

Ep #26: Why We Resist What's Best for Us



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With Your Host

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.

Oh, my goodness, I welcome you. I hope you're on a sunny beach, a quiet mountain lake, a hike in the mountains or just having a really good summer with your family, or just with yourself. I hope it's going well. I've had some fun. I haven't really taken a full vacation, but I have really been giving myself time to visit family, to stay longer in Dallas so I could see my son. It's just been great.

And what's really wild is – you know, you've heard about my mom, because she broke her hip, and she is moving. She's moving Saturday and hired these amazing women that are helping her move so that I don't have to be there, which is awesome since I have a retreat on Saturday.

Alright, so welcome and happy summer, but I want to unpack something really important for you today. It answers the question that I think gets us in so much trouble; this moment of resistance. Why do we resist doing what we know to do or what we really want to do, especially around the area of health?

Isn't that the million-dollar question? Like, if we could solve this, if we could bottle this up, we'd be millionaires. Well, I have the solution for you today. I don't have all the answers, but I can't wait to give you some really great solutions for these kinds of resistant moments when you don't feel like doing the best thing. And they actually help disrupt that pattern because our brain loves to work in patterns and this might be going on for you over and over and it's wearing you out.

When you're really sick of dieting or sick of trying to get to the gym, this is probably what's going on. You're experiencing a lot of resistance. You push yourself over it, but I want to share with you, my friends, you can dial-down that resistance.

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You do have all the answers. I want to encourage you; this is simply a practice of relying on a different part of our brain. What I'm going to help you to understand and do is move from decision-making in the frontal cortex around good health, moving to a totally left side of your brain – I think it's left. I don't even know which side, but it's the really creative side that intuitively and calmly, without a lot of thought, makes decisions around food and exercise.

And we are going to focus, on this episode, around healthy choices, but this applies to everything. Pay attention. Where are you most resisting in your life? It is a beautiful way that your body and your mind might be trying to get your attention. Once we understand this and have some tools to shift it, you won't be so frustrated the next time you're not feeling it or feeling motivated or find yourself not doing what you most want to do.

Alright, so this is the scenario. You've decided to eat very healthy food. You've even decided to cut out sugar for a time and you find that you're, "Oh my gosh, I'm doing anything but eating healthy. In fact, last night I ate chocolate cake. It was so good." And you wake up this morning and the last thing you want to do is eat healthy.

The moment of resistance actually started in the decision to have the cake. And you know, having cake isn't a big deal, but the reason that we give in is because we're having so much resistance in that moment. I'll explain more in a minute. Or, like maybe this is you; you're working out consistently and for a few days now, you've been so busy you've canceled and before you know it, you've missed the entire week.

You have great reasons, but it's what happened in that moment of canceling the first one – and I am no perfect workout person, no perfect eater, but it's that we're avoiding the resistance and then we get off our game. We get in this really bad cycle.

I don't know about you, but I hate the feeling of resistance. These resistant moments when we decide to have the cake, when we decide to not work

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out, are the cause for so many of us to give up altogether, right. Before we know it, we're off our plan for a week or we haven't worked out for a while.

It's what happens in the first moment that I'm going to talk about. Why don't we want to do it? Why is it so hard to decide sometimes to do the right thing? Alright, this is the easiest way to explain it. You are rocking it. I'm going to put you in that scenario.

It's the third week of a new trainer. It's the third week of a great diet. You are eating on plan. You are loving what you are doing. You're eating in a way that just you're eating lean and green and it feels so good. And then, you have a challenging week at work and this thought creeps in, "I'm too busy to work out today. I don't have time to get fresh groceries. This is hard."

It seems pretty innocent, but once we think something like this is hard, it comes along with difficult heavy emotions. The brain jumps in and thinks of a myriad of reasons of why it's hard to either lose weight or maintain that healthy lifestyle. And before you know it, you are in full on resistance and the relief we get is we give in.

The giving in stops the resistance, but we end up doing what we did not intend to do. There's one more thing I want to explain; when our brain revs up with excuses, again, that sneaky thought comes in your brain that it's difficult or it's hard and the brain just joins it with 30 reasons why it's hard. That's why it feels so oppressive.

And what happens to us in that moment is we think the relief will come canceling the workout or eating the cake. The brain makes you think it's a trick, that the relief will come making a decision in that moment to have what is off plan or what is tempting you or whatever. And this isn't about temptation, it's about giving in to the resistance that is happening, the fight, that battle of the good angel and the bad one.

And so we feel relieved in the moment. I know, when I cancel a workout because I think I'm too tired or I don't want to race to it at the end of my day, I feel relief for a while, but then it just feels horrible. I'm like, "Is that

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really a good enough reason?” But initially it feels really good because we have relief from the resistance that our brain is offering us.

But the relief is a lie because the icing on the cake is that then, our brain does go into a tirade of how we’re never going to get fit or healthy and we’re such losers. So let me give you an illustration that I think will make it real easy to understand what I’m getting at here.

It’s like having a conversation with a coworker. You’ve been working all day on the projects. You both work on a team together so you have similar work projects together so we have the same language. And you’ve been working really hard on something and you’re kind of – it’s ease and flow.

You feel great, but now you’re at lunch with a coworker and one of you brings up a particular project and how much you hate it. Now, it could be you or them, it doesn’t really matter, but before you know it, you both cannot stop complaining and you’ve thought of at least 30 reasons why this project is horrible and you’ve been at it for like an hour, for the rest of your lunch.

And what do you notice? It’s hard to get back to work right now, right. You’ve created all this resistance now around the project, around the good decision to get back to work because that one thought that was negative, your brain just joined it. We joined it in conversation with another person, that’s why complaining just draws us all down; we join that. But it goes on in our own brain.

All this complaining created resistance. Remember, the conversation started with a great morning. You’re rocking it at work. Things are going well and one negative comment grew into an hour summary of the many things that are wrong, proving the point that the project was awful and you get back to work and the last thing you want to do is work.

Resistance, this is just the brain unsupervised, using a part of our brain that doesn’t really honor our body’s wisdom. And that’s why this topic is so important. If we know what to do when we feel this resistance, we can stop this crappy cycle of resistance, giving in to decisions that don’t serve us,

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then we miss the beat-up cycle or trying to explain in a really ugly way why we're not doing what we most set out to do. And then, we don't take great care of ourselves for a season, a week, two or three days, and we have to summon the energy to start all over again.

There is another way; moving these decisions to a more intuitive space where you're creative and trusting the body's feedback. This is why I teach and encourage the hunger scale and fuel testing for every person I meet and coach. I teach it in almost every workshop. And these are fully explained in episode 10 and 12.

This is why I have relied on these tools since I learned them. My body wisdom is so much better at making these decisions, and when we practice and honor that type of decision making, it becomes second nature; intuitive. And it becomes intuitive and easy to eat and live in the way we most desire.

Let me explain more. The cognitive logical decision-making part of our brain can only work on two or three choices and it always feels relief when a decision is made; like remember not working out and eating chocolate cake. It goes, "Phew..."

You know, the resistance is built because you really want to do the right thing and so it becomes this battle in your brain. However, when you use the intuitive side of your brain, the one that also is relying on your body's signals, remember this; it's expansive and creative. That's why when I'm coaching people when they start telling me how hard it is, I really won't argue with them because there in the space of it's really hard, but I will ask, "Okay, I know it's hard, but what could make it easy?"

Like, right now, what's hard in your life? I believe you, but interrupt it with a really good question that just switches off into a more intuitive space of our brain and what would make it easy? "Wow, I could pick up food on the way home – yeah, it's takeout but I know it's really lean. I could do that video at 6:30 instead of going to the gym at six." Do you see? It's expansive and

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creative. It's a different part of our brain. Lean in; this is the magic. This is the million-dollar solution.

It's understanding that it's natural to feel the frustration, the disruption, it's natural to feel resistance to doing what you want to do. Just allow that to be there. Then lean in and trust your own body's feedback. Trust your appetite. Trust what works for you in terms of fuel and the foods you know work in your body. Trust what works for you in certain types of workouts. You won't have to think about it in that frontal cortex kind of way.

This has been life-changing for me. I am not perfect at it but it's the way I do food and exercise. It's the way I plan my grocery list without even thinking about it. It's the way I do my workouts. It is the skill that prevents all of those heady should I or shouldn't I conversations. Isn't that beautiful?

I can open a menu and go not what should I eat because I've chosen not to eat sugar, I lean in – am I hungry, first of all, and then what does my body really need right now? And those conversations really bring up wise answers; intuitive body honoring answers.

We can stay in the negative battle, but I encourage you to think about moving to insight and intuition. It is calming, expansive, creative. It is amazing. It's what I'm starting to use when I write the podcast. I don't force myself. I get myself in a more creative space.

I bet you can use this when you're resisting getting to work; what would make this easy right now? What should I do first? It's interrupting this frontal cortex, I need to make a decision, you have to do the right thing, kind of different part of our brain.

Now, in terms of intuitive eating, it does take some practice, but we need to quickly dishonor that argument that goes on in our head and ask better questions. And when you do this over time, the resistant conversation loses steam. It stops asking you. It stops tempting you per se. Thank goodness, right. I do not have those battles in deciding to work out; I just go. I'm so excited.

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Like, I don't have a battle on whether I'm going to eat takeout that is fried food, I just don't eat it and I think, "Oh, that place has a grilled salad. I can't wait." It's just a different space; what would feel good in my body right now?

Okay, so I've shown you what's going on. Remember, resistance is created when one subconscious thought comes in our mind, we believe it for a minute and our brain joins in with a chorus of similar thoughts all creating this huge mountain. I call it the mountain of resistance. But as we ignore it a little bit and as we learn to trust our body wisdom, our true appetite, and we don't think about it all that much in that frontal space, we just do it.

Now we are doing again what we most want to do for real. This is where I have changed my life from being on a diet, being off a diet, working out and not working out. It has absolutely healed. I have been a consistent exerciser for three years now. I have maintained my weight for 10, but I will tell you, the least four have been with ease and flow.

It's beautiful and it doesn't take that long. It does not take three years to learn this; it takes about six weeks. So how do we stop this? This is how you apply this in your life. How do you get more ease and flow?

Understand it, which I've shared, give yourself a break, like understand that this is human and normal, it's your brain, it just needs a little bit more management.

Now, give yourself some time to learn the hunger scale. Develop your fuel list. Don't worry, I have some in-the-moment hacks for you on this podcast episode, but you can lean in and learn the hunger scale on episode 10 and fuel list on 12. And pulling it all together is another very easy way to lean in on this. And not to list another myriad of episodes, but How to Lose that 5 Pounds is another very simple way to start learning these intuitive tools. Whatever appeals to you, go, dive in. I encourage you. It really will give you freedom.

So understanding this is key, giving yourself a break, that this is something normal that's going on, giving yourself some time to learn the hunger scale and develop your fuel list. And three – that the resistance or the heady

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decision-making part of your brain, it will stop entering this what to eat when to workout conversation. The more you practice intuitive eating, it will leave that conversation. You can use that beautiful part of your brain for more important things.

You know, you have a lot of decisions, a lot of thoughts during the day; this is where we move all the decisions about eating and moving our body to an intuitive space so we can make decisions on things that are much more important than day to day, “Am I going to work out tonight or am I going to eat that cake?”

I know you have more important things to be making decisions on, right. So that’s why I feel like it’s so important to all of us and it has given me the freedom that I am no longer in this drama around taking care of my body; I’m now in the drama of being a wild and crazy business owner. What was I thinking? It’s very fun though. I love every minute of it.

What is fascinating to me, and I want this to be an encouragement to you, is that that tricky subconscious thinking, that thought that says it’s too hard is weaker than your body’s feedback. It really is because when you begin practicing and listening and honoring what that body wants for food and exercise, it’s like building trust with a friend.

We no longer do things to our body, like a diet or forcing ourselves to exercise seven days a week. We’re not honoring a more subtle life-giving conversation about what is best; what is best in the moment and what is best in general.

Diets and harsh workout plans can have the greatest of goals and intentions, but it ignores that body’s feedback. So this is why I’m talking about moving from that, you know, we’ve disrupted that listening voice, that quiet voice of body feedback and now your body gets to have its voice back. So what do you do now?

How can I solve this for you today? I have some simple steps. And in the show notes, I’m going to have those questions. You know, I’m all about

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those questions, but I know having those at hand can be a beautiful way for you to practice.

So I will have a worksheet for you, but this is what you do; when you notice the resistance, you're starting to feel that battle in your mind or it feels really hard and oppressive, just notice it and allow it. Don't fight it anymore. It gets worse when we fight it. Do not resist the fight. What does somebody arguing with us want? It wants us to argue back. Stop arguing with it. Stop arguing with that part of your mind.

Then interrupt that resistant feeling and emotion with questions. If it's about food, am I hungry? No, the answer's no, move on. No cake. If you're in the middle of a meal and you want more but you know you're full, just ask very gently, am I full? Yep, I'm going to push that plate away. No more food. I'm taking that home.

This is how we practice it, those decisions are made, you honor the intuitive that says yeah you're full, you don't need any more food even though it tastes really good, and you just push it away. And the more you honor that, there won't be any more discussion, I promise you.

And then the other one around activity is a great question; what is my body really needing today? If the answer is, I need to work off some stress, I have an urge to sweat, I need some fresh air, I need to recover – do you see where the answers are? Literally yesterday, I was so sore, instead of booking my 6pm workout, I booked a massage and today I feel so much better. I know I'm in a position to just get back at it. But I really listened to what my body needed today. It prevents us from injury. It helps us find things that we love doing when we're not deciding from this heady place of what we should do.

Alright, another great question is what does self-care look like right now. If the answer is, like, you're truly physically exhausted – I work with someone that travels very heavy and has very long workdays when she's on those road trips and she is truly physically exhausted. For her, a nap might be the

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best workout. That might be the best thing for her body. She'll get to working out – she's on her feet all day – when she can, right.

Or in that moment, you're bone hungry – I know this has happened to me. When I was moving a few years ago, we weren't eating well because we were on the go all the time. I would get to these moments that I'd be bone hungry and we'd literally go hit a steakhouse and get a really good meal. You know, if you're bone hungry, eat a steak.

But if you're not hungry at all and you're out with your friends and you really ask that question, drink seltzer, order a salad and nibble on it. This, my friends, is so peaceful. Give it a try. This is for you. I do have another solution for you, but it's another podcast episode. So next week, I'm going to talk about planning. And again, it's another way to move all this frontal cortex decision, having to make decisions all day, we're wearing ourselves out.

It's about planning and it's really about deciding ahead of time and I'm going to help you to see how, even if you're not a planner, how planning might be your best friend. Well thank you so much for listening. I really appreciate you being here.

If you love what you're getting or if you have questions, please, leave me a review. Send me an email, Diana@dianamurphycoaching.com – I'm producing a question and answer podcast and the best way to do that is to hear from you. So don't be bashful; I cannot wait to produce that for you. Have a great day.

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