

32. Distractions



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dara Tomasson

32. Distractions

Do you feel surprised by the end of the day, and you don't know where the time has gone, you felt so busy, but you don't have a lot to show for what you got done? Make sure to turn off all your phone alerts and notifications so you can listen to this episode where I will show you why you are feeling like this most days.

I am Dara Tomasson, and this is Weight Loss for Quilters episode 32: Distractions.

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.

Alright, today I'm recording this on Valentine's Day and so my heart is full of love for all of you as I prepare this and record it for you. I truly feel like every day in my business is Valentine's Day because my entire program is built on the foundation of learning to love yourself. Which of course means to accept yourself how you are, it's active, compassion, actively loving yourself. So, the irony of today's episode also is that I've known about doing this podcast for three weeks now because distractions I think are one of the biggest struggles that people have with weight loss.

And it is two hours past when I wanted to record this podcast and in fact I was hoping to record it last Tuesday but we're selling our house. We have just got it listed and so there has been a lot of distractions in order to get this house ready, there's been lots of things. So, I won't distract you from distraction podcast. But let me just say, there's been a lot of things that have taken a lot of time. And so, I've got you on this, this has been really, really helpful.

So, today's outline, what we're going to do is I'm going to show you how to recognize what a distraction is and how do you know that you're being distracted. And I'm going to give you lots of real life examples. I'm also

32. Distractions

going to be using the filter of weight loss in here because there are some really common weight loss distractions that I know are holding a lot of you back, for example, menopause, that's a distraction. Our DNA, that's a distraction, caregiving, grandchildren, children, work, retirement, COVID. All of these things are different distractions.

And I will be going over them in detail. So first of all, I'm going to teach you how to recognize what a distraction is and give you some background on that. Then I'm going to show you how to cope with those, how to redirect yourself and then how to overcome it. So, I'd like you to think about the idea of making a quilt. So, all of you, we go online, we scroll, and we see a beautiful quilt.

In fact, right now I'm looking at a Laurie Holt quilt, well, it's Laurie Holt's fabric. And I can't remember the name of the bird quilt but it's a Canadian designer. It was really popular, it's super cute. She also has a really cute one with strawberries. And right now, I could distract myself and go online and look it up. But I'm going to stay focused, that's what we need to be doing. And I'm looking at it, it was so cute. And so, you see a quilt online and you think this is adorable, I love this fabric, I love this design, I want this.

So, you have a desire, you have an end goal, so same thing with weight. You say, "I want to be back to my wedding weight." I want to be where I was when I was whatever age. So then so you have this desire, result, so that's your north star or your reason, your end point, let's just even say that. So, we see where you are right now, this is your starting point. So, the starting point is you have none of the fabric, you don't have the pattern, or you aren't at your goal weight. And then there's a path that you need to go on to get to that place.

So, if you wanted to make the quilt, you have to find the fabric, it's out of print, so are there shops there? Buy the pattern, okay, do you do digital? Do you do PDF? Which way do you go? And then it's all, there's a path of ordering the fabric, getting the fabric, prewashing the fabric or however you want to do that, cutting out the blocks, making them. And so, it seems like a

32. Distractions

very simple path but there's lots of distractions along the way. It's the same thing with weight loss. We want to be at that ideal weight once again but of course there's lots of distractions in the way.

So, I am going to walk you through all of that today. And I really hope that as I am sharing this you can see how it really is doable, it is totally possible to use these tools that I'm going to teach you today to completely overcome these distractions in your life. And I want you to think about – so let's go back to our analogy of the making a quilt. So, I want this quilt, so that is my end result. And we have this path and there's going to be lots of obstacles in the way. But this podcast is going to help you overcome them.

So, it's like I have a roadblock, the fabric is out of print. Okay, so there are still going to be some places that will have that fabric, I promise. So that's a roadblock, it's not at your regular local quilt shop, it's not at your regular online places you go to. You're going to have to dive a little deeper. You're going to have to do a few more internet searches. You might have to go on some Facebook pages and ask, "Hey, does anyone have this or know of anyone who has this certain kind of fabric?"

And so, all we're doing with this podcast is we're going to learn how to overcome those roadblocks, those hurdles, those obstacles in your way. So, it's going to be really, really helpful. Alright, before we go into the meat of the podcast I want to just shout out one of my clients. So, I'm recording this again on Valentine's Day, so yesterday, Sunday was Super Bowl. And she has two brothers, and they do this every year. They have an insane amount, she was telling us of all the food they had there.

They had crackers that were chocolate filling in between them and then iced and all these different, she said basically, Super Bowl is an excuse to overeat. And I live in Canada, even though my dad was a football player we never really watched sports at home. It wasn't a thing that we did. So, this is a little bit foreign to me, but I see the commercials. I can see how that would be. And she knew that there was going to be all of this extra eating. And she brought her own vegetables, and she had her food plan of what she was going to eat and what she wasn't going to eat, and she stuck to it.

32. Distractions

And the most exciting thing was that when she left she didn't feel sick, she didn't have to worry this morning when she stepped on the scale that it was going to be up two pounds. She didn't have any discomfort when she went to bed because she hadn't overeaten. And so, she was just so thrilled. And the thing that really surprised her, because she's been working with the Love Yourself Thin process for six months now. She's lost almost 50 pounds. She's at 48 pounds.

But what she's really realized is that she doesn't have the same level of urges anymore. So, it's exciting to see and it's really fun in the community, the lifetime membership how we are just so supportive of each other and so helpful to each other. So, I just wanted to shout her out, that's just really exciting, that you too could have Super Bowl, or Christmas, or Easter, or Valentine's Day and not have to eat any chocolate, overeat anything and feel really, really good.

Alright, so let's start. So, think about what distractions do you have about weight loss? So, I'm going to give some examples here. So, one is menopause. So, when you have a thought, okay, menopause, and that is a distraction because you think my hormones have changed, which they have. I feel out of control, which is optional, my body is no longer my own and I don't know what to do with it. So, when you have those thoughts, what are the feelings associated? You feel confused. You feel overwhelmed. You feel disempowered.

And when you feel these feelings, because our feelings are always the fuel for our actions, the actions we take are disconnect from our body, don't pay attention to what we're eating, feel very alien from it. And truly feel this isn't your body and so your actions are well, it doesn't really matter what I do because this isn't me anymore. And so, you completely detach from your body, so you overeat, you turn to food for comfort, you need to have more and more food to get more and more comfort because you're going to a lot of false pleasure.

Now let's look at the DNA example of a distraction. So, when you say, "Well, I was just born with it, my mom, my aunts, my grandma, I guess we

32. Distractions

just have that DNA.” So, then you have thoughts like I’m out of control, nothing I can do will make a difference. And so, your feelings are disempowered, quite often you feel like a victim. And so, your actions are just eat, don’t figure it out, just look to food for pleasure, not yourself. Do you see how it’s the same kinds of thoughts that create the same kind of feelings, that create the same actions? And then the results are this isn’t your body anymore and you aren’t in control.

Caregiving, that’s another distraction, so you don’t have a lot of choice here, my life isn’t my own, the same thing, grandchildren, children. I don’t have a lot of choice here. You don’t rely on yourself to create your own joy, you’re needing to get it from others. And then when you’re relying on other people to create your joy then of course you feel out of control.

Work or lack of work, I hear a lot of ladies who have just become recently retired and they’ve never had this kind of time on their hands. And so just like with work, they didn’t feel they had a choice, and they had all these things they have to do and life really isn’t their own. When they go to retirement it’s the same thoughts, it’s just a different circumstance. I don’t have a choice, my sewing area is so messy, I don’t know what I can do.

So those are some distractions, but I also wanted to kind of dial back just to make it a little bit more realistic on your everyday distractions. So, working on a block that requires concentration and a notification comes in. You’re kind of feeling frustrated with how the block is going. You’ve tried the points, you’ve tried to get them nice and straight and it’s not going well. And so instead of just sticking to it and focusing, and being in that troubleshooting mindset, instead of this is so frustrating. A notification comes on and you’re like, what’s the email?

So, is my favorite quilt shop having a sale? Or I wonder what’s going on, on Instagram. Or, hey, maybe Facebook, maybe we can go somewhere like that. And so, what’s happening is you’re turning outside of you to try to feel better and you’re not creating that feeling better for yourself. And then we go through the, well, I might as well be on email then maybe what’s happening on Instagram, or maybe something is happening on Facebook.

32. Distractions

And so now you're relying on an external thing again to try to create an internal feeling.

Let's take another case scenario. So, you're doing a block of the month, you get really excited about ordering them, they come and that's exciting too, you get this dopamine hit of getting them in the mail and getting the notification that they're going to be here. And then you get to see them. But then what happens is you get overwhelmed because you get behind. And then maybe you start blaming other people. Blaming is a distraction.

Maybe you start demeaning yourself and berating yourself like why do you do this? When are you going to learn? Why haven't you figured it out yet? You can only do so many things. Why do you keep thinking you can do more than you can? And then now you're back into distracting yourself in a really negative way. And so some more case scenarios that can happen. In those ones you can go to self-blame, you can go do that, demeaning yourself, blaming others. Well, self-blame is shame.

So, let's go to a weight loss scenario that's kind of similar is trying to help your friend with taxes and they don't have all the stuff together. So instead of allowing yourself just to feel disappointed or frustrated with the friend, you go to food to try to feel better. Now, this is what I'm talking about. You're having a problem internally and you can't deal with it very well because you're not dealing with it in the fact that you just have a negative emotion, and you allow the negative emotion.

That's what I mean by deal with it. You just allow it to be there. Another example is you volunteer at the guild, and they keep cancelling things. So instead of just feeling the negative emotion of frustration, or disappointment, or whatever that is, you go to your favorite ice-cream place and get an ice-cream treat. So, what's really happening is that you are going to false pleasure rather than allowing yourself to live an authentic life.

And an authentic life is when you allow the feelings of positive and negative feelings of your life which gives yourself permission to feel balanced because you have that full spectrum of emotions. Now, with those

32. Distractions

examples I gave I just want to say that, so when we talk about your starting point to the end point those obstacles now are feeling like a victim. My life is not mine anymore and everything is against me.

And so when you feel like a victim there's always going to be a villain. So now food has become a villain or other people have become a villain, or your body has become a villain. Another common obstacle that gets you from your starting point to your end point is feeling disempowered. I'm out of control. I have no control over this. This is not really the life that I signed up for. And so now you just, because you don't feel empowered you just go to external things to make you feel better.

And one of the ways that I was thinking about this as I was creating this podcast for you was I was thinking about false pleasure stacking. So, when you are feeling really frustrated and you're saying to yourself, okay, this is not good. I'm not feeling good. This quilt block is not working out or the number on the scale is ridiculous. So, you're feeling really bad. And so, you think, okay, how am I going to feel better? Well, I can watch some Netflix. I could spend some time scrolling on Instagram or Facebook. I can buy some fabric.

So, what you're doing is you're stacking all of these pleasures which I am not saying that Netflix, and food, and shopping, I'm not arguing that those aren't pleasures. But what's happening is you're turning to something outside of you to try to create a feeling inside of you.

So, before I go onto that I want to just clarify what a false pleasure is. So, a false pleasure is something that your brain has an excess reaction to that is not evolved to handle and therefore has a negative consequence. So, let's take, for example, sugar. So, if we looked at raw sugar or sugarcane, it has fibers and it has all these different components to it. It's hard. Have you ever seen raw sugarcane? But what's happened is when they reduce that sugar they have taken out the fibers and they have taken out all of those pieces of the sugar.

32. Distractions

And so now we have concentrated sugar and we put it into food. And then what it does is it gives our brain an extreme burst of dopamine. So, since your brain is not used to having an excessive dopamine response it thinks that sugar is very important for your survival. Therefore, you'll eat it at the expense of other things. It's the same with wine, it's the same thing with flour, it's the same with heroin, it's the same with cocaine. So, we take all these naturally occurring things in the world and we process them, so they affect our brain in a way that is artificial and it's a false pleasure.

Your brain says, "Wow, this is amazing. This experience is much more amazing than my usual life experience." We've escaped our lives into this place of artificial pleasure. What it does is it buffers us from reality. It buffers us from having, like I talk about, the 50/50 experience of half of my life is amazing and the other half is opposite, just like when it's dark we know it's light. We have to have the contrast. So, I think we do this in our lives. We're having an experience that feels unpleasant. And this is where the false pleasure stacking comes in.

So, we think, well, you know what? To kind of soften it, let's just make something a little better. And I know for me I did this a lot with chocolate chips. And I did this during, between the time where I'd pick up the kids from school, to making dinner, to then the routine and going to bed. When I wasn't very organized, and I didn't have things really well planned it felt like I was out of control. And I was just really hoping that everything was going to go okay.

And so, I would tend to grab a handful of chocolate chips, or even crackers, or even some cheese or something that would just kind of take that edge off of having to feel different pleasure. So, what do you guys, what do you do? I'd love to hear it. So that is what buffering is. It's when we use an external thing like chocolate chips, or crackers, or shopping, or Instagram scrolling to try to change how we feel internally. But it's an artificial external thing that changes how we feel internally. And so, this is not long lasting. This will not be sustainable.

32. Distractions

And I want you to think, because we're constantly rejecting unhappiness, we're trying to solve it by seeking false pleasure. And we're never going to get ourselves out of that loop. So, the loop is we feel unhappy, we overeat, you watch Netflix and then you feel even more unhappy so then you overeat more and then you watch more Netflix and then you feel even more unhappy. We do this with overeating, we do this with overdrinking, overspending, overworking.

So, what is your world like if you don't seek the false pleasure and you just go for a true honest authentic life? I really want you to think about that. So, nobody really wants that authentic life because authentic means it's 100% true. It's honest, and it means that you need to take 100% responsibility for yourself. So, if it's easier to blame someone else then maybe we should just do that. If it's easier just to blame menopause, or easier to blame work, or easier to blame a spouse, or a family member instead of saying, "You know what? I made a mistake."

I was having a conversation with a friend the other day and she was talking to her brother. And she made a comment about one of his kids. And realized, you know what? I was out of line. And the brother, he kind of flew off the handle which he normally does. And she was able to, because of listening to my podcast and listening to the tools that I have been teaching, she was able to truly take responsibility for her part of it. And was humble and asked for forgiveness.

And so that is what I'm talking about. It seems like it's easier to blame other people but really then now you're, again, hiding from yourself. So, if you want to live an authentic life are you willing to live without any brain substance manipulation, without any false pleasures, without any pretend emotions? So, we have been sold that we could just buy happiness and that could just be part of our life. But the problem is, and I like how at The Life Coach School, she teaches us about what does it mean to do that.

And I like how Brooke asked, let's say you could take a drug or get an injection and it would just give you that emotion. So, I'd like a little bit of happiness, I'll just inject it. I want a little bit of happiness right now. This is

32. Distractions

what people are trying to do when they take an artificial substance in order to feel better. And then Brooke says, “What we have done is taken food and alcohol in situations and manipulated them so we can create those emotional substitutes, those artificial emotions.”

So, then she gives this example, “When I eat a lot of sugar I have an intense dopamine hit in my brain. It gives me the sense that I have done something wonderful. My brain is like, “Wow, that was brilliant, good job.” And so, I feel good because I just had that sugar in the moment.” Now, do I really feel happier? And I love this question, or has my brain been tricked into thinking that I’ve done something wonderful? My brain has been tricked.

I think that we need to consider how much we want pleasure to be the only happiness that we feel. I am talking about false pleasure. Do we want, and this is such a good question, and I remember the first time that I learned about this, do I want to cobble together a bunch of false pleasures and call that happiness? Really think about that. And I call this pleasure stacking.

And I also think of it, imagine you’ve dug yourself in a hole, so you’re in a bad place and you want to get out of it. But instead of actually making a ladder or getting someone to help you, you just put a bunch of false pleasures there to try to get to the top of the hill but that will never happen. So, then most people are like, “Yeah, hey, I’m happy.” But what if we could remove all of those things and find a way to be happy without them, is it possible?

If you’ve been using a lot of pleasure in your life you probably won’t think it’s possible because when you remove all those pleasures you go through withdrawal and you probably feel deprived. You’ve probably left with all the emotions that you’ve been unwilling to feel and that doesn’t feel so good. So, when you allow yourself to feel unhappiness you get to know yourself in a much deeper way. Now, this is what happens with false pleasure. False pleasure is unsustainable. False pleasure is constantly turning, going outside of yourself to feel better.

32. Distractions

And the problem with false pleasure is we have a kickback. So, if we're trying to get pleasure from food almost immediately you feel icky, you feel sick. Not only do you feel 10 minutes after you've eaten that thing, but the next morning or eventually weeks later, you don't know if your clothes are going to fit you properly. And you don't feel good in your own skin. And so that is what's not sustainable.

Whereas an authentic life is very sustainable, you know that your clothes are going to fit. You don't have to worry about your weight. You feel good 10 minutes after eating. You feel good an hour after eating. You are now what I call an inside job. You are creating your own pleasure. And I want to tell you that food does have, we do get a dopamine hit from eating healthy food. It's very subtle. It's nothing like the dopamine hit that you get when you eat ice-cream. So, when you eat ice-cream it's very intense and it doesn't last very long.

So, after you eat a salad you are going to get this subtle dopamine hit but that is beautiful in its own way. And you also have this new experience where you have this constant steady stream of wellness that you get to experience when it comes to your body. And you get to learn how to trust yourself and how to really, when you really take care of yourself you have such a greater pleasure because you know that you're taking care of yourself.

Now, so all that pleasure doesn't add up to happiness because of that equal and opposite consequence that comes after all the false pleasures. And in my very first podcast I talked about math versus drama. And so, I was thinking about this idea of pleasure stacking, thinking that you're going to, you know, it's like a ladder that you're going to get eventually to where it is. But that ladder, it's like rubber, it's not real, it's not true.

And also, when you actually think about math, you can add a whole bunch of negative things together, all these negative numbers are just going to get more negative. You're just going to keep going below zero. And that's the same thing with these false pleasures. You can't have enough false pleasures to create a positive outcome. It's going back to math versus

32. Distractions

drama. And it's because we just keep compounding all the negative that's happening.

I like this example of when you buy a car, a brand new car, if you can't afford it there's this rush of pleasure, the same thing with the block of the month, or same thing with a bunch of fabric. But then now you have the stress of, okay, I need to make the block of the month, I need to work on this thing. I need to do all of that. And so, when you trade all of your false pleasures in your life for wellbeing, it doesn't feel good. And then of course you aren't becoming the best version of yourself.

You're spending all of your time in this false pleasure seeking mode. And you're never getting anything out of it. And so, the other problem is when you're in the pleasure seeking, it's actually all about you. So, you're just always focused on you and then you're not able to give. You're not able to contribute to others. It's all about you and you just dig yourself deeper and deeper in a hole.

And we know the more that you drink the more you need to drink, the more sugar you eat, the more sugar you're going to need to be able to sustain that same boost or that same dopamine rush that you had in the past. And it's the same thing with shopping. So, if you're constantly trying to avoid yourself, you're literally just missing yourself. You don't even know who you are. So that's pretty sad. And so now you're just always turning to external things to try to make yourself feel better and you're never going to know who you are.

That's why so many women that I work with who have worked their whole lives and done all this for everyone else, they don't even really know who they are anymore. They lost themselves so long ago. I think for most of us it's not that we're afraid to make ourselves available to the world to becoming our most authentic selves. It's not that we're afraid to showing up and being who we genuinely are. It's just that we just don't really know how, we don't really know how to feel all of our emotions. We don't really know how to start getting to know ourselves better.

32. Distractions

So, we can either decide to just keep going with the buffering, the false pleasure stacking, or we can allow ourselves to start feeling the negative emotions so that we can allow ourselves to feel the positive emotions. So, to be authentic, to have a true relationship with your life it really is being willing to experience negative emotions 50% of your life. So, I know this is tough.

I know this is a hard one, but I like to think about when Brooke, so she gave an example of if you feel like your life is a mess and things aren't going that great, it's like my house is really messy. And our initial reaction is just to turn the lights off, just be like, "I don't want to see it." That's why we go to the false pleasure. But when we turn the lights off and we try to get anywhere in the dark we just stumble, and fall, and we hit our heads, and we have all sorts of problems. I don't want that for you.

I want you to be able to turn the lights on and I want you to be able to solve for what's going on. So just like I promised at the beginning of the episode, I was going to teach you the tool. So, the first one is recognize your distraction, how do you know you're distracted? Well, what are the results you're having in your life? You're going to know immediately. So, like I said at the beginning of the episode, if you get to the end of the day and you don't know what you did, it's because you're filling your life with lots of little distractions along the way.

And like I talk about with our higher brain and our lower brain, our lower brains wants us to stay safe, seek pleasure and to conserve energy. So, it wants us to think that we're busy doing a bunch of things but it's doing a bunch of things that aren't giving us the cumulative effect of a life that we want. So, getting distracted, getting down rabbit holes, getting sucked into Facebook for two hours, or YouTube.

Or thinking that it's really important that we learn how to make a quarter inch seam and so we watch, the next thing we know we have watched four or five hours of YouTube videos of all these different people's versions of how to have the perfect quarter seam. But we don't actually spend the time

32. Distractions

applying the tools that we've watched on YouTube. And so, we're actually not any further ahead on being able to make that quarter inch seam.

Instead of watching something for 10 minutes and then applying for 20 minutes and seeing how it works for you and using your own brain to solve that. How many of you can relate to that? So, recognizing them, so we need to make a plan, we need to have accountability of our day and saying, "This isn't what I had planned to do." And then how do we cope with that? We get to redirect our brain.

So, saying to ourselves, "Am I engaged in a false pleasure activity or am I living an authentic life?" And you're going to know that if you're feeling, and the best easiest way is to take a time capture of how much part of my day am I feeling negative emotion? And how much of my day am I feeling positive emotion? And if it is 50% positive and 50% negative, you are doing it, you are living your authentic life.

And number three, how to overcome the obstacle and move forward is to truly embrace that if I am going to have my most authentic life I am going to feel 50% positive and 50% negative. Now, I can't possibly teach you all the other tools and ways of helping you but that's just a very simple way of I know I'm distracted when I am avoiding myself, I don't even know where the time went. Okay, so your head's up. And then number two, how do you cope? You start taking an inventory of when do I get distracted. How long am I getting distracted for? And just getting onto yourself.

And then number three is being able to have 50% of your day positive and 50% of your day negative. And understanding the difference between a false pleasure and a real pleasure. And then you're able to make those changes for yourself.

So, this one was a bit hefty. I spent a lot of time trying to really get into how distraction has really caused us to gain so much weight, physical and mental weight. And as you start to just even listening to this episode and even knowing this is a thing that you can be distracted by DNA, you can be

32. Distractions

distracted by menopause, you can be distracted by your feelings and lack of feelings, you can totally make a change.

And if these things that I'm teaching you in this podcast are really resonating with you, I encourage you to check out my lifetime membership, Love Yourself Thin where we meet three times a week on live calls. We have a private Facebook group where women who are all along the spectrum, people who are just starting out like you to people who have lost 70, 80 pounds and been able to keep it off. They're all in there. It's an amazing supportive community that will help you all along the way as you lose the weight and keep it off.

It's been such a pleasure to spend this time with you. Take care everyone, bye bye.

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