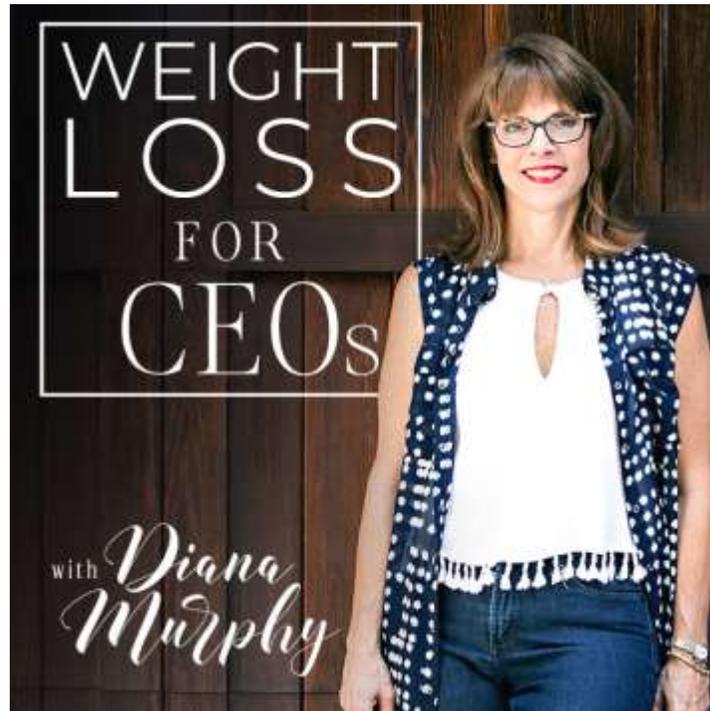


## Ep #21: Stop Failing by Remaining Neutral



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Diana Murphy**

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

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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.

Hello. We have survived yet another Super Bowl weekend. You know, I'm recording ahead of time, so you might be thinking, "The Super Bowl was three weeks ago, Diana." But I just want to say, Atlanta put on quite a show with its stadium. I'm so proud of our volunteers and the way that we offered southern hospitality to a team that broke our heart two years ago. Yep, that is true hospitality, my friends. I still hate them.

The topic I want to cover today is around our specific thoughts around food and exercise and the way that we think about ourselves around food. What if food was neutral, not good or bad? What if exercise choices were neutral? What if you weren't being good or having a bad day around food or anything wellness? What if there was no, "On the wagon..." or, "Off the wagon?" What if there was nothing to fall off of, right?

Adding this emotional sting to our behavior with the words we use around food is causing unnecessary harm, for sure. I don't want to give away the punch line here, but what we're left with if we drop those words is calm; a calm emotional state creating much better results.

I'm going to play around today and help you to break your brain a little. Well, that's what I call it when someone offers a new way of thinking that I'd not thought of before, when we look at someone else, like a puppy, and twist our head, "What did you just say?" I have been experiencing this quite a few times recently with my coach, Stacey. It's so good.

Where I'm working on it in my life is around money, around money being neutral. Wait a minute, but money brings me peace, money gives me freedom, money is amazing. Oh, wait, but I'm also scared I won't have enough money. I'm worried I'll miss a bill. I'm worried I won't have enough. Oh, I have work to do because if I thought, to the marrow of my being, that money was neutral – because it really is, it's just a circumstance – all the

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thoughts around money are different. It might just change how I make decisions in my life and my business if I thought of money being more neutral. I'll keep you posted.

Why do I bring up money when we're talking about food or exercise? I could have used politics or any other subject. I wanted to use a topic to help illustrate something that, for most of us, has a lot of emotional energy because we have a lot of thoughts, and we think those thoughts are true.

I definitely have drama thoughts around money, but my thoughts around food and my food choices, exercise routines, they are all pretty darn neutral. This did not happen overnight. The intensity and the drama for me is gone. And how does that serve me? How would it serve you?

I know that I can stay curious, intentional, and not so perfect all the time, and create beautiful lasting results of maintaining my weight and taking really good care of myself if I think neutrally about all of the things. And it does not have to be perfect. Isn't that good news?

But I do have to watch where I judge myself around all of the things food and exercise and self-care, because I have learned that judgment is not helpful. Judgment disrupts any ability for you and I to stay curious, to make change, or to make choices that truly serve us.

And what is this was true for you? What if you could become more neutral around the way you take care of yourself around food, the way you make decisions with food, the way you see yourself because of how you eat drink and workout? Why is this important? Because, if you can recognize and then manage thoughts that don't serve you in an important area of your life, like self-care and health, you can manage your thoughts around anything. That's what I've been learning.

For many of us, how we do one thing is how we do many things. So, if you've been struggling with losing weight and keeping it off, then most likely, you have quite a few thoughts that are pretty strong about how you should be eating, what foods are good, which ones are bad, and what type of exercise plan will help you to lose weight. Let's dig in a little more.

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If a food is bad, has too many calories, too many points, how do you treat it? It's like it's a hot potato. We avoid it, we hide it, we keep it out of the house. Of course, when Weight Watchers developed their plan, behavioral modification was part of their intention. So foods that are more calorie-dense, more high-fat, are going to be more points. We think twice before we eat it. We do this with calories as well. Even with the studies that we hear on the internet, "Oh, that's bad for you..." and we don't even know why sometimes.

But we put food in a category many times when we're making efforts to lose weight. It's deeply cultural, so it's even quite American to think this way. So, no judgment if this is happening for you, I just want to help you be aware of those areas where you are judging food and your relationship with food in a negative manner.

In essence, what I want you to see is that you're giving the food power. And when you do that, you take the power out of your own hands. But what if food was neutral? Unless you have a deathly allergy to something like peanuts, food is neutral. It cannot do you harm if you have a bite of it. it isn't ill behaved. It has no power.

But, when you label a food as bad and then you eat it, what happens? Then you feel bad, discouraged, guilty, or upset with yourself. You simply have had a dessert that you hadn't planned on and then you basically freak out and start judging yourself because you did something bad. And if you're an emotional or stress-eater in any shape or form – I think we can all raise our hands here because that's human – then you are likely, correct me if I'm wrong, to give up and eat whatever the heck you want when this has happened.

This dynamic extends the overeating, for sure. But how can you get more neutral? First, start with the awareness of all the words you use around food. Watch every way you talk about food. Get really curious. Even write out your good and bad food lists. Notice how many are on that bad list and how you feel when you eat them. And I want you to just cross out bad. Those are neutral. They're just foods.

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Just look at what you have there. Notice how you feel about eating anything on the bad list. Just watch the next time you decide to have something on this, quote en quote, bad list. How do you react? Get really curious.

Another way to notice the emotional impact on the way you label or think about food is your should statements, “I shouldn’t be eating that. I should eat more of a particular food. I should drink water. I shouldn’t have done that.”

Now, I’m all about eating a lot of lean and green food, lots of fruits and vegetables. But when we should ourselves around food, any of them, we cause resistance. So it even prevents us from eating the good ones because then you can end up using all of this energy somewhat fighting in your own mind about what you should and shouldn’t eat. You literally are wearing yourself down over your food decisions, right?

This, my friends, is where we wear out our own willpower, by battling ourselves over the food choices that we’ve made, and this has got to stop. Well, I could just tell you to stop it, but that’s not how it works, right? Understanding and giving yourself a little compassion here, like I am today, understand that you created the, “I should or shouldn’t...” and that all of that came out of a real desire to make some good health decisions.

I just want you to notice, when you eat what you shouldn’t, how that creates disappointment and discouragement, and it is not giving you motivation for the day around anything that you’re intending. So, the first step is always to notice your judgments and should statements around food, the good, the bad, really be aware, and then interrupt them.

I have a couple of ideas of what to offer in your thinking when you notice. One thought is, it’s just food. Another is just taking a deep breath and saying, “So what?” This isn’t throw your hands up, so what, what the hell thinking. This is, like, “Oh, so what, I ate a bite of a cookie?” Girl, stop it. Guy, stop it.

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This is, “So what, what is the big deal? It was just a cookie.” This is the step of interrupting the critical thoughts you’re having with yourself around food. Now, once you’ve noticed that, lean into a productive way of thinking. This is when you can simply start asking some better questions. And I use them all the time in my work.

Am I hungry? Decide ahead of time to only eat when you ‘re hungry. So when the cookie is offered, you ask the question calmly, am I hungry? And you’re like, nope. Then, another is, does this food work for me? Do you love what that food does for you, good energy, et cetera, fuel; is it fuel? And then the last one, do I really want this item?

Do honoring your intentions, if your intention was no sugar no flour, especially like during the week, do I really want this? It won’t feel comfortable saying no to the foods that you want, especially in that moment. What you’re choosing not to have is to help you to reach your health goals. And there might be a little drama and discussion in your mind, but as you choose over and over from a space of honoring your intentions, instead of a place of judgment – you shouldn’t eat that – you know, we’re like a two-year-old, “Nope, I’m going to have it anyway.” And here, we have just really dishonored our original intentions.

But, when we ask that question, do I really want this, and we decide no, that decision will get easier and easier, I promise. So, asking some better questions in the moment – am I really hungry, does this food work for me, do I really want this item – that gives you the pause and the power to decide what you most want every single time.

If you want to dig in deeper to the powerful tools around food decisions, check out my episodes one through four. These are steps one through four. They’re very much the core of how to lose weight for good. And the first step always is mindset. It’s taking the battle out of weight loss. So, if you’ve not listened to those before, go back and start with those if this is getting your attention.

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Remember, awareness is the most powerful step. I just don't think we realize that we're getting into self-critical mindsets around food, just like I wasn't seeing that I was having such drama around money. And when we begin to manage our mindset of judgment and being self-critical, we open ourselves up to creative ways to move forward with our weight loss and exercise goals.

You know, when we're in a more positive mindset, even just calmer, even that neutral, our brain comes up with great ideas. Where else do I see this pattern? When you design your workout plans, when you have a belief that a certain type of workout or certain number of days is ideal, and then you happen on a week where you can't honor that many workouts, you're creating a disappointment that creates an avoidance of the gym instead of working it in when you can.

Of course, when you are first wanting to lose weight or honoring New Year's resolutions, you have a lot of motivation and energy to get to the gym. You feel great. You're getting in that ideal workout that you've set up as an expectation in your mind and you're sure to lose weight, you're rocking it. But even using all of this positive energy around your workout decisions can set you up for failure, because what happens on that week that you can't get there four times and you didn't run all week because you were sick or traveling?

This is creating the on the wagon or "I'm doing great," or the off the wagon, "I'm a total failure," mentality. Like, there's been this big failure just because you worked out three times instead of four. Do you see it? You worked out three times. A month ago, you weren't working out at all. This can create a movement into or kind of an engagement in a mindset that goes on without our permission.

And it sounds like this; if I'm not successful with this, working out four times, my program, or if I'm not successful following the diet perfectly, why even try? We're too busy to get to the gym. Most of us just give up. And because we hate that feeling of failure, not doing it right, we're not avoiding

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the gym because we don't want to go to the gym. We really do, right, but we create this, "I don't want to fail so I'm just giving up."

What if it was just neutral that you worked out? It's good for you. You're doing something that works. You'll work it in when you can. But there isn't this high big bar that you set around your expectations. Consistency around all choices, food and exercise, comes from reducing the emotional judgment we have on those activities.

This is the magic sauce. And I know that people have told you over and over that consistency is the way, and that's where becoming neutral in your thinking is the way to that consistency. That is the magic sauce here. Let me close by using another illustration.

Our culture talks about being on the diet wagon or being off of it all the time, and there are more sophisticated ways or words to use around it, like, "I'm staying on plan. I'm eating healthy." Again, it's so great to be putting energy into eating healthy and moving our bodies more, but what happens when you fall off? What do you say to yourself when you fall off your plan?

Most of us, especially leaders that I work with, are extremely critical of themselves and they stop putting energy into taking care of themselves around food altogether. And this is where there is another way. What if your behavior was neutral? What if you can't fail at eating or exercising in a good way?

See, I even used a good word there; what if you can't fail at eating and exercising? Don't you see how that even sounds more neutral? What would it feel like to take your power back and stop judging yourself around all of these choices?

I want to close this episode with some very practical how-tos. First, notice all the judgment, but start creating a mindset that works for you. It's very personal how our thoughts create our best results. It's very individual. But you can start right here with some thoughts that I'm going to offer you.

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You may have better ones, but here's some to try. Watch when you think this way if you're more neutral or you're more emotionally charged when you think them. This is where I think beige might be a new really great color. And if you know me, I love bright. So this is where beige might really work out for me.

As you're learning to eat more to your appetite with the hunger scale, you could start thinking, "I'm learning to eat to my appetite. I'm learning what works for me." See how neutral that sounds. It's so calming. As you're tweaking and learning about what foods work for you, you could be thinking, "I'm learning what foods are my fuel. I'm learning what works."

And if your goal is to be moving more and you're committed to moving more times during the week, this could be, "I'm going to choose two activities I want to do and one that is new. I'm going to try something new. I'm working on this." or around exercise, if you're not moving at all, I think even one thought is, "I'm going to do this for just 15 minutes a day." Start with small bites.

Leaning into a new mindset that creates calmer emotions is your key to stopping that yoyo behavior. The good week, the bad week, the awful day, the good day, the off the wagon, the on the wagon need to be thrown out the window so that you can calmly yet powerfully honor all of your great intentions around wellness and health.

I know this is so core to my story. I haven't really even seen it as clearly now as I have in the last few weeks that I have actually noticed that I have been a yoyo business builder. And now I'm unlocking it because I know I've had so much success around no longer being a yoyo dieter.

I know that the way that you're thinking around food is having a deeper impact than just around becoming successful at keeping the weight off, of really being well, keeping great care of your health. Do you want more mindset help? Have you loved the podcast but would just love some personal attention? Click the show notes for a consult.

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I'll help you to identify some sneaky ways your thoughts are getting in your way so you can move forward with your goals. Just check out the consult link in the show notes, [dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo21](http://dianamurphycoaching.com/ceo21) – have a great day.

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