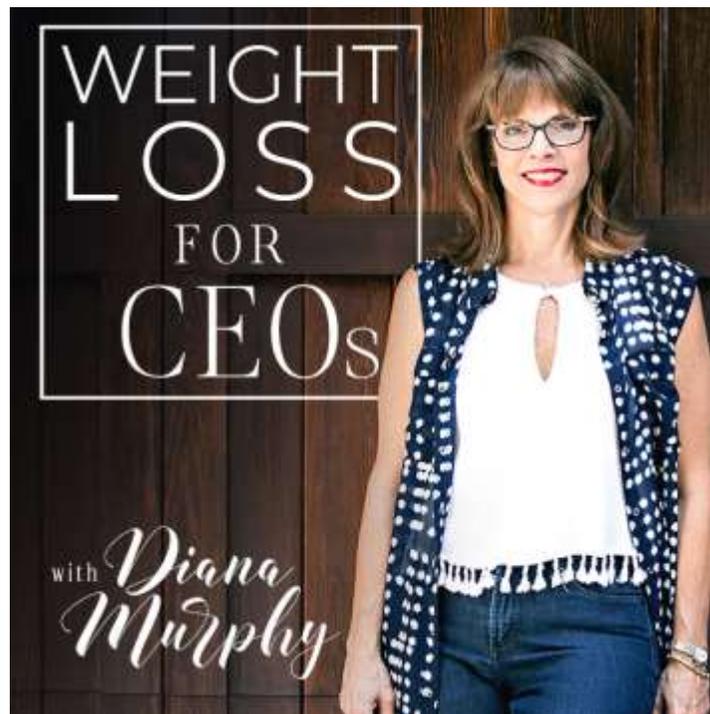


## Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Diana Murphy**

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

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

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.

One of the biggest challenges that we have when we're changing our behavior and our habits around food is when we're dining out, or even dining in someone else's home. So, my goal in today's podcast is to help you to feel more grounded, more confident, in any dining out scenario.

This was actually where most of my work was when I was learning to lose weight or learning to maintain weight; really changing my relationship with food. And I may say it a little too often, but it is so true; the struggle is real. We are social creatures and we're wired to want to be accepted, liked, and included, and not be seen as different.

And you might be thinking I'm talking about our early school days, talking about being liked and accepted and not being different. Nope, all of these emotional needs and desires, I think, crop up very strong when we're dining with other people and dining out in restaurants and we're working to lose weight.

So, I'm going to go straight at it today and help you to have some very simple hacks that can help you to be successful at eating what you want in any situation. The truth is, if we honor our fuel needs by eating when we're truly hungry and eat what is great fuel for us, there really isn't any discussion.

And I teach you how to do those things starting in episode one, two, and three in my series. But again, we're human. We operate with routine and patterns. So I think it serves us to talk about what's going on when we're dining out. It can bring up so much.

I'm going to cover when you dine out in a group, when you dine out when there's someone else in charge of the menu, like being at a banquet hall or being a guest in someone's home, and what to do when food is offered in a buffet.

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## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

So many of the solutions are the same, but I know that if you give yourself an opportunity as you listen to the podcast today, you can see what's going on for you in these situations. And my goal is that you can feel more empowered and shift any pattern that might be getting in your way. And there certainly are people out there that aren't affected by these scenarios, by dining out. My husband happens to be one of them. I just love him.

I notice this most when we dined out with friends. If he wasn't hungry, then most times, he just won't order anything. When he doesn't like the menu, he'll just wait until he can get something he likes to eat later or is more in line with his desired fuel.

And it can be awkward. I do remember friends of ours that didn't quite understand. They'd even sit down with us, "Are you going to eat tonight?" Like they were offended. And we dined with them often, but sometimes, my husband would have a shake after a workout and just would not be hungry when we had dinner at 6:30.

Then, of course, I'd be uncomfortable and almost pressure him because I saw how our friends were feeling uncomfortable. Wild, right? If food is to be enjoyed, if food is for fuel and energy, why all the drama? Dining and food experiences mean so much to so many people, and so many different things. There are so many beliefs.

Your dining friends will have beliefs, you will have beliefs, and your host will have beliefs about what should happen in that scenario, when you should do, what a person that's dieting should do, what a person that's trying to lose weight, what a healthy eater does. What's so fascinating is now, as a wellness coach, when I show up for events, they literally ask me to help choose the menu.

They're worried that they're going to order something that I think is, like, off the list. And, frankly, I really don't care. I want them to order what they like and what would be good for that day. Maybe they've been eating great all week and this is a treat, they're getting Fox BBQ. Like, no drama for me,

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

but it's interesting that they have beliefs around what should be served when the wellness coach shows up. I love it.

What is so important, as I share this episode today, is to stay grounded and make decisions around food in these scenarios and remember that the only important belief is the one that is your own, and to understand how your beliefs might be creating results you don't want, or creating beliefs that you do want to create the results that you want in your life; eating really healthy.

But again, this struggle is real in the small moments when we look at them. we can be kind, curious, and compassionate about how these dining challenges affect you. And don't judge how you respond like it's a contest. Like sticking to a diet is not some big win, or going off your diet when you dine out is not a big loss.

And diet is a four-letter word anyway, in my book. I use it sometimes – it kind of is the way we talk about losing weight, but it is not the way I like to talk about losing weight. Let's neutralize this even now with my first thought hack.

Now, I want you to borrow this and practice it if dining out gives you a little trouble. This is a new sentence that you can start believing right now. I am dining with others and I'm eating food. It seems very simple, right? But practicing neutral thinking creates neutral emotions. That just took all the drama out of it.

It's not like I'm going out to dinner with my boss, I'm afraid to eat my favorite steak at that restaurant because he's going to be concerned about what I eat. Most likely, he doesn't care. He's worried that his wife is going to ask him what he ate because they both agreed to do paleo this month or something.

Everybody has their own thoughts that they bring to these moments, and we have to dial it down for ourselves, neutralize our thinking so that we are not in these drama moments. So again, I'm dining out with others and I'm eating food. I'm going to remember this next time. I came up with it today.

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

We put so much pressure on ourselves in these moments that I think this is the first and most important step. This is why my husband has no drama. That's the way he sees food. He sees food like this; you eat food when you're hungry, you stop when you're full, and you eat what you want.

So he might be seen as a successfully coached person, but he never had to be coached. This just wasn't an issue in his life. The skill that you can develop is staying focused on honoring what you need and want as it relates to food and notice – and it might be unintentionally – notice that being swayed by what is going on around you, notice what is going on around you and notice how it makes you think or feel.

And for the purpose of this podcast, we're going to assume that the goal for you is to eat to your hunger scale and honor your fuel that you might want to put in your body, and that these scenarios are taking you off that goal. So, the baseline is that we all want to eat to the hunger scale, eat to plus two, but what is going on when we dine out? That is what we're going to talk about today.

Alright, dining out is a classic challenge for most of us. Your new tool that can simplify handling this challenge is to notice the energy. This is new. I'm not going to ask you to think about the thoughts. We can always talk about those in a conversation. But notice the energy. Notice yours, notice your friend's as you walk in, notice the server. There is definitely a rise in energy in most restaurants and dining experiences. I think this is for the server's benefit.

I think when we're celebrating and what are you going to have, we'll order more. And that serves them for sure. It's all on purpose and it's just part of the pleasure of dining out and being with friends. So, we can enjoy the pleasure of someone else preparing and serving us food. You can celebrate the occasion and the company at hand.

This is like walking into a dining situation if you're really concerned about how you'll behave or respond to the food choices, is to really just read the situation, kind of note how you're feeling, and just decide with intention that

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

you're going to enjoy the people at hand. I could go into all the different thoughts that commonly come up here, but it is so different for everyone that I do have a one size fits all approach here to move us straight to our desire, eating what we intended to, eating in a way that honors our desire to have a joy eat, if that's the case, or to eat fuel, to just eat to our own appetite.

So notice the energy of your friends. Notice how the waiter approaches you. Notice how you feel. Enjoy the pleasure of it, but really notice how it's making you feel. I know I feel pressure, like a push. I feel pressure to order. My expectation is to have fun. What is it for you?

What are you feeling in that moment? It always also feels fast to me and there are times I've ordered and don't even realize what I've ordered, like, what did I get? I don't know what I'm even going to look forward to coming. I've gone along with the crowds, and yeah, I'm going to have that double cheeseburger and fries like everybody else. And I just didn't even really take time to see and check in with what I wanted.

So notice how you're feeling, allow the emotion of it, and just stay present by asking two questions, am I hungry? Then order some food. And, what am I hungry for? Don't order or make a decision until you feel like you're in touch with your own body and what you want to do in that meal.

Seriously, this is power work and it really is just a centering and getting in the present moment. This is practicing mind work from Thomas Sterner. Then, make that decision, order, and then focus and invest in those around you. What is the purpose of the gathering? Are we celebrating a birthday? Are you just out because of work? Is it a group that's gathering?

Listen to everyone you're with. Join the conversation. Be present. But as you order, just remember to stop when it comes your turn, or pass if you're not ready and say come back to me. They can handle it. Am I hungry? And what am I hungry for?

Honor the answer that your body gives you in those questions. Now, when the food arrives, take a slow breath. This is what is so key for me. I usually

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

am pretty hungry when I dine out. I like to have a good appetite for fine dining, so I know of save up for it. I usually eat light food during the day when I'm going to go out to a special restaurant, and that's just so I can enjoy the food with all my senses and have a really healthy appetite.

But, remember, just go really slow and savor every bite. Don't make it a goal to just eat half of your meal or a certain portion. Just stay present. Your body will tell you when you're full. Stay present with yourself and your food.

Now, this is a key. If you're distracted by conversation, put your fork down. Either eat or listen. You might find you eat really slowly now when you're in groups of people. If you notice you're getting distracted, put the fork down. Stop when you're full. Ask gently during the entire meal, am I full?

Again, if you're distracted and you're new to doing this work, especially new to doing the hunger scale, put your fork down and wait until you've checked in again. If you're still hungry, certainly, continue to eat and enjoy your meal.

What gets most of us in these situations is the energy of the meal is lively and fast, and we also get distracted beautifully with all the conversation. But don't eat unless you're present and aware of your food. Notice its color, notice the aromas, notice the taste, enjoy it.

You know, this has been a particular challenge for me. I grew up celebrating around food. I always wanted to be included and part of the group, so I'd order just like everybody else did. And those events left me either rover-full or feeling not so great because of the fullness from eating something I really didn't want that was too heavy for me.

Now, I simply ground myself by slowing down and checking in with what my body really wants in that meal, in that moment. I might order two appetizers. I might order a salad. I might get the steak because I've been waiting all week for this treat. So I stay grounded in what I know is for me. I don't care what anybody else thinks. But this took some practice to get to this space.

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

Before we move on to when we're a guest at someone else's home or a guest at a large gathering, I want to cover the challenge of dining when there is a buffet. There's just two things to be aware of; your beliefs around buffet dining and your thought about wasting food.

One thing that I realized when I was a Weight Watchers leader and we discussed buffets as a group, the classic belief and energy around buffets was the money value. I never really understood this because celebrating food is always my gig, so I didn't understand that.

So, whether you're at a simple restaurant that offers a very good deal for their buffet – think the really cheap Las Vegas buffets to get you in their casinos – or the luxury brunch at the Ritz, I still feel like the energy can be the same. You know, you're trying to get that value, like eating all the shrimp or getting a very full plate and not worrying about loosening your belt because you're getting the best value for the buffet.

So, I want you to check in before you experience your next buffet and see what comes up for you. Many of these thoughts create the dynamic of overeating, but our awareness of them helps this overeating to be diminished because we're onto those unintentional thoughts.

So my help was hearing all these different thoughts about buffets when I was in that Weight Watchers meeting, and it really helped me understand that I did have a belief around buffets, and I have really tailored it for me. So here's my life hacks.

I used to just overeat at buffets because it's like, all the food. This permission to overeat, was really what my belief was. Alright, to life hacks are this; number one, check out the food, the entire line, before you even put a plate in your hand. Notice everything that is offered, then decide what you're going to go back for. Decide ahead of time before you go through that buffet and know what you're going to put on your plate.

What happens in buffet lines is we'll take a little bit of everything, and as we get to the back of the line, we realize our favorite chicken dish, that might

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

have been really amazing, or whatever there isn't room for – we've overfilled our plate by now with mac and cheese, so we eat that.

Visually survey what's out there. Ask, what is for me here? What do I want to be sure to put on my plate? So again, survey the entire buffet line, then get your plate and stick to what you decided. Take small portions of the items you want to enjoy. Fill your plate with that fuel.

I love the variety of buffets, but I've learned something else; buffets are a beautiful opportunity to change your mind on what you want to eat. You didn't order a chicken fillet and then decide, oh my god, the steak is amazing, and then change your order when you're in a menu type setting. But on a buffet, you can take a small bite of each and decide which one you want.

Leverage this – really enjoy buffet eating, but not in a way that causes overeating, but actually just creates an amazing experience. I did this at Christmas. I think there's five different meats that were offered, and I hadn't had lamb in a long time, and I just had a very small bite of every one and I went back for the one I really liked for a little additional portion. And I just left the dry turkey or whatever else on my plate. I wasted.

So, if what you choose just doesn't taste that great, stop. Eat what is worth it for you and go back for something else if you aren't full and there's something else to try. Again, survey, keep checking in, notice what you like, whatever's not worth it, leave it on your plate, and go get something else.

Now, for another mindset or thought check in, you're going to have to understand how you feel about wasting food. You can see here, I'm pretty comfortable at just leaving food on my plate, and I am. And that came with a little bit of practice, but I'm actually quite proud of it, because I don't want to be eating food that my body doesn't want.

I'm wasting food in the garbage can, not on my body. I don't try to intentionally take massive amounts of things and leave them, obviously, but it can feel a little awkward to not clean your plate. Check out the show

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

notes for my Waste Food Worksheet. It definitely was a big help to me when I was fine tuning my relationship with food.

And you can find this worksheet and all these prompting questions and life hacks at [dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo18](http://dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo18) – they're right there on my website on the podcast tab. I will also share the simple hacks that I'm sharing as we go along, but I really want you to sink in during this episode and really note what you know you can practice next time.

Last but not least, what do you do when someone else is cooking for you? I'm going to cover a more intimate dinner party as a hosted social event, and it will also cover when your meal is limited at an event. This is kind of the scenario, think of it, when someone else has decided what you're going to eat, so you're going to someone's house or you're going to a big banquet.

This is when you really don't have a choice of what you're eating. It can be a little tricky. But the key is not to walk into hosted events and planned events in that tricky powerless feeling, that victim mentality; feeling like all is lost because you can't have your food or eat what you intended. And I think, for so many of us, when we're working hard to lose weight and focused on our own appetite and new foods for us, we get really thrown off when we're in these scenarios. So that's why I'm covering it today.

You know, I just want to say, of course you can have what you most want to eat, you just might need to plan around it. We take our power back and decide how we want to navigate these scenarios by really deciding ahead of time. I want to give you an illustration. I was part of a small group that met weekly, and this was like for a whole season – actually, through a whole year.

This was when I was still learning to maintain my weight, and I really wasn't at peace with food yet. I was really worried about gaining the weight back. I actually would go to my weigh in right before so I could be more motivated. It's kind of a bad pressure point. And weighing at the end of the day isn't the best thing for my body either. It does not show accurate results.

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

So, frankly, this wasn't really working. But I did decide firmly on how I wanted to handle these small group dinners. You know, I save more of my joy eating for weekends and I did not want to be spending them also on Monday night.

The general theme on what everybody brought to this potluck was treat food; casseroles, gooey desserts, you get the drift. And I tried to fight it for a while by always bringing something, but I was doing more work and not enjoying letting somebody cook for me, and it was taking a lot out of the small group event and enjoying the people I was with.

So, I would go through the line, I would choose salad or veggies and a clean protein, if available. But if there wasn't, I just didn't get anything more. I gave myself permission to not eat there, and if I was still hungry when I went home, I'd have a small sandwich. And you know what – most times, I was just fine with some of the green beans and a salad. It's kind of sad how small an amount of food sometimes we really need, right?

So this is what I suggest; if you have an allergy or you suspect food options to be really limited, ask ahead of time. Know ahead of time what's being served so you can either eat beforehand. At bigger events, I just expect rubber chicken and mashed potatoes. And I eat the chicken and I hunt for the vegetables.

Sometimes, I'll even ask my neighbors, if I'm close friends with them, if they're not going to eat their vegetables, I'll have a double portion of vegetables and just skip the potatoes. But there are some events that give you a vegetarian option or post what's being served. This is all about paying more attention ahead of time, taking your power back, and navigate it by getting the info ahead of time, and even asking the host or hostess when you sign up for something or know the organizer of an event, ask if they offer a gluten free or dairy free or vegetarian option if that's what you need.

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

Just do a little planning ahead of time. Sometimes, it's just having the chutzpah to call ahead of time and know what's being offered. This is where it gets tricky for some of us.

If we're having a meal at someone's home, you know, it's a fine dining experience and somebody's cooking for me, or even going home to momma's cooking, we might feel a little awkward saying no. and we might feel a little awkward with, what I was saying, like asking ahead of time. But asking what's being served is just gathering information.

And if you do it in that kind of tone when you call, let the hostess know why, if there is an allergy then you'll at least know, and let them know you don't want them to change their menu at all, but you're just planning around it, so can you let me know what you're serving. And it's totally up to you whether you do this or not, but I have found this to be really helpful.

When I'm concerned that I'm going from event to event and I might be really hungry, then I'll remember to take a bar with me or I will eat ahead of time. I take my power back and do what I want to do around the food. So this is another tactic, and again, it's like the buffet.

From what's being served, I will put on my plate only what is my fuel. I might take a small taste of the macaroni and cheese or something else, but I will prepare that plate as if I was in my own home cooking my own dinner. I'll overfill it with veggies and salad, I'll be totally satisfied, skipping all those gooey casseroles if, in fact, that's not what I want. And that works for me.

I feel better when I eat lean and green and I just remind myself of that when I load up on those items. This is really honoring what you know is food for you. If the hostess says anything, just compliment her for the great evening and enjoy it.

And this is where we can be aware of pressure and get pressure from others. This is real. This is when momma says, why aren't you eating? Are you on another diet? And there can be drama around it, but I want to show you that most of the drama is in your own mind. You're not going to hurt

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

anybody's feelings by what you eat or don't eat. Just over-compliment them, be a gracious guest, don't worry.

I have another secret for you of what I do. This is kind of sneaky, but I love this. If there is a lot of pressure to enjoy everything on your plate, the hostess is so worried about how everybody is enjoying the food, she worked really hard and she lovingly prepared it for you, put it all on your plate and only eat what you want and let the rest get wasted.

For me, and for so many of my clients, they have these sweet Italian mommas or Jewish mommas – I'm only using those phrases to not be inappropriate, but we know what we mean when we say that. These are people that love us dearly and food is their love language. And sometimes, I just intentionally waste food.

I take a bit of everything. I honor them by putting that food on my plate. I might taste it and comment on it, but I still honor what I know is right for me, and this is power, people. There have been times where I will load my plate because people are watching me. And not because I feel uncomfortable. I really do it to honor the person that cooks so hard. And when they're not paying attention, I throw it in the trash. I literally have done that.

Now, you can judge me for this type of behavior, but I think it just calms everything down. It does for me. I honor the hostess and just there's no drama. Now, thin people don't think about this that often. I know I am not, or I was not, that person, but I find it pretty empowering to enter any situation honoring what I really want to be putting in my body, and not by making a fuss or making sure everybody else knows about it.

I was that person. When I was dieting and on Weight Watchers and working so hard, it's almost all I talked about. And I'm sure people really wanted to talk about something else. So I took that energy into those social occasions. And what I'm saying here is, drop the drama on your plate, honor what you know you really want, and let the rest just go to the side.

But I took my power back and checking in with what my body really wants in that meal, honoring the hunger scale and stopping when I wanted to, is a

## **Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks**

way that you build trust and not feeling like a victim when there's different foods around.

Alright, I've gone on too long, I think. So I think the drama we create can be from seeing these events like winning or losing the diet challenge. For me, I know it's all, am I going to be successful dining out and follow my points? I was ad nauseam where I was thinking about it way too much, and I was worrying too much of what others thought.

I've got to share this story. It simply shows us what our tricky minds can do and trip us up as a natural way of feeding ourselves. I was coaching a young college grad early in my coaching and this gal just wanted some support, and she was talking about when she was dining out with friends.

Do you know what was happening for these women – and mostly in her head, but I think it was a culture that they'd built with this group of friends – when they dined out, it was understood that you always finished everything on your plate because you didn't want to be that one holding out and dieting when the whole goal of the meal was basically to overeat and enjoy everything.

What? I asked her what would happen if she had stopped at plus two. Now, this could all be in her mind, but I actually want to give her some credence, as it was her thought, but she said that others would notice and think that she's dieting and kind of almost bailing on them, like being a disloyal friend because she wasn't there enjoying and overeating like everybody else was.

Can you see that a lot of this was in her mind? But I don't think many would have noticed if she had left food on her plate. I really don't. But her thought had her convinced that they would. But I also bet that there was some truth there that this culture, in this group of girls, that they had created that dining out was for eating whatever they wanted and not dieting and not constricting, it just created overeating.

And they didn't need to do it that way, but they didn't know that their brains had gotten into a really sneaky pattern. So watch for when you feel that pressure. The pressure is real, but once again, it comes from a thought that

## Ep #18: Mindset Vol. 8: Dining Out Weight Loss Hacks

is creating that pressure to eat. And it all is solved by slowing down, checking in with the hunger scale often, and really gauge what you are truly hungry for fuel-wise and honor it.

There is nothing more empowering than honoring our body's true needs. If you practice it here, you will stay in that rhythm of your own appetite and fuel and not need to go on another restrictive diet again.

Again, use these life hacks, ask the questions. I think you can really boil it down to notice the energy in the room, of the table, in your own body. Slow down. Ask, am I hungry? And as you order, what am I really hungry for? And then, when you're dining, the best life hack ever if you're distracted and not focused on your food, put your fork down and only eat when you are checking in with how full you are and how much you're enjoying that food.

That, my friends, you can take wherever you go. I hope you had a good time on the podcast today. I hope you pictured a lot of dining scenarios that help you to know what questions you need to ask. And if you have any questions, always shoot me an email, [diana@dianamurphycoaching.com](mailto:diana@dianamurphycoaching.com).

Alright, I'll see you next week. And remember, in the show notes, [www.dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo18](http://www.dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo18) - can you believe it, 18 episodes in on my new podcast – how that will be, every life hack you need, and the worksheet for wasting food. Have a great day.

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