

## 122. Weight Loss and Shame Mastery



— WITH DARA TOMASSON —

**FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT**

**With Your Host  
Dara Tomasson**

## 122. Weight Loss and Shame Mastery

Is shame your middle name? I know for a really long time shame was something that I just felt all the time, it was just always there and it truly was the fuel for so much other things that I was doing. So if you feel the same way, I'm not good enough. What's wrong with me? Why can't I ever get it right? I must be broken because clearly after all these years I still haven't figured it out. Then this episode is for you. I'm Dara Tomasson, and this is Love Yourself Thin episode 122 Weight Loss and Shame Mastery.

Okay This is such a big topic and we talk about shame a lot in my program and in the world. Brene Brown did an amazing job at bringing out so much awareness about shame. And I remember the first time I listened to a podcast on shame and she said, If you feel like your theme song is I'm Never Good Enough, I want you to just own it. And I remember sitting in my car, just bawling my eyes out. Because then she said, So many other people feel the same way. And it was just such a load off because I felt like it was my deep dark secret and I operated out of fear that people were going to find out that I truly felt like I was broken and as soon as she said that I was actually ready to receive and to hear her and I was able to just admit it, and you know, I feel so much guilt because I have beautiful children, I have a husband who adores me. I have a home with electricity and I live in a free country, I have a relationship with God and I do feel really connected to him. But there, it just is so deeply seeded in me ever since I was a little girl, I just felt like I was never good enough. I could never clean my room good enough. I could never clean the bathroom good enough. I could never even do a test, I couldn't do it good enough because I didn't always get a hundred percent. I just felt so fundamentally flawed, just like Gay Hendricks talks about.

Today's episode, we're going to dive into shame a little bit more and I'm not sure if you're ready to receive this, but when you are, it makes me feel really good knowing that there's episode 122 in my podcast for all of you who feel like shame is their theme song. And so many of us are so embarrassed about it and we're so ashamed that that's our story. And so today's episode is going to be kind of raw. It's also going to be informative and I'm really excited to share it with you because even though I know that this work is challenging and difficult, the benefit of doing it is so worth it.

And so I'm going to go into the episode, but before I do, I wanted to share a win from one of the members in my program, because so many of the women before they join, they just feel like they are fundamentally flawed. They feel like they truly aren't able to be smart enough to figure this out. And recently I hosted an incredible retreat. There were nine women there. They came from all over. So one of the ladies there, she has experienced some pretty amazing weight loss. She's down 70 pounds, but she's been at that weight for over a year and a half. So she's kept that 70 pounds off, but she hasn't continued to decrease it. And she just keeps showing up. And she keeps figuring things out and even though she in some ways feels ashamed that she hasn't made more progress, the more that she can lean into what's really going on and to accept that this is just her story, the more that she can be, it's almost like you're making a cake and I just threw a 80th birthday party for my mom and I made these cakes and it was like you put the timer on and you're not sure when the cake is going to be done and it will say, you know ideally, this cake should take 30 minutes, but of course you put the timer on and you check it and you don't know how the oven is going to do and how it's on the top shelf or the bottom shelf of the oven. And so you put that knife in to make sure the toothpicks, is this cake ready yet? And I like to think about that for our brains. Are we ready yet for hearing the things so that we can start healing? And I'm just so glad for her that she is not giving up and that she's allowing that plateau because what it's doing, a plateau is actually you learning how to be you at 70 pounds down and learning how to go deeper into why are we overeating still? Why are we still having the overdesire? Why are we like, where's that resistance? And so the more we can do on shame mastery, the more we're able to figure out what's going on.

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And so I'm gonna, I'm gonna share some thoughts. I actually really love looking at shame in lots of different ways. And of course, Brene Brown, she has really been helpful for all of us to understand about shame and, and where it shows up. Now, she said, shame is the conviction that we will never be good enough and that because of our flaws, we're not lovable and never belong. So the problem with this is that we then put ourselves in a place where we have to earn our worthiness. Now, what's the problem with that? The problem is our worthiness was already decided. It's not something that we can earn. And so now shame is built on fear, self hatred, and the sense that we're not good enough. And so shame has us hiding and rejecting parts of ourselves that we think others will judge us. And so now we're not being our full amazing self. So we're always filtering ourself. We're always editing ourselves. We're always scrutinizing ourself, thinking they might not like this. I better not say that because if they, if I say that they're going to think this. And so we're all in our heads second guessing ourselves, doubting ourselves. And so we're not ever really who we want to be. And so what's happening is we distance ourselves by hiding our true self. We try to please those around us so we can earn back our worthiness and then we express our shame through aggression and by shaming others because this is kind of an exhausting way to live.

Now there's lots of explanations here on the internet. It's really fascinating to go down these articles. But as we look at shame, I want you to ask yourself, what is your relationship with you? So this is an article that I found online and it's from abc. net. au. So it's an Australian take and she talks about the epidemic of shame. And I want to read this part. "Brown has spent a large part of her career looking at shame and she believes it's now an epidemic in our society." I think in our culture, and this is Brené Brown saying, "I think in our culture today, we just see the vitriol. We see people humiliating, shaming each other, name calling, belittling, putting others down, she said. it's a really powerful way to discharge anger and pain and discomfort just to tear into someone else. One, it feels good. And number two, we do not know how to hold people accountable. It's just easier to name call and move on and rage. She then says it's also too hard on ourselves when it comes to feelings of shame. We berate ourselves. Very few of us talk to ourselves in the face of a disappointment or failure. Very few of us talk to ourselves the same way we would talk to someone we love and respect. Brown says the reason we do that is because we've bought into the idea that we can shame ourselves into changing. But there's literally not a scrap of evidence that says that's true."

So think about when we were kids, like, if you shame yourself enough or you're mean enough to yourself, you'll change? Yeah. That, that is not a good birthplace of change, right? Talk about willpower. Think about how that affects us with weight loss. If we say, if we say, Oh, you're such an ugly pig. What's wrong with you? If you talk to yourself like that, you're not going to eat the brownies. No, you're going to eat more of them because you're so mean to yourself. So Brown says " what we know from studies is that shame does nothing to move people in either direction. Empathy, understanding, listening, that is actually the only thing that's effective. And so you can't shame or belittle people into changing. We can hang the picture of our worst selves on the refrigerator hoping that it'll stop the snacking." My mother in law has a picture like that and she will always be looking at it. But most of the time we just end up standing there looking at it eating the peanut butter because it makes us feel like crap.

Now last episode we talked about guilt. And so she gave some insight on this. What's interesting is guilt gets a really bad rap, but guilt is really a very socially adaptable emotion. Guilt is I did something bad and shame is I am that bad. Guilt is cognitive dissonance. Guilt says, I've done something or failed to do something that is aligned with my values and it feels awful. I need to make amends, make a change and hold myself accountable. I need to fix it. Shame. However, is a lot more damaging because it says you are a bad person. And as a social species, shame is death. Shame is the fear of being unworthy of love, connecting connection

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and belonging and the absence of love and connection and belonging as a human. There's always suffering. So we have to say to ourselves, look, I'm not a bad person, but I did a bad thing and I've got to fix that thing and make amends. So when you see people making amends, being accountable, it's not because it's driven by shame. It's because it's driven by guilt and a combination of guilt and empathy.

So just really interesting. How are you relating to what I just said? What is going on there for you? So when we think about shame, and I look at the definition of shame here. So, the definition, there's a verb, there's a noun and then there's an expression. So the noun is a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior. And as I explained that feelings come from our thoughts. So let's say we did break something or let's say we said something mean to someone. Well, we have a thought like you shouldn't do those things. So it's okay to feel shame. It's okay to feel, Oh, I'm humiliated or I'm distressed because I did that. So it's okay to feel that way. It actually helps us to not go to jail. It helps us to like stay on the path that feels aligned for us. So if you do break something at a store, you could say, Oh, I'm so sorry I broke this. That's being in integrity with like the kind of person that you want to be. So it's okay to feel shame about it and just allow that feeling.

Another way to look at shame is a regrettable or unfortunate situation or action. So, for example, I, you know, what a shame Ellie won't be there. Like it's too bad that she won't. I feel bad that she can't be there. It's a misfortune that she can't come. So it's like, that's a cause of regret. It's okay that that happens. And then the verb of shame is to make someone feel ashamed. So I tried to shame him into giving some away. And how many of us do that? A lot of times we don't even realize, but we think that we can do that. But remember what I said about emotional adulthood in our last podcast is nobody can make you feel any way. So and then there's an exclamation. I have a friend at church that will say that she's like, Oh, shame. She says that all the time. It's so funny. And so it's an it's actually used to express sentimental pleasure, especially at something small and endearing. So look at the foals, shame aren't they sweet. Okay, so it's just interesting how they had different ways of looking at it.

Shame is a feeling of embarrassment or humiliation that rises from the perception of having done something dishonorable, immoral, or improper. So when you think about that, I wanted to come back to the handout. So when we look at shame, how many of us feel like we're fundamentally flawed? And, you know, Gay Hendricks in *The Big Leap*, he talks about that. Brene Brown, of course, talks about that. So if you believe that you're fundamentally flawed, then that means you're spending a lot of your mind and your time and your energy trying to earn your worthiness, trying to earn back. Now, so obviously this is a very useless tool. It's like people who want to go on a wonderful vacation, but instead of walking on a road or driving a car, they just stay on a treadmill. So they're doing a lot of movement, but they're actually not going anywhere. So that's the first issue I want you to ask yourself. It's like, do I feel like I have to earn my worth? Your worth is already set. It can't be earned. It's like if you keep saying one plus one is three, it will never be true. One plus one is always going to be two, no matter what, no matter what language, like it just is what it is. It's a universal truth. So if you keep saying one plus one is three, you're always going to be wrong. So it's the same thing with you are not fundamentally flawed. you do not have to earn your worthiness. It already is. So that's the very first thing I really want to emphasize today in this podcast.

The second concept that I really want to help you with is when you are embarrassed or humiliated from the perception of having done something dishonorable, immoral, or improper, and then you turn out to hide from what you've done and then you have that chronic shame, which is I'm fundamentally flawed. I want you to think about what is the thing that is dishonorable? What is the thing that's immoral or what is the thing that's

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improper? And this is where we get our power because then we get to decide, what is that about us? Like, do we want that? And I'm going to read a quote by Brene Brown. She said, "Owning our story can be hard, but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky, but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy, the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light."

So, I'm going to give some examples here of what I'm talking about. So, for example, if you grew up thinking that it was dishonorable to steal, and then you stole something, and then you walked away and you then believe that you are like, that's very shameful. So if that is something that you want to live by, that you think, yeah, you know what, that is a value that I have. I do not want to be a person that steals things. So then you can go back and you can, you can make restitution for the things that you stole and you can make a decision on purpose and say, yeah, I grew up believing that it wasn't good to steal and I'm actually going to honor that. That is something that I want.

Now let's think of another one where you grew up thinking that you had to honor adults, that whatever an adult said was, you had to just honor it. But now that you're not a kid anymore and you're an adult and these people are your peers, how do you want to work through that. Is that something that you want to honor an adult just because they're an adult? Or do you want to have a new filter where I'm going to decide if I honor what that person is doing? And I showed this example before, but it's just, it was so powerful to me. And so when I went to this quilting group, when I had my first child and I went to this church quilting group, there was a woman who was probably 65. And she ran the group. And we did a lot of charity quilts. That was basically what we were doing. We would tie them. But she would, every once in a while she would bring up a quilting tip or tool or a strategy to kind of help us improve our piecing or, or whatever it was. She taught me how to birth a quilt. Like all these different things. So one day I decided to bring this table runner I made. Which this is before like YouTube videos and things and I had never really read a pattern so it had had Trees on it. I pieced them. I didn't really know how to piece triangles and stuff and anyway, so I pieced it and I quilt hand quilted it and I definitely didn't know anything about you know stitches per inch and all that and so I showed it to her and she called everyone's attention to my quilt and she immediately started to point out all the different errors and then she said at the end, she said, you probably want to give this away because you'll be so embarrassed in the future looking back thinking that you ever did anything that terrible. And so this is a great example of me making a decision. Am I going to feel shame? Because if I was taught it was dishonorable to question what adults said then that would feed the definition of I actually warrant feeling shameful because this adult just told me that I did a terrible job. It's not interesting, but the fun thing is I could totally decide what I want. And at that moment I looked at her and I thought, just because you're older than me doesn't mean you're wiser or kinder or nicer. And at that time I was, what, 29? But I had been a school teacher, I don't know, I, I just, it was just so fascinating to me that I'd never had that situation before where I questioned what I had been taught and then I got to decide how I wanted to perceive her.

And so, this is where you get your power. So if embarrassment or humiliation from the perception of having done something dishonorable, immoral or improper, this is where you get all your power. You get to decide what is dishonorable. You get to decide what is immoral and you get to decide what is improper. And the more that you can bring creativity, curiosity, compassion, understanding to the table, then you can come with a brain that is more powerful instead of reacting or feeling hurt. When emotions are high, intelligence is low. So that's why when Brene says "owning our story can be hard, but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it." That is why life coaching tools are so important. Because we can then go into our own brains and

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start making decisions on purpose of what we want to think. So then she says, "embracing our vulnerabilities is risky, but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on loving and belonging, enjoy the experiences that make us the most vulnerable." I always promise my clients, the more you are willing to feel vulnerable, the more success you're going to have. And then Brene says, "only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light." That is why our brain is the best investment.

So as I was doing some research for this podcast, I found a five page worksheet that Brene made back in 2019 and I've linked it here in the podcast and it's really interesting. You know, she talks about how we are wired for connection. It's in our biology as infants. Our need for connection is about survival. So we all know that we are wired to connect. We know that we need to be accepted by others. It is in our very basic survival.

So I shared a lot of different concepts today about shame. I really hope just like when we have a tangled ball of wool, it feels really almost impossible to get it untangled, But the more that we can loosen up our brain, the more that we can kind of like look at things from different perspectives, so what should we do when we're untangling wool? We have to make it less tight. We have to loosen it up. That's my goal for today's podcast. And I, I threw in a lot of different ideas. And I'm really excited to hear your thoughts and feedback from it. Because the more that you can become a shame master, the more happiness, joy, excitement, thrill, awe, courage, you're going to have in your life. It's way more fun and you're going to have a much more exciting holiday. All right, I can't wait to hear your feedback from this one. Bye bye.