

3. How to Heal Your Relationship with Yourself



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dara Tomasson

3. How to Heal Your Relationship with Yourself

Do you feel like you've been sold a bill of goods throughout your life? Do any of these resonate with you? In order to be happy, you must wear a certain size of clothing, and the number on the scale needs to be whatever that is, look a specific way, your hair, your makeup, and don't forget those eyelashes. What about your house or your car? The number of kids? Your career achievements, or number of vacations or exotic vacations? Even the number of quilts you've produced, your size or stash, or the amount you accomplish through the day, do they dictate how much happiness you allow yourself to have? Have you been nodding your head as I went down the list? You are not alone.

In this week's podcast, I'm going to help you figure out why this problem exists, fill you in on why it's not your fault you've been struggling with it. I'm going to unwind the clock so you can see what's been really in play. I will then share an alternative solution that will have you feeling happier even before the episode is over. What are the existing tapes that are constantly playing in your head? We are going to press pause on unhappy and press play on how to have a happier life. You ready? Let's go.

Did you know you could lose weight and keep it off for good? After 25 years of hiding behind my quilts, I have finally cracked the code for permanent weight loss and I've lost 50 pounds without exercise or counting calories. I'm Dara Tomasson, professional quilter turned weight and life coach, where I help quilters just like you create a life they love by losing weight and keeping it off for good. Let's jump into today's episode.

Here's the problem. We are constantly bombarded with ads. They are everywhere. The purpose of ads are to make us associate happiness with buying stuff, AKA, consumerism. We see advertisements showing us what happiness should look like. Can you think of the most recent ad you've seen? Did it have a small house on a crowded street? After doing some Google searches and reading several studies, they all concluded that advertisements break down our self-esteem. Self-esteem is always our thoughts about ourselves. For example, I must not be as good as I should because I don't wear those types of clothes with that size of body, with that

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type of house, or definitely not that beautiful sewing space, so I fall short. I cannot be happy. You might not relate to all of these thoughts, but I feel pretty safe in knowing that you can relate to many of those.

So back to the advertiser's job. They break down all the good and happy thoughts we have about ourselves. So what they do is they create a problem for us. The problem is we aren't good enough and then present us with the solution, buy a bunch of stuff in order to be happy. So now happiness is no longer available within us. We are now conditioned to believe that we are not able to be responsible for our own happiness and we must go outside of ourselves to achieve it. This dilemma has even more of an impact on us because consumerism i.e., having an external item or action is now the only way to create an internal emotion, such as happiness, joy, calm, commitment. So the message we have been given and sent repeatedly over and over is that happiness or any positive emotion is to be bought.

Many of us have an internal dialogue of I'm not good enough. So when the advertisements feed that belief, we now feel like it's true. Whatever we feed grows. So if we continue to feed that story of I'm not good enough with all this shame associated, that story just, you guessed it, grows and grows. So see how it's such a problem. Don't worry, I'm here to help.

Let's take the message from advertisers of you're not pretty. This, of course, is implied because all the pictures that they show are of men and women with very specific qualities: symmetrical faces, thin bodies, no cellulite, or few wrinkles, if any. So if we have anything different than what's shown, then we feel like the only way to solve the problem is to buy what they're selling. So what happens? We end up with drawers full of creams, makeup, hair products, closets with name-brand clothes we might not even like, and then there's the overflowing shoes and accessories.

Now for us quilters, if we have given up on having that perfect body, we may turn our focus on to sewing machines, fabric, block of the months, tools and yeah, even more fabric. Again, the same principle applies. We

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aren't able to be happy on our own i.e., it's not available inside of us, so we must turn to an external source to create that joy.

Advertisers condition us to not trust our ability to be happy on our own. Diets are very similar. Diets tell us what to do, how to do it, when to do it. They don't teach us to trust our bodies. We no longer trust ourselves to be happy. We don't have the ability to generate our own thoughts or emotions independently. We are at the mercy of specific external conditions to happen in order for us to believe we can be happy. Do you see how this dependency on external factors has created such an unhappiness for us? We have now created a conditional love relationship with ourselves and our lives. So here we go, you're waiting for it, the solution. The solution is to stop the conditional relationship and rebuild the unconditional love we had with ourselves before.

Let's talk about when we were kids, or when's the last time you hung out with a kid. Did they talk about their thighs? Were they complaining about their belly? Were they nitpicking about how many calories they were eating, or when they were full they just turned around and kept walking? So even as children, we see when they are learning to eat, they just know when they're full and they just turn their head. And as kids, we lost our ability, we didn't learn to trust ourselves around food. So we had the, "You've got to clean up your plate," and "There's starving children in China," or whatever country they said, and we never grew that ability to learn to trust ourselves in that way.

And then we have the teenagehood where we rebel and we don't want anyone to think that we are sad or unhappy. And so we eat, and eat, and eat and feel sick. And then we never gained the ability to trust ourselves. And what happens is where our body gets to a certain weight and we step on the scale and we think, oh, no, this is out of control, I don't want to be this weight. And so instead of turning inside of us and learning that we can be trusted, we go to, you guessed it, another diet. Another diet, someone else telling us what to eat, when to eat it, and how to eat it. So as you see, advertisers condition us not to trust our ability to be happy on our own and

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diets do the same things. They tell us what to do, how to do it, when to do it. They don't teach us to trust our bodies. So in this episode, I'm going to teach you how to heal our relationship with ourselves and our bodies.

The first thing I want to do is talk about how do you heal our relationship. And I created a very nice acronym out of H-E-A-L. So the first step of HEAL is to have your own back. Now, when I was visiting France and I had the opportunity to rent a car and I was driving around the Arc de Triomphe. Now the Arc de Triomphe has, I don't even know how many lanes, but it's a crazy thing of this roundabout. And essentially what you have to do is you can never look back. You can only look forward because what happens when there are that many cars driving on that many lanes of a highway, or not highway, the roundabout, that when everyone is just concerned about where they're going, and they don't get all bothered in what everyone else is doing, everyone knows where they're going and how to get there and we never have any accidents.

But if someone was turning their head and getting all nosy in anyone else's business, that's right, it's a crash. And so one of the things we need to do in order to heal our relationship with ourselves and our bodies is we need to, when I say you have your own back, that means that what you think of you is more important than when anyone else thinks of you. And if this is resonating with you, I have a 12-step perfection recovery program that is totally going to help you, but let me keep going. So H is to have your own back. What you think of you is the most important. And by the way, it's not selfish. When you can take care of you, and when you are in your own head, you are then going to be better for everyone else around you.

The second part of healing is the E, and that is eating without guilt. Now, there are two different ways of looking at guilt. One is guilt is defined as denying yourself a feeling. So let's say, for example, you got that ice cream and you were so excited about eating it, but you sat down, you got the bowl, you're on the couch, you got the sprinkles just the way you want them. And you look around and you think, uh-oh, I shouldn't be eating this.

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I shouldn't be enjoying this. This is terrible. So now you are denying yourself the joy of ice cream, and that is guilt.

The other way of looking at guilt and how I describe it is this two opposing thoughts. So even in that example of the ice cream, you can say, oh, this is so yummy. But the other thought is, but it's so bad for me. So now you have these two opposing thoughts and that creates guilt. Now, when we have guilt in our body, anytime we have a thought, it creates an emotion. And when we have an emotion, emotions are literally just vibrations in our body. And we have an emotion, it releases chemicals in our body. It can release cortisol, it can release adrenaline, it can release dopamine. And so if we're having a lot of guilty thinking, we are actually releasing a lot of cortisol and cortisol is a hormone that affects our weight. So whatever we're eating, I want you just to eat it without guilt.

The third part of HEAL is A, allow all the feelings. So when you think about the last time you buffered, now buffering, this is just a side note. You're going to learn of these terms as you continue to listen to this podcast. But when I talk about buffering, we're not just talking about the little wheel that's that goes around and around and around on your computer. But buffering is when you don't want to feel one thing, and you want to allow another feeling inside you, but you're not willing to process that feeling.

So let's say, for example, someone says to you at a guild meeting, "Oh, you picked that color for your thread for that quilt." So if they said that and you had this feeling of embarrassment, or shame, or annoyance, and if you try to avoid it, I like to say, it's like, you're bottling it up, and you're just letting it fester, and like you're shaking a pop bottle and it just gets more and more pressure. So the more that we can just allow a feeling. So the lady says, "Oh, you picked that color for your thread, for your quilt?" You could actually say, oh, and not out loud. You could say, oh, that makes me feel annoyed that she said that, and you just allow yourself to feel annoyed. It would probably take you to 10 seconds, maybe even 30. And then you can just allow it. It's just like a river just flows through you and then you can now go on your way.

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So that is the next thing we need to do to heal our relationship with ourselves and our bodies. We just allow all of our feelings and we don't judge ourselves for them. And we don't deny ourself those feelings because the more you deny it, the more you shake that pop bottle. And before you know it, you're going to blow up, 10 minutes, 3 hours, however many hours later at your dog, or your husband or the dishwasher.

The last part of healing your relationship with yourself and your body is to love yourself no matter what. So this brings me back, back to having an unconditional relationship with yourself, unconditional love. Now that is really challenging, especially if you expect yourself to be perfect all the time. And if you bought into the advertisers who say, in order to be happy, you need to look a certain way, you need to present yourself a certain way, your house needs to look a certain way, you need to drive it a certain car, and you definitely have to wear a certain size of clothes. And that number on the scale better be whatever number that the internet says you should be, or you're not allowed to be happy. And what I say to all my clients is that no matter what number the scale is, because literally the scale is just the amount of gravity that your body has on the Earth, has nothing to do with your happiness.

So after we learn to love ourselves no matter what, which, by the way, I like to think about it as you've just made a new friend, because your relationship with yourself is a relationship. So imagine that you've met this person and you have just decided I'm just going to like this person. And that's what we're going to do for ourselves. We're just going to decide, I'm always going to be nice to myself. I am no longer going to punch myself in the face, I'm going to be kind. And even when I fall off the track, or even if I promise myself I'm going to do something and I don't do it, I'm just going to stay committed to loving myself no matter what. I have a little analogy here.

When I got married 20 years ago, we were picking an engagement ring and I in the past have had a really hard time making decisions. And I remember thinking, oh my goodness, I'm going to have to wear this wedding ring for the rest of my life. And I put so much pressure on myself. And so I picked it,

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I loved it, we had a certain budget and all of that. And I had been watching other people and their wedding rings and scrutinizing what they had and what I liked and what I didn't. And it was so interesting because I just decided then and there that whatever ring I picked, I was just going to love it. And I tell you every single day I put my ring on, all right, I always have my rings on, I rarely take them off, but whenever I look at it and I say, oh, I'm sure glad I picked that ring. That ring is so perfect for me. And so I'm constantly re-deciding and recommitting to loving this ring, no matter what.

And sometimes I will see other people's rings, and they are so beautiful. But I look at my ring and I say, oh, I love you ring. I'm so glad I picked you. So that is something that I do all the time. And that's just a very simple example of what I mean when I say love yourself, no matter what.

All right. So when we can heal our body, what happens is our bodies are actually wired to be their best size when we operate from our executive brain. So in the past episodes, I talked about our lower brain and our higher brain and we'll be talking about that throughout. But when we can operate from our higher executive brain, we no longer need to worry about our survival, we don't need to worry about staying safe, seeking pleasure and conserving energy, because we know that if we're working from our higher brain, then we know that when we are healthy and strong and we know that we can always access food for our sustenance. And so when we're in that higher brain, we will be at our ultimate level. And our body is wired to have these systems in place to keep us at our best weight. So there are three hormones that are intrinsically there to help us lose weight and keep it off.

The first one is leptin, and leptin is the hormone that tells us when we're full. Yep. We're done. We don't need anymore.

Ghrelin is what tells us when we are hungry. So I think of grr, my stomach is growling. And so when we have that hormone working properly for us, we will actually understand hunger.

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And the third hormone that helps us to be wired, to be at our ultimate weight is insulin and insulin is what helps us have all the energy our body needs. Now our thoughts are connected to our feelings. And every time we have a thought, we have a feeling attached to it and those feelings release hormones. So I always say, thoughts are connected to our feelings, which then release hormones. Think about the last time you saw a baby and you just went, I can just hear it. Ah, so cute, or a puppy or a baby bunny. So we have a thought like, oh, that baby's so cute. And then we are released with some dopamine, like so sweet.

Or if we're late, if we think we're late, we have a thought I'm late. And then we get immediately a rush of adrenaline, that adrenaline literally changes our body dynamic so our heart starts to beat faster, we might sweat a little bit, our eyes literally get bigger and our senses are heightened. Our blood starts rushing because it knows that if we are late, we need to pick up the pace. So one of the problems we've had is if we've eaten too much sugar or flour, those hormones don't work. The leptin, the ghrelin and the insulin, they're not working how they're supposed to be working. And also, if we are not being in our own brain, if we're outside of our brain, thinking that joy and happiness and all of that comes from buying things or going on a specific diet, then we are not really into our thinking. We're not really tuned. And I like this concept of thinking about recalibrating our wiring.

So my sons are really into mountain biking and they have these fancy mountain bikes that have shocks. So when they go up and down on these rocks, they can have some cushioning so that they can do all these really interesting adventures. And depending on how much they weigh, the bike shop has to calibrate the pounds per inch. I'm pretty sure this is the way it goes. Something along those lines. So that when they go on their bike, then it's the best cushioning for their ride for their bike.

And so I want you to know that as you do this work, and as you apply these tools that I teach in my podcast, you are literally recalibrating the wiring that's already set in your body. So even when you give, and I gave you the example of a child, they don't worry about what other people think of their

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body. They never are concerned about their thighs. They walk around without shirts on, it doesn't bother them. And so they haven't been calibrated for shame. And so what has happened, there is a shaming, there's all sorts of messages that come out. And so what I want to do is help you recalibrate your wiring. And so in order to do this, we have to have these necessary skills, what I'm going to share with you.

So the first skill we need to have is we need to learn to watch our thoughts. We need to start paying attention to the things that we're thinking.

The second skill we need is we need to observe when we are believing that an external thing, it will create a different emotion for us. So we need to get onto ourselves. And I'm telling you, the weight loss industry, I looked it up, just last year was \$422.8 billion industry. And that's just weight loss. That's not clothing, that's not makeup, that's not housing, that's not furniture. So can you imagine that? So we have 422.8 billion in weight loss, and then all the other influences. So we need to learn to observe when we are believing that when I have this number on the scale, then I can be happy. Or when I have that furniture in my house, then I can be happy. When I have that much fabric, then I could be happy. When I have a long arm, then I can be happy.

It's a very subtle shift, but you can start paying attention, you're going to recognize it. And I'm not telling you that a long arm isn't going to bring you happiness because, let me tell you, I love my long arm, but it's when I'm thinking until I have that one thing, then I could be happy. That is the conditional relationship and that is what we need to be careful of.

And the last skill that we need to learn in order to create an unconditionally loving relationship with our body, which by the way, is what our goal is, is to learn how to be happy on our own is we need to learn to pay attention to our body. We need to start listening in. And so just some tips when you're eating, don't have your phone right in front of you. Don't be reading a book, just let eating be the main feature. And so when you can just let eating be your main feature, then you can start paying attention to your body. Can

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you imagine if you were always sewing, and like ironing, and trying to stitch at the same time? It doesn't work. We do one thing at a time. Maybe we can have a radio in the background, but I really want you to, when it's eating time, make it eating time.

And then when you learn these necessary skills of paying attention to your body, observing when you're believing that an external thing can bring you a different feeling. And when you watch your thoughts what's going to happen is you're going to start trusting yourself. I want you just to pause for a moment. What would it be like for you to truly trust yourself? Well, that is going to happen, that will happen when you start watching your thoughts, observing when you are believing that an external thing will create a different emotion for you and when you start paying attention to your body.

The next result that's going to be created is that you're going to be able to process any emotion. When you know that our thoughts just create an emotion, and we are the ones who created our thoughts, then you're able to realize that you can just process any emotion and it's no big deal.

And the third thing that's going to be created when you watch your thoughts and you observe when you believe that an external thing will create a different emotion for you and you pay attention to your body is that your opinion of yourself will evolve and we grow into our own abilities. So just like advertisers want us to believe that the only way we can be happy is if we buy something and then of course, so that breaks trust with ourself and then just like diets, they are very similar.

They tell us that we can't be trusted with our bodies, my steps of healing, having your own back, eating without guilt, allowing all the feelings and loving yourself no matter what, will help you learn to recalibrate your body, you'll be able to get your leptin, your ghrelin, and your insulin all back in check. And then you're going to be able to recalibrate your wiring of your thoughts because our thoughts are what create our feelings. And so when we can know what we're thinking, then we are now being the driver of our feelings. And so we can now learn to observe when we are believing that

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an external thing, it's going to try to create a different feeling for us. And we can also start learning to pay attention to our body, which of course will help us build trust with our body, be able to process any emotion. And then our opinion of ourselves evolves and we grow in our own abilities.

So thank you so much for spending this time with me. I'd love to hear what you're working on as you listen to me talking, if you were doing some chain piecing or doing the dishes. I love that I can help you to create a completely loving relationship with yourself without having to lose one pound.

To celebrate the launch of the show, I'm going to be giving away \$100 gift cards to Lisa Bongean's Primitive Gathering shop to four lucky listeners who follow, rate and review the podcast. It doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope you love the podcast. My goal for this show is to provide you with tons of value. So please let me know in your review if there's a topic you'd like me to cover. Visit daratomasson.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter. I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode.

Thanks for listening to *Weight Loss for Quilters*. If you want more info, please visit daratomasson.com. See you next week.