

Ep #22: The Power of Celebration and Play



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With Your Host

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.

Well, today, we're going to have a little fun because today is my birthday, and it's a big one. Well, I'm recording ahead of time, but when you get this episode, I will be celebrating one of those decade birthdays. Boy, do those feel like they're coming too fast. But wow, what a year and what an amazing decade I've had.

I am really a success story about how to handle empty nest life for sure, and I'm so proud of that. We all have so much to celebrate, and that's what I'm going to touch on today. In today's podcast, I'm going to have a little fun with you today. My intention during this podcast is to celebrate with you and share with you the value of celebration.

And maybe you've got this down, but as much as I'm a cheerful person, when I set goals and intentions in my life and start, and start a new business, by the way, I dig in. I put my nose to the grindstone and I get pretty serious. And I'm not afraid of working long hours. I probably think about work way too much.

So, when I was being coached in my early days, basically by my best friend, Mary Ellen, I was seeing where I was holding out celebrating until I've done something really big. Now, there's nothing wrong with celebrating the big milestones. Oh, do celebrate the big stuff. But also celebrate your small wins and put intentional breaks of play into your day. Actually, I think I just created a new 30-day challenge for me because as I'm writing this episode and I'm telling you all about the importance of celebrating and taking breaks of play, I think the reason it came up as an idea for a podcast is, I really needed to.

Anyway, learning to celebrate your small wins along with the big ones is key to so many things. In fact, without it, I think it's difficult to stay motivated

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and it's hard to tap into our vision as business owners, and our results show for it.

If you've stalled in any area of your life, you might look at this and see what I'm saying. I think we drain ourselves with all that drive and seriousness if we don't stop, and not only give ourselves mental breaks, but celebrate small wins along the way. We might not only reach the goals we've set, but we might just be missing the point of enjoying the process along the way.

So, these concepts are really intertwined. I'm going to talk about celebrating and how impactful that can be when it is related to a small win or a big goal, and I'm going to talk about the value of play for play's sake. This is one of the reasons I think people in my season of life enjoy grandchildren so much. They have no option.

When they're hanging around and taking care of those amazing little people, how can you not enjoy play? It's so important. But you do not have to have a grandchild to practice this, right? It's like having the excuse to go to a really good Pixar movie you feel like you have to take a child with you; you don't. Think about that analogy as I'm sharing this with you today.

I'm going to start with a quick story to show you what I mean around this concept of play and celebration and really enjoying what you're doing, whatever your big goals are, enjoying it along the way. When I attended my coach school's yearly mastermind last summer, I started to really listen and pay attention to the coaches that were loving, growing, and thriving in their businesses. And, frankly, they were all making different levels of money and doing it in as many different ways as there are people and coaches.

But there was a bottom line. When they stepped into big growth, it made them want to throw up. They had to learn to let fear ride shotgun and not put fear in the driver's seat. But, when they kept taking steps, kept failing, then tweaking, then kept moving forward, they started enjoying the journey before they even hit their goals.

They all realized at that point that the results were inevitable because they were believing in themselves and enjoying and celebrating life along the

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way, enjoying the process. It's the practice of being present, even when you've set out to do something very new in your life, like losing weight for good and losing it for the first time ever in a peaceful, powerful way. There's such a good analogy here.

You know, when I was writing this podcast, I got a little emotional when I realized that in this moment, looking back at what I've accomplished this year, I'm realizing how powerful enjoying the journey is, and not just enjoying the end results. And I can see my mind switching into that mode.

Can you see how this applies to changing your behavior around food and wellness? Imagine, if you can enjoy the journey of eating to your appetite, leaning in and learning what foods work for you, enjoying the process of moving more, making it playful and becoming a brilliant manager of your own mind, almost laughing at the thoughts your brain brings up, and realizing, when you lean in, get present, enjoy the journey itself, that the result of losing whatever amount of pounds you want is absolutely inevitable.

So, what gets in the way? Why don't we do this all the time? Why don't we stop and celebrate the small wins? Why don't we just take off time to play? I think there's two mindsets or two beliefs that really are classic and get in the way. I see it all the time and I see it really clearly in my own life.

The first one is, you won't be happy until you reach that goal, basically. It's leaning in and thinking that the goal is going to make you happy. And the next being self-judgment, being so self-critical until you reach that goal. Like, you think that being really critical and being hard on yourself is what is helping you get that goal; not true.

They are mindsets, both of these. They are beliefs that you're thinking over and over and they're getting in the way of enjoying your life. And what's the solution? Mindset work, for sure, but what is so powerful about the power of celebration and play is that it can fuel you to get you there faster.

When you stop taking yourself so seriously, you can actually create beautiful ideas and solutions when you let that brain, that beautiful,

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powerful, efficient brain take a break, and you can begin to teach yourself that you're winning way more often than you're losing.

Now, you know I'm all about understanding and changing beliefs in your life that are not getting the results that you want, but I want to show you the power of play and celebration today. I want to show you how celebrating along the way and putting play back into your life might even be more effective than pushing hard to change your beliefs, because play and celebration act as a powerful reset.

Alright, so first, let's discuss this belief or mindset that you won't be happy until you reach that goal, like that feeling of being hard on yourself until... And what does this look like? It's really not being satisfied or happy until the weight is lost. It can be tricky. It might be showing up that you can't be easy on yourself or you need to push yourself, or it is really hard for you to let off the gas and take time away from your business, working hard, or on that weight loss work, until...

This is basically a punishment. You can't be satisfied, happy, or content until you do this one thing; losing 30 pounds or hit a certain financial goal, run a half marathon. This is like putting yourself into a discouragement prison. And how do you react when you're discouraged? And you feel locked in on that, like nothing is ever going to be right until this certain goal is reached, and it's just a lie our brain's offering us.

It thinks it's being helpful, but when we create discouragement with the way we're thinking, we slow ourselves down. I even feel it – don't you – talking about discouragement, how heavy that feels. What's the way out? By starting to create happy moments because you're an amazing human. That can be the only reason you need. You work hard and you get to play.

You don't need to earn it; it's just that play for play's sake. What might this look like? It might look like blocking out time Fridays for lunch out, carving out time for you to enjoy your favorite hobby, scheduling that golf game. When is this the most powerful? You're going to be surprised; when you're in the middle of the busiest week of your life.

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And once you taste this little break of play, you're going to realize how incredible it is. Your brain will resist it for sure, but also, if you do it, it will reset. You will think it will be too risky to take the time off. But, you know what's beautifully amazing? These brain breaks help us to be more productive. But don't do it for that reason.

Break your brain's taskmaster focus and play. Hang out with yourself, with friends, with family, and do something just out of the box, just because. It's so liberating. I learned this and I'm still learning this. It's really something that I think is really important.

A couple of years ago, I planned a fun Friday event with some friends. It was also with my friend Mary Ellen. We're both coaches. I almost canceled it that morning because I had too much to do and I knew my husband was depending on me getting a tax form done that day, and I promised him, but I had this event.

Well, because other people were coming – not because I was taking care of myself well, I learned that that day – I went. Well, we had the most amazing experience at the civil rights museum. We basically planned our own tourist day in our own town. We then walked into an amazing lunch at Aviva by Kameel. This business owner shows up, shares free food, and created the most amazing dining experience I have really ever had.

And this is, like, just a place to stop by for lunch. But when Kameel realizes that you have never been there before, he treats you like a queen, and that's what he did that day.

Next, our next plan was to go ride a Ferris wheel. We have a Ferris wheel here in Atlanta and I had a free ticket and I was dying to use it up. We were like kids, and lining up for the Ferris wheel, there wasn't really a line. We got on, and guess what – we figure out in that moment that one of the group was terrified of heights.

So we're giggling and laughing and helping her to enjoy that day. I'll never forget looking across and watching Mary Ellen talk to her. She started sharing just this story and distracting her, and before we knew it, we're

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looking at this amazing view of Atlanta and she gets off this Ferris wheel and realized what she did for herself.

That was an amazing day because we really just acted like kids and tourists and just enjoyed what we wanted to enjoy. And you know what happened? I came home and within 20 minutes, I finished that tax form that probably would have taken two hours if I had stayed home that day. And I was home and ready to enjoy the rest of my weekend.

You know, I've caught myself here, I'm not planning enough of those, for sure. And then the next 90 days, I'm going to be sure to plan two fun Friday events and anyone in Atlanta is welcome to tag along.

Another belief that prevents us from celebrating and slows us down from reaching our potential is being in self-judgment that you are not good enough until you hit that goal. It sounds similar to the other one, but it's not.

It looks like this; no matter what progress you're making, your brain is always telling you it's not enough. The brain loves pattern and if we're thinking in this way, no matter how many great ways we're taking care of our physical health, we hear, in our mind, "It's not working. You didn't lose weight. You're not even doing it right."

And what is really sad, this mindset can be so strong that even when you have positive results, you still feel like it's a fluke, "No, you're doing it wrong. I know you lost two pounds, but nope, you are not going to make it." What? This is cruel. But this is our brain just staying in a safe pattern, protecting us from harm – I'm air-quoting harm – and it can happen around any financial goal or weight loss goal. If you're really working hard to get fit or want to hit a training goal of being at a certain strength level or running a certain amount of miles, the brain is powerful, my friends, but it needs management. Do you see that here?

And what we can do here is beautifully and powerfully interrupt that, give the brain some new memories and emotions along the way. And you do this by celebrating small wins.

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I want to give you some ideas. You can celebrate each pound lost by counting safety pins or marbles. Make a jar, or put a large safety pin on your bulletin board and put a little safety pin in there every time you lose another pound. Or you can celebrate consistent wins at the gym by buying a new outfit when you have four weeks of three times a week consistency.

Now, that's kind of a big goal, but if you're on a year-long journey, I want you to be stopping along the way and realizing that you are doing the work. Even smaller, make a list of small things you love to do; read a book, take a walk, hang out with your dog, take time for a hobby, talk with a friend from out of town, eat out for lunch on Fridays. And when you hit your daily challenge of working out or whatever it is, whatever your daily challenge is, pick something off that list to celebrate.

Why do I recommend you do this? Because your brain will remember how fun it is to celebrate and it will want to do that activity again because it knows that you might celebrate again. This is a powerful and beautiful way to get yourself moving again if you've been away from exercise. In fact, I prescribe it often.

It might sound good to you now, but I know you might be resisting. And that's your brain just saying, once again, it's not good enough until it's done. It's time to ignore that and practice something new. Basically, we're talking truly about interrupting our thought patterns and doing some brain training.

Pure mental breaks are powerful. It actually helps your concentration. And creative companies have games in their hallways for a reason. Let's learn from them. And celebrating small wins makes us want to do it again. This is all about creating the desire to do the new habit, to create momentum along the way.

I love how this has worked in my life in some small ways and some big ways. Let me know what you're going to do. I'd love to share the journey with you. I want to let you know about something kind of new. I've done this

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off and on, but I'm making a commitment to be on Facebook Live every Tuesday morning at 9, Eastern. Join me there. Watch the replay.

I'll be there to answer questions about the podcast. And I love doing it the day after, first, to remind you that there's a new podcast this week, but also to be there with you live to celebrate what's coming up for you. I'm going to share what I'm learning, what my clients are learning, around each podcast subject. So, get on my business page and pop in there. If you "Like" my business page on Facebook, then it will notify you in your feed that I'm live.

Alright, I know for sure that I need more fun in my life, and in fact, I am setting March as a 30-day challenge of taking a play break every day, and I'm setting aside those two fun Fridays. Again, if you're in Atlanta or if you're on my list, you will be invited to those.

Alright, I want to share with you one final celebration story, and it really is about play or doing something for no reason, and also just learning to celebrate you because you're an amazing human. It was one of the most fun birthday parties ever. A couple of years ago, I had this burning desire to have a big bash for my birthday.

My husband isn't really a big party kind of guy, but he was all for whatever I wanted to do. I gave myself my own birthday party. It was so much fun. I had over 50 women here from all the different areas of my life and we had the best time. The point is, don't wait. Don't wait to celebrate your steps along the way.

This life of a business owner is not for the faint of heart. Be your own best team player. And also, don't ever wait for someone to give you a party. If you want one, give yourself one. Go all in. If your spouse or your friends want to do it for you, let them know what you'd like and give them your guest list.

Stepping in and celebrating ourselves in this way busts any ability to judge ourselves. It is a life-giving pat on the back that we can give ourselves anytime we want. And, being my birthday today, I highly recommend it. I'll see you on social media. I'll share with you whether it was one of those

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quiet birthdays or one of those big celebration birthdays, but I am learning over and over how critical it is to take time to just play for play's sake and to celebrate those small wins along the way, and I love sharing them with you. Have a great day 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.