

14. Blame is a Lie



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dara Tomasson

14. Blame is a Lie

Are you convinced that even if you lost weight, it would just come back on again? This episode is for you. In fact, I have a client who lost her cat a month ago, and sure enough, it came back.

So how often do you feel like your life is out of control and seem to think the only way to get anything done is to have a few days all by yourself with no phones, no internet, no people bothering you asking you to make them a sandwich or see if you can figure something out for them?

Well, this episode is perfect for you because I will be sharing how none of these drastic measures need to happen in order to have the life that you want. I'm Dara Tomasson and this is Weight Loss for Quilters episode number 14.

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.

So before I start talking about the importance of blame in our lives, it's one week away from my birthday. And I'm super curious, how do you celebrate your birthday? I would love to hear your traditions. It's been really fun for me to see how my birthday has evolved and celebrations in general now that food isn't taking the center stage.

And talking about food, I just got back from Lisa Bongean's retreat center, and let me tell you, it was amazing. The food was amazing, but more importantly, it was those incredible women that came for my live event where I taught them the entire love yourself thin process.

And I just want to say how full my heart is as I think about what those women are doing for themselves and how they're truly allowing themselves to change from the inside out. And that's how we make permanent change.

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So you're going to love this episode because we're talking about something that really blocks a lot of us from having the true authentic life that we so badly want. So the tool that I'm going to teach you today that you can add to your toolbox as you've been listening to this podcast is this concept of 100% responsibility for how we feel.

So shame and blame go together. And so blame goes hand in hand, because shame is when we blame ourselves for things that don't go well. And blame is when we use external factors to explain our problems, so we never take full responsibility. So does this sound familiar to you? It's not my fault. They shouldn't have done it that way. They did it wrong, so now I have to suffer.

Now I'm going to give you a few scenarios, and I want you to think about them as I share them. And maybe you could think about how this might play out in your life. So if I had been born in a different family I wouldn't have moved around so much. And then I wouldn't have had so many disruptions in my schooling, and I wouldn't be so bad at math.

Or what about this one? If I had lived close to my grandparents, I would have had more support and love so I wouldn't be so needy as an adult. If I had a more wonderful supportive Grandma, I'm sure my life would be so much better now. Or how about this one? If I had more money growing up, I wouldn't feel so much scarcity. And I wouldn't have such a problem with budgeting or with problems.

Now, we know that those aren't true because we could tell these stories very differently. Because if we looked, just as I often do with myself and in my own self coaching with my clients, I said okay, "Let's take a look at that and see if we can change it into a different story."

So for example, the moving so much, I moved so much as a kid, and it was amazing because I made such great friends. I was super adaptable. I got really creative and curious with living in so many different places. And I can travel anywhere now, and I have so many friends.

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Let's take the grandparent example. Living close to my grandparents was really wonderful, but I didn't really allow myself to make more friends because I was just spending a lot of time with my grandparents and so now, I have trouble making friends. Or what about this one with money, I grew up without having a lot of money. But now I have such an appreciation for the value of a dollar that it's really helped me to create the kind of life that I have now.

So as you see in these examples, we know that blame is a lie because there's lots of different ways of looking at those stories. So as we talk about being 100% responsible for how we feel, I invite you to think about what are things in your life that you don't like, first of all. And second of all, what do you attribute that to?

So for example, your weight. Do you like your weight? And what would be the way that you would describe your weight situation? Would you say you inherit it from your family? Would you say it was in your genes? Would you say it has to do with menopause? Would you say it has to do with how you grew up and your family traditions?

I really want you to get curious about why you think you have the weight that you have right now and what's going on for you. And just bringing back to our last episode on shame, if you think it's your fault, then that's shame. But if you think it's something outside of you, that's blame.

So now we're going to look at what starts happening with blame. So blame, you can go to an external thing, and you can say if I had better parents, or if I was born on the other side of the track, or if I didn't move around so much. You turn to something that happened in your life and you attribute the issues or the problems that you have with that.

Now, remember how we talked about life being 50/50? I want you to think about the negative emotion when you go to blame. So is it injustice? Is it disappointment? Is it unfairness? So what happens quite often, especially when we're dealing with blame, is we will have a negative emotion about the situation. And instead of just sitting with disappointment, or frustration,

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or whatever negative emotion you're having, you start to feel kind of powerful in blame.

It actually feels really good. In fact, you could say, “Hey listen,” and you start rallying people. And you start getting people to say, “Hey, listen to my story. Because I've moved around so much, and I sometimes missed all of one module for math at this school for two different grades.” And it's like, “Yeah, you know what? My parents were jerks, they moved me around so much, and they didn't get me a tutor and now I'm so bad at math. And I've just limited my life so much because I'm so terrible at math.”

And so now it feels kind of good because you're now building a case, and you're getting people to be sucked into, “Yes, you're right, that was really awful. That was terrible that you didn't do well in math.” I'm just using this as an example, you can replace that with whatever you're thinking of.

So we start feeling powerful in blame because we build a case. And as we tell more people, then it starts to feel like they are agreeing with you. And now this is a false feeling of the 50% that's good. But it actually isn't because it's buffering from actually just processing the negative emotion.

So what it's doing for you, which you don't even realize, is it's putting you into being in the victim mentality. And that feels awful because anytime we're in that victim mentality, there's got to be a villain. And wherever there's a villain— So food becomes a villain, or math becomes the villain, or your parents become a villain. And then being a victim, of course, you're very powerless and that feels terrible.

So the other way that it affects you is that now you have to have somebody change in order for you to feel better. So you need to go back in time, and you need to change the circumstance of moving. Or you need to go back in time to change that someone made a comment about your eyelids or your weight or whatever it is. And so now you feel powerless in moving forward because you can't change the past.

So when we spend a lot of time blaming, using something external, to try to make things better, we get ourselves stuck and we stay there. So like I said

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in the examples with moving and with grandparents or money, blame is a lie. And so, of course, is shame because we know with shame that our worth was already set.

And I really loved how Jody Moore talked about the shame blame trap. And as she was explaining this in a podcast my eyes were opened so much more clearly. And even as a certified life coach who has been trained in all of these tools, when she talked about it being a trap, I totally related to this.

And I want to encourage you to look for, you know how sometimes traps have triggers on them? Well, a lot of them do. You have one of those old hunting ones, imagine it has those teeth on like a clamshell the teeth. And then when you open it, and so now you've got these flat clamps open – I'm having a harder time describing it than I probably need to. But they have those teeth and then there's like a little trigger that the animal steps on and then it clamps shut, and you're now stuck.

So we have triggers that take us into blame. So if you find yourself saying things like, "It's not my fault. I can't change it," then those are triggers for you. So this is where I'm going to teach you how you can start changing your relationship with blame. Isn't that great?

So the first thing is to recognize, of course, that blame is a lie. So nothing that happens is your fault. Okay, so it doesn't make you a problem, it doesn't make you less complete or less amazing. Also blame, it's nobody else's fault. It doesn't make anyone else less amazing or less lovable.

So the truth is, nothing has gone wrong in the first place. So we just need to accept the things in our life that are happening. We no longer need to push against anything, we no longer have to push against the things that are happening in our life. And we can start taking responsibility for our own actions and our own results. And we no longer need to use excuses, blame anything outside of us, or internalize those things.

One of the ways that I like to look at this and it really helps me, because I had a client recently, and I said to her everything in life we have is because we get our own results. And she said, "Well Dara, I have cancer and I didn't

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choose to have cancer.” And so what I reminded her is we all have different circumstances.

So we have a circumstance of being born. Some of us are born with disabilities. Some of us are born into large families. Some of us are born into really rich families. Some of us are born into really poor families. Some of us are born in countries that don't have a lot of resources. Some of us have been born in countries that are plenty and plenty of resources.

And so those are all circumstances. And I like to call those part of our curriculum. And so when I used to be a schoolteacher, at the beginning of the year I looked at the provincial standards of what does a grade five student need to learn? And so I took all of the criteria for a grade five student, and I planned the entire school year of what the curriculum was going to look like.

And so all of us have different curriculum in our life and so we get to decide how we want to react to those things. So, cancer, that's a new curriculum. Divorce, I have a friend whose husband after 15 years said he no longer wanted to be married to her. So now she's being a single mom. That's a new curriculum, that's a new way of learning to be a human.

And when I look at it that way, it just really gets me excited about all the new things that I can learn with all these new circumstances. I want to give you a little example of that.

So recently a client came to me and said that she feels really comfortable with her eating protocol. She's lost, I think around 30 pounds in the last 12 weeks or so. And she really likes going to tailgate parties, she's a real big sports buff. And she felt extremely uncomfortable at these parties because it was like food was being passed around.

And so she was describing that she just felt really out of control and really scared. And I said, “Okay, so at your home, how do you feel about food?” Oh, I've got this, I'm totally in control, it feels really great. I said, “Okay.” So the thought was I'm totally in control of my food. And the feeling was

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confident. And so the actions were I plan my food and she was able to feel really good about her food.

And I said, "Did you know that your home is just a circumstance? That we could just switch out to tailgate party. You can have the same thoughts about food, regardless of where you are." So this is what I like to think about for our life circumstances, is that we have lots of different things happen to us and we can always learn how to be however you want to be at whatever situation is happening.

So the truth is, nothing's actually gone wrong. So the fact that she had cancer didn't mean she did anything wrong or didn't mean anything is wrong in life. It's just she got cancer. We dislocate our elbows, we have all sorts of things happen, like COVID, no one did anything wrong.

And so even if we did do something, like if we were being silly and we went on a ladder to get to the top of our quilt stash, and we fell off the ladder, even that we didn't do something wrong. It's just we didn't quite balance and so now we have the consequences of bruises, or whatever it is.

And part of being a human is we do make mistakes. Sometimes we say things that we're not super proud of. Sometimes we lose our temper. Sometimes we spend more money than we were going to at the quilt shop. Sometimes we eat a chocolate bar because we're mad. Sometimes we do anger shopping on Amazon.

Sometimes we do those things, we make mistakes. We don't always act from our very best version of ourselves. So remember, our value never changes. And did you know that we are supposed to make mistakes? We're supposed to make wrong choices. We're supposed to fail. That's part of the human experience.

But having said that, is we actually are the creator of our own feelings. We are the creator of how we want to think about cancer, or about COVID, or about falling off a stool. No one else can do that for us. And you know what? There are times I like to think about emotions like a giant smorgasbord. And there are so many different emotions.

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And so when I think about my grandma, Hazel, I have this really sweet picture of her in my office, and she's holding my son who's now 15, he was just a baby, on her lap, I get a little bit sad. Because I think, "I wish she would have been able to see what a great young man he is." And my oldest son is actually living in the city where my grandma used to live. And it makes me kind of sad, that she doesn't get to see him as this wonderful, strong, amazing kid.

So that, to me, is an appropriate emotion because I do get sad. And at Christmas and holidays she's no longer with us. And so we get to feel bad about things. And we get to feel sad or scared or disappointed. And we get to decide how we want to feel.

So no one's ever to blame for my own experiences and nothing is wrong with me either, that's what Jodi Moore said. And I wrote that down and I put stars beside it. No one's ever to blame for my experience and nothing is wrong with me either.

So let's just talk a little bit about what does that mean to be the creator of your own feelings. And so this is going to be a little bit awkward for you. And one of the ways I like to think about it is when we have a story we've told, like I was sharing earlier on about feeling powerful, so let's just take the math example. And we would say to our friends, "Yeah, it's totally my parents' fault for moving around so much and I missed whole sections of math. So of course, I'm terrible at math."

So when we tell that story, it's like doing a dance, like the cha-cha. You're like, "Oh, I tell this story. People have this kind of reaction, and I kind of start feeling powerful. And it feels kind of good, but guilty good. Like it doesn't feel that great, but I like the attention that I'm getting from it." And so let's say that's the cha-cha and you're really good at the cha-cha. You've been doing the cha-cha now for 20, 30 years.

And then you realize, "Oh, wait a minute, there's been some really good things about moving. And do I really like that story about me being really

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bad at math and blaming my parents and all of that? Is that really serving me?" And so now, you can just get to the feeling of not being good at math.

So there might be some embarrassment, there might be some disappointment, there might be some lack of responsibility. You've kind of not taken responsibility for that, there's a lot of emotions with it. And then you can say, "You know what? I'm going to change the way I tell that story."

And so now we're doing a different dance. We're doing the story of, "Yeah, I moved around a lot, and I didn't do very well with math. And so I have definitely have some gaps. And now I'm going to do something about that if it really bothers me." And so now, instead of that being the cha-cha, you've changed the way you've told tell the story, you're no longer blaming, you're now taking that self-responsibility, and you're being 100% responsible for the way you feel.

So that dance has changed and it's going to be a little bit awkward. Just like anytime we learn anything new, it feels kind of awkward and challenging. But I want to encourage you to embrace it. I want you to embrace it all.

So when we first learned to quilt, we were really bad at it. We didn't really know how to use the rotary cutter, we didn't really know how to use the ruler. We didn't know how to do our nice corners for binding. I mean, there were a lot of things about pressing, all of that, we didn't know about squaring up.

But we knew that when you learn something new, it's going to be a little bit messy. Just like when our kids are little. Oh, I love using the analogy of the piano. So have you learned piano, or have you paid for children to learn piano?

I like thinking about paying for lessons for your kids for piano. Because, you know, you're making dinner and the kids are practicing piano and they keep messing up. Are you going to go in and yell at your kid and say, "Could you stop messing up when you're practicing the piano?" No, you're celebrating it because you know that they aren't quitting.

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You know that they keep practicing the piano and you're like, "Yes, keep going. Keep practicing the piano because the more you practice, the more you troubleshoot, the more you figure out, the better you are going to be at learning the process of playing that song. Amazing."

So you celebrate them practicing the piano. You celebrate every wrong note, because the more that they do that the better they're going to get at learning how to play the song. So that's what I want to leave you with, this concept of you are ultimately always responsible for how you feel, 100%.

Just like with food, no one can force food in your mouth and make you chew it and swallow it. Nobody can make you do anything, really. We always get to decide. And so let's stop triggering the trap, the animal trap of blame. Let's stop it.

And so when you start going there, just like I encouraged you with shame, when you are getting distracted by saying things like, "It's not my fault," and "What's wrong with them?" You got to get off the road. You need to just pull off on the side of the road and recognize, why am I doing this and what's going on? Because I actually am always the creator of my feelings, always.

And so I do want to encourage you to embrace it all. Just like the emotions like a smorgasbord, they're all out there and you can decide what emotion. And we're not robots and we're not psychopaths, right? We are humans, we have a whole range of emotions. And in order to live the full human experience, we do need to have a bit of disappointment. We do need to have a bit of frustration and a bit of injustice and a bit of whatever emotions.

But on the flip side, if we don't have those negative emotions, we will never experience how wonderful and amazing all those beautiful, feel good emotions are that are available to us. So keep going ladies. I just want to encourage you as you build your toolbox, you might feel a little frustrated.

You might feel a little bit awkward, you're like, "Dara tells me that I'm 100% responsible for my feelings. But then my husband might say something and I just kind of fly off the handle." Well, I want to remind you, just when you

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started learning how to use a rotary cutter, you weren't that good at it. And it took some skill and practice.

So just give yourself some grace. Just give yourself a break. And just give yourself the opportunity to be bad at something, enough that as you keep going, you eventually, inevitably will get better.

So stop the shame and blame trap and allow yourself the opportunity to be really good at living the human experience. So just like with the piano piece, you just need to keep working at getting those fingers more comfortable as they go up and down the keyboard.

It was so fun sharing with you how powerful it is to recognize the triggers for blame. And I want to encourage you to keep going because as you improve, as you do this work, your life is just going to get better and better.

All right, thank you so much for joining me in this episode.

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

Did you know I have a YouTube channel with all sorts of free motion quilting content? If you want to up your free motion quilting game, I have a 31 day doodle challenge there that goes along with my brand new quilting book, Doodle School. Like I always say, make your food boring and your life more exciting.

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