

Ep #34: Urges



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dara Tomasson

Ep #34: Urges

Are you convinced that Easter cream eggs and cheesecake will always be more powerful than you can resist, that no matter how much you build your willpower you won't be strong enough? Well, this episode is for you because we are going to be facing urges head on.

I am Dara Tomasson, and this is *Weight Loss for Quilters* episode 34: Urges.

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.

This episode I'm going to take you through the what, where, why, when and how of an urge. Then I will show you exactly what to do with an urge step by step followed by a very practical action that will literally help you rewire your brain so that urges are not so urgent after all. You can expect to understand what an urge is, where it comes from and what to do with it every day all day. They really won't be that big of a deal. Are you ready? Let's go.

But before I do wanted to shout out my newest member of Love Yourself Thin. So, this client she has always struggled with her weight, in fact, you know the story, she had the taller, thinner, blonder sister who was always just, that's how she was and she was the short chubby sister. So now she's 57 and she has a friend who's in Love Yourself Thin and was amazed at watching how much her friend has changed as she has been part of the program. And so, she started listening to my podcast and you know who you are if you're listening.

And she came on for a 20 minute call and signed up immediately. So that was on a Wednesday and she went away for the weekend for a baby blessing of one of her grandbabies. And she knew just like lots of families, they plan a lot of their family time around food and her family is no

Ep #34: Urges

exception. So, her sister had her famous banana squares and her daughter-in-law made the beautiful cupcakes. And of course, they all had to go for Chinese which is her favorite but she honored her plan of the no sugar and flour.

And she realized for the first ever that she was actually in control of what she put in her mouth. She felt empowered around food and by the end of the weekend, on Monday she weighed herself, she was down 1.5 pounds. She has watched two modules and came to one call. So, I love the power of Love Yourself Thin because it really truly gives my clients all the tools they need to be successful with weight loss and I'm so dang proud of her as she uses the tools and creates that result for herself, love it.

So, you've got your pen, you've got your paper? I do have a handout for you but I do encourage you as you're listening to just write down things that come to your brain as I'm talking. So, let's just go first off with what exactly is an urge. And we're going to do just that typical I'm writing a newspaper, the what, when, where, how and why of urges. And then we'll go into the step-by-step. And then I'm going to have an actual exercise for you to do that will truly help you to change the neural pathways in your body.

So first of all, understanding an urge. So go into the dictionary and an urge is a strong desire or an impulse. When you think about an urge as a verb it's to present, advocate or demand earnestly, or pressingly. And urges do feel like a verb. They feel like an action. It feels very, very urgent. An urge is to push or force along, to empower with force or vigor. So, when we see a donut or a cinnamon bun and we smell it, and we look at it, and our mouth starts watering, the emotion of desire is very strong. That's what an urge is. It's a very strong emotion.

Another definition is to drive with enticement, to speed or effort. So once again an urge feels very urgent. So where do urges come from? They come from our brain. And in fact, we are wired to have urges. So, any time we have an urge it is the best news because we know that our brain is actually doing what it's supposed to. So, when we have an urge for, let's take the donut for example, we know from experience that not only does it

Ep #34: Urges

have refined flour and refined sugar but it gives us an incredible dopamine hit immediately.

We can have a moment of just a feeling of ecstasy because we've got both refined flour and sugar zapping into our brain and giving us that hit. So, when we have an urge it's our brain saying, "Hey, that was really great when you ate that food." And it gave you that immediate response, we should do that again. So where do urges come? They come from our thoughts. And our thoughts, we have 60,000 or so thoughts a day.

Why do urges come? Again, we are wired for our survival to seek pleasure, to avoid pain, and to conserve energy. And so, they come as part of our natural instinct. So, you might notice you have more urges if you are feeling maybe more threatened, maybe not feeling a lot of calm so those can just come.

So how do urges present? Quite often an urge, the definition, feels very urgent. So, your heart could start beating faster so then of course your pulse kind of increases, you might sweat a little bit. You have a little bit of debate back and forth in your brain, should I have it, should I not. So, then we have this back and forth so it's a little bit like a tennis match. So that's how it feels in our body. And it feels very important.

So, I want you to answer this question. What would you say are your most common urges? I know for me food definitely still even though I've been doing this for a while, I still have a human brain and I will still have urges. For some reason cinnamon buns have a particular urge for me. But even I can be driving down the road and I'll see a Wendy's and I'll think a frosty would be a good idea, Bubble tea, it sounds fancy and fun. There's a lot of different urges.

But think about even without talking about food, think about fabric. Thinking about buying that new fabric line, it's an urge because we know that as soon as we get that fabric or test that fabric we get that instant dopamine hit as well. So, we can have food urges. We can have relationship urges. We can have fabric urges, those are all just part of our brain. Anything that

Ep #34: Urges

gives us a really quick dopamine hit we will have that urge. We have a normal functioning human brain.

So right now, what I'm going to do is I'm going to give you step by step instructions of what to do with an urge.

So, the first step is to recognize that it is an urge, not a fact. So, if we have a thought like I really want that donut, it's just a thought that you just want a donut. It's not a fact of I must have that donut, my life is depending on it. No, it's just a thought that just came through your brain.

And then step two, is allow the urgent feeling in your body. And one of the things that I recommend to all my clients is to put your hand on your chest and it's a way for you to play hide and seek with your feelings. So, when I put my hand on my chest I say, "Okay, where is that urgent feeling in my body?" And then I just take a breath and I basically search for it. And quite an urge feels quite intense in my chest, my face might get really hot, sometimes there's a feeling in my stomach.

And then step three, hold on to the urge and just say hello to it. Just say, "Oh, I see you urge, yeah, that donut looks delicious, or that fabric, oh my goodness." And you just say, "Hi, I see you, I acknowledge you."

Number four, label it as an urge. I am just feeling an urge to have an ice-cream. I am feeling an urge to go to Starbucks and get that fancy drink with the caramel drizzled stuff on, that delicious whipping cream.

And then number five, thank the brain for doing what it's supposed to do. Thank you brain. I love that my brain is working, this is awesome.

Number six, decide what you will do with the urge. So, I teach my clients to decide ahead of time where that urge is going. So, I like this idea of recycling garbage. So, recycling started when I was a teenager and I remember it being kind of a thing in our house where we all of a sudden instead of just throwing everything in one container, we had to start rinsing out cans. And we had to distinguish between if it was paper, or if it was

Ep #34: Urges

can, or if it was glass. And all of a sudden what used to just be everything went in that one receptacle, we now had three receptacles.

So, it took a little bit of time and a little bit of training for us as a family, I'm sure my mom and dad had to take us aside many times and had to redo the recycling and everything. And say, "No, the paper goes in this blue one. Everything goes in this", whatever it was, can or a jar, whatever. "This goes in the green one and then the rest of this goes in the black one." And so, what I teach my clients is that we get to decide what we're going to do ahead of time with those urges just like this one goes in this container, this one goes in this one, and this goes in this one.

So, number seven, move on with your life and not be afraid of urges because you know exactly what to do with them. Best news ever.

Alright, so what we're going to do now is we are going to learn this concept that I learned at The Life Coach School which was so helpful. And basically, what we're doing is we're going to be rewiring our neural pathways in our brain. And this has been helpful for myself and my clients as well. We call it the urge jar. And so, my clients have used little stones. Or one of the things that I have used that works well is using a jar of Wonder Clips.

And so, what the concept is, is we have one jar that has a 100, let's say a 100 buttons, or a 100 Wonder Clips, or a 100 beads. And they need to be at least the size of a penny just so that you can put it in your hand, you can close it in your hand. And you take one jar that's full and then every time you process an urge which I'm going to walk you through that, you hold it, you have it in your hand, you process that urge. You go through the seven steps, recognize it's an urge, allow that urgent feeling in your body.

Meanwhile the whole time you're holding on to this button, or Wonder Clip, or whatever you've chosen, you label it as I'm just feeling an urge to have this ice-cream. Then you say, "Oh, thank you brain, you're doing exactly what you're supposed to do." Then I'm going to decide, I'm just going to

Ep #34: Urges

process this urge. I'm just going to allow it to be in my body. I'm not going to respond to it. So, you're not going to reward the urge.

This is where we're going to start getting into the neural science because just like a toddler or even a five year old, or even sometimes you can see them at the store, 12 year old's that want something really badly.

In fact, this weekend we went away and we went to Nordstrom Rack, which by the way is one of my wonderful places because I have very large feet. And there are not a lot of places where I can find shoes, and Nordstrom Rack traditionally has size 12. So anyways he found these shoes that were collectors edition. And he wanted them so badly and it was hilarious. He's almost as tall as me. He's 12 years old. And he's like, "Please mom, please mom." And I'm like, "I understand, you have an urge, it's okay."

So, we decided ahead of time that I'm not going to buy him those shoes. So, I'm not going to reward him because if I do reward him then he just knows that if he just begs me for five minutes then I'll just buy them for him. And so, I've just rewarded the urge. So, we are going to actually learn how to un-reward the urge and create another kind of reward which I'll be sharing.

So, you've processed that urge and then usually if you just allow it to be in your body, you allow the discomfort in your chest, or your face, or your stomach, or wherever, or your throat even, wherever that is. You might feel some strain in your shoulders, you just hold onto it, you just focus on that urge to say, "Yeah, I've found you in my body you're there, I acknowledge you." It would last about 60 seconds. What my recommendation is, if it's longer than 10 minutes that's a second urge.

So, after 10 minutes which is very rare, you would then place that processed urge into the other jar. So, what's happening is you're visually representing every urge that you processed. And inside my program I have a worksheet for my clients of a 100 processed urges. And it's a very powerful exercise for our brain because we literally are rewiring how we are rewarding our brain.

Ep #34: Urges

So, one of the metaphors that can be really helpful in understanding this idea is when your alarm is going off, have you ever been in a hotel room when the alarm goes off and they say, "It's a false alarm. So don't react but we're just going to take care of it."

And it was interesting because when I was delivering my second child and I was literally in full active labor, pushing her out, the alarm went off in the hospital which I mean, could you imagine that? Yeah, that was really scary for me. I'm like, "What do we do? What do we do?" And the doctor, they have all these codes and the code came on that said this is a false alarm. She said, "Just don't worry about it, you can have this baby."

But let's go back to the alarm in the hotel. And so, you know that it's a false alarm, so you don't have to run out, you don't have to go out and be cold or whatever. We don't have to react to it. We just have to allow it. We're like, "Okay, it's a false alarm. They're going to take care of it." It's loud, it's kind of annoying. We don't really like it. But you know that eventually it's just going to turn off.

Now, so imagine what happens if you put a pillow over your ear, you try to plug your ears and you're reacting to it. This is so dumb. Why can't they get their act together? I paid a lot of money to be here. I'm going to have such a terrible sleep. So, what happens to you when you spend your time resisting or reacting to the hotel alarm? Versus, this is kind of loud, it's kind of annoying but you know it's going to be taken care of. I'm going to be able to be okay. And you really do give yourself that calmness and you are allowing yourself that comfort in knowing it's going to be okay.

So, one of the things about processing an urge is that you are actually creating comfort in your own body. You are creating a safety in your body to know, my brain is my normal functioning brain and in fact my instincts are if I was to listen to my primal self, my instincts would be eat as much as possible, don't move very much and don't do anything different or scary, conserve lots of energy. We've talked about this. That is truly the motivational triad, that is how we are wired to survive in times of danger.

Ep #34: Urges

But when we are in our higher brain, and truly our body for survival would be best at our natural thin weight because if there really was a danger, let's say there was a grizzly bear, or there was a real danger, we'd have to run fast. Our ability to run fast is much better when we are in our best shape, when we are in our naturally thin state, when we are in our strong and capable bodies, when our brains are not drugged out by all the sugar and flour, truly. So, we are actually creating comfort in a wonderful body.

And so, it gets a little bit confusing because the brain is saying, there is comfort in predictable. But what we are doing is we are creating comfort in knowing that we can handle any emotion, then we get this quiet confidence. So, when we allow an urge we're also allowing any emotion. We're allowing depravation. We're allowing boredom. We're allowing sadness. We're allowing ourselves to have a natural healthy balanced life. And we're not reacting to it.

So, desire is normal. And we'll be having a podcast coming up about desire. I'm going to talk a lot more about that there. It is, when we see the donut, the donut's job is to be desired. The donut's job is to be wanted. So, it's normal. But where we get to step in is we get to decide what we want our bodies to look like, what we want our relationship with food to look like. We get to decide all of that. And so simply allowing that urge and getting into that practice of saying, "This is what I want", all of that is happening then we are able to truly start living the life that we want.

And so, we can have alarm bells, it's totally normal. And then we just get to decide if you're going to eat that thing or if you're not going to eat that thing. If you're going to allow your body to get to its natural thin state and staying there, and controlling all those urges and just allowing them and letting them pass, we are always in charge of that.

And just before I conclude I want to go back to the definition and I love this, the first one, we talked about a verb, to present, advocate or demand earnestly or pressingly. And I thought of that in a very positive way. So, when I think about an urge, I really want to present to you, I want to be an advocate for you, and I want to demand earnestly or pressingly to you that

Ep #34: Urges

you no longer need to give in to urges. You no longer need to give in to these, what seems like a really intensely driving emotion.

And when I think about an advocate I think about your future self. And that's what I am as a life coach. I am always helping my clients. I am always saying to them, "I'm doing this for your future self. I'm helping you. I'm giving you this coaching. I'm showing you your brain. I'm showing you your thought errors. I'm showing you these patterns of behavior that aren't serving you. People pleasing doesn't serve you. Giving into urges and rewarding that urge, that doesn't serve you.

So, with this episode I really want you to feel my love and my advocacy for you. And I want to just emphasize to all of you that there is never a point in your life, there's never an age, there's never a weight that you can't come back from, I promise you. If you are insulin resistant, if you have type 2 diabetes, if you have PCOS, if you have any of those things I want you to know none of those things are stumbling blocks that we can't overcome, truly.

It's so much fun to watch my clients do this work and transform their lives. And one of these tools, now you're going to put this in your toolbox of an urge, will help you so much in truly creating the life that you want. It is so much fun to spend this time together. So, I have included a handout for you with all the steps of processing an urge so you can download it. I would love to see you show me your pictures of your urge jar, and if you decide to use buttons or Wonder Clips that would be so fun for me to know.

And if you want to take this work to the next level I invite you to join my lifetime membership of Love Yourself Thin, just like an all-inclusive resort, you pay once but for Love Yourself Thin you get in for a lifetime. You have an amazing day. Take care. Bye bye.

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