

132. Weight Loss and Love as a Tool



— WITH DARA TOMASSON —

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

**With Your Host
Dara Tomasson**

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Do you feel so frustrated that even at whatever age you are right now, you still have childhood trauma that comes up and holds you back? You still feel like you're trying to prove yourself or you feel like you're not good enough or somehow you're broken? Whatever you do, you can't be fixed. Well, today's episode is going to be so helpful as we really learn how to use love as a tool for all healing. My name is Dara Tomasson, and I am a life coach who helps you to look at your life and make permanent change by going to the root of the problem. And this is episode 132, Weight Loss and Love as a Tool.

All right. How many of you feel like weight loss has been a lifelong battle? I hear you. I'm so glad that you're here and I'm so glad that I'm going to be able to share this episode with you as we really look into what's going on for each one of us when we know that we're smart, accomplished women, but for some reason we just can't get over that hurdle of looking at ourselves in a much better light and living the life that we really want. Now, before we get into the episode, which is going to be very, very helpful, especially if you have patterns of behavior, like promising yourself, I'm going to be better. I'm going to be good. And then you find yourself eating that ice cream at 10 o'clock at night. You're going to be really glad that you listened to this.

But before I go into the tools in the episode, I'm going to be sharing the ripple effects of how other people are affected by the members of Love Yourself Thin. So today I'm going to be talking about one of our members who, she's been in the program now for about three months and she's just come off of no sugar november and she said that she had the best sleep she's had in 30 years. And the reason I share this ripple effects is because guess what, her husband? He is feeling a lot more peace and calm because his wife is a lot more peaceful and calm because she has had such better sleep. So she is not as jumpy or crabby and she is feeling so much better about herself, which of course affects their life together. So yay, win for him and win for her. I always want to remind you that when you do this work on yourself, you actually turn up in the world as the best version of you and it feels so much more empowering. And so when you do this work for yourself, you actually are benefiting everyone else around you because they get that happier version. I don't know if this was like at your house, but do you remember when you were a kid, maybe, I'm not sure, but your mom was maybe saying like, okay, go clean your room and she might be yelling at you or are kind of on your case. And then the phone ring and she'd pick it up and say, hello. And she'd have this like very stark change in her personality. Well, so we want to be that best version of ourselves and to be able to just be really honest with what's going on.

So today we're going to be talking about love as a tool. And the reason I'm bringing up this episode is because love takes a lot of work. We watch romance movies, you know, rom coms, and maybe you love romantic novels. But it just looks very easy and flowy and you can kind of like fall into that. But when it comes to unconditionally loving yourself and being committed to being the best version of you, which means you have to unconditionally love yourself that actually takes a lot of effort. And I was coaching one of my clients today and she just said, well, weight loss is going to be a lifelong battle. It's been a lifelong battle for me. And the way she said it, it was just such a trigger to me because and I was able to tell, ask her like, do you believe that that's a fact that that will truly be a lifelong battle for you? Or do you believe that it's just a thought? And as she reflected on it we were able to go back into her childhood and she was able to see how she has been fighting her body and food. And so I want to talk to you about like love actually takes effort. It takes commitment. It takes accepting of where you're not doing things that are awesome. It takes patience and understanding.

And so today we're going to go back to your childhood because that's where the foundation of love was built. So if you had a childhood where love was conditional, it meant you could only get love or you felt secure if you behaved a certain way or even if you did behave a certain way and maybe if your parent was you know, an

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alcoholic or always worried, stressed out, whatever that was that they didn't have that stability of love. And so that brings in a lot of insecurity. And when your foundation of love is a little bit shaky, you know, just like a building, if you don't have a solid foundation, then if the winds blow, or if there's a bit of a tremble. you know, earthquake or anything, it feels very unstable. And so you react in different ways. So if there were some struggles, we need to address them. And so what were your messages that you heard as a young child and do they still impact you?

So today I have some in the show notes And this one was just a really good Google search and it's childhood trauma signs you're repressing traumatic memories. And so I'm just going to read a few of the signs. So causes of childhood trauma, there's, you know, verbal, physical, or sexual abuse. There was neglect, alcoholic parents, mental illness of your family members, abandonment of a parent, so through divorce, death or prison, severe childhood illnesses maybe some learning disabilities, extreme bullying. Maybe there was like a refugee situation or natural disasters. And it's interesting in this one report, almost half of the children in the United States are exposed to at least one of these causes adverse childhood experiences that can leave scars of repressed emotions to emerge as an adult. So think about that 50 percent now, I like how they shared signs and symptoms. So the following signs may be ways that emotional impact of childhood trauma can present. So a strong reaction so let's say someone said something and you just kind of flap the handle and you really like react and sometimes that can happen and you're so surprised by it. What about anxiety? So childhood trauma increases the risk of anxiety. Anxiety triggers a reaction where adrenal courses through your body, telling it to fight or leave a situation. Your heart rate increases and you may feel sick to your stomach. So is that you? What about a childish reaction? So childish reactions may look like a tantrum. You speak in a childlike voice. You show stubbornness. You have outbursts that are difficult for you to control. And I know as a mom, there's times where I'm not proud of it, but I, I will literally be having like a tantrum and I'll, I will be kind of like raising my voice to my kids and I'll even say, I'm having a childhood reaction right now to the way you're acting. I know I'm acting this way. It's, it's just been so interesting. I mean, I haven't done that in a long time, but definitely when the kids were younger, there was times where I just felt. I, I was like, I'm just having a tantrum right now, everyone. You could probably just go to your rooms and just let me have this tantrum and then I'll come back.

Okay. What about this one for you? Inability to cope with change. So stress is normal when you're pushed out of your comfort zone. That's, that's okay to feel stressed, but it becomes concerning when change triggers persistence, extreme emotions that interfere with daily life or relationships. So that's when you aren't able to like regulate, come back and to kind of bring yourself back into the moment. What about intense mood swings? So trauma survivors might feel numb or have overwhelmingly emotions. Some find it difficult to identify why they feel irritable, stressed or angered. There's another one here. Certain places make you uncomfortable. So certain smells, noises, environment, sights, or other sensations. I know as a teenager I learned that my grandpa, my mom's dad, he was an alcoholic and he didn't, he wasn't an alcoholic until later on in his life when he was retiring and was really struggling with retirement and not being able to do everything that he could do. And he died, he actually like drank himself to death when I was eight years old. And so my memories of my grandpa were associated to alcohol. He always smelt like alcohol. And I remember being driven home. I was doing a babysitting job and the man that was driving me home smelt like my grandpa and I remember just feeling so triggered and I was so upset that I had gotten in a car with someone who smelled like that because I, I had this association with death and alcohol and so it was super uncomfortable for me. So that's an example.

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What about low self esteem? So low self esteem can be hard to identify, but becomes apparent through fears of being judged, people pleasing, not setting boundaries, or lack of self worth, frustration, social anxiety, and distress can also occur with low self esteem. Now I'm going through this website that I found. It's called VeryWellHealth. And I just find like it's a really good way to, for you to listen to me as I'm, I'm sharing these. So if you wanted to go in deeper and there's, there's a lot of research and different other articles that are connected to it. So if you do want to take a deeper look into that, I invite you to go check out that link. Another one that can cause signs and symptoms that you had an emotional impact of childhood trauma could be chronic pain or illness. So some studies show that people with early childhood trauma may be susceptible to developing chronic pain or illnesses later in life. And I see this a lot in my program with women that have thyroid issues, arthritis. So a lot of the women that do this work and they keep showing up, those things start to lighten because they are able to work through what's going on for them.

Another one is abandonment issues. So in many cases, the very people who should be caring for a child hurt them. This can lead to an alteration in the development of trust that leads to an intense fear of abandonment. So abandonment issues may result in the following behaviors; so quickly getting attached, lack of commitment or trying not to get attached, staying in unhealthy relationships, distrust, feeling insecure, intense suspicion or jealousy, separation, anxiety, overthinking, hypersensitive to blame or criticism, and self blame.

So when we think about childhood trauma in the book, *The Mountain is You*, she says that trauma is any time you felt scared and you didn't know how to solve the problems. Now you can go to behavior therapy and you can get a trauma therapist. I recommend that if, if you are really triggered by some of the things that I'm saying, you can relate to it. I do invite you to, to go and check that out. You can have exposure therapy, you can have cognitive processing therapy. That's super helpful for people who have PTSD. But one of the things that happens in *Love Yourself Thin* and with life coaching tools, it's basically putting a mirror to your, brain and your thoughts.

Now there are four different ways that trauma can affect us as adults. Now as in *Love Yourself Thin*, the average age of participants is about 62. So it's interesting for me as their coach to talk to them about what's going on and they, they continue to blame their mom or their dad or their grandparent or whatever that is. And it's because there was that trauma as a child, you were so afraid of what was going on and you didn't know how to solve it. And so you kind of, you do stop your progression in that area of growing up and developing yourself. And this other article that I want to reference, it's also in your show notes. It says four ways childhood trauma can affect you.

So this woman who's a childhood emotional trauma therapist, she sees many patients who carry childhood emotional wounds with them into adulthood. And one way these wounds reveal themselves is through the creation of a false self. So they bury their emotions and they lose touch with who they really are. So that's why a lot of women have imposter syndrome because they think that they have to act a certain way, but they're not super connected to themselves. So that's really scary. So I'm curious, is that you? Another one that she mentions here is victimhood thinking. So what we think and believe about ourselves drives our self talk. And I don't know if you've noticed, but in the worksheets this year, the last question I ask is what are you going to do different after listening? And so I want you to, as you're listening to me here, I want you to write down in that last slot, like what are you relating to? Like, what can you identify with? One of my members in the membership, I shared it recently in the podcast, she was speaking to herself as a bully and didn't even realize it. So, if you were victimized as a child are you still doing that to yourself?

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Passive aggressiveness. This is an interesting one for me because I have some experiences with older people in my life who are extremely passive aggressive and they don't even realize it. So what this therapist said here is she said, when children grow up in households where there are only unhealthy expressions of anger, they grow up believing that anger is unacceptable. If you witnessed anger expressed violently then as an adult, you might think that anger is a violent emotion and therefore must be suppressed. Or if you grew up in a family that suppressed anger and your parents taught you that anger is on a list of emotions you aren't supposed to feel, you suppress it, even as an adult you would benefit from anger. So remember we talk about if you avoid, resist or react, it's like pushing the beach ball down. And so that just makes it worse. So what happens if you can't express your anger? If you're someone who suppresses your upset feelings, you're likely already know the answer. Nothing. But you still feel angry. After all, anger is a natural, healthy emotion we all experience. Like I like to say, when I think about injustices in the world, I want to be angry. Angry is an appropriate emotion. When I see children that are not treated properly, I feel anger towards their parents for doing that to them or whatever, you know, whatever that is. It's good to feel angry in those situations, because anger can be a catalyst for going into action.

So she continues to say, you don't express your feelings straightforwardly, but since you can't truly suppress anger, you express your feelings through passive aggressiveness. Now, me understanding this passive aggressiveness has helped me have a lot more compassion and understanding for those people in my life who are extremely passive aggressive. And so I don't have to judge them anymore. I can just say, this must be really hard being them because of the way that they're reacting to me. So I don't have to take that personally anymore.

And then the fourth way that you can react when you've had trauma as a child and then it's gone into adulthood is passivity. So if you were neglected as a child or abandoned by your caretakers, you may have buried your anger and fear in the hope that it would mean no one will ever abandon or neglect you again. What happens when children do this though? is that we end up abandoning ourselves, right? Again, we hold ourselves back when we don't feel our feelings. We end up passive. We don't live up to our potential. The passive person says to him or herself, I know what I need to do, but I don't do it. And how many times do you do that? Or, you know, people that do. And so she continues to say, when we bury our feelings, we bury who we are. Because our childhood emotional trauma we have learned to hide part of ourselves at the time that may have helped us. But as adults, we need our feelings to tell us who we are and what we want and to guide us towards becoming the people we want to be.

So, as you can see in these two reports on why childhood trauma affects us today it's because we aren't able to resolve it from an adult perspective. So this is my purpose of this episode today is to bring an awareness of love as a tool. Now, in the worksheet, I asked, what are your first memories of being loved? And then what are your childhood memories of love and food? So how much of the times in your life where you actually felt safe because it was around food? So for example, a birthday. People came to celebrate you or to celebrate other people. It was usually a happy time in your family. And it's associated with food. So that makes sense that that would be the case. Also if you, for example, you had a dance recital or a music recital and they celebrated you, oftentimes it was, you know, let's go to the ice cream and get a special treat. Or when grandparents came to visit, they would take you to a Burger King and McDonald's. It was a time to celebrate. And so a lot of our associations with happiness have associations with food. And so because we haven't developed ourselves as an adult in that area of trauma, we will go to hamburgers, milkshakes, french fries, chicken nuggets, like all those kind of typical party food, ice cream cakes. Those are what we do. It's why the holidays have a special draw to food.

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And so, when my client said in a coaching call today that her weight is a lifelong battle, the problem is it is a lifelong battle if she doesn't slow down and look at what's really going on. That she can look at the time when her grandpa and her uncle made a comment about that she was chubbier than her sister and then her mother didn't say anything. And so then that left a scar on her thinking, you know, even my mother didn't stand up for me. And so that was a time in like, if we go with the definition of trauma, it's a time where you felt scared and you didn't know how to solve it. She didn't have the words as a little girl to say hey mom, aren't you going to stand up for me? Or Hey, what does that even mean? What's wrong with being a little bit chubby or it's not my fault that I have chubby cheeks or I don't have control over what I eat. You're the one who feeds me, right? Like she didn't have that ability to do that and because she didn't she felt a lot of fear around her body and food and hence became a lifelong battle.

So, In parting for this episode, when I talk about love being a tool, I really want to teach you this tool that will be so helpful. And we want to really connect our body with our brain. So that's one of the reasons diets don't work because they're saying read this, do this, follow these instructions where food really was kind of the babysitter or the food was the go to, was the distraction, was the I'm gonna give you like a quick feeling of goodness, it's not gonna last long, but you don't know how to do it for yourself so let me help you with this. So the key is we need to connect our brains and our bodies together and we need to really emphasize that connection. Like, Hey, I got you. It's okay. Your worth has nothing to do with your size. People said words in the past, but you're an adult now and you get to decide what you want to think.

So this love tool is I want you to put your hand on your heart. So what that's doing is it's saying, Okay, I'm physically connecting with who I am. So you put your hand on your heart and then you just let yourself feel your heartbeat. And you can just start with this like my heart is beating. My heart I appreciate you so much. You work all day every day. I Never have to ask you to do it. You just always are beating you're always making my body move, You're pushing this blood through and you are, you just are so good to me. Thank you so much. So you'd put your hand on your heart and you're able to say that. And then you can put your hand on your shoulders and say, thank you shoulders for, you know, carrying this, like the different burdens that I have. Then you can put your hand on your your jaw or your cheeks or your nose or your ears. And thank you ears for hearing. Thank you nose for smelling. Thank you legs for walking. And you start really appreciating everything about yourself. Thank you digestive system for working. Thank you eyes for blinking. And so you're connecting your physical body to your brain and you are able to kind of span out and see the bigger picture.

And when you show love to your body and you have that different perspective, what starts happening for you? One of the things that really starts happening is you are able to have a perspective that like you have so much, you have so much going for you. And even if you have pains or even if you have, there's certain things that maybe aren't working as well, it's like, it's okay. We can, we can figure this out. I got you body. I appreciate you body. You do, you do lots for me and now I'm going to step up and I'm going to do stuff for you.

So I want to just encourage you to keep doing this work. Love really is the tool. And just as a reminder, so the reason this podcast is called Love Yourself Thin is because when you love something, when you truly love something, you take care of that thing, you nurture it. You, just like your laptop or your phone or your grandchild or your stove or your fridge or whatever that is, it's like, I'm going to take care of you. I'm going to make sure that you're, you're safe and that you're clean and that you're fed and that you're loved. And I'm going to speak kindly to you. I'm going to take care of you. And I'm telling you the members who have really learned to love themselves no matter what, they are making such huge strides in their life because they truly are

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changing their life. And which of course the ripple effects changes the people around them. All right. This was such a good episode. I am so grateful that I can share these thoughts with you. And I of course love to always hear your feedback. You can come over and visit me over on Instagram, or you can just email me at Dara at Dara.tomasson.com. All right. Take care everyone. Bye bye.