

Ep #11: Slow and Savor



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Diana Murphy

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Welcome to *Empowered Wellness for Leaders*, a podcast that teaches CEOs, entrepreneurs and sales leaders how to deal with the unique challenges of balancing a high-stress career, family, AND their own health. Here's your host, Certified Executive Wellness Coach, Diana Murphy.

How are you? I am so glad you're here today. You know, I am talking about my favorite subject, and it didn't come to me I think willingly. I have spent most of my life talking about food, talking about diets, and I just love what's happened in the last few years of my life where the absolute opposite inclination is actually the most powerful tool. And that's what I'm going to bring you today.

I love doing things with a lot of intensity, and it does not always serve me well. And certainly around food, it does not serve me well. And in fact, I am probably one of the fastest eaters in my family, and I found when I was growing up that I actually was embarrassed about the empty plate and would literally go back for more food to fill it up because I was embarrassed that I ate so fast.

Well, enough of that. I now have learned the power of slow. And I'm going to bring you today how slowing down around food can really be a gift in your life, as well as savoring food and bringing some more joy back in your food can really help you get a little more joy in your life.

So are you like me? Do you have a hard time slowing down? You know, you have a family, or colleagues that actually stop you sometimes, they go, "Wow, slow down, what is the rush? Take time to smell the roses." I've heard that before.

Well, if you're anything like me, it does not come naturally. It really doesn't. But there are so many benefits to slowing down and starting with food can be a powerful place to start. Would you love to dial down the intensity in

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

your life but you don't know where to begin? That's what I'm going to talk about today.

Do you often really realize that especially by noon or one o'clock, I find this midday where the mind chatter, the mental chatter is just overwhelming. Or you're that person that you're waking up with so much on your to-do list that you just can't imagine getting it done so you find that you're running in anything but fast and furious gear. This episode is for you.

Because eating is such a basic human experience, it can reflect and be a perfect place to start to slow down your mind, let it process in a better way, and as a result of eating more slowly, it can truly affect your body's health. And who wouldn't love a faster metabolism? Did you know that eating more slowly is the key?

It's so ironic, right? And if you suspect that work and the pressure that you're under to succeed are stealing your joy, then that's the second half of my episode. This is all for you. What's going to happen today in this episode is I'm going to explain and teach you a little bit about why eating more slowly actually increases your body's metabolism, I'm going to show you how so you can apply this into your life right today. It's not a hard exercise.

I'm going to show you how eating and savoring delicious food can bring joy and pleasure in your life and as you do these exercises, maybe some insight on why you're not doing that. Withholding joy around food and not giving yourselves permission can be a reflection of what we're doing in our lives. I do this all the time in work. You cannot do this, you cannot go out to lunch with friends, you need to work all day.

This might be the concept where this might loosen up and give you some insight in those areas in your life. Again, it can be a reflection. I'm also going to discuss how to give yourself permission to enjoy that hamburger,

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

molten lava cake, or amazing cocktail that you absolutely love. And take the guilt out of the experience. Are you ready to get started?

As a reminder, this is part of my food tool series for April. All about food. What's going to happen here is I'm going to wrap it all together and create an entire teaching series when we're all done that can help you to be the intuitive eater that you want. And to gain what you most want to out of slowing down around food, eating great food, eating highly nutritious food, and learning all the ways to have this be more part of your life.

Whether you're an undereater or an overeater, all of this can be applied. Alright, let's get started. Do you even remember when you ate your last meal or what you even had? Do you barely have enough time to eat in your day? And don't get me started on the dinner hour and how is it even possible with your current workload. I think a lot of us are coming home and just changing gears and then going right back to work.

And then there's others that have entire sport schedule wrapped around their kids and obviously their schoolwork and all, so I know that it's a challenge. And everything that I'm sharing with you today can be applied in the short time that you do have to eat. Even if you're eating in the stands watching a soccer game, even if you're eating in your car, just to get a break from work, seriously, this can be applied.

And I want this to be an encouragement. This has really truly been how I've calmed my mind and stayed more centered in everything that I do. And I'm simply talking about slowing down when you eat, but it affects so much. Much of what I want to share with you today is from a book that I really have enjoyed. It's called *The Slow Down Diet: Eating for Pleasure, Energy, and Weight Loss*, and it's by Marc David.

You know, in the show notes I'm going to have a summarized handout for you that you can download that will cover every chapter. You don't even

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

need to read the entire book to get the gist of this. But it will show you if it something that you should be reading.

David studies the biology around metabolism and how slowing down, increasing pleasure around food helps our body to get ready for food. It's a simple way to help our bodies drop and then maintain weight. Well, I am all about that.

This is all about working with our bodies and letting them do their job. Our parasympathetic system and digestion especially, shuts down when we're on the run. It's all from that fight or flight that we've been wired to as humans. And discussing how simple it can be to turn it back on when we're ready to eat.

I want to show you how today when - even when you have limited time for meals. Again, it's all about slowing down, moving from that fight or flight busy busy workday, busy whatever day you're having, and slowing down on purpose. And allowing your body to get in gear and ready to eat food.

Now, why is this important? This is really a cruel truth. If we even eat really healthy food, it goes to fat if we eat it too quickly. Wow, that got my attention because I'm putting a lot of energy into what's going in my mouth. I certainly want my body to be able to metabolize it well.

Okay, so let's get started with what I really recommend trying a few times, at even lunch hour is like, a great time to practice this. Breathe before you eat. Seriously. Even if you just have five or 10 minutes to eat, I want you to sit down, plant your feet on the ground, and take some calming breaths. This literally will help your parasympathetic system to turn back on.

Slow down totally on purpose. Prepare your space. Even if you're eating fast food, plate it, or move from your desk. Get outside or even to a window. And again, if you're eating in your car, point that car in the

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

direction of a park or something. Please, make this a treat. Add some pleasure to the meal itself.

If you've listened to a few podcasts, or have attended any of my workshops, you know I'm all about dialing down stress. Stress causes us to overeat, it's hard on our bodies, it's not good for us, and I talk about how you can shift that with your thinking. You know, the way we're thinking about our lives really does cause a lot of stress.

But that's not what I'm talking about today. This is your backdoor trick to doing it. When we breathe, remember, yoga, you don't have to be in a yoga class to benefit from yoga breathing. When we breathe, pay attention to our breath, calm our bodies down, even when we've had the most stressful morning, this meal time can give us a gift to regenerate, clear your mind, and give you better mental and physical energy for the rest of the day.

I encourage you to try this right away. It has really made the difference for me. I don't know if you remember the podcast where I shared that I was even in this mode when I first started coaching, and I would forget to plan midday breaks. Sure, you want to coach at noon, I'm set. And I've learned the time of day my body really loves to eat, and I've realized it's really important to take those breaks.

And sometimes it's a matter of just the 15-minute break between calls. You know, take this time to refresh so you're not just zooming in to the rest of the day. Again, this can restore your physical and mental energy and can kind of zap that stress ball we all start creating by one o'clock in the afternoon.

Alright, the second activity is really a lot of fun. And it may sound a little corny, it's very coach-y, but I love that, and I found that some of the exercises that I most resist are absolutely the ones I'm supposed to be doing. And in fact, this is one of them that I am going to try this week.

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

You can hear about it in the videos I'm preparing for you on Facebook live. Alright, take yourself on a mindful eating date. Plan this activity when you are alone for a meal. But again, this can apply if you learn to eat mindfully and really enjoy your food when you're on your own, then the next time you're in a busy conference or a large party, it will help you to be more mindful then too, I promise.

Pick out colorful fresh foods, things that you love eating. And set the environment. Light candles, use china, treat yourself. Put flowers on the table, eat outside, put some music on. You know, if this behavior is really good for dates, it's a great way for us to treat ourselves.

So for some of you lonely eaters at night, I found this to be really important for me. I was eating - my husband traveled a lot, and I really was a time that was very, very difficult during the evenings. And by creating a few dates in the next weeks, I think you'll notice that you'll take better care of yourself. You know, during even a normal basic leftover dinner.

Nothing wrong with any of that. But by spending some attention on yourself and making the food experience more pleasurable, it really, really nourishes us in more ways than just the food. When I get calm around food, I know I make better choices, but there's biology going on.

David mentions, simply put, the same part of our brain that turns on stress turns off digestion. Isn't that fascinating? The same part of our brain that turns on stress turns off digestion. And conversely, the part of the brain that turns on the relaxation response turns on full, healthy digestive power.

You do not need to read his whole book to learn this, do you? I didn't. This is just fascinating to me. So remember those slow breaths are helping you to jack up your metabolism. We're all doing our best, but we just didn't understand this part. Our life is so fast, our culture is so fast. So I encourage you, see what happens in your business day during the

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

afternoon. See how you're feeling at home when you take some time to dine with your family.

Alright, now, for savor. This is all about taking time to enjoy your food, for the food itself. Now, I mentioned it in the previous exercise, but are you having trouble enjoying your food? And why? If you're anything like me, and most Americans, your brain has a litany of thoughts around your food choices. And even when we're making the most decent ones, there's clear anxiety about having to make the best choices.

Oh my goodness, is it farm to table? Is it organic? Does it have pesticides in it? I read that report that this food is bad for me, but I love it. Oh my god, am I eating healthily enough? Is this going to make me fat? Oh my god, we have an entire conversation.

Now, I'm not talking about ditching nutritional advice here. Don't worry, we're going to cover that next week, but we absolutely have taken the joy out of eating food at all. When I was on my weight journey, I realized I hated food. Truly. I blamed it for making me fat. What a killjoy that was.

This was all wrapped up around the deprivation cycle I was in, so even when I did have a treat, I didn't enjoy it. I ate it quickly, probably ate too much of it, and got it over with, and then started my guilt cycle again. That's fun.

You know what, sometimes we have to practice loving our food again. I know I did. And certainly slowing down is part of this. This is why I've coupled these two concepts for you today. What if you every single week, chose to eat something supremely delicious just for the heck of it?

So many of us are stealing joy out of life by not enjoying some of these very human and basic pleasures. If it makes you a little nervous, I want to

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

teach you the four types of eating, and help you to see where joy eating comes into play.

Fuel eating is the type of eating where we eat what's lean and green, what we know is fresh, what is good for us, kind of the core foods that we eat day to day. That's fuel eating. We should be eating a high percentage in this area, and we spend most of our time fuel eating.

Next, there's fog eating. This is the classic boredom eating or eating behind your own back. It's when we just start eating more unconsciously, we're not really aware, or the food is kind of boring and we're just eating. That's fog eating.

Storm eating is what most people think of as binge eating, and it's when we're feeling a really strong emotion and we cannot stop. We are gangbusters, open those pantry doors, open the freezer for ice cream, and we cannot stop. We know we're doing it and we know we're actually doing it out of emotion, but we cannot stop. That's called storm eating.

And last but not least is joy eating. This is my favorite, and actually a way to bring food back into perspective for you. So let's dial up the fuel eating, and dial up the joy eating, but really let the fog eating and storm eating diminish. And we can do that by really enjoying our food again.

Alright, see if this helps it shift for you, giving yourself permission to eat. Creating pleasurable experiences. Again, joy eating. Listen to this quote, "Pleasure catalyzes the relaxation response, just like our breathing did," when I was talking about that before, "It promotes parasympathetic dominance and full digestive force." Pleasure. Let's put some pleasure back in our lives, people, and let's start with food.

We are humans and it is something we're supposed to enjoy. So what's the difference between having any sweet or delicious item that comes our way,

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

you know, you didn't plan on eating birthday cake but somebody's birthday is happening down the hall. And this is when we learn to trust ourselves around these foods by planning for it.

You never eat joy food, it's not joy eating, it's fog eating if you don't plan it. So planning a joy eat shows us that we can wait for good things. And if it's planned, we're not tricking ourselves into thinking that we are to enjoy every sugary or fatty pleasure that comes our way. That's foggy and that's not good for us, and that's not helpful, right?

Plan a joy eat. Remember, if your brain gets a little freaked out, your wellness coach told you that this is what you're supposed to try. Alright, this is how you do a joy eat. Pick something you absolutely love, even something that you're craving.

Typically, this for me is a craft hamburger, and it comes with a craft bourbon cocktail, and French fries that come in brown paper. Seriously, I love that type of experience. But I don't have them all the time, and I don't order a hamburger every time I'm out at a hamburger joint. It's not the core food I love to eat, but there's times I really crave it and want a good one.

So that's a good example, and for others it might be a molten lava cake, you know, a dessert, or a sweet roll, or a cappuccino moment where you really do allow yourself to have something delicious out of that Starbucks case. Pick something you really do love that's prepared really well.

Next, pick when you're going to enjoy this. Pick a date with yourself, pick a time you're dining out with friends and you really are going to enjoy the dessert. Suggest your favorite restaurant for that craft burger, that's how I do it. Nope, I want to eat over there tonight, and my husband will be like, "Really?" I'm like, "Yeah, because I want the hamburger tonight."

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

Come hungry to this event. Even if it's dessert. This just gives us an opportunity to really, really enjoy it. Did you know you enjoy food when you come to it more hungry? For some of you, that is a new concept. For me, it was.

Alright, so pick something you love that you're craving. Next, pick when you're going to enjoy this, make a date. Come hungry, even if it's dessert. Eat very slowly and use every sensation, look at it, look at the color, enjoy every single bite, smell, taste, use all of your senses to enjoy it.

You know what I've noticed when I coach people during their weight loss journey? Guess when I can tell they're in diet mode and constricting themselves unnecessarily. When they're not allowing themselves to joy eat each week. Yup, if you can't give yourself permission, that might be an indication that you're really being tough on yourself.

Yeah, for most of us our bodies can handle little sweet not and then. David really dedicates an entire chapter on pleasure and shares this concept with us. Listen to this quote. "The way we experience pleasure with food is a mirror of how we experience pleasure in life."

I have found this to be so true. I hope you do too. Slowing down can serve us so well. We are more present, we can restore our mental energy for what's next in our life, whether it's our evening, whether it's our afternoon, after lunch. When we allow food to be a pleasurable and sensory experience, we create a satisfaction that's so lasting it will start reducing your cravings.

I'd love to hear from you how this hit you, and there's so many places that we can engage. I have a business page, Diana Murphy Coaching on Facebook, you can leave comments on my website, or you can just email me. I bet you have further questions, and I'd love to hear your insights this week.

Ep #11: Slow and Savor

I have started something new, I'm going to create Facebook live videos. You can find them on my business page for Facebook, Diana Murphy Coaching. I'm going to create a tab and a folder for them, so you should be able to tell which ones. As you hover the cursor over them it'll give you the title. Watch for them, and they're going to align with every podcast I do.

I can't wait to see you next time when we discuss fuel testing and figure out what to eat. You know, I'm not a nutritionist, but did you know your body really can give you a lot of information? And that's what we're going to talk about next.

This will be the third podcast in April, this is going to give you the three basic tools that you need to get more centered, to really learn how to eat in a more intuitive way because ladies and gentlemen, we have much more important things to think about.

Thanks for being here today, I absolutely love bringing this work to you, and I'll see you next time.

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