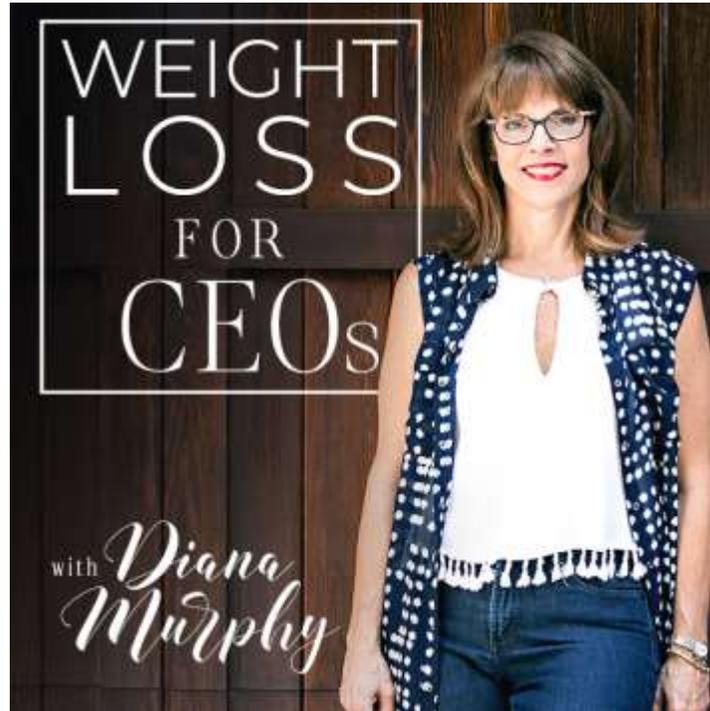


WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Diana Murphy

[Weight Loss for CEOs](#) with Diana Murphy

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

Welcome to *Weight Loss for CEOs*. A podcast that teaches executives and leaders how to deal with the unique challenges of achieving sustainable weight loss while balancing the responsibility of a growing company, family, and their own health. Here's your host, executive coach, Diana Murphy.

Happy New Year. I am so glad you're here on this podcast. I hope that other episodes, if you've listened to me before are really helping you and I think this one is a really important one and a beautiful one to start our new year with.

So happy New Year, happy 2019. I hope you celebrated well. Now we're into that first full workweek of the year and I can't think of a better thing to bring to you than talking about how we use food for buffering and how to change that to understanding and knowing what to do about it, to kind of interrupt those patterns of overeating.

So in the previous episode, I described how to practice and integrate mindful eating into your life. The goal with mindful eating can be different for each one of us, but eating in this way can have huge benefits. Better energy, creating more calm during the day, helping you to keep mentally centered, and creating better energy, better physical energy because overeating can make us sleepy or eating the wrong foods can as well.

And mindful eating is a skill. It creates lasting weight loss and great energy. There's a lot of discussion about mindfulness in our culture, and most of us have given a mindful practice a shot. But what about real life? How do we remain mindful when work is stressful? When we have very little margin in our day or we're so busy and have so many other things weighing on our minds.

Certainly, it takes practice, but I want to encourage you, if you make a commitment to practice the steps I shared in episode 13, decide, notice,

[Weight Loss for CEOs](#) with Diana Murphy

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

and response, you're going to be on your way. This is all about deciding when to eat, am I hungry, what am I hungry for, and noticing how your body responds to food, what works for you, what gives you energy and sustains you, and then response in the broader scheme of things.

Does eating in this way work for you? Are you dropping weight if this is your goal? Do you feel good? Those are the responses that we want to see and want to see what's working. By digging into this sequence, you can really make a huge difference in your relationship with food and your health, and you can find yourself craving healthier food much more naturally and not being so distracted by food decisions.

But seriously, what about those times we just can't seem to mindfully eat? The time that we set out to eat healthy all week and realize we just wolfed down a fast food burger and fries, or we're at a business dinner and just realized we cleaned our plate and weren't paying a bit of attention because the conversation is so animated or nerve-wracking at your table.

Or you just spent the holidays with family. I'm raising my hand here and one of the main attractions was all the dining out and the amazing food. I'm so thankful that now I know what to do during these seasons and most of all, have learned to not let those patches of overeating in my life shake my confidence anymore. That's the trick.

Understand that what I'm going to share today is absolutely different than what you'll learn from diet experts. This is not about thinking about what you should and shouldn't be doing. This isn't about pushing food away or being perfect on your diet. And this isn't about your New Year's resolution to lose weight.

This episode is about learning how to stop eating behind your own back, to stop eating when you're bored or anxious, or to stop eating when you feel like you deserve a break, or to simply stop using food for any other reason than fuel. How do we do that?

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

Remember that when you overeat, you're just trying to feel better. And when the body eats, the body experiences a feel-good response. Your body likes to reward you for fueling your body. Remember, you're wired to eat whenever food is available. It's in our DNA. Our survival used to depend on it.

But now we live where food is always available, as I mentioned in the previous episode. So also, we as humans will do anything to avoid pain and having food and eating can really mollify or buffer that pain. And for some reason, we as humans recognize even the most slightly negative emotions as pain and we want to feel better right away.

Learning what to do in this space, this space when we're using food to buffer your negative emotions, to slow down enough so you can look at the eating without thinking moments with some curiosity. This, my friends, is the key to healing your relationship with food. It's the key to stabilizing your weight and feeling in control around food without following any particular plan, except being focused on eating your fuel. What you know works for you.

This approach is about moving from a mindset where you reach for food to buffer to feel better to a mindset where you understand what's happening so you can be in calm control around food and feel better without using food to buffer those negative emotions.

I have some vocabulary to explain this. Remember that mindful eating that I described in the previous episode is fuel and joy eating. Fuel eating is healthy fresh foods when we are hungry and stopping when we're full. Joy eating is eating our delicious favorites in a deliberate and confident way, and I say confident because when we handle joy food in this way, you build confidence and self-trust that you are not going to go off track because you simply ate an amazing dessert or an amazing meal of food that is not your fuel.

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

So we have fuel eating, there are four of them. We have fuel eating, joy eating, now let's talk about fog eating and storm eating. Those moments when we are overeating. Fog eating is when we eat behind our own back. We're digging into a bag of chips and we're at the bottom before we even realize it. Fog eating can be so sneaky. We might be enjoying a fuel meal or even savoring a joy eat. Before we know it, we've switched from mindful to fog and we've cleaned the plate without even realizing it.

Or is it this? You're calling every sweet treat that comes your way your joy eat. This might be happening during the holidays. That's my joy eat for the day, and before you know it, you're eating a lot more sugar than works for you. That's fog eating.

Storm eating is a higher emotionally charged type of eating. We might call that bingeing. This is when you're angry, frustrated, or experiencing any stronger emotion at all and are watching yourself overeat but you just can't stop. You feel like you need to do it. This type of eating can create shame and guilt, which extends the overeating, by the way, after that first binge or storm eat.

If you can name it, observe it, and play detective in these moments, you can unlock the overeating patterns that are happening in your life and stop them from being extended times of overeating. This is about understanding the why of the fog and the storm eat and using an approach that gives you a tool to show you how to turn this around, how to disrupt the patterns.

Sometimes it happens so fast you don't even realize it's happened. This is the way to slow it down in the moment or process it after it has happened. Both work. I want to remind you of this. When you've had a big overeat, analyzing it afterwards will give you insight for the next time.

When you're eating foods you didn't intend to or look back and say why did I eat so much, these tools that I'm sharing today are what you lean into and it's asking two simple questions. What was I feeling? And why was I feeling

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

that way? That's it. It's very simple but it takes courage to stop and look at what we're feeling and thinking in these moments.

So be brave with me here because you'll notice I took more time to write this podcast and I think this is why I even resist - I'm a coach and I even resist digging in and understanding some of my thinking, especially around places that I might feel a little embarrassed.

And that's what was happening when I was writing this episode. I'm in the middle of Christmas and there are a few times I was really not happy with the way I handled food. But I used these tools of really understanding how I was feeling in the moment and understanding why I was feeling that way. It helped me to turn around my moments as well.

This can be used in the moment that you catch yourself. Okay, why am I noshing through this bag of chips? That's a good example, or afterward. Why did I overeat at that party? This isn't about digging in so deep that we are over-analyzing what was going on or getting all touchy and feely for you guys out there that are listening.

This is simply being onto your thinking so you can understand your why and choose differently next time. We're playing detective here. Let me illustrate. I'll start with some intense situations and then move into some milder examples.

I have vivid memories of my high school years when I had episodes of storm eating. When I was babysitting and after the kids were in bed, I couldn't wait to check out the pantry. I would go to the pantry and get a snack. I'd just start with a box of crackers and say, "Oh, I'll just have a few," and before I knew it, I was diving into all the cabinets, the fridge, to find something that could satisfy me, and then trying to hide it.

I couldn't stop. So I could ask why in a critical way. What an idiot. You were trying to lose weight, why'd you do that? You have no willpower. Or I could

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

respond in a different way. Step back and get curious. That's what I'm asking you to do for yourself.

Now, what was I feeling and why? I looked back. I was feeling deprived because I put myself on some strict diet. Then when I ate that first item that was off that strict diet, I felt discouraged and powerless that I couldn't even follow - I couldn't even follow that simple diet plan. And then fear. At that moment, I know I was having fear of losing a boyfriend at the time because he was pretty clear that being thin was the ticket to us staying together and me being okay and lovable.

Yeah, I did get rid of him eventually. But I was young. Now, we could deep dive and you could feel sorry for me that I was having all those feelings. But that isn't useful. I could start blaming others that were pressuring me to lose weight. I could blame the diet. I could have blamed the family for having so many treats in the house. I could blame the boyfriend's pressure, right?

And certainly, as a high school student at the mere age of 16, I did do those things. But this next step is where we take our power back. Let me show you. Let's look at the thoughts that were creating those emotions. This is where we get logical and look at our thinking instead of being in the moment.

So the first step is asking what you were feeling before a fog or a storm eat. But then it is asking why. So I'll share my example again to help you know how to do this for you. Why did I feel deprived? Because I was thinking, I have to go on a strict diet to lose weight. That was my belief and my thinking.

I felt discouraged because I thought I'll never lose weight. I was feeling I was really a failure, but I really thought it was hopeless, I would never lose weight. I also felt powerless because I was thinking, I can't stick to

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

anything, I can't do this. I was feeling fearful because I thought he would break up with me if I didn't lose the weight. He didn't by the way. Not then.

Even writing those out now, it feels like such a huge relief. Even though they felt so true, I experienced every emotion thinking those thoughts, but when I took the time even now to really nail down what my thoughts were and say them out loud, they lose emotional power. When I was actively thinking them, I felt every one of those emotions.

But when we step back and look at what the thoughts are, we now can be in more control. So again, these thoughts lose their emotional power because we're not actively thinking them anymore. But we were taking a lot of action from feeling deprived, discouraged, powerless, and fearful. All those will make you want to overeat if that's your gig, if that's something that works for you.

Not all of us overeat emotionally, but if you're here and trying to lose weight for good, I have a hunch that this is for you. Remember the circumstances were strict diets, boyfriends, lack of weight loss. Those did not create the emotions. The thoughts did.

We only need to change our thinking. We do not need to change the diet, the boyfriend, anything. We don't even need to empty our pantries. We just need to get to the bottom of our thinking.

You know, I'm feeling a lot of compassion towards myself as I look back. Even doing this exercise has helped me unwrap my story around all of those moments. Even you look at these situations and say of course Diana, you wanted to eat your way through the pantry, but the power is doing this for yourself.

You might have felt compassion for me. Are you treating yourself in these moments after these moments of overeating with the same compassion you would a good friend? That is the magic sauce. Compassionate in a powerful way. Not in a way of feeling sorry for yourself or excusing your

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

behavior, but turning that into curiosity of the why so you can start turning it around.

Let me illustrate another example that's not so intense. I share this one because this one caught me my surprise. I'm an extrovert and I thought I was always comfortable in social situations. But if you're struggling with food when you're around others or out to dinner during parties, this might be helpful to you as well. Good time of year. We just finished the new year. But really, this will empower you going forward.

When I was learning how to maintain my weight, very soon after I hit my goal at Weight Watchers, I noticed that I was overeating to the point of discomfort. When I was attending book club and other social events, but mostly book club, so we'll use that example. Within the first 20 minutes of getting to book club, I had usually downed a full glass of wine and was into my second plate of appetizers.

Then, out of embarrassment at my empty plate, people were just arriving, for goodness sakes, I would fill the plate again and try to slow down. But it was difficult. Then when the group would start going through the buffet line before we sat down to discuss our book, I was already full but there I was, filling my plate again. That might have been the third or fourth time. And definitely, this was a pattern.

I was maintaining my weight, but I was doing that by making sure I had a heavy workout, a run on the day of book club and the day after. I was kind of beating it off. But somehow that didn't seem right. It certainly wasn't peaceful and the pattern was getting my attention. In fact, I was coached on it and it really gave me a lot of insight.

So I looked at it. Let's look at it together. What was I feeling during the book club? I was feeling anxious, lonely, and very vulnerable. Why? I was feeling anxious because I kept thinking I don't belong. Seriously, during that season, I was doing something very different, my friends.

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

I was working. My other empty nest moms were not, and I was literally starting a business, and it was frightening. This was about four years ago and I was really thinking and believing I didn't belong with these women. I was also lonely.

I was thinking I have no one to talk to, they don't get me. Again, back to the kind of change and shift in my own life, and I was really putting it on them. I have no one to talk to, they don't get me was the thought that kept going on in my mind. And that made me feel really lonely.

I also felt very vulnerable. I was the Weight Watchers leader now. I was worried about gaining weight. I had lost a lot of weight and it was witnessed by these women. They were doing life with me at the time and I was thinking if I gained weight again, it's going to be really embarrassing. And I lied. I was kind of puffed up proud about that. Wasn't good for me there because I really was thinking some ugly things.

So my desire for connection, my fear of not being connected to these wonderful friends was creating a lot of crappy emotions. Again, I just wanted to feel connected and engaged, but because I was afraid of not being connected, thinking all these thoughts that made me feel anxious, lonely, and vulnerable, of course I wanted to eat and drink. It was very accessible, very fast. I kind of felt better at first but doesn't it leave us wanting every single time? I felt gross after all of those events.

Once I understood that my brain was offering these thoughts, I saw quickly that they were untrue and I unraveled this pattern by approaching these events with a totally different mindset. I began to look forward to connecting with them versus worrying is they accepted or connected with me. I focused on them.

I took off the shield of feeling vulnerable, whether I gained weight or not, and I just dropped the focus on myself and focused on them. This was all different thoughts creating calmer emotions so that during the same

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

situation, same book club, I was now calm around the food and I did not overeat.

Huge win, and this is available to any pattern where you're overeating now. My understanding of what was happening gave me the opportunity to turn my thinking around and be compassionate with myself that I was having all these negative emotions and to look at other ways of thinking about my situation. Can you do that for yourself here?

The beauty is we don't even need to turn those thoughts around. I do intentionally engage differently, but it didn't have to have a turnaround for each one of those ugly thoughts. I really saw them as lies that my brain was offering. It served me in so many social situations going forward, I'll tell you. I do get nervous.

I'm very high energy, I'm very outgoing, but there is a part of me that when I'm with new people, I need to admit that I do have some level of discomfort. And when I do that and just kind of calm down, it really helps me. Could it help you to look at the thinking?

Now, your overeating isn't always going to be from such dramatic experiences. Those were my vivid recalls that I wanted to bring to you so that you could picture yours. But if you're experiencing patterns of overeating and just can't understand why, take some time to write down every emotion you're feeling. Make a list. Put it on a scrap piece of paper and write down every emotion you're feeling

And then in another column, ask why. Why are you feeling that way? Why are you feeling that particular emotion? And go through each one. It will give you so much insight. You're going to be able to name the thoughts and it will give you the power to turn those patterns around.

Okay, now overeating patterns are not always this dramatic and that's where the fog eating versus storm eating comes in. So these illustrations were clearly storm eating, but what I want - what about just snacking too

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

much? Eating in front of the TV, kind of eating chips whenever, just kind of walking through the kitchen and eating because food is there.

And that's just eating more than you intended. You're not hungry. That's fog eating. It's eating behind your own back. But same question, same insight, and the same opportunity to check out the thinking. And because it's less intense, you have an opportunity to catch yourself in the moment.

I call these plus two moments. I'm referring to the hunger scale of light fullness. These moments are when you know you're not hungry but you want a snack or you want to eat more while you're in the middle of a meal. They aren't highly emotionally charged, but your thoughts are creating moments where you're overeating on the regular. What do we do here?

The same thing. When you realize you're not hungry but want to eat more or want to eat, you've asked, am I hungry, no, but I still want to eat. I want to share with you my illustration. It comes from when I began producing this podcast a year ago.

For the first few months, when my podcast was due on Mondays, I was noticing something. It'll be early afternoon, I'd be just about ready to get my mic up and ready and I go, "Oh, I'm hungry," and I dash to the kitchen, get some crackers, and get something that was filling.

But I look back, my stomach kind of felt funny. I'm like, oh, wait a minute, didn't I just have lunch? Yeah, I took no time at all to ask if I was hungry and I wasn't. I was not really hungry. I had a bit of a nervous stomach so sometimes our emotions can create that. I just wanted to calm down.

Again, what was I feeling and why? So I started catching myself and I catch myself now in the moment. I was feeling anxious and nervous and distracted. But why? I was feeling nervous because I was thinking, what if I have to pay the late fee and I don't produce this one on time? So I would create nervousness. And I knew I needed to calm down so I could share the podcast with you in a good way.

[Weight Loss for CEOs](#) with Diana Murphy

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

Then I'd also be anxious. I was - these episodes are taking too long to put together, I have phone calls to make, I have things to do, I have coaching calls this afternoon, and I would just be anxious about the podcast.

Fascinating, right? So I'd go buffer, feel a little better and get to business.

Nothing had really gone wrong but I didn't feel good. I was not eating when I was feeling hungry and I wasn't choosing fuel most times. Just puffy crackers to fill my stomach. The last one was distracted, and I was. I really was instead of being in the moment, I had that thought, "I want to get other things done," and so I was just taking my mind off my game.

And now I really practice paying a lot of attention and getting really grounded before I record, and now on pretty much the regular, these are done before Monday. But these emotions did not feel good. They were distracting and not only - it made it longer to finish writing my podcast because I was always nervous. They made me want to eat.

They might make you want to get up from your desk and go talk with a neighbor. Buffering can come in all sorts of forms. Really, social media is our new classic buffer. Binge watching TV instead of getting work done. Any of those things, or just engaging with our family. Buffering comes in a lot of forms, and eating is just one of the fastest and quickest to feel better in the moment.

So getting to the bottom of my thinking in these moments has not only helped me to stop fog eating in the afternoon, but it has helped me to turn around my thinking when I produce the podcast. New thinking has brought more calm and less noshing in the afternoon. Seriously, I want to be more productive. Don't you as a business owner?

And getting to the bottom of these moments around food or any other buffering, what am I feeling now, and why, bottom line when you're eating in a way that you didn't intend to, always ask what am I or what was I

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

feeling. Even before you eat. What am I feeling? Am I really hungry? If the answer is no, ask what you're feeling and why.

Why do I feel blank? Keep asking like a little toddler why, why, until you come up with the thoughts that were at play in the moment. I promise you, if you have the courage to look at these moments and really write down the thoughts, you're going to laugh at what your brain offers you. And remember, they're just thoughts and we so often attach too deeply to not only our emotions but to those thoughts in the moment.

The more you practice this process, the quicker you can turn these around and disrupt the patterns you've been experiencing. And that's the work. The work is unwrapping the fact that you get fast food on the way home when you're on the way home for dinner, and you realize that you were just bored and you just needed to feel better.

Any of these moments that you want to stop overeating or stop eating altogether and wait until you have a healthy meal, these questions can help you. The more you practice, the better you'll be at it. You know, I have one more powerful tip to share with you that I was reminded of because I've done a little bit of overeating during this vacation.

So you might be asking, Diana, what do I do when I've overeaten and am about to start kicking myself for it? I'm totally aware that I overate. So I do the thought work, I understand why, but what now? How do I get back on track? This is the magic.

Wait until you're hungry again. Use the hunger scale and simply wait until you feel physical hunger. This, my friends, is where you build trust. Knowing that your body will eventually let you know when to eat fuel again. Make sure that you have a nice fuel meal planned but don't eat it until you're hungry next. Even take some time to look forward to it. This stops the way that we punish ourselves for overeating.

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

And you might even need to skip a meal or two. You might be surprised at how long it takes to get truly hungry again but it will feel so good to be eating in response to your true appetite and need for fuel. This, my friends, is the way to reset. This was what I did.

I had to employ it two or three times during my trip and then the next meal it was my favorite kale salad with shrimp on it or anything lean and green that I just was kind of craving. Kind of sick of that holiday food, and I would just wait until I got hungry again and honor it and eat a great meal. That is your trick. Wait until you're hungry again.

When you couple the mindful eating tools that I shared in episode 13 with this method of understanding your thoughts and emotions, you can completely shift the way you approach food and get off that diet, fail, overeat, diet again cycle. You can create a routine around food where you are overeating less often and eating in a way that your body absolutely loves more fuel and a little bit of joy. No storm. After some practice you'll be surprised you can nip those storm moments in the bud and you'll have very little fog eating.

I do have a quick sheet for you in addition to the basic questions of asking what am I feeling and why. I'm sure you'll remember those because I've repeated them so many times here, but don't forget them. Honor them. I've created a set of three simple steps to ask yourself to quickly get back on the path to mindful eating. They're in the show notes.

Check them out at dianamurphycoaching.com/CEO14 to find your resource guide. Happy New Year, my friends. Are you ready for a consult? I don't want you to be bashful. Is this the year? Is this the year you're going to learn how to treat your body just so beautifully that the weight does begin to come off but it also, you know, is the way to keep it off?

Check out the link to a consult session with me in the show notes. Again, dianamurphycoaching.com/CEO14. There'll be a link there that you can get

WLFCEO #14: Mindset Vol. 4: Why You Overeat and What to Do About It

right on my calendar for a consult. Find out what it would be like to transform your relationship with food and eat and live in a way that you most desire.

Thanks so much for listening. I love producing these for you, even when they create anxious and nervous thoughts and remember, it's not the podcast causing those emotions. It's my thoughts. Now I sit down and can't wait to talk to you now that I'm deeper into this year of podcasting with you. Thanks again for listening and I'll see you next week.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *Weight Loss for CEOs*. If you enjoyed this episode and want more, visit dianamurphycoaching.com for Diana's latest free coaching tools to get started losing weight without having to start a diet now.