

Ep #38: Step 2: How to Stop Overeating



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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.

Hello, listeners. Oh my goodness, I think that today's episode may be the best in my series that I'm creating, and this is just step two, of creating an effective and lasting weight loss. In this series, I'm going to be teaching you all the ins and outs, and the hows, to create and maintain lasting weight loss.

We're going to have some fun today. Remember how your parents told you not to play with your food? Well this week, I'm going to ask you to play around with your food, and how you think about your food. If you missed step one, be sure to get it back to episode 37. You might be a little bit surprised at what is key in any journey towards permanent weight loss.

What is it? Compassion and curiosity – so much more gentle, powerful, and freeing than judgment and pushing ourselves to lose weight, and it's just not a great way to take care of ourselves, right? So grab a listen if you haven't yet.

And today, I'm literally weaving the how, to stay curious, with some steps and some very fun tools that I use myself and my clients. Okay, I'm going to give you three powerful steps to take to help you cure three classic ways that most of us – and you might be – where you're overeating in your life.

It's a simple way to look at patterns that are going on for you around food. I'm looking with you at those moments where you just might feel like you're eating behind your own back. You'll learn today how to stop cleaning your plate, slow down, and to have a little joy with your food.

Doesn't this sound fun? I don't know – I sounded like I was being very bossy there, "Stop cleaning your plate." But hang with me because it really is. Let's dig right in.

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One reason that you might have trouble keeping weight off is what happens after you diet. One of the reasons a diet can work to help you lose weight is, it is a season where you're paying a lot of attention to what you're eating. But afterwards, through no fault of your own, you slip back into old patterns.

Remember, the brain loves familiar. This is why a diet doesn't work long-term. This is why I love teaching intuitive eating tools, because once practiced, these tools are sustainable. And this brings me to my first focus for you in terms of classic overeating patterns.

Are you a clean plate kind of person? Be honest. Do you feel pressure, or notice, that most times you eat, you eat everything that's on your plate? In fact, I know that I'm eating more consciously when I leave awkward bits of food on my plate, and sometimes might not even eat a meal even though I just ordered it.

And for some reason, perhaps from our upbringing, you hear some voices in your head from your grandmother that was worried that you didn't eat her food, or you grew up in a house where you were encouraged to clear your plate, "You know, there's those starving children in China..." right? And that's not true anymore. That's how old I am.

It can feel awkward to not finish the food on your plate. Can it be that simple that you're feeling just a bit of pressure or desire to clean your plate? Is it that big of a deal? Yeah, I think so because it's subtle, but it's a very powerful place to start paying attention.

If you're eating more than your body needs, or even less for that matter, by focusing on what's on the plate, not what you really need for fuel during that meal, at that moment, it's really important because none of the signals about eating should be taken from outside. We shouldn't be eating at a certain time, we should be eating when we're hungry and stopping when we're full.

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But, considering the portion sizes in restaurants these days, I think it can be a big challenge. And whoever created the buffet plate, that I think is a normal plate – the tendency is to fill those. This can be a real challenge, especially if you're working hard to lose and maintain your weight.

The best news is that unlocking this pattern isn't as hard as you think if you look at it just a little bit. And don't worry, as always, I have downloadable worksheets that are available for you at dianamurphycoaching.com/38. There are just a few questions to ask yourself. It all goes back to how we feel about wasting food.

This is one of my favorite exercises to run through. It really helps clients, it helps me, to kind of see what I'm thinking in those moments. So imagine yourself in the following circumstance, and comment or think about how you'd feel. And it's okay if you're talking out loud; you're in the car by yourself, right?

Okay, so you're at an expensive restaurant. Your meal arrives and you're not hungry. You decide not to eat because you're past plus-two on your fullness. You can't bring it home with you. You can't have the waiter box it up for you. You don't have those circumstances. There's no refrigerator and it would spoil. You can't take it with you.

The waiter must take it away after only tasting it. How does this make you feel? What comes up for you? Now, same situation as above, but you eat the food; every portion, every bit of it. How do you feel now? How do you feel compared to the first situation? And let me ask, do you believe wasting food is bad? Why, or why not?

Notice what's coming up for you as I ask you these questions. If you eat food that your body does not need for fuel, are you wasting it? Aren't you just carrying the waste with you on your body as fat? Bottom line, would you rather waste food in the garbage or on your body, and why?

It sounds harsh, but for me, it really helps me remember what's going on in those moments. In our large portion society, in order to stay at your ideal

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weight, you'll have to waste some food. And how does this make you feel? Notice it. And next time you eat and stop at light fullness and there's still food on your plate, notice how it feels to waste it. How does it feel to not be part of the clean plate club?

What are you noticing right now as I led you through this? I know, a lot comes up. And even when I go through it – I'm very familiar with this exercise. Even when I go through it, I think of more things that are going on for me in my brain. And for me, this is so subconscious that I need the reminder often. And I've been doing this work for over four years, but it works.

Our brain loves pattern and it takes some time of undoing it before we live in a new normal, because this is a sneaky thing for all of us. I know that for me, slowing down and breathing slowly and being fully present when I eat is really important for me. Then I know I'm not unconsciously cleaning my plate, unless of course, I'm that hungry.

I'm going to remind you that clean plates are not bad. Eating without any awareness, however, gets us into trouble, in terms of eating our true fuel needs and to our own appetite. You know, I've made a new rule or guideline for me, and this has really helped.

If I feel urgent or anxious or in a rush, I just simply don't give myself permission to eat. I stop and breathe through it every time. So try it this week. Slow down at your meals and see how you feel when you know you're full and your plate still has food on it. It's interesting what thoughts come up, for sure. Again, this takes some practice, and I've shared the exercise, the waste-food worksheet for you as a reference in the show notes.

Alright, next concept – this brings me to the next concept of slowing down and savoring our food. I know each one of us has a different pace of eating, so in most cases, I'm talking to those fast eaters out there. Oh my word, where did I pick up this habit?

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I'm a really fast eater. I always have been. And get this; sometimes I was so embarrassed that I'd already finished my plate, especially in a group situation or buffet – I'd be in line with someone, fill my plate, and we'd turn around and they'd still have a ton of food on their plate and mine would be clean. I'm not kidding. That's how fast I eat.

And so I'd go back and get seconds so others didn't see my clean plate and be embarrassed. Whoa, I do think that this is some of my normal wiring. I'm a fast-start. I love high-energy conversations and workdays, so it makes sense that I'm high-energy during a meal.

I was exposed to a really, not life-changing, but it really brought up a lot of great information for me in the book called the Slow Down Diet, by Marc David. I was exposed to it by Susan Hyatt, who trained me as a BARE coach. This method is really helping us to get out of diet mentality. And this was a really key concept.

The Slow Down Diet talks about what happens in our parasympathetic system when we eat fast. Bottom line, when we eat fast, our digestive system is actually shut down. Our body thinks it's in fight or flight, so it shuts down everything but the brain and our muscles, basically.

So what does this mean for you? Even if you're eating really healthy food – listen to me here – your body needs to store it when we eat it fast because it's not in a position to digest it. I love when science helps me to understand why something isn't working in my body.

This lines up with being curious and being a student of our bodies and what works. And this information, it kind of removed the shame I had about eating fast and just gave me a really good reason to slow down. I hope it works for you there too. It really encourages me to slow down. And typically, I don't clean my plate either when I put myself in that slower pace. Fascinating, right?

This is your challenge. Slow down. Savor your food. Really truly enjoy it. I'm hearing you, "I don't have time, Diana." I hear you, but even if it's just

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your tricky sandwich at lunch, I want you to take the time necessary, a few calming breaths, walking outside a little bit maybe before lunch. Calm your body down before you eat by just getting present at your meals.

When I coach executives, I present this absolutely as a true mental break in their day. Even if it's 15 minutes, when you get really present with your food, your brain can slow down and you can actually experience a mental reset for the rest of your workday. Don't we all need that by now?

We've had three or four meetings, we're pushing it hard, we're hungry, and just taking this breath of fresh air break, eating and slowing down can be a break instead of just another thing on your to-do list. Trust me with this. remember, even if you're eating healthy food and you're eating on the fly, it can be turning to fat instead of just being used as fuel in your body.

Now, my friends, we're really going to play. This is my absolute favorite concept; joy eating. If you're like me and have done a lot of dieting over the years, this concept will surprise you. Food is meant to be a pleasurable experience. We are meant to enjoy it, savor it, and experience it. I recommend to always have a joy experience around food during the week.

For me, this might be a special dining experience out on weekends where I really do savor that biscuit with honey on it, even though in most meals, I don't eat sugar or flour. Or it might mean setting aside some time to savor your favorite fresh baked cookie at your favorite coffee bistro.

When we teach ourselves that we can trust ourselves around treat food, it takes the entire deprivation mindset out of the experience of losing weight. There are a few ways to practice this skill. For me, because food made me gain weight – at least that was my thought most of my life, that food was bad – I actually was mad at food most of the time.

Imagine how much energy that brought to my meals. Seriously, I bet that's why I ate with such energy when I was struggling and ashamed of how heavy I was. Doing this exercise and taking some time out to really enjoy

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what you're eating, it has changed me forever in a really beautiful way. I hope it changes you.

You're meant to get pleasure out of food. If you're having trouble trusting yourself around delicious food, if you're missing the joy experience around food, I have some ways for you to try this. First, never eat joy food on the fly. This is to be a planned and special event.

So this isn't the birthday cake interruption at work when you don't even remember the person's birthday and you just decide, this will be my joy-eat. That is not what I'm talking about. That is kind of eating without your permission. You just eat because it was there.

So what I want you to do is notice something that you're craving. It could be a juicy hamburger craft fries, it could be your favorite Mexican meal, it could be that warm cookie – plan ahead for something you really want and notice your cravings. That's the second step.

Once you've noticed something that you're craving, decide where and when to do it. For me, when I start really craving a hamburger, I notice that, but I really wait until I'm at the right restaurant or I can prepare one really well at home. I get kind of picky about it.

And I encourage you to do this. Make sure it's really good. So, never eat joy food on the fly, that is not a joy-eat. Plan ahead at least 12 hours. And notice a craving and decide where and when to do it. Next, go hungry. Yes, have an appetite for what you're about to enjoy. Even if it's a snack in the afternoon' wait until you're hungry.

I promise you, this will make the experience even more delicious. Take some time to notice every bite. Look at your food. Get comfortable. Be in a place you really like. As you eat slowly, does each bite taste the same? Really take in the entire experience and stay curious.

There are so many different things we can learn here, but the most important is that by planning ahead, enjoying that food, and trusting

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yourself that you're not falling off the wagon, that you've planned this and you cannot wait and you notice that you can do it. This is another intuitive mindset piece to put in place for your permanent journey towards weight loss.

One way you can practice this concept is to certainly plan a joy eat every week or so. But another way to bring true pleasure and joy to your meals anytime you're eating is to set a table. Make sure you eat off a plate, not Styrofoam, even if it's takeout; just transfer it to a plate. Or find a place in your office that at least has a window and isn't your desk if you're eating in desk-mode. If you really don't have a lot of time, find a corner, put some music in your ears, make your mealtimes something special that you look forward to. Get outside if you can.

It's something we've begun to miss in our fast-paced lives and this is a way to bring true joy and pleasure back to our food experiences and our lives, really. I have shared with you three really strong concepts and exercises that really have shifted the food experience for me and have helped my clients to maintain the weight that they worked so hard to get off.

I have some really good news. Of course, there are downloadable PDFs for you to have access to; dianamurphycoaching.com/38 – but today, listen in, October 15th is the beginning of my free training on the program that I'm calling Weight-loss and Stress-loss. So I'm going to deal with mindset and weight loss.

I'm offering six high-impact amazing classes, but they're not long. They're 30 minutes. They're easy to access. And if you've loved what you're hearing on this podcast, you're going to love the Zoom classes I've set up for you.

To receive the login information and the times for the classes, I put them all over the calendar so you can at least hit a couple of them. So check out the show notes link and register for the class. Or check out the front page of my website. I put a floating form for you to sign up there.

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Good news, if you're listening to this podcast later than October, if you sign up, I will be providing these as a resource after we're done. When I notice that you've opted in, I will make sure you get the access to the resource page. But if you're getting this live, I encourage you to invest some time.

The power in changing anything in our life is showing up. I highly encourage you to attend the classes live and get your questions answered and learn what is for you in this program. I am so excited to bring this to my podcast listeners.

Come join us. Again, dianamurphycoaching.com/38 – remember, play with your food, don't listen to your mother anymore, do not clean your plate, slow down, enjoy some joy food, notice what you're feeling around all these experiences, and give yourself some compassion and learn and apply what you're learning in each exercise.

I love bringing this to you. And as simple as these concepts are, they have changed my life and many client's. Make sure you get your transformation by digging in. have a great week.

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