

Ep #72: How to Stop Boredom Eating and Reach Your Goal Weight

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue blazer over a white top, dark blue jeans, and beige heels, stands in a doorway. She is smiling and looking to her right. The background is a bright, slightly blurred interior.

The
Unstoppable
Mom Brain
podcast

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with
DR. PRIYANKA VENUGOPAL

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Priyanka Venugopal

Ep #72: How to Stop Boredom Eating and Reach Your Goal Weight

Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal, and you're listening to *the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast*, How to Stop Boredom Eating. So you're on a little walk and talk with me, which I have been loving doing. I wanna say this has been happening since episode 45. When I first did my walk and talk podcast episode, it was all about doing B minus work, which is what this is bringing you in a walk and talk, where you can hear the cars, the buses, maybe even the people in the background without my fancy mic set up and all my notes.

But sometimes I have been finding that these walk and talk episodes are even more valuable than the ones that I've really prepared for in advance. So welcome to a little walk and talk with me. I hope that if you enjoy some of the background noise as we talk about How to Stop Boredom Eating today.

This is going to be that episode for you if you find yourself really able to stick to your plan Monday through Friday, or you find it's really easy to follow through on your plan when you're busy, when you have like back to back meetings. It is easy to lose weight. It's easy to stick to your plan, but come the weekend or maybe a vacation or a holiday when you have less to do, less to occupy your mind, less structure, you find yourself meandering into the pantry.

You find yourself snacking a little bit more. If that's you, this is the podcast episode for you. Before we get into today's podcast episode, I want to make sure that you know my next brand new webinar is happening in just a few weeks. It's called the *Do Less Work Lose More Weight Webinar*.

It's happening on Sunday, September 17th at 12 pm Eastern. Make sure you grab your seat over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar. This is going to be a webinar that you do not do not want to miss because one of the most common things I see for high achieving, working moms is this false belief that you have to do more, take more time, work harder, take all this effort to lose weight, and I promise you that's the reason that you have likely stayed either stuck on the scale or worse, you lose the weight and then you gain it back.

So I'm going to be helping you solve this in this webinar. Make sure you grab your seat. I highly encourage you to block the time off on your calendar. Come live. Prioritize this. Prioritize your body goals this year, my friends. It is going to be so impactful if you can learn how to lose weight with doing less work.

And right after the webinar, my small intimate group is going to be opening for enrollment. The Unstoppable Group is a six month coaching experience for high achieving working moms who want to lose weight without a calculator. That is going to be opening right after this webinar on September 17th, and there is a very, very, very special bonus if and only if you are registered for this webinar.

So don't wait. Grab your seat and over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar. Okay. Let's get into today's episode. I am having one of those rare, perfect Sundays where the kids are off with their cousins, and I got to really enjoy coming to my Pilates reformer class, which is one of my new favorite ways of exercising.

I seriously feel wrung out like a towel. Discovering muscles I did not even know that I had, which I love, and I decided to opt out of driving to go pick them up or taking the metro. I decided to do this fairly long walk because I wanted to really do this podcast episode as a walk and talk. So here we are.

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I wanted to talk about this concept where weight loss feels easier Monday through Friday, and then come the weekend or holidays or when you have unstructured time, you find yourself meandering into the pantry. You find yourself feeling maybe just a little bit more hungry. You find yourself snacking and you end up undoing all of the work you did Monday through Friday.

Does that sound familiar? Let me tell you what's happening. Okay, let's kind of break this down, and then we're going to talk about a mindset solution and a strategy solution to How to Stop Boredom Eating. So let's first talk about why this is happening. Okay, so Monday through Friday, the high achieving professional working mom usually has a very regimented and structured schedule.

You have a routine Monday through Friday, you wake up. Maybe if you have young kids, you're getting them ready for school or for camp. You're getting them out the door. If you're anything like me, you have the timing down to a science. You know exactly when everyone has to wake up by exactly when you have to be out the door by like to the minute.

I remember when I used to drive into my OBGYN practice, I knew if I left at like 8:18, I was gonna walk in two minutes late, like at that level, right? How many of you have figured out your schedule to a science, right? So Monday through Friday, you have this routine that is very, very regimented, and because of that, you also likely have a very full schedule.

So whether you're a team leader, A physician, an attorney, however you are in your busy working mom life. Likely you have a very full schedule in meetings, back to back. Maybe you're seeing clients or patients, or you're in the OR. And so because your brain is occupied all day long, your brain does not experience very many episodes of boredom.

Your mind is being occupied by problem solving, by figuring out solutions to what you're doing by caring for your patients, your clients, your staff, right? Your brain is occupied, which is one of the reasons you don't experience boredom. You're able to stay focused and on task, and not surprisingly, you're also able to follow through on your plan.

Your plan for the week, that Monday morning plan that looks so perfect on paper, you're able to follow through a lot more consistently simply because you're occupied and busy Monday through Friday. Does that sound familiar? And if I'm, you know, I think that this is something that is so normal that we want to understand and dive below the surface on, because if we don't understand what the problem is that undoes are Monday through Friday, weight loss.

Weight loss is gonna feel like a perpetual struggle. So what happens on Friday night [00:06:00] or that moment for you where you're not occupied, your mind isn't occupied with either work or the task list or all the things that you have to do? Right? There are a few things that happen.

Number one, and this is something that I am so familiar with that I used to do all the time. Number one on Friday night, I used to plop down on the couch and say, I just deserve a break. And I would really reflect back on all of the hard work that I did Monday through Friday and think about how hard I was working, not just at work, but at home with my kids.

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I would think about all of the things that I had to deal with, all of the problems that I had to solve. And I was like, what about me? There was a part of me that was like screaming, what about you, my friend? Like, who's taking care of you? Where's your joy? Where's your pleasure? Where's your fun, rest, relaxation.

How come you don't get to just do whatever you want. There was like a whole monologue happening in the back of my mind that was screaming. What about you? And on Friday night, food and alcohol was just such an easy vehicle for me to treat myself. It was such an easy vehicle for me to celebrate myself, for me to basically toast the fact that I made it through another week that I did such an awesome job.

Or barely survived, right? Either or. So that's the very first obstacle that I think that high achievers especially have is on Friday night. We just are screaming on the inside, you just deserve a break. What about you? We have to recognize that we can't ignore it. I don't want you to brush that under the rug or poo poo it.

I want you to really start a practice of recognizing yourself and acknowledging how much you have done over the week, and prove to yourself that you can actually do that without the food and alcohol? Like what would that even look like? This is so crazy because this is a concept that I really teach my clients how to do.

It's called the Daily Work, and this is not really work. It's actually just an act of self recognition that I teach my clients how to do inside the Unstoppable Group. And I have to say that when clients really learn how to do this, to recognize how, how much they're doing on a day-to-day basis to recognize themselves in their own minds, the relief and the peace and the calm that you can feel when you start recognizing yourself is incredible.

Now, whether you pour yourself a glass of wine or enjoy that special treat on Friday night, it's just besides the point, you can have that, not have that. But imagine that you didn't need that to celebrate yourself or to recognize yourself. So that's the very first obstacle that you have to overcome is how to recognize and celebrate yourself for a job well done Monday through Friday without the food and alcohol.

We've just simply given food a job it was never meant to have. And what would it look like to take, take that back. Okay. Next, This is the big one. This is the whole point of the episode. Friday night, or for me, it's like the Saturday afternoon, right, where you don't have the hustle and the overworking that you experience Monday through Friday, Saturday afternoon, you find yourself with nothing that you have to be doing, right.

Monday through Friday, you probably have things you quote unquote have to do. You may have maybe team meetings. You have to see patients or clients like your schedule's fairly booked, but over the weekend, you find yourself with a freer schedule. You could always be doing something, and this is again, the whole thing with a high achiever.

You could always be doing something. You have a laundry list, an ever-growing laundry list of things you could be doing, but you don't have to. And so you find yourself a little bit bored, maybe a little restless. And here's what I have discovered in coaching, high achievers and coaching, working moms comes up time and time again.

You want a rest. You want a break, you want to relax, and yet the moment that you feel bored, you struggle. How familiar is that? I actually shared a poll on Instagram and if you're not following me over on Instagram,

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make sure you are on there. [@theunstoppablemombbrain](#), especially in Instagram stories, which is where I'm the most active.

I shared a poll, I wanna say. I can't even tell you how many people have responded to this poll saying that they just would love to relax, but they really struggle being bored. I mean, this is so common. I also shared this. I asked this question in an OBGYN Facebook group that I'm in, and there were so many comments around this idea that yes, We want to rest and we want to relax, but we have such a hard time actually being bored, and I wanted to uncover and kind of unravel for you the difference between relaxing, having rest versus experiencing boredom.

Okay? Let's just unwind this a little bit because this is the reason that you lose weight Monday through Friday and then you gain it back over the weekend. I want you to imagine that it is that Saturday afternoon and you have nothing that you have to be doing. Go there. Imagine that moment for you and you feel yourself kind of bored in our minds as the high achiever who is used to really being productivity focused and is used to attaching her pleasure with productivity or used to having to earn your rest.

You're used to having to work really hard to earn your pleasure, rest, and relaxation. It is going to feel very disconcerting the moment that you experience boredom. Why is this? Because subconsciously in the background, unless you're very aware of it, your mind is going to say, we should be doing something right now.

I wonder what else I could be doing right now. Like your mind is gonna start trying to problem solve for your boredom by looking for productive activities. I want you to know nothing's going wrong. If this sounds like you, nothing is going wrong. It is simply a habit that you probably developed over many years, likely since you were a kid, and it served you in some ways, right?

So let's just get really familiar. That moment that you experienced boredom, your mind is like, I wonder what else I could be doing right now. Your mind is so addicted. Listen, you and me both, we are so addicted to productivity that we simply have forgotten how to rest. Lemme say that again. We have simply gotten so addicted to productivity that we have forgotten to rest.

And the one thing that the high achiever is deeply craving is more rest and relaxation. Like ask yourself, why is it that we ever eat when we're not hungry? Why would we ever eat when we're not hungry? It is our way of stealing, rest and relaxation. Okay, so this work is important to unravel because the main reason that high achievers are eating when they're not hungry is because they don't know how to rest. Now I wanna take this one step further and tell you why it's likely that you are, if it sounds like you, why you're addicted to productivity. Because it's like, it's like, well, productivity sounds pretty good, Priyanka. Like, we have shit to get done.

We have things to do. It sounds like a good thing. Listen, being productive is an amazing thing, but not when it comes at the cost of you not knowing how to rest, right? So that's why this topic is so important to unravel because it's undoing your desired results on a week-to-week basis. Every, every weekend, right?

So that's why this, this topic is so important. The reason that most high achievers are a little or a lot addicted to productivity is because we've been kind of programmed that to earn rest, we have to be productive. The trouble

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with this is that there's no end point. It's a completely vague and very ambiguous line for what is, what does it even mean to be productive?

What's enough? It's like, I mean, I don't know about you, but I remember for myself when I was really operating from this place of having to earn rest and and relaxation, I would do the list of things and then I get to the end. And that would be the time that like I should have supposedly earned my rest, but I'm like, you know what?

I could do more. It's a line that is in sand and it is constantly shifting. So while you are operating from this place that you have to earn rest and earn pleasure, you will keep pushing off your rest and relaxation. Because I promise, especially for the working mom, there is always, always, always going to be more that you could be doing.

It's just so important to see that we believe we have to earn our rest. Now, the other reason that we do this is because we believe that being productive. When we're productive, we believe that is when we will feel relaxed. If I got it done, if I got more done, then I would get to feel relaxed. And so our how to see how just that belief keeps our rest contingent on this never ending productivity hamster wheel.

There is actually no end point unless you define it, which I would guess most of us have not done. We have not defined what's enough. Have you ever defined what's enough? I know I never did. I know my clients don't. We just keep thinking if I just did more, if I just was more, if I just worked harder, if I just got more done, then I would get to relax then, then, then, and I am here to say that unless you have defined what, what enough is that line is going to keep moving and is going to keep you from ever experiencing rest.

Okay, so that's the first biggest obstacle that high achievers have is that moment that you have nothing to do that Saturday afternoon, that you have nothing to do. Your mind is going to not be able to rest. It's not going to be able to relax. It's going to look for something to do. And if you have nothing to do, if you have no specific task, you have to do guess where you're going to find yourself? In the pantry.

In the kitchen meandering around because your mind is so used to you having to do something. It is going to find you something to do, which is going to be eating when you're not hungry. And here's the other thing I'm gonna say on this. Food and eating is kind of a requirement for humans, right? We have to eat to survive.

And so another really common, very, very common thought [pattern is, well, I mean, I have to eat. It's like such a justification to eat when you're not hungry. It's like, well, eating is. It's kind of a productive task, right? So just notice how we have attached, just attaching productivity to your rest and relaxation will drive you to overeat because that moment that you have nothing to do your mind is like, well, I mean, eating is kind of productive and you will find yourself eating when you aren't hungry.

So this is a justification I want you to be super aware of that moment you feel bored, the moment that you have nothing to do. Catch the justification of using food as your productivity action item. So let's talk about how to solve this from both a mindset perspective and a strategy perspective. And you need both.

You cannot just do one without the other. You have to have equal parts mindset and strategy to overcome boredom eating. So the very first one is, To really check in with your relationship with boredom. So as I was

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sharing up until now, we've had a fairly contentious relationship with boredom. We feel bored and our mind immediately goes to, I have to solve this right now.

I should be doing something else. I mean, I wonder what else I could be doing. It kind of has this undercurrent that boredom is a problem. So the very first thing, the mindset piece of this is to remind yourself, this is not a problem. Boredom is not a problem. It's ok for me to feel bored. I don't have to be doing something.

I don't have to fill this time and listen. I'm gonna be honest with you. This might feel uncomfortable if you are super used to being productive all the time, or even having like all of your rest and relaxation activities for like semi productive. I see you like folding the laundry while listening to the podcast while like, you know, planning out your vacation for next year.

Like, I see you trying to multitask your pleasure. This is going to be uncomfortable. I'm just letting you know. Off the bat, but this is going to be so worth it. Just like we tell our kids, like, you know when our kids come to us and be like, mom, I'm so bored. Listen, we could keep jumping through hoops for them and like making them entertain, like entertaining them constantly.

All we do is we teach them that boredom is a problem and then we have a life full of having to entertain our kids every single time they're bored. Like how terrible is that? And you and I have both done this. Like I know I have made this mistake when I took on that role of having to entertain my kid 24 7, he needed me to entertain him 24 7.

He did not know how to be bored, right? So this is the same. We have to retrain ourself. We have to teach ourself how to be bored. And it starts with our mindset. So that moment you experience boredom, stop telling yourself it's a problem. Stop trying to fix it. Stop trying to run away. Settle in friends.

Settle into the experience of boredom, knowing that if you might feel uncomfortable, you might feel anxious, you might feel a little unsettled, uncomfortable at just sitting there not doing something. The second piece, and this is the strategy piece, I'm gonna break it down into two parts. I strongly encourage you whenever you're retraining your brain with new habits, and that's what we're doing on this podcast episode. We're retraining your brain to rewire so you don't eat when you're bored. That's a new habit that we're retraining on this podcast episode is what would you do instead? There are ways of experiencing your boredom that might feel better in your body.

Let me tell you what I mean by that. So when you feel bored on that Saturday afternoon, you're going to start with the mindset piece. You're going to remind yourself, this is not a problem. It's totally okay. I don't have to fill the void. I don't have to be productive right now. Allow yourself to get up and do something different, and I don't mean something productive.

Okay? So let me be super clear. I don't mean that you go start folding the laundry or start making the doctor's appointments or open up your laptop to get ahead on next year's vacation planning, or like doctor's appointments and all that kind of stuff. Like I don't mean to take action from a productive place.

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I mean take action in a way where you can allow yourself to experience boredom differently. So of course you could just sit there. Okay. You could just sit there with the boredom. You could take some breaths, experience the boredom, be very zen-like, and experience your experience of boredom in that way.

What I find to be a much more pleasant experience of boredom and what's actually allowed me to even foster some inner creativity when I'm bored is simply to go on a walk. Now, I want you to think about what actions you might want to take that would allow you to get to know boredom. I don't mean that you distract your mind from boredom with another activity.

I mean, what would be another way of experiencing boredom that could be sitting with it? Maybe you do a short meditation, maybe you go on a long walk, maybe you put on some music and dance. And I wanna even encourage you, like when you're on your long walk, don't do productive things. I see you like trying to like, you know, Like multitasking your walk.

Allow yourself to enjoy your walk, put on some music. Allow yourself to experience just being with yourself. This is like, you know, it's, I think it's so fascinating because when you're with your best friend, when you are with like that person you love being with, you're never bored. Yet. All that's happened is when we are with ourselves, by ourselves and we have nothing to do, we somehow experience boredom.

Because we have forgotten how to hang out with ourselves. Let me say that again. The only reason that you're ever bored when you're on your own is simply because we have forgotten or maybe never ever developed the skill of hanging out with ourselves. And I know this because if I'm hanging out with my best friend, even if we're not doing anything. Even if we're not saying anything, we can just go on a silent walk and I don't feel bored. Why is that? It's because I know how to hang out with someone else that I love. So I wanna challenge all of you to think about boredom just a little bit differently. It starts with the mindset piece.

It starts with really reminding yourself, it's not a problem to fix. You don't have to fill the void with another productive activity and really start taking a different action. Teach yourself, remind yourself of what it would be like to hang out with you without filling the void. Think about what the impact would be if you taught yourself how to feel bored every Saturday afternoon.

Every Friday night, every vacation, every holiday, what would it be like for you? What would the impact be for you if you taught your mind to slow down, to hang out with yourself even when you felt bored? This is one of those things that will cure you from eating when you're not hungry. Simply because of boredom, and I am, I and I shared this earlier on the episode with the caveat that this might feel uncomfortable and let it be, let it be an uncomfortable exercise because your Monday through Friday weight loss, the work that you're putting in Monday through Friday deserves this attention.

If you wanna hit your weight loss goal this year, this is the work that you have to do if you have to know how to stop eating when you're bored. Stop eating simply to fill in the void and instead learn that boredom is just not a problem. Imagine what would happen if you learned how to hang out with yourself.

This is one of the things that I see and I hear from so many of you time and time again, is you just want to rest and relax, but you hate being bored. And I wanna ask you, how is that possible? If we want to rest and relax,

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but, we have a hard time being bored. It's going to be an uphill battle. So for those of you that really do want to rest more, you want to have more relaxation in your life, this is the work.

This is the way there. I hope you guys enjoyed today's podcast episode on *How to Stop Boredom Eating* because truly this is a required step. If you want to hit your body goal this year and then keep it off for good, I want to make sure that you know, my brand new webinar is happening super soon. It's just in a few weeks, Sunday, September 17th, 12:00 PM Eastern, the *Do Less Work, Lose More Weight* webinar. It is going to change how you lose weight forever. And most importantly, we're going to talk about losing the weight that you wanna lose is how you're also going to keep it off. If the way you've been losing weight has taken too much work, too much time, too much effort, it's not sustainable.

That's what we are solving on this webinar. It is not going to be one that you miss. And if life gets in the way and you cannot attend live. Don't worry, you will absolutely get the replay if you are registered. So make sure you grab your seat right now, theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar. It's going to be amazing.

And right after the webinar, my six month intimate small group coaching program, *the Unstoppable Group* is going to be opening for enrollment and when you're registered, you are eligible for a super special 48 hour bonus that I will tell you about on the webinar. So I will see you all there. Grab your seat at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar.

Have an amazing week, friends.