



the
LOVE
YOURSELF
THIN
podcast

— WITH DARA TOMASSON —

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

**WITH YOUR HOST
DARA TOMASSON**

144. WEIGHT LOSS AND MENTAL HEALTH

My name is Dara Tomasson, and this is love yourself. Thin podcast, episode 1 44. Weight loss and mental health. Before we dive deep into all that I have prepared for you. I want to be sharing with you the wins that happen in the lives of the women that are in my membership. I have a lifetime membership you pay once you get in for life.

What I've been focusing on this year is really looking at the ripple effects of what's happening in the lives of husbands, of children, of grandchildren, of fellow friends. A client of mine was cleaning her studio and she found her body measurements from August of 2018. She has taken off 30 inches of her body.

And you might think, well, how does this impact her husband? When you are down 30 inches you are a lot more fun to be around and she'll tell you that too. They have such a stronger connection because she's not so defensive. She's not inside of herself. They go on walks regularly. She wasn't able to do those kinds of things before and her husband loves being outdoors. He loves having adventures. She can go to the beach and she can walk on uneven surfaces that has strengthened their marriage we're going to be talking about mental health I taught a master class on mental health.

This master health class is called the missing links between mental health and physical wellbeing. I accidentally became a weight loss coach.

I never intended to be, first of all, I actually never intended to be a coach. I loved my quilting career. I love being a published author. I was at the height of teaching, I was going to the states I had People reaching out to me and offering me like working at a teaching at retreats and at events and all of it was very exciting.

But when I got a life coach, I started really expanding my business and feeling more confident and putting myself out there and being. Willing to be wrong or seen or whatever that it was. As I was attending teaching and doing all of these things These women were very curious on how I was, my body was shrinking because they saw me on Instagram stories. They saw me on my YouTube channel. They saw how different my face was looking and how different my body was looking. They also notice a glow about me that I hadn't had before because I was so buried behind my weight, I had so much shame and I just felt so bad about myself.

There's six variables variables on how would you rate your mental health? I'm going to kind of crisscross my story back and forth and, and bring it kind of tie it all together. Kind of like, you know, we're, we're, we're stitching up. A stuffed animal.

So I'm going to thread this through. As I was implementing these life coaching tools and looking at my own brain, finally looking at my fears my challenges my difficulties and overcoming them. I was creating new results in my life that I felt really good about. Everyone has mental health. Just like everyone has physical health.

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These six criteria I got from the Canadian mental health website and I have resources linked in the show notes. But these are the six considerations one is, do you have a strong sense of purpose? Two. Do you have strong relationships now? We're not saying, do you have lots and lots of relationships, but of the relationships you have, do you feel like they're strong? Number three.

Do you feel connected to others?

Number four. Do you have a good sense of who you are?

Number five. How do you cope with stress? What are the ways that you cope? Are you, you keep resisting, avoiding reacting. Or do you just allow the stress? Do you work through it? Like, what, what do you do? Number six. How much do you enjoy your life? How much do you laugh? How much do you. I during the day feel. I really love who I am, and I really love the life that I'm living. I'm really grateful for all the things that I have. I'm amazed at all of my talents and abilities and I, my home that I live in. How often do you say those things?

One of the big confusions that I even fall into and a lot of us do is the difference between mental health and mental illness. According to the world health organization, around 450 million people currently struggle with mental house health. Making it, the leading cause of disability worldwide. Mental health affects more than 6.7 million of us.

In fact, one in two Canadians, and this is a Canadian stat, but it's very comparable any other place in the world have, have had a mental illness by the time they reach 40 years old. Let me talk about that for a moment. Mental illness is depression, anxiety, OCD. Schizophrenia.

Mental illnesses are described as disturbances in thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that are severe enough to affect day to day functioning. Some examples are anxiety disorders, schizophrenia and mood disorders such as major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. Mental health, however, is a state of wellbeing and we all have it. Just like we each have a state of physical health.

We also each have our mental health. We'll look after. So, this is what I'm talking about. It's not just about surviving. It's about thriving. It's enjoying life, having a sense of purpose and being able to manage life's highs and lows.

Now I like this stat one in five people in Canada will experience mental health. Problem or illness in any given year, but five and five of us have mental health. I've never thought of it this way before. And it is. Such a great way to think. It's really opened my mind. And it's also reinforced my story of when I got a life coach and I learned how to not be afraid of my thoughts.

I didn't, I wasn't afraid of falling into depression. I was able to lose weight as a side effect because I wasn't needing to shove food in my mouth all the time. It's just been really interesting to see it framed in this way. Mental health isn't simply the absence of mental illness and living with a mental illness doesn't mean you don't have good mental health. Just

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like someone with diabetes, for example, can live a healthy life. So can somebody with a mental illness? And even if you don't have a mental illness, that doesn't mean you'll feel great all the time. Hallelujah right. We might experience stress. A difficult life event or burnout, just like anybody can catch a cold or flu. Everyone can experience the ebbs and flows of wellbeing.

So there's not just the one in five of us who have mental illnesses. The rest of us who don't. There is no rest of us. There is just us all five and five. We are all on the same team. I've really loved looking at this from this perspective, because first of all, it takes the stigma out of mental health, this whole conversation. In fact, I'm really glad because you know, I talk about my story.

I was scrolling on Instagram, trying to numb out. That's when I found a life coach and that's when I started to realize, I'm okay. I'm not broken.

I'm going to tell a quick story about my little boy. So I have. Four sons and one daughter. And they're not so little anymore. In fact my three of my sons are taller than me and I'm six feet tall. And my youngest son, who's 11. It won't be long before he's taller than me. One day my son, my middle son was in grade two. He was having a lot of troubles with his teacher. He would just leave the classroom. He did this twice after the third time he actually left the school. This needs addressing. Third time's a charm. But I took him to the doctor. He said, well, mom, what are you doing? I said, listen, honey, if you had a broken arm, I would take you to the hospital no questions asked because we want to fix your arm because it's broken right now there's something broken in your mind and in your heart. You are feeling really unsafe to stay in that classroom. I don't know why, we have to figure it out. It's like a mystery. But the doctor. All of these health professionals. They're actually really good at looking at our brains and in our hearts. And they're able to help us figure out why we're not feeling safe. And I have to tell you that was such an awesome experience for me as a mom to recognize. The mental health and how important it is to acknowledge and to. To take care of it and to take the stigma out. And so we were able to go and get counseling and he was able to work with a mental health. Nurse and she did these amazing activities with him. And we worked closely with her and the teacher and we had these great incentive programs and they worked so well.

We broke down his day. We broke down things to make it so much more manageable so we could create healthy habits for him.

Now he's this great 17 year old boy. Who he able to work through these challenges. Although he doesn't have a diagnosed mental illness. That this early intervention was really helpful. I had another son only four months old had this respiratory track infection and I had to spend the night. In the hospital every every once in a while it would flare up and we tip, I'd have to walk him outside, wrap him up, really warm, but go outside and help him with his breathing. And it's just, that was like a physical issue that he had as a baby. That has impacted him let's normalize this.

What happens when you feel you're in danger? What you know, right. If a lion or a tiger or a grizzly bear what would you do? What are, what are our responses? Definitely we have fight flight freeze or fun. So fun. Is the people pleasing? I was listening to a psychologist talking

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about this and she said, one time she was walking and somebody bumped into her and she said, sorry. Canadians are really famous for that.

We're always apologizing for something that we never did. And so it's very similar, right? That people pleasing of like taking, thinking responsibility for something that's not yours to take responsibility for. When we have these responses, the fight, this is what it looks like. We can be angry. We can be sh. We can start shouting or our muscles could clench.

We could blame other people. We could get really defensive. We could attack others. We could gossip. We could retaliate. That's what fighting looks like. I'm going to get them. Then there's the flight: avoiding and procrastinating and scrolling and, you know, not like taking work off, right?

Like just like I'm having a mental health day. I can't deal with it and just watching Netflix all day. You know, don't try new things. Don't monitor your thoughts and you let old. On productive thoughts come in. So how many of us are spending our time and energy? This way what about the fawn? The finding is the complying, appeasing, others doing what others want.

Don't take your, don't take your needs into consideration. It's like, I don't know. What do you want to do? You don't try new things. You don't collect data that works best for you and your life. Now the problem is we have perceived danger versus perceived safety. If I said to you, do you feel safe right now?

Oh yeah, I'm in my house. And do you really feel safe? You could start feeling like, oh, well, you know what? There could be someone could run into my house. I've seen that before. I have a friend in high school and they were just sleeping. This guy, he was driving was actually a true story. He was drunk and he drove into their house and he missed their sister's window by a foot. It was crazy. Right? So our brain will go to all those like worst case scenarios and bring it all up and be like, actually, I don't know if I am safe, someone could be making a rude comment about my quilt on this group I belong to or whatever it is, right. Or my husband could be upset that I didn't do whatever.

So, whether it's a tiger or if it's a perceived danger. Our body reacts. As oh, it was the same. The autonomic nervous system. There's two parts. There's the sympathetic nervous system and there's the parasympathetic nervous system. We have a Vagus nerve that goes from our brain urinary tract. And it make sure that all of these functions are working properly.

Like our digestion, heart rate, blood pressure immune system. Mood. Mucus salivation skin and muscles sensations, our speech, our tastes our, if we have to go pee, right. If we're really nervous

Is like always communicating to our brain. If we're feeling like there's danger, Then it is sending messages of what we need to do. So the sympathetic nervous system is part of our lower brain and that's the fight flight freeze and fawn response. It's like automatic.

It goes for it. It's like we don't have time to talk. We got to like reactive. A little kid is about to get, run a walk on the highway. We're like we rush. We don't have say no, don't go on the

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highways. I'd say, no, we would, we would go and get them. Right. Then there's the parasympathetic nervous system.

Imagine a parachute kind of opens up and slows things down and we can think about it so that is our higher C O brain thinking. We're able to say, okay, is this really danger? If someone makes a negative comment about a quilt that I made or a technique or something, I said, am I really in danger?

Will they come and find my house? And will they kill me? All right.

This is going to help you with your mental health because if you're constantly dealing with stress. And look at, we have the blood pressure, heart rate. If we don't have good ways of dealing with our stress, we can compound that. Just like we have lint in our sewing machines, if we don't clean out that lint, it can compact over and over and over again.

And then eventually that fluffy lint, that's no big deal. Become so compounded that your attention doesn't work. Your machine will not work because it is literally blocked. I need to make a caveat. I'm not a certified doctor. I will never diagnose you. Our family history, our genetics, some of us have a predisposition. If we have a long history of mental health in our family, there's that pattern that repeats over and over. I have a brother who has schizophrenia. What, what does that all mean?

I want to share with you three things that you can do to create safety when you have perceived danger. Then I'm going to tell you the difference between a therapist and a life coach. If this is what you're interested in, then I can make an offer to you of how to help you. So, first of all, the three steps of how to create safety, when you have perceived danger. Be able to see that people say words and it doesn't have an effect on you. That's like taking a step back and saying, you know what people say, words. People can be really mean on the internet. People there can be mean, in person. Just recognize that is something that feels terrible. Number two, create boundaries and reinforce them without a lot of drama or difficulty. So when there is conflict. If you see someone that's CA that I was always having conflict. You can say, listen, I will not. If you, so when I was a school teacher, I had this one, mom, she had a lot of challenges. And one day we were on the phone, her son was having these problems and she started yelling at me and she was like, Clearly you this and that she just started yelling and she was, it was like totally irrational. I was so stunned. I'm this year old girl going. Oh, my goodness. I can't believe this grown woman is yelling at me. I finally, I was like, wait a minute I'm not going to let her talk to me this way.

I said, clearly, there's something going on here. You're not, you're not happy. I said so, but the problem is when you, when you're yelling at me, we're never going to get anything resolved. So when you want to talk to me, when you're calm, I'd be happy to meet with you after school or at lunchtime we'll book that appointment and you can either come to the school or we can. We can arrange a time to talk on the phone, but I'm going to hang up now because I'm not going to allow anyone to yell at me.

The third thing we can do to create safety. When we have a perceived threat. Is understand that when we went to perfectionism people, pleasing and procrastination, Those were survival strategies that we had as children. And so the fact that we are doing that now it's

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just an old habit and that we can. We can change it because now we have this new awareness and we don't have to change anymore. Another thing that's going to be really helpful is to go from the sympathetic. But that danger is to look at what is happening.

I am not certified as a life coach to administer tests to see if you have a mental illness. If you feel like you have a mental illness You definitely 100% need to go to a therapist and get that help. There's a great podcast. It's the difference between like coaching and therapists and it's actually a panel of five therapists who are also life coaches. What I have found working with the women that I have, because I have women in my program that have depression, they have anxiety.

And I do recommend taking medication to kind of give you that little bit of extra help to be a little more even keel so that you can start using strategies you can start using strategies to help you.

This is what I recommend is the life coaching tools help you to think about your thinking. They help you connect your thinking to your heart. And when you can do both of those things then, and you can use these strategies that I teach within. Love yourself thin. Then you can help yourself. Just like the Canadian mental health Said in their resource sheet that I read.

I'm going to read it one more time. Cause it was so good.

Mental health, isn't simply the absence of mental illness and living with a mental illness doesn't mean you don't have good mental health, just like someone with diabetes, for example, can live a healthy life. So can somebody with mental illness. So with proper diet, with proper medication, with proper therapy, with proper support, with all of those things in place, you can be a very healthy human living a wonderful life even if you have a mental illness. Alright, this has been such a good podcast to share with you. If you want to find. I'm just going to conclude, as I share the end of my story. As my story continues to move on, so I knew I was struggling with my food. I knew I was struggling with my mental health. And as I use these tools and as I was able to give my brain more structure, I was able to cope with things.

I was able to work through things. I was able to have a strong, stronger sense of purpose. Stronger relationships. And a stronger sense of who I was, especially at that time of my life. My youngest went to school and I, my whole identity was wrapped around being a stay at home mom with all these little kids. I started enjoying my life more. As I did that, the weight started to come off. It wasn't because I was exercising because I didn't do that.

It wasn't because I wasn't counting calories because I wasn't doing that. I wasn't doing keto or vegan or whole 30 or any of that. I literally was losing weight because I was finally taking care of me. Just like I take care of my children. Lost 30 pounds and I was thrilled. That was in may of 2019. Then by Christmas Between 18 I had lost another 20 pounds. I did not think I could lose another 20 pounds.

I, it wasn't even on my radar. Because I kept taking care of myself and being kind and being thoughtful. And being considerate. Since December of 2019, I have maintained that weight

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loss within 10 pounds, because that's kind of the normal range by the way. Especially if you're six feet tall. I go up and let me go down and it's no big deal. I just EB and flow of life.

I'm just learning about how my body is. I'm I've done this whole venture through peri-menopause and I think I'm in menopause. I'm not quite sure. Technically I'm not quite in menopause yet because I did get my period in September after almost an entire year of not having my period for a year. I thought that was my like, oh, I've entered menopause now, but no, I got my period and it was, it was actually the day my daughter left. To serve a full-time mission.

I got it. It came with a vengeance. Very interesting. You can't tell me that. Our cycles are connected to our thoughts and our feelings. That's another episode for another day. It has been so fun spending this episode with you, and I hope you enjoy the YouTube version. For those of you who enjoy the podcast version?

Absolutely. If those people who want a little bit more connection with me, face-to-face. This is kind of fun. So take care, everyone. Bye-bye.

If you find so many tools and gems from the podcast, you wouldn't even believe what a difference it is in the membership where we go deep into these topics. And for the month of May, we are going to work on how our mental health impacts our Our physical health. And so if you are struggling with anxiety or depression or any of those mental health issues, I invite you to consider coming and preparing for joining us in love yourself in where we're really going to take a deep dive into that.

I can't wait to see you there. Bye.