

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy



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With Your Host

**Diana Murphy**

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## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

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.

Welcome back. I am so excited to bring to you what might be a new perspective towards food for you. Whether you struggle with getting enough fuel in your day or you struggle with staying on diets because you want to lose weight, or you just want to know more about eating in a healthy manner, this episode is for you.

I'm going to get a little personal here; food in my life has been a really big deal. It kind of carried with it a lot of drama. I loved it for real, and I hated it when I gained weight and became very self-conscious about my body in middle school.

Yeah, I know; who isn't self-conscious in middle school? But it was a very big deal for me. And for a wellness coach, if you followed me every day, you might be aghast sometimes at how I eat. Don't get me wrong, I really do eat in a healthy manner most often, but I eat bacon, I have desert sometimes, I love Chick-Fil-A sandwiches, and I mean the Chick-Fil-A Fried Sandwich. It is awesome.

I don't like how wine affects me, and that makes me a little cranky, but I do drink less of it now. But I've found bourbon, and I'm playing around with that every once in a while.

My point is this, our body is really resilient with how we treat it. And when we eat a higher percentage of clean food, most of the time, our body responds really well. This is one concept, or really a life lesson, that has helped me to calm down with my food drama. I learned that I didn't need to be so perfect at it. But also, I learned that my body's feedback can really help me stay on the right path.

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## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

That's what I want to bring to you today; a fuel strategy, not a diet strategy. I'm not against diets. In fact, many of them are fabulous at helping us to eat healthier foods and to understand where we might be overdoing it. However, if we think – and this is what had happened to me – that the diet is wiser than us, we lose.

The goal here is trust; learning to trust yourself, trust that your choices will work, trust that even when you eat fun foods or treats, you won't lose control. I've got your back on this one and I can't wait to share this full episode with you.

I hope that you've been digging into some of the resources, and today's episode really lines up with the video series I've created as well on my website, and that's called Empowered Wellness Now. That's where you can go a little deeper on this topic, certainly around food a little bit, but much more around the full dynamics of how stress and motivation are part of it. So that's what you'll see there and that's on the front page of my website.

Has this happened to you? You've vowed to not eat any sugar or flour and you just ate a cookie on the fly and feel like you've ruined everything. Or you're following a diet plan to a tee, but you're hungry all the time and you feel like something's wrong with you that you can't follow this? You're on the road or at a business meeting and you're so frustrated that what is available to you in terms of meals is not at all what's on your diet plan, and you just throw your hands up and end up overdoing it. Or you just read an article that tells you that you absolutely eat a lot of meat protein, then you read another one that says that a plant only diet is the way to go.

Wow, all in all this can be so frustrating and very de-motivating when we're trying very hard to be healthy. The tools and perspective I'm sharing with you today can help you get started eating in a way that honors your appetite and your fuel needs.

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

Let's get started. The three steps I'm talking about, and they all work beautifully together are honoring your appetite, slow down and savor, and eat your fuel; and emphasis on YOUR fuel. So again, this is all about fine-tuning what really works for you. We're moving from outside signals, or noise, to inside calmer – at least they have been for me – intuitive signals. It's from noise and frustration to trust. And it really can be really calming, and for me, it is really what has helped me maintain my weight for a very long time now.

Let me break it down. How do you honor your appetite? You can start this by getting in touch by asking simple questions. And it may be so simple that it's laughable to you right now. But this really does work, and especially for people who are eating on diet plans that tell you what time to eat, if you're always eating when food's available. Whatever it might be, if you're in a restricted space, these questions can kind of unlock it for you.

And for those that deny themselves food during the day because they work hard through the afternoon, or during a season of heavy workload they actually lose weight, this is for you as well. Ask these questions throughout the day: am I hungry? And then while you're eating, am I full?

It's all about honoring your true physical hunger. And this is all about eating when you're lightly hungry, not starved, and stopping when you're lightly full. This is one of the facets that really helps us maintain really good physical energy throughout the day. We don't have those sinking spells of sleepiness or getting tired because you haven't had enough fuel.

And again, light hunger is more flutters in your stomach, not headaches and hangriness, you know. I know you have people, maybe in your life, or you're one of them, that is hangry when you're hungry. It's not that level. And light fullness is when you're calm and sated and you could actually take a brisk walk after the meal.

So again, am I hungry, am I full, and eating to light hunger and light fullness as you eat. When you eat in this way, as I mentioned, your energy is much

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

more stable during the day. No more sleepy afternoons after you've had a big business lunch. No more waiting until you get home to eat and then being totally out of control. And no more deprivation because your plan – your diet – says you can't eat now. It's all about establishing your own rhythm in your own real life.

Some things might happen at first, and I want to warn you, you may start eating a little more often when you eat this way. Or, you may actually skip a meal or two. Nothing's gone wrong. You might actually have to spend a little time and energy being prepared when you're hungry to make sure you have food on hand.

Now, I'm not talking about preparing food on Sunday for 15 hours so that you have all your meals done. But I am talking about making sure there's a bar in your bag, making sure that you're going to places that have food you like, making sure you're shopping more often.

And then as you work with, what I call, the hunger scale – and this is just a light version of it – you might find yourself just eating a lot less food; fascinating, right. And the best part, you might just feel amazing.

First, it builds that trust that you are really dropping the head drama; you don't have to think about when you eat. But energy-wise, I know that this has really changed things for me. I really feel good in a more sustained way during the day. It frees your mental energy. You have much more important things to do, my friend, than be worrying and fussing about what to eat, when to eat, where you can go to stay on your diet, or even those that are forgetting about themselves in this as well and denying themselves food during a really busy time.

Your body will get your attention when you're hungry and just listen closely when you get full. I really love how this has worked in my own real and busy life, but it was really fun to see it work for a client of mine a while back. He's an executive at a large company, and we'd been working together for, I think, six or seven sessions at this point. And he was

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

concerned because he'd only lost a pound. And I was concerned for him as well, as his coach. And so we took some time to look at what was going on. We went through what he'd been eating and whether the hunger scale felt comfortable. He had noticed a lot of changes in his habits and when he was eating, so he's really quite surprised.

And so I asked him a little more and realized, you know, he shared that he had been home from his second ten-day vacation. He's been applying the tools all this time. Well, then I asked him, "So what did it look like last year after your vacation time? Did you do the same thing?" And he – it was almost the mike-drop moment, right. He's like, "Diana, that's when I gained at least five pounds."

This is the magic to this; when we get more and more of a rhythm – again, it's not about being perfect – about truly honoring our appetite, we will not have those weight gains on weekends, holidays, the summer, and you will not have to lose ten pounds every year.

This is the true gift of not only losing, and letting your body go to a natural weight, but sustaining a weight, if you fluctuate, losing weight too much during stress, or when you gain weight when you're in stress. Honor, "Am I hungry?" Only eat when you are and eat until you're full. Stop when you're sated. It really does work. Test me out on this, I'd love to hear from you.

If you want to dig a little deeper, I do go fully into the hunger scale and feel testing, which I'm going to cover in a minute here, on a really great worksheet that you can do on your own. It's at [dianamurphycoaching.com/3](http://dianamurphycoaching.com/3). Everything that I'm sharing will be covered in a more in-depth manner there in the show notes.

Next, slow down and savor. So are you a pretty fast eater? Do you eat on the fly? I think most of us Americans eat pretty fast compared to the Europeans, right. We don't take a long lunch, as our culture. But I know – I really have done this before, especially when I started as a coach, I forgot

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

to schedule lunch breaks in my day and realized I was eating on the fly; so I wasn't even following my own advice.

The next tool I'm going to share with you is about enjoying food and savoring that time of day. It's not just about the food. Eating slowly is essential for two reasons. First it helps us with the first tool I shared with you; you can actually tell when you're full. But it's also when we're eating on the fly and our body is kind of in fast mode, or intense mode. Our food can immediately, even when we're eating really healthy, go to storage; fat, literally.

I learned this in the book by Mark David called the Slow Down Diet. It explains, in much more detail, of how slowing down can get you faster results, especially if you're trying to lose weight or curious why you gained some weight. You know, I'm wondering, after I read this book, I seriously think this might be part of the Freshman 15 issue. Kids are eating in groups, not at a family dinner. I've never seen my kids eat faster, ever, then after they returned from their first semester in college. It's just crazy.

So this might really be important to your wellness. How do you really do this in your real life? I know you don't have time for French lunches and taking a nap in the afternoon; and that is not the point. If you have a busy fast paced day, I want you to use this time to have a break in your day, even if it's 15 minutes. Take a few calming breaths, yoga breathing, little box breathing. Hold your breath a little bit and gently let it out. Do that maybe three times.

Like, literally slow down your parasympathetic system that has been on overdrive, driving through your day. Let it slow down so that your body can really digest your food well. And in addition to this, honor your mealtime as a mental break. I can't think of anything better to do to prepare ourselves for our afternoons as doing this. It pays off totally in our mental energy during the afternoon if we really just slow down a little bit and get refreshed.

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

When we savor and taste our food, our satiety is really strong. And this helps you remember the meal, it helps you be more satisfied with the meal, which really helps us to stop noshing on things all day.

What we eat is really important. So I will get to my last tool. And again, this is a lot to take in, so take advantage of the further tools. But much more important than that, if there's something that's gotten your attention already, just stop here and practice that tool and come back to this podcast and lay down the next one when you're ready. Or listen to it all as an overview, and listen to it again later, so you can see how you're practicing is going and layer on something more.

They all work together beautifully, and maybe one is getting your attention today. Start there. I'm really of the mindset that one thing at a time is a really beautiful way to change and grow.

Okay, eat your fuel. This is where I started bucking diets a bit and honoring what food was right for me. Remember, I was a professional. I worked for Weight Watchers, and I realized I was bucking the points plan. I felt like a rebel. And it was really good for me because I started learning and testing out some foods that actually were quite high in points but really, really worked for me.

Now, I don't eat by points anymore. I actually didn't much as a leader; please don't tell anyone. But this is really important, this is getting more wisdom. Use the information of a certain plan, if you're eating healthy and you're trying something. There's a lot of information there. It's really a good process. But, be aware of how it feels for you. Use your body's feedback; and these simple questions can help you get there.

Okay, stay with me here. Does this food sustain you for more than two or three hours? That's a fuel for you. Do you feel really good energy after eating this food? Do you feel like you could go on with the rest of your day; it doesn't make you sleepy? That's your fuel. Can you stop easily when you're lightly full? This is where Lay's potato chips comes in. seriously, you

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

cannot eat just one; at least for me. There's nothing wrong with a potato chip, right. But I will tell you, if I start eating them, I absolutely cannot stop.

It's not a fuel for me. So it's something that I am more aware of, so I use it as a little bit of something with a sandwich or with my meal. I will always watch carefully and kind of just decide not to go back to the pantry later in the afternoon, even though I want to.

But all that food is telling me is that it's not fuel. Good to know. I used to have a lot of guilt around these things, like wanting foods; what was wrong with me that I couldn't stop? And many times, the food itself is causing the reaction for you. If it's not a fuel, it's hard to stop.

Alright, there are also some ways that our body reacts to food. It's not a fuel for you if you're bloated or really sleepy after eating it. Those are kind of classic non-fuels. There are some foods that are kind of in between, then there's foods that are like, "Oh I love this food." Those are the ones to keep more of around the house.

You know, these body clues are – we sometimes will need to isolate foods to figure something out, but this is all about being told to not eat a particular food or to eat a particular food, and only listening to that advice. This is learning what works for you.

Your body is a beautiful feedback mechanism. We all broke it when we honored outside information without really understanding what was right for us.

You know, you absolutely have all the answers. That's what I believed for so long, that I was broken because I could not stop having to diet after gaining weight, why did I overeat so much – I was really so out of sync. And this calmed me down.

I also know, for many of the clients that I work with that are actually underweight and under a lot of stress, that learning to fuel well during the afternoon is just vitally important.

## Ep 003: Fuel Strategy, Not Diet Strategy

So what got your attention? What are you going to work on this week? I'd love to hear from you. Thanks so much for listening today. I absolutely love bringing this information to you and sharing some of the things that are going on for me and some of my clients. Please leave me a review and let me know what you like, what you don't, so that I can tailor this to what you really need so that you will be more empowered; not feeling a victim of all these wellness challenges that you've done in your life. All of us have been there.

I'll see you on the next episode where I'm all about motivation. Hope to see you there.

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