

35. Desire



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dara Tomasson

35. Desire

Do you feel like ever having fun shopping for clothes or shoes is ever going to happen in your life time, feel like the consolation prize of ice-cream and chocolate bars will have to suffice? Well, today's episode will shock you because I'm going to show you that you not only can eat these things but you can have the body you want without ever gaining the weight back.

I am Dara Tomasson, and this is Weight Loss for Quilters episode 35: Desire.

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, I want you to imagine desire is like a secret weapon and if it gets in the hands of the bad guys it's going to cause a lot of trouble. And I want you to know that this is actually what's happened. So, today's episode we're going to go a little different in my routine because I have some stories I want to share with you as a way to understand when we don't understand desire we use it in the worst way possible. And we have created terrible results. In fact, one of the reasons our society is getting more and more obese is because we have used desire in the totally wrong way.

So, I want to share some stories about some clients and from my own personal life and my grandparents. And then we're going to bring it all together.

So here is a story about Sue. Sue is super accomplished, she has done so much in her life, very well educated, very well regarded in her career path, raised three amazing kids, has a very happy marriage, accomplished quilter, everything she does she does well except for weight loss. And recently she went an entire week without peanut butter. And this was a really big struggle because peanut butter was something she always went to, even as an adult it was a daily practice.

35. Desire

Now we have another client and she had a grandpa that she saw every Saturday. She loved visiting him and he always had three things, he had a beer, he had Hershey's Kisses and potato chips. Well, she wasn't really into the beer, she was just a little girl. But the Hershey's Kisses, she absolutely loved. And so, whenever she's super sad or discouraged she would just make sure that she always had her Hershey's Kisses in her pantry, sometimes in her car, in her purse.

One of my favorite treats is a Peanut Buster Parfait and not only a Peanut Buster Parfait but the Buster Bar which is the frozen version of it. So, any time I needed to celebrate I would get one of those. Every time I needed, not every time but quite often I would think, what could I do that would really celebrate? What could I do that would make me feel so much better? And there was always some version of a Peanut Buster Parfait. Even in my own house having Hershey's chocolate on hand, having peanut butter and ice-cream seemed to be really important to me.

My father-in-law loves to tell stories. And one of the stories that I've heard, I've been married for almost 21 years, over and over is the time when he was a teenager and kind of going through a rough time. And his dad invited him to go outside on the front step and they had a bucket of ice-cream and two spoons. And my father-in-law lovingly told that story over and over again about him sitting on the front stoop and giggling because he knew that if his mom ever found out that they ate ice-cream out of the bucket and sharing the same container she would have just lost it.

So, my grandparents used to come and visit us. I have three brothers and two sisters and so growing up we didn't go out for dinner very often. But when my grandparents came to visit they always made sure they took us to McDonald's, sometimes we'd go to Burger King but for the most part McDonald's was the choice. And if we were really good in the car and if we were really well behaved they would even sometimes buy us ice-cream cones or even ice-cream sundaes and I of course always got the chocolate with the peanuts.

35. Desire

Now, my mother-in-law loves baking. It's her passion, it was she does. And I have my five kids and for their birthdays my mother-in-law would start emailing them pictures of birthday cakes. She would get on the phone and call them. She would get library books out. And she would brainstorm the theme, the flavors, the decorations for months in advance. So, as I tell these stories what kind of stories come up for you when you think about food? And now I'm going to tell you a little bit about each one of them.

So, my client who loves peanut butter and went a whole week and she's 60 years old, she went a whole week without peanut butter which was monumental for her. And as we dove into that what she realized was as a little girl when her mom took her to the doctor worried about her weight and there was so much shame around food, shame around her body, she realized that peanut butter was never restricted. It was never on the restricted list.

And as we further explored, peanut butter was something that she was allowed to do herself. So not only was it restricted but it was something that she could do independently on her own. And so, whenever she was sad or when she ever did feel conflicted or embarrassed about her body, or confused about parents always serving dessert every night but also saying that girls shouldn't do exercise, peanut butter was her consolation. Peanut butter was her way of making herself feel better.

So, this client with the Hershey's Kisses, having that time with her grandpa every Saturday just brought a lot of comfort. It was a regular activity. It was something she looked forward to and 65 years later she has such fond memories of sitting at her grandpa's side and listening to his stories and eating, again, without restriction, without limitation, eating freely from his bowl that just kept magically re-filling of these Hershey's Kisses.

My first memory of having a Peanut Buster Parfait was right after my grandma Mary's funeral, I was eight years old. I don't have a lot of memories of my grandma, and most of them are all around food. My grandma made pancakes and she called them hotcakes and flapjacks. And she had an Aunt Jemima bottle that she made a little dress for her Aunt

35. Desire

Jemima. My grandma made her homemade ice-cream, she made her own root beer. And we would play games with popcorn.

And so, to be eight years old and to go to Dairy Queen and order from the fancy list of all the different sundaes and I just happened to choose Peanut Buster Parfait so that memory has been solidified over and over again. So, when I am feeling sad I imagine that salty sweet taste of the Peanut Buster Parfait and I feel special and I feel loved.

Having my grandparents come and making such a big deal of having all of us going to the restaurant and all of us eating and just having that special attention. And solidifying again if we were well behaved we got more treats.

And then I think about my kids getting all of that special attention and having all of those delicious conversations with my mother-in-law and having all of that special time just devoted completely to them. They didn't have to compete with anyone else for attention, they got that undivided attention. It was their special day.

So, as I share these stories I would love to hear what stories came to your mind. What food associations do you have? And really until I really started doing this work I had no clue except that Peanut Buster Parfait went right back to when I was eight years old of going to Dairy Queen, being able to order from the fancy menu and getting whatever I wanted. That was a level of freedom, that was a level of possibility I didn't even know was possible.

So, if I said to you, there is this bar that I created, and this bar has everything you need, it has all of the nutrition, it has all the minerals, it has all the nutrients, it has everything you need and you just have to eat one bar a day. And if you do this you will be thin for the rest of your life. You'd never have to worry about gaining weight back. And in fact, it has great probiotics, and it has all of these things that are going to help your body be super healthy but it means that you would never be able to eat again. You would never eat food again. Would you do that?

Would you trade this bar, it doesn't taste very good, I mean even if I could flavor it, for perfect health, would you do it? And now the question is, why

35. Desire

wouldn't you? What would it be exactly that you would miss out on? What is the relationship you have with food? Now, this is where the science part comes in. And this is where it really helps us understand what really is going on in our bodies. And so, my brilliant clients who have had all of these successes and I'm going to include myself in there, I feel I'm a really well accomplished person.

But to have that weight loss that just keeps bugging me and just reminding us, yeah, you're not perfect, yeah, you're not smart enough, yeah, you're not good enough because you can't figure out this whole weight loss thing, what's wrong with you? So, this is what's happened and this is why it's a perfect recipe for obesity. I'm going to explain it, why.

So, it's important to understand the difference between treating the symptoms. Because first of all there's two reasons we're overweight, one is over-hunger which just means we eat more often than our body needs and more food than our body requires, and over-desire. And in fact, the month of March I'm doing a deep dive with over-desire with my clients. And so, every Monday of the month we explore more of this. So, if you're interested in coming into my lifetime membership this is what we'll do in the month of March.

So, we have to understand the difference between treating the symptoms of over-desire by resisting overeating and treating the cause of it. So, imagine you go to the doctor and you're like, "My arm, my bone's got broken." And the doctor's like, "Yeah, I see you're in a lot of pain. I'm just going to give you some medicine for the pain." And you're like, "No, but my arm is not working properly." The doctor's like, "No, no, no, we're just going to treat the symptoms, don't worry." That would never happen.

But that's what we're doing when we approach weight loss. So, our desire for food is based on – now, this is really important, this is how we're wired, on a healthy release of dopamine in our brain. Our desire comes from a subtle reward healthy food provides and the satisfaction of hunger. So, let's just look at that for a minute. We all need food to survive because food provides us energy.

35. Desire

Our body needs approximately 1200 calories or so to function. So, for our eyes to blink, our heart to beat, our lungs to take in oxygen, use the oxygen and release the carbon dioxide, we need approximately 1200 calories a day. So that is our normal functioning. So, in order for our body to take the time to eat we have this whole mechanism that's built inside of us that says, I'm feeling some hunger pains. I'd better go get some food.

You're sewing and you're having so much fun and you're just really into it. And you realize, oh my goodness, your stomach's really growling. You think, a good thing my stomach's growling, I've got to go put some food in my mouth. I've got to go stop what I'm doing now so I can nourish this body so it can have enough energy to keep going. So, you see the problem though is that we now have overstimulating food. We have refined flour and refined sugar that gives us an extreme response.

So, think about the difference, and I say this all the time, of the sweetness from a strawberry versus the sweetness from a chocolate bar. A chocolate bar is wowzers, it's just so overpowering. So, our desire for food is based on that healthy release. So green beans give us this really nice sense of that was yummy, having a nice chicken breast that also does the same thing. So, it comes from that subtle reward, food provides us with satisfaction of hunger. It also has, we have some cultural conditioning and beliefs around what is normal eating and how much enjoyment should get from food.

So just as I shared the stories from my clients about peanut butter, and Hershey's Kisses and eating ice-cream with your dad on the front step when you're not feeling connected to him. All of those things, that kind of gets ourselves a little bit confused. And so, the problem is when we eat foods that unnaturally release dopamine, so we really super-size our brain. And I say super-size as in we've overly concentrated it. We get more desire than we need from our food. So now our desire is artificially increased beyond our evolved ability to satisfy or even understand.

So, then when we cut back on food to lose weight without addressing the underlying desire, we increase our desire for food by withholding it. That is

35. Desire

why our willpower is often so low when we embark on weight loss programs. So, you see how we're setting ourselves up for so much disaster. So often we feel as if we're eating against our will or that we're out of control. The truth is that false desire is making our brain run what we call a thought error created by an unwarranted urgency, so this false desire for food.

So, the ultimate goal is to reduce the desire for overeating, when that has gone you will have no need for willpower or extra effort to resist overeating. So, all that we have done by turning to the peanut butter or associating the Hershey's Kisses to food is we've now wired our brain to believe that eating the refined flour and the refined sugar is what's going to help us survive.

And we see this with drug addiction. When people have a hit of – I don't know – heroin, then your body now says, "Oh my goodness, this is amazing. We need lots of heroin to survive. This is really important for survival." And so those heroin addicts, now they've become addicted to heroin and the problem is you can't just do – I don't really know, I'm just imagining. But you can't just have one shot of heroin, you need more of it and more of it. And it's insatiable, and it's created this addiction. It is the same thing with sugar, it is the same thing with flour.

But the issue is it's so culturally acceptable that it does feel very confusing. But I said at the beginning of the podcast that you can still have ice-cream, and you can still have chocolate, and you can still have those things. But we plan that in advance and we eat it knowing that we will have some withdraw. We know that we're going to have some resistance. We know we're going to have it but because we've planned it from our higher brain, it's not that big of a deal.

So, when I said we have a recipe for disaster it's because we have very stressful situations, we don't really know how to process our emotions. I remember, was a school teacher, I was teaching in 95, 97. They started having little charts that had facial expressions that said their emotions. So, we have – we're kind of late in the game about acknowledging emotions. And that's okay, we're on the right track now.

35. Desire

But this is the reason why it's a recipe for disaster for obesity. We have stressful situations, we have been taught in the past to turn to suckers, lollipops, ice-cream, chocolate chips, chocolate chip cookies, you know all of those things. So, we don't really know how to process our emotions. We have been conditioned to go to food, to go to something external, or for some of us it's shopping, some of us it's drinking alcohol. Some people it's pornography, some people it's gambling. Those are all ways to try to feel better by going to something external.

And so now we've wired our brain for dependency on food and the kinds of foods that we're eating. That's all that's happened. And that's why we're obese. That's why we struggle with weight loss. And it's why Weight Watchers and all of the other, Herbal Magic and all those things don't work. It's because we are just giving, or just throwing, like here's you have a broken arm, but I'm not going to take care of the broken arm, I'm just going to give you some Advil.

Because the symptom is eating to feel better. But we're not actually addressing why we're trying to feel better. What is the actual problem? And for today, when we talk about these stories that I shared about my clients and from my own life it's because we want connection. I wanted to feel connected to my grandma. I wanted to feel special. I wanted to feel when something really sad happens, and my parents said, "Let's go", and it's like a consolation prize, and they up the stakes. So yes, and you guys can all have whatever you want on the menu. We do this in our family.

And I mean I do it as a mom. And I've just started recognizing that I have done it. When a few years ago – the first time I actually recognized it, my son – so this was when I started life coaching and learning all of these tools. And my son got a ridiculous amount of points in a game. He's only 12 years old and he got 30 points in one game. It was just amazing. And my immediate reaction was, "You can have anything you want from Dairy Queen." And I realized, oh my goodness, I'm doing the same thing.

So, I actually did celebrate in another way, we went and got art supplies. And I let him pick those. And I wanted to recognize his efforts. And that was

35. Desire

how I chose at that time. Because I wanted him to develop more talents and to acknowledge him. So, it's everything we have is we desire a connection, we desire to be able to do it yourselves.

So, I have this theory and I have created a handout for you which is going to give you step-by-step, practical ways to help you to be more sustainable in creating that connection with yourself. And not having to go outside of yourself. And I have great suggestions on there. I have great steps and tools. But I have this idea that I wanted to share with you as I've been thinking about how to understand desire a little bit differently. And growing up we lived in Alberta which is very similar to Texas, for example, as far as its dependency on oil and gas.

And so, I've lived there twice during two booms and busts. It's been very interesting to watch and what happens when you put all your eggs in one basket. The industry is so dominant on these non-renewable resources. And so, when the economy is based on that, this non-renewable resource, and it's now becoming scarce, then we have a lot of trouble. Whereas if we have a renewable resource then it's very stable.

And this is what we have been doing with food. We have been using food as a non-renewable resource. We have turned to food for trying to feel better. So that's why we have giant fabric stashes, because we're feeling sad, we're feeling bad, we're feeling uncomfortable, or we're feeling really happy, and even that has some discomfort because we don't really know how to sustain that for long. So, what we do is we go and we buy a bunch of fabric or we go eat a bunch of ice-cream. And the problem is that it's just a very short period of time and it doesn't last long.

So, what I want to help you with is to learn how to create that connection for yourself. That you become your own renewable source. You learn that what you really want is connection, and the connection only comes from you. So, what I recommend is that we decrease our desire for food, and we increase our desire for life, for joy, for sustainable, renewable ways of doing that. And it only comes from ourselves.

35. Desire

So, I see this happen over and over in the human experience. Is if you don't feel good enough about yourself and if you don't believe, let's say someone compliments you and says, "I really like your hair, it looks really good." But you don't like your hair. If you don't believe that your hair is nice, then that compliment that they gave you will fall on dead ears. You know like, "Oh, yeah."

So, if someone compliments you on your quilt and says, "I really like this quilt." But if you don't really like it, what are you going to do? You're going to start pointing out all the errors, all the things about your quilt that aren't that great. So that's one of the reasons why we need to create our renewable resource, that connection with ourselves because otherwise we won't believe what other people say, and it won't matter.

So, desire is wonderful. Desire is what has helped humans survive through pandemics, through natural disasters, because we all have this desire to be connected, desire to live in a healthier cleaner environment. A desire to be a more evolved version of ourselves. We all have this need to be more. And I believe that's part of our wiring. It's like we have this desire to create, it's in us, it's part of who we are. But if we use that desire against ourselves by saying, "I'm not good enough. I'll never be good enough." And we never offer ourselves that connection.

We never offer ourselves that compassion or that contentment, that level of peace. We all desire these positive emotions but as we know we need to work towards them. We need to – just like we can't just say, "I want a quilt." And then it just appears magically. Just you know twink our nose like from the TV show, Bewitched. If we want to have that quilt, we need to go and we need to put the work in. We have to cut, we have to pick the fabrics, buy the fabrics, cut them out, piece it, iron, square it up, and then quilt it with the binding. And then we will have it. And it's just like our bodies.

But if we use desire against ourselves then we're going to quit. We're not going to get to the finished quilt. So, I want to just close with just a story about one of my clients. And it's really exciting to me to think about the conversation I had with her before she decided to make a change for

35. Desire

herself. So, she had struggled most of her life with weight. Just like all of us, we have a story, whether it's our parents, or just messages we heard as a kid. But we have a lot of food associations we don't even realize.

And she had all sorts of feelings of guilt for being that overweight mom and just really struggled. And she's just in her late 60s. And so today I was meeting with her and we were talking about why she wanted to lose the weight. Where did that desire come from? And I think a lot of people the desire was to feel accepted, to feel good enough. They needed to prove that. And so, when they couldn't figure out why they were overweight, they just made it worse for themselves. And so, then they switch the desire to having more food, and more candy, and more treats.

And having, well, if I can't have this body, I might as well have all the candy, and all the baking, and all those external. And as we've just learned today from today's episode, non-renewable resources. Because if you don't have it, it's like a baby, if you don't have a bottle, if you don't have the milk, they won't eat, they can't eat.

So, she's just been on this journey now for about a year and a half and she's lost over 70 pounds. And she had talked about she just desired to wear nice clothes and just to feel good in her body. And it's interesting because there's a lot of, you know, lots of people have a lot of different opinions. And honestly you get to decide for yourself what kind of body you want to have. And I even said to myself, I just want my knees and my hips to feel more comfortable.

And I also just wanted, I had so many negative ways of thinking about myself being overweight, I had so much judgment on myself of you should be smarter and all of that. So just being overweight was just such a – it wasn't a fun way to be. I didn't show up nicely for myself. And everyone can decide this for themselves. And I really love that there is no judgment. And so, if people are judging it's because they have a judgment themselves.

35. Desire

But as I was talking to her about – she'd said, "Well, I just want to have more clothes options. And I just wanted to feel better in my body." And it was funny because she realized that when that happened then she could really be what she wanted, and that was being vibrant. She wanted to be a vibrant person. And when she was hiding behind clothes, and feeling drab, and feeling like she didn't have a lot of options of things to wear, she didn't really allow herself to be the vibrant woman that she wanted to be and how she truly wanted to show up in the world.

I was so proud of her because she said, "I don't need to carry these extra clothes around. Just because it's a nice shirt, and these are good quality pants. They just don't fit me, and that's okay. And I can give them away. I can give them to somebody else."

So, there's a lot and I know I'll have future episodes about this concept of desire. But just as I have been preparing this deep dive for my clients for the month of March and truly coaching my clients about desire, understanding the way that I have changed my relationship with desire and thinking about peanut butter. I just spent, yesterday I spent like 20 minutes thinking about my own story about peanut butter and what that meant for me as kid coming home from school and being able to be independent.

And having that, I just was able to take that spoon and I was able to satisfy myself. I didn't have to wait for somebody else, even just spending time thinking about that. I want you to just let yourself just go. Because I actually not until right before I recorded this podcast, I never once associated the Peanut Butter Parfait to my grandma's funeral and had all of that awareness.

And so, when I could answer the question of would I be willing to have this bar that I would just eat and I wouldn't have to have the food. Which I'm not saying – and actually I don't agree. And she doesn't either, at The Life Coach School that you have to not eat food ever again. Because we do have this need of our digestion system and all of that has been put in place. And there is also a factor of preparing food for other people and also the act of you preparing your own food. So please don't get me wrong on that.

35. Desire

But it's just this really great way to take your brain to say, if I never could eat food again, what would my life be like? And how would I have my own connection? So, thank you for listening, this one, this got a little bit longer. And I really wanted to help you to see desire in a way that's going to serve you so beautifully.

And the worksheet that I have prepared for you is going to help you see how you truly can use desire as a superpower for good. And that you can truly create a renewable resource in yourself of meeting those needs that we all have as humans and creating the kind of body that you want. So whatever kind of body you want, you can be in charge of it.

You can create the body that you want, and you can maintain that body when you learn you become independent, and no more control freak or control enthusiast needed, no more trying to make anyone else do anything else. You can do that for yourself.

I am so glad that you are listening to this podcast. I remember the first time that I heard desire and all of these tools that I'm teaching you. I spent, I think it was about two weeks, and I just binge listened to this podcast that was teaching all these same things that I'm teaching you. And it truly was like I had only been ever seeing black and white in my life, and then I finally had color. And it really is a privilege for me to share this podcast with you.

It brings me a lot of joy knowing that wherever you are, if you're on a walk, if you're in your sewing space, if you're cleaning your bathroom, that you can know that desire is not a problem. But when we don't use desire properly we get ourselves further and further into the body that we don't like. And then we just convince ourselves that we could never have that body that we would ever be happy with. And then we give up and we turn to chocolate and ice-cream for consolation.

And then we wire our brain to have a stronger and stronger desire that's further and further out of our own control because we truly have wired our brain just like with an addiction that's never satiated, it's never satisfied. So that is my invitation to you, is to learn how to create that total self-

35. Desire

sufficiency for yourself without ever needing anyone or anything. In fact, even in a marriage, I say you take care of you, he takes care of him, and then we can come together and have fun because we can't change anybody. The only one we can change is ourselves.

This has been a heavy podcast, in the way that having to go back and trace some things. But I want you to know it doesn't have to be heavy. You can literally just say, "I'm going to start connecting with myself. I'm the most important to connect with. And then I will show up so much more powerfully in my life. And then the connections I have with others is truly going to be so much different." Because you don't need anyone for anything anymore. It's the most beautiful thing, my friends. And I am so privileged to be able to share it with you today. You have an amazing day. Bye bye.

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