

# Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Diana Murphy**

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## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

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 this morning? I hope fall has hit your place in the world because we're still having 80s and 90s on most days here in Atlanta and it's October. It's wild.

Well today, I really want to ask you a question. Would you love to stop worrying about food choices, portions, and losing weight? No matter what the situation, whether you're at work, on vacation, or hanging out with your family in the evenings, wouldn't you love to know how much to eat for you?

What I want to dig into today is how to create that reality for you, for your life right now. Why do these tools that I teach in my program work? Because they help my clients to lose unwanted weight, to keep it off, and sometimes just to change their awareness around their health, depending on their goals.

These tools work because you're replacing patterns and habits that are already going on in the background with new ones. Ones that serve you in a powerful way. Let me explain. Our brain loves to be efficient, and when we have done something, just even a few times in a row, it becomes routine. What some might call a habit.

Subconscious thoughts and triggers operate in the background, really, without our permission. And sometimes, and I would say most times, without even realizing it. For example, you start a new job and there's a Starbucks in your building. This is new to you. For a few days in a row, you join your office mates for that very fun 3pm break in the afternoon. It gives you a kick, you enjoy getting to know your new associates, and you love trying their new special drinks every day.

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## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

And before you know it, a 500-calorie latte is a new part of your routine and it doesn't even feel like a decision anymore. And maybe it's more subtle for you. I know for me even growing up that Sunday afternoons were all about watching the Bears play football, popping popcorn, and enjoying apple slices and cheese on a Sunday afternoon.

So does it surprise you that I feel a little munchy when the Falcons are out of town and I'm not at a game but I'm watching football at home? Yeah. And then we can talk about the deeper patterns that we develop growing up, like the whole theme around dining out with your family was always about celebrating and eating everything that was offered. That's what was true for me.

Again, it had nothing to do with our appetites, or when we came home from school we always had a snack. Do you have some of those patterns where you're eating but you're not really hungry? These patterns can actually start as a response to hunger, but somehow it moves to becoming a habit that has nothing to do with hunger and you know you're truly eating now behind your own back.

And this is how using the tools I'm teaching today can play out. I still have those Sunday afternoon triggers. Like when you go to the movies, when football is on, but it's just as routine or a habit for me that I honor is I gauge and ask myself every single time whether I'm hungry or not before I say yes to eating.

And sometimes I just plan on it and I eat lighter at lunch so I can enjoy that treat on Sunday afternoons and actually be hungry before I do so. And I still celebrate with food, I love hospitality, I love cooking. But I'm doing it in a way that serves my body. Eating mostly fuel and honoring my appetite even if I awkwardly am not hungry on one of those occasions that I dine out with friends. I participate socially instead of with the food. And you know, if I

## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

find myself in the middle of the afternoon, even if I'm at a meeting and I'm hungry, I honor it and I eat.

How do we implement better eating without having to think about it all the time? The most lasting option for you is to put it into the background of your mind. Create a habit of awareness and practicing new tools so they are the things that operate in the background instead of mindless overeating habits.

Remember, one reason that diets work during their time, during that season but not afterward is they create a hyperawareness during the diet. We lose weight and then we slip back into those mindless eating habits again. You've done nothing wrong, by the way. But now you have an opportunity to train your brain in a way that serves you around food.

What I'm proposing here is to implement tools that create sustained awareness and eating tools that become that background pattern in your mind and in your life. Let me show you how. The first step is awareness. As I've shared in step one and step two, and that's podcasts number 37 and 38, slowing down around food and being more curious than judgmental to ourselves is a foundation to intuitive eating.

Stay aware during your meals. Enjoy what you're eating. Savor and enjoy the food. Even during the most basic meals. Your body then remembers eating and you will feel more satisfied and aware of which foods work well for you. But I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit.

You might ask, "How much should I eat? What about portions, points, and calories?" Let's dig into that today. The hunger scale is a foundational tool in my coaching practice, even for those that are not working to lose weight. Using the hunger scale can even help those that would like to gain weight or to maintain their weight during stressful seasons.

## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

You might think at first that this is just another diet trick. I know I did until I realized that most of my decisions to eat had nothing to do with hunger. Or for me, the decision to stop had nothing to do with fullness. If I was following points, I might eat more proper portions but if I wasn't, I'd eat until I was uncomfortable. And choosing to eat had a lot more to do with the clock or the social occasion than my appetite.

The hunger scale on the simplest level is this: am I hungry? Am I full? It's not eating until you're sure you're hungry and then eating during a meal, paying a lot of attention so that you can stop when you are full. Again, that's where the attention comes in as you practice this tool. But trust me, as you practice it, it becomes a part of you.

When we eat in this way, we get in a rhythm of what I call our true appetite. And for those that want to drop some weight, this is a powerful tool to be sure we're fuelling our body but eating only what we need for fuel, and allowing our body to drop excess weight. And maybe you're like most of my clients that when you're trying to lose weight or just too busy to eat you wait until you get too hungry and you're out of control.

And that's why this is so important. Honoring your hunger is just as important as honoring your fullness. There is a deeper level to this tool than just asking, am I hungry, choosing to eat, and then noticing when you're full. Am I full? If you want to get more detailed and your goal is to lose weight, I highly recommend learning the full hunger scale.

And this is how it rolls: the hunger scale is based on a 10-point scale. -10 on one side, +10 on the other. -10, you haven't eaten quite a few meals. Maybe for an entire day, day and a half maybe. Not many of us do this unless intermittent fasting or something. But -10 is super, super hungry. It's something we don't normally do.

## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

Most of us probably eat or let ourselves get - if we're getting headaches or super, super hungry, -4 or -5. Then you go on up the scale to +10. +10 would be two Thanksgiving dinners and you didn't want your host to be disappointed so you ate everything and dessert at both places. So that's +10, and most of us, we might be dramatic and describe, "Oh, I ate to a +10," but most of us when we overeat, even if it's binge eating, +7 is about the most we see.

Now, the ideal is to eat at when you're at light hunger, -2, and stop when you're full at +2. I call it eating between the twos. -2, eat, +2, stop during the meal. Now, you're going to need to give yourself some practice. How I describe this to most of my clients and I think this will work for you as well is midday is a great example because all of us have different hunger scales in the morning, but that's an entirely different topic, by the way. I do not eat until I'm hungry, which means it might be 10am.

So honoring the hunger scale and you are noticing it's midday and you're at your desk and you're starting to wonder if your office mates are ready to eat, or it's starting to get your attention. Should I stop, make another phone call, should I work at my desk another half hour? And you realize you're just getting distracted. So -1 is a perfect time, it's really our body getting our brain's attention and it's a perfect time to start preparing a meal if you're cooking or throwing some food together or to ask where everybody's eating or start ordering food if you're doing takeout.

So then while you're eating, you're at -2 and for some of us, we might have gotten to -3 by the time the food arrives, is to slowly eat and notice when your body starts calming down. Now, our body starts calming down and gets neutral at zero. But we're not full and sated yet. We know that we still - our body is not done.

So listen carefully. +1 is lightly full. +2 is the fullness I'm going for here. +2 fullness is really light fullness where you are energized now because we

## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

finally have eaten but you could go on a walk. Now, you may not run five miles right away, you might let your food settle a little bit, but +2 is light fullness.

Now, give yourself some ample time to practice. And again, in the show notes, [dianamurphycoaching.com/39](http://dianamurphycoaching.com/39), there will be a hunger scale worksheet. On this worksheet, it gives you an opportunity to kind of identify what happens for you at -4 and at +4. And this just gives you even just a more insightful way to understand your hunger scale.

Now, you're paying attention, you're practicing a new tool, and give yourself ample time to practice. Most of us take about six weeks totally make something a grounded habit or routine. Start with the questions for the first few days, am I hungry? Am I full? And then add the scale and dig into where it is easy to eat between the twos. And get curious about the spaces where you eat past +2 or +3. Get really curious about what's going on for you.

This is where tweaking comes in and noticing what works and what doesn't. It takes a bit of patience, but I guarantee you, if you give yourself the same time you would have going on a diet and practice these tools and those diets most times end up failing in terms of maintaining our weight, you will now have grounded yourself into an amazing healthy eating pattern that will last forever.

Now, you're laying down the learning of this. Remember, it's going to take some time but it is so worth it because before you know it, you're intuitively thinking, am I hungry? Am I full? But there are patterns that might show up for you. So my next step in this is noticing your patterns. Do you notice a particular time of day or food where you just can't stop at fullness?

This is good information and a beautiful opportunity to get curious as to why. This is where some coaching might come in. Are you an emotional

## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

eater during some times of the day? When you're bored in the afternoon? I know for me, I really do run for food when I'm about to record my podcast. And now I just ignore that prompt because I know I'm just like, nervous that it's not going to go well and I just eat about it to feel a little better.

Is it just a habit? Sometimes all we need to do is understand what's going on in our mind that makes us want to eat in those moments. I know for me, I've had a difficult time truly stopping when I'm full after dinner recently. I would love a taste of sweet after I eat dinner and frequently, I want a little ice cream sundae at night. This has not been working for me as of late as I know I'm really eating past +2, even really, past +3, and it's way more than my body needs.

I notice that I get the urge to get ice cream out and I ask again, are you hungry? And I take a deep breath and calm my body down because in most cases, the answer is no. Now, I'm not distracting myself. We can do that, but I think really listening to your body's answer, am I truly hungry, and honoring it is powerful.

By the way, if this is where your struggle lies, I'm raising my hand here. A great way to bust these patterns is to hop on a quick call with me. I'm serious. Share a pattern with me that you've noticed, that you struggle stopping at +2. Believe me, I've heard it all. I've had clients that get snacks every time they drive home from work because they're bored, I've had people that really eat because they're angry. There are so many beautiful ways to unlock this and most of it is me helping you just look at your thoughts and unlock that pattern.

During this quick session, you will look at some of the thought patterns that are going on for you in the background. A link for this quick call appointment is in the show notes, [dianamurphycoaching.com/39](https://dianamurphycoaching.com/39).

## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

Now, you're noticing patterns, you're practicing. The next one is important. Stay committed. If you stay all in on this tool and take the consistent steps of eating right at your appetite, your body will drop weight. And when we do anything consistently, we compound our results. You know, like interest.

What if you ate, let's say about 80% of your time, you ate between the twos for a very consistent period of time. Say, six to eight weeks. What would be the outcome? Try it. I can't tell you how freeing this has been for me. I no longer worry if I'm eating the right amount of food. My body alerts me when I need fuel and compared to the majority of my life where I overate regularly, and now I really don't.

Not because I'm making myself do it. Because it's not intuitive and a very natural part of my life. No more points, no need to measure. Just a tool to help you to get back into the rhythm of your natural appetite. No matter how much dieting, how much weight you have to lose, or whether you just want to get healthy, if you give some practice to trying these steps, it can be true for you as well.

The struggle is real because we live in a culture where everyone is telling us what and when to eat. But with practice, it's a beautiful gift to get into our body's rhythm. Why is this tool so important? I teach it to everyone I work with. Even those that are working on a confident mindset in their businesses because if we become intuitive around food, we become more aware of what is for us and we're aligned in our lives. We make much more grounded decisions and we truly become more intuitive in the really important parts of our lives.

I also know that we all suffer from decision fatigue. And when we take deciding what and how much to eat, I've noticed with even the healthiest of people, that the conversation in their head and the conversations we have when we're dining out is really focused on these two questions. What should I eat? How much should I eat?

## Ep #39: Step 3: Food Decisions and Trusting Yourself

So I hope for you today that you're answering that question, how much should I eat, from your natural appetite. Have a great week and I can't wait to hear how this tool works for you, or not. Bring up any questions or concerns. Email me, [diana@dianamurphycoaching.com](mailto:diana@dianamurphycoaching.com) and remember that quick call I mentioned, the link is in the show notes and don't hesitate to give yourself that gift.

If you unlock just one overeating pattern in your life, that might mean that you don't have to lose five pounds every New Years. That might be all it takes. That's why this works so well. I hope you have a good week and let me know if you have any questions.

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