

Ep #76: Getting to Goal Weight with Dr. Diana Pfeil



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DR. PRIYANKA VENUGOPAL

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Priyanka Venugopal

Ep #76: Getting to Goal Weight with Dr. Diana Pfeil

Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal and you're listening to *the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast*, Getting to Goal Weight with Diana Pfeil. I am thrilled to bring you today's podcast guest and an amazing podcast story with my Unstoppable client, Diana Pfeil. Diana has actually been on the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast before, but she is returning now at her dream ideal weight to share her story and some of the obstacles that she has overcome simply in our work together.

Diana is a CTO. She's a mom to two kids and she literally has a PhD and she's going to tell you all about this in a field that really focuses on optimization and strategy. I mean, this sounds like the high achieving working mom at her finest. I love sharing real time stories of my clients from where they start with me to the process they go through, the obstacles that they have to overcome.

And I love sharing some of their dream results that they get to create for themselves. One of my favorite things that Diana is going to be sharing on the podcast today is how she used to think she needed to feel motivated to take action, motivated to lose weight consistently. And this is one of the things that you learn when you work with me in the Unstoppable group.

I call it my 4P process to uninspired action and how Diana got to implement that tool and strategy to hit her goal weight in a simple and sustainable way. And how she shares today, how she feels so confident. That she can actually maintain it before we get into today's podcast conversation. I want to make sure, you know, about my brand new live webinar happening on Sunday, September 17th, 12 PM Eastern / 9 AM Pacific.

It's called the *Do Less Work, Lose More Weight Webinar*. And it is for you if you identify as a high achiever, who has ever thought that weight loss is too hard. In a nutshell, we are going to be breaking down on this webinar, how you can lose the weight you want with half the time, energy and bandwidth.

And right after the webinar, the Unstoppable group is going to be opening for enrollment. This is my six month intimate small group coaching program for high achieving working moms who are ready to lose the weight without a calculator. Spots in this group are capped. So make sure that you're ready to book your sales call with me on day one when doors open right after the webinar. You can grab your seat for the webinar for free over at theunstoppablenombrain.com/webinar. Okay. Let's get into the goodness with my client, Diana Pfeil. If you want to reach your ideal weight and create lightness for your body, you need to have simplicity, joy, and strategic decisions infused into your life.

I'm a physician turned life and weightless coach for ambitious working moms. I've lost over 60 pounds without counting points, calories, or crazy exercise plans. Most importantly, I feel calm and light on the scale and in my life. There's some delicious magic when you learn this work and the skills I'm going to be teaching you.

Ready? Let's get to it.

Welcome back to the podcast. Diana. I am so thrilled to have you here and for anyone that's listening to today's episode. Diana is one of my most amazing Unstoppable clients. She was actually on the podcast many months ago and she is back to continue her story. So before we get into continuing the story with where we left off, Diana, tell us a little bit about you and we're going to get into the background of where we started together and where you are now. So start with just telling us about you.

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Dr. Diana Pfeil: Okay. Thanks. I'm happy to be here again. And about me, I am a mom. I have two kids. They're in elementary school ish, a little bit older than that. I have a pretty busy work life. I am the CTO at a company and I have always wanted to be at a certain weight. And that's one of the reasons I joined Priyanka's group, because I really connected with you, Priyanka.

I felt like you're speaking my language, but I didn't have a huge amount of weight to lose, like 20 ish pounds. And where I am now is that I'm in maintenance mode. So I had like this all really worked really well for me. I learned so many habits constantly throughout the experience. So it's been really great.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love that, Diana. So before we get to like, how you even solved this and how you got to maintenance. And of course, like I want to talk about me and Diana, we're talking before we even hit the record button, like the ease that you create and the confidence you feel now, let's just backtrack for a second for anyone that's unfamiliar with where you started out.

You said you had about 20 pounds to lose before we started working together and what were the things that you felt like you were struggling with?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: I was struggling with a lot of things. I would definitely decide I wanted to lose weight, but then I had very, I didn't want to be too strict about it. I didn't want to track anything.

And so, yeah, I just always had loosey goosey ideas. And so nothing ever changed. And then I would give up and then I would ruminate a lot about it. So that was, that was sort of the trend.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. So like, what was like in the, like, if you think about, you didn't want to track anything. So what were you doing in the past to try to lose weight? That was Lucy goosey for you.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: I did things like the plate method where you make sure that half your plate has a lot of vegetables. And that really, I really like that approach because I really want to be eating a lot of vegetables. So like that fit in as a philosophy, but I think I just consume a large amount and I was very disconnected from my hunger.

So it just wasn't a strategy that was successful for me. There was a period when I was successful in losing weight and that was unintentional. I had to go on a pretty strict elimination diet after my daughter was born. I had a lot of health complications. And so there I wasn't counting anything, but I had a very small list of foods that I was eating from and that was successful, but I was miserable and all I could think about is how I really didn't want to be eating these foods. Successful, but then unsuccessful because it was not sustainable in any way.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And I think that that's kind of like, I remember from like when we first started talking, you and I started talking. I think this was one of the things that we talked about. You're like, you know, talking about some of the strategies that you had tried.

You didn't like tracking calories and points. The plate method was one approach that seemed to make sense, but it wasn't working sustainably. And you tried this elimination/ restriction diet, which worked, but it wasn't sustainable. And I remember asking you, you know, if you've lost weight in the past, why do you think it didn't last?

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And how did you like the strategies that you had been trying? And I remember you were like, your answer was like, uh, they all suck.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Yeah. I hated them. Yeah.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's exactly what, yeah. You're like, I hate it. And so I'm so curious, like if you think back now around, like, why do you think you were so willing to do these strategies that you hated?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: I didn't think there was an alternative. I thought I have this result I want, which is a different weight for myself. And the way you do that is, you have to eat less or eat differently. And therefore that's going to be terrible because I don't want to eat less or eat differently. And so I just thought there was no choice.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So I'm curious because eating less than eating differently is part of what we do in the Unstoppable group, which is like, you know, just like that's part of our strategy. So we do kind of come in with that filter. We eat differently when you join the group, but like, what do you think changed for you where you went from hating the weight loss strategy to I think how you feel about it now?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Okay. There's two big things. Number one, there's such a big focus from you Priyanka about you have to like your strategy. So, and I didn't even know that was possible. So it kind of expanded my thinking like, okay, well how, what can this look like if I need, no, I need to like it. And And with that was like picking foods that I do love, and there's a lot of foods that I do really love that are, I mean, I'm a pretty healthy eater, so I think for me, it's quantity and some other issues.

So there was that. And then there was the approach to hunger. I think previously, I really didn't want to be hungry ever, and that was uncomfortable for me. And by kind of well, am I really, do I really hate being hungry? Like what's the problem with that? I was able to realize, no, actually there's nothing better than making sure that I feel hungry before I eat.

I love that part of my strategy. And so I was able to take some of these things that previously I might think of as negatively kind of expand how I thought about them and only do them because I've chosen that I love that approach. I think I've used this word that I brainwashed myself into loving my plan, but it's kind of true.

Like I was able with the daily work that you have as part of your program, I was able to really over time list all the reasons why this is such a good idea and such a good plan. So I became, I really ended up enjoying it and liking it.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, and I think of this as like your back pocket body tool, like really eating when you're hungry and you can take it with you anywhere in the world, on vacation, [00:09:00] on your busiest work week.

It just doesn't matter. You can lose weight. What were the thoughts you had about food before the Unstoppable group? Like I love the food so much. I have to have a break. Like what were your most common thoughts that kept you in that desire cycle of wanting to eat more food than your body needed.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: There was definitely a lot of, I deserve this because I work so hard.

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I have such a busy job. I have all these kids to take care of. There's only two, but it's a lot, a lot. And so there was a lot of, I deserve this thoughts. And then the other big thought that I often had is that I learned is that I do a lot of eating out of connection or not wanting to seem different from the group.

And so that was another time where I'm not listening at all to my body and my hunger signals and what I want. I'm just like picking the things that I think other people might expect me to be picking in this social situation. I'll step back a little bit because I know that you've talked about this before that when you were a kid, you're always the kid with the mango chutney or whatever.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's right. Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: And, and so I was, I kind of had a similar experience. I'm an immigrant. And by the time I was six. I already lived in three countries and learned three languages, so I just growing up had, I always felt different. I always felt alienated. So one of my mechanisms for fitting in, I think, was just to optically just do the things that everyone else is doing.

That's how I'm going to fit in, make friends, and that's just continued. With me, I think I just still have, I think it's like a habit though, like if I do something different, then I won't have these friendships. And so what got me out of that, I think is first realizing that that's a thing for me, like why I'm with my friends, these people like me, not because of the drink I'm ordering at this dinner, but for other things we're connecting on and I do not need to order the same cocktail as everyone else.

In order for this friendship to continue, I think just recognizing was the first thing because I think it was just a habit. And so I still have that habit. Like I'll go out and I'll think, Oh, I want a skinny margarita because I don't want as much sugar. But if I order that, what are people going to think of me?

And I just have to catch it and catch that in the moment and think, Oh, actually, no one's going to think no one will even notice. So let me just order this that I want.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Right. And even like really validating that that was how your, like your youngest self, like how brilliant were you as a child to like, pick up on that as a strategy, like if I just optically do the same things as the other kids, then maybe I can fit in and form connections and friendships. Like how brilliant were you, right? As a child.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Yeah. It probably worked.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: It probably worked in so many ways because like other children were probably doing the same and, and I think what we're talking about is like, as you got older, it just led to certain habits that impacted your eating, impacted how you drink, and maybe even impacted you in other areas of like, as you mom, as you, the way you show up at work and getting to challenge that I think is was so beautiful to watch you do.

So when, so what was the next step for you? So you caught it as kind of a pattern that this was something you do. This is the reason it was kind of a thing that was a strategy that worked. How do you start to break out of it? You would catch it. And then like, how did you overcome the discomfort of ordering something different?

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Dr. Diana Pfeil: I think I saw it as the first time, couple of times I did it, I planned it in advance a little bit and kind of thought of this. I think that you coached me towards this, but like, let's think of this as an experiment. What will happen if you don't order the tacos and instead order a bowl? Which is like, for me, I'm happy with either one.

I'm like, I don't feel like I'm restricting myself by doing that second choice, but I have a hard time doing it because of this connection issue. And so it was more of a challenge, like try to do it and see how it goes. And then I noticed, okay, no one cared. This did not create my outcome in this social situation.

I still can connect with these people. So I think it was seeing the proof. It was scary to me. It sounds so silly saying it because it's such a small thing, but it was scary to me. I had to see the proof that I can do that and it works.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. What we get to do in coaching before you actually ran the experiment, we actually went to the worst case scenario.

Like let's say you order the different drink or you order your meal differently than other people and like somebody makes a comment or let's say somebody does like give you a funny look or says something, then what? And like, how can we kind of troubleshoot? Your worst case, instead of like avoiding the worst case scenario, which is what I think so many high achievers are so used to doing, like, let me avoid the worst case scenario so that I never have to deal with that emotion that's going to come up.

What if we like, let yourself go there and we troubleshooted your solution? What are you going to do then? And now when you go into your experiment, it might feel scary, but I wonder whether that creates a little bit more confidence because you know, you can handle the worst case scenario.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Yeah. I create some safety in the situation.

Definitely. I think it makes me feel better about my relationships actually, by like noticing that they're not superficial. They're not based on the order.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's right. And I'm like, I think the other thing that had come up, it's like, then you spend less time in the rumination of like, should I order it?

Should I be like them? But I didn't want to, but I do, it's like, instead of all of your mental bandwidth going in that you're actually focused on the conversation.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Definitely, rather than ruminating being scared of these other people, I can focus on actually being present.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. The other thing that I remember you said was really impactful for you after you joined the group was really understanding the hunger tool and understanding how it's like just something you can have in your back pocket all the time.

You never need a calorie calculator or points or macros. What was your experience of understanding that tool and learning it and how do you think it impacted your weight loss journey?

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Dr. Diana Pfeil: Definitely. The Hunger Tool, I just love it. It's the best. It's just the most fundamental part of what I'm now doing going forward, like for the rest of my life.

I think it is just something that I really love. One of the most awesome things about the Hunger Tool is it fits really well with The idea that you have as part of your program, which is evaluating where you are. And even if there's mistakes or plot twists along the way, you can get back and just keep going.

I think the hunger tool is completely fundamental to that because for me, if I overeat on a night or eat something that wasn't part of my plan, so I like mess up. It's not a downward spiral because I have this [00:16:00] really great tool and I know that's okay. I'm just going to now wait until I feel hungry again and that'll be the great, the perfect time for my body to have my next meal.

So it's like a very easy and natural tool in order to get back up and keep going and keeping going is like what you need to do in order to make it. To the end.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That was, I love you saying that. Oh, that's so good. Because it's like, actually, maybe you tell me. So like all the times in the past, like when you would have a, like, I like to call them plot twists, or you went off plan, maybe you overate on a weekend or on a vacation, maybe you gained a pound or five or 10, what did you used to do?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Well, there's probably a few things I used to do. Number one, I would be upset with myself so, And didn't handle it with kindness, like, Oh, like now the way I can handle it is how interesting. I wonder what led to that. Or I wonder what I could learn from that. It used to be, uh, I'll never lose weight. This is such a disaster.

So I would go into that. And so I didn't have, and I didn't have a tool to recover from that. Like my plan was this and I didn't follow it. And So what do I do now? So, um, just having something in my toolbox for that situation was a big deal.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. One of the necessary tools that is usually missing is how do you handle plot twists because we don't have like what you're saying.

We don't have that tool in our toolbox. We don't know how to wield that tool in our toolbox. We think every mistake is a major catastrophe, a major disaster. We let it ding our belief. Like, see, there I go again. I'm probably never going to figure this out. And then. In my experience, we do one of two things.

Either we completely quit on ourself and be like, just stop taking action. We weeks and months will go by, or we think we have to like beat ourselves into submission, like double down and get extra strict and like, like undo the quote unquote damage that we did. And both of those are fairly miserable.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Definitely. And yeah, yeah, both at different times. And it's true. The nice thing about the hunger tool is It's not the doubling down, it's just going back to the original thing that you're trying to do. So there's no punishment in that, it's just a very natural, gentle reset that feels really good. And then once you eat, or at least for me, when I would go back, wait, now I'm hungry, now I'm eating, it would also be such a great reminder, like, oh yeah, this is why I love this plan, this feels really great. Now the meal tastes so much better, and I'm enjoying it more.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Right. And I think to be able to implement that strategy, what we're talking about, like being able to reimplement this like back pocket body tool anytime, even if you have a plot twist, even if you go off plan is to be able to do a proper evaluation of why you went off to begin with.

And this is actually one of the things I really love about how you showed up in the group is you were really diligent about doing our weekly audits, or I like how you call them retrospectives, like really being able to look at your week and look at your results. With such a clear lens and then get coaching on it, I think it really helped us unravel and pick up on why you might have had a plot twist or why you might have stagnated or gained a pound.

And I love what you said about, like, you had to just stick with it and keep showing up in that process to ultimately solve the problem. What was your experience of the weekly audit and how do you think sticking with it is what got you to where you are now?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: So the weekly audit was huge for me, and it was kind of a natural thing for me to do because in my work with software engineers, we call it a retrospective, a regular retrospective every week or every 2 weeks is just part of what you do.

And the whole idea is that's how you become a stronger and stronger team or learn from your mistakes. And one tenant of that is it's completely blameless. It's not about, Oh, we messed up so bad. Who's to blame who's getting fired. There's none of that. And so I was used to applying that to myself. Like I can evaluate without blame and more from a perspective of curiosity.

So that's what it's like really resonated with me as a thing because it's just part of what I think I know works anyway, and it was completely fundamental to my success because I made tons of mistakes along the way I had like the days when I had gas station food for three days straight and I had a whole time during the ski season when I had a whole thing with breakfast burritos and like it was just really nice with the evaluation to in a blameless way get curious about what is happening with these breakfast burritos. Um, let me try to work through that. So for me, the impact has been huge and it's a tool that I know I can continue to use.

Because another thing I learned is there will be a, the plot twist will never end. There'll always be a new situation that will throw me for a loop.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, I think this is what we were talking about before we hit the record button today is like, I think most of us, and maybe you felt like this too, before the Unstoppable group, which is like, you want to get to this.

Proverbial finish line. Like when I get to my magic three digit number, or when I get to that, that dream weight that I have been wanting for so long, then I'll be done. And we just want to be done with like the thinking and the rumination and the worry about the weight. But what we were talking about before we hit record is like, There's not actually a finish line, but tell me for you how you had to shift that end of the road, thinking like there's a finish line versus what we're talking about now that you're in maintenance, what that experience is for you.

If there was no finish line, but someone's like, seriously, I'm just forever, what would you, what's your response to that?

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Dr. Diana Pfeil: Yeah, I had that repeatedly, but like this thing being throughout the last year, like, Oh, I haven't learned that yet. Oh, I'm going to be learning new things forever. And the surprising thing now that I'm doing maintenance, but it's only been a few weeks.

So yeah, it's new was that I have several times that, Oh, I kind of miss my old routine and being in weight loss mode. There was a lot of positive stuff. I really grew to love the plan and love the process and love what I was learning about myself. And so that's really surprising. I didn't think I'd get here and think, Oh, I miss it a little bit.

Um, and that also makes me feel good about just maintaining. I just know I can do it because I was able to get to a place where I like a little bit begrudgingly, but realized there's no finish line. It's a process. There's always going to be new things. No, I haven't learned it all yet, but there's kind of something nice about like beautiful about that.

Right. We're always evolving and there's, there's, we're always learning new things about ourselves.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, I think what you were sharing in Slack, which I just thought was so beautiful is like that day that you hit your, your goal weight, it was like, you know, [00:23:00] I did it, this is the week. And what do you think changed this time compared to all the times that you've lost weight in the past versus how you feel about having lost the weight this time?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: In the past, I think I would have gotten there and thought, Oh, okay, great. I'm done. I can stop doing all the things. And I didn't have any of those thoughts. It wasn't like, Oh, phew, I'm stopping to do the things. It was like, wow. I felt really proud of myself, but I also knew that I just had come really far.

And so I just have everything in my toolbox that I can keep using was like a moment of celebration. That like is a mind blowing shift for me. And I think that's why this approach works of like really having a super simple plan that you grow to really love it's because yeah, it completely changes the process and it makes it possible to be something that you can continue doing.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. Okay. So I want to ask a question. So you share recently that you have a PhD in basically, like, tell us, tell us about what, what your area of expertise is. And I just had such a chuckle about this. Tell us about what you do and how it's been like a ninja super skill in all these areas of your life and how it might've gotten in the way of weight loss and the kind of how we've overcome that. So tell us about it a little bit.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: So my PhD is in the field is called operations research, but it's like the field of optimizing the field of making things more efficient. Like, it's logistics. Like, how do you do things as fast and efficiently and optimally as possible? And it's. It's like mathematical modeling.

So I do a lot of math. And so this has just been my super skill. I mean, I got into this field because this has been how I always am. I, if I always try to do things as quickly as possible, I'm super efficient. I can multitask. I, it really makes me crazy if we're wasting time. So I'm sensitive to all of those things.

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Yeah. Um, and it wasn't until recently that I probably this week that I realized how this is so not helpful for me when I'm with my family. Like if I am playing a board game with my kids, getting it over with as quickly as possible should not be the thing that is at the top of my head. So that Right. My next task.

Um, yeah. So that has been , the realization and it's also been, yeah, something that has held me back even with weight loss because, One thing I definitely struggled with is I, I don't think I slow down. Like sometimes I make the quick decision, but it's maybe not the one that's as aligned with my goal.

Cause I'm just trying to be quick. I think it was a week when I was really following my plan really well and feeling great about my decisions. But I did have [00:26:00] a date night with my husband and I think I had like bread as part of that, some soup, and then the next day my weight was up, and yeah, my conclusion was, well, obviously it's The bread that I had with the dinner.

So in order to, but I've been like following my plan so well. So that's the only thing it can be. This is part of my, like, a lot of the, I leap with logic there must be this, and there's no other possibility. And I think, yeah, it was really helpful that you invited me to consider could it be water? What about your movement?

What about your, like, stress levels? And all of those things were potential variables. So it was, yeah, I do have a tendency to, it is easy to cut out flour and sugar because that is kind of a fast way, but I also For sustainability, I've tried not to do that. So it was nice to like recognize the other things that play a role into ups and downs week to week.

That's not just the bread.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I think that that's such an important distinction to make that absolutely taking a break. And this is something that I recommend all my clients do is to take a break from flour and sugar and really get back in touch with what your body feels like when you're hungry, when you are a fat burner.

So there's absolutely a detox process to that. But I think the part that I wanted to coach you on in that instance was sometimes we, again, like I like you called it leaping with your logic because you had that one piece of cake. It's because you had that one bread roll and we're so quick to cut it out that we forget to zoom out and look at, let me just zoom out for a second. What are all the possibilities? That's one. Maybe, maybe it was the bread roll or maybe it was the cake, like fine, but what are all the possibilities? What might it look, what might it feel like to zoom out and take a look at all of it?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Yeah. I mean, this is why I found it so valuable to have a coach because I'm not, I don't get stuck in one way of thinking. It's someone that's always inviting you to zoom out, to think about other options. to challenge what I'm doing. So yeah, it's really nice to have that other extra perspective.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love that you're saying that having a coach was helpful.

I'm curious for you because, you know, I think a lot of people listen to this podcast and they love the content and the stories and the strategies that you learn on this podcast. What do you think is the difference between trying to listen to the podcast and implement it on your own versus Investing in yourself and having a coach and being in this group.

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Dr. Diana Pfeil: I don't think I would have been successful because I've had podcasts and strategies to listen to forever. I think there's something about like really connecting with a single approach. So you stop like shopping approaches and having a single coach there for guidance. And like, yes, I did this, the evaluations regularly, and I also did really daily focus on my goal, but I think having that structure really helped, helped make that happen.

Like life does get busy and having a big commitment and like having a clear goal and having a top of mind. Cause I've agreed to come to this coaching call every week. It's huge. It's I mean, people could do it on their own, but I think that it's so much have a better experience in a supportive environment.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, I, I like to think about it as like it's this act that we do when we make a decision when we invest seriously in ourselves and we say, I'm actually blocking out an hour on my calendar and it's blocked off the way that I like to think about it. I'm curious if this felt impactful for you. It's like, I'm really signaling to my brain that it I'm taking this seriously and I'm going to prioritize this more than I have in the past. This is not just a one of like many things that matter to me. I'm prioritizing this in a way that I haven't before. I'm curious whether you feel like that was part of your experience in joining the group versus just like binging all the podcasts and going to all the content that you could have gone to.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Yeah, explicitly saying, Hey, this is, I really want to make this my number one priority. I want to like do this thing for myself and really put it at number one. Yeah, that's not what I would have been doing if I was just listening to podcasts and kind of dabbling. I think it really does take like an effort and a focus and a desire on a consistent basis.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And I don't like to mince words around that. I think like that's even why I think on the strategy workshop and I love that you said that, you know, the group also created this like inner accountability for you, but. I mean, I say on the, on the strategy workshop, when we start working together, that the fresh start, the excitement, the motivation that you feel at the very brand new experience that you're having right now is going to wane.

And so just like you can check out of any experience or any new planner, like I used to buy all the planners and all the apps that you could stop doing it. You can stop doing the group. So what do you think it was about part of the process you learn in Unstoppable that was like you knew how to take action even when the motivation waned, the excitement went away, the brand shiny newness was not so shiny and new anymore.

How did you learn how to take action? Anyway?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Well, I didn't even realize that was a concept. This was, I remember this so clearly before my first week in the Unstoppable group, when I was kind of reading the materials, I didn't realize before that I could do this without motivation. In fact, motivation is not helpful because in order to be successful, you need to be doing it when you don't want to when you don't have motivation.

That concept pretty blew my mind and but it really resonated. It was like, Oh, that is another reason I haven't been successful. I rely on motivation. And that's not going to help me here. So that was really clarifying for me. I thought, Oh, wow, I can actually do this without feeling motivated. I didn't even know that was a possibility.

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I thought weight loss required constant motivation. And so that was really helpful for me because it was a constraint. And then I knew I had to work within that. Like I. Her, what I heard was okay, motivation will go away. Of course it will. That makes sense. What do I do then? And just putting something on my calendar and showing up for myself, even when I didn't feel like it, kind of like sometimes that happens with a meeting at work.

I don't, I mean, I have to do this meeting, but I don't quite feel like it, but do I need to? Am I going to do it just because I don't feel motivated? Of course not. So I was able to apply that same lens and that makes it easier in, in a way because you don't, you can take action even when you don't feel like it.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, I think that that's actually one of the biggest misconceptions that we have is we think we have to keep feeling motivated or excited about our goals and the strategy and the process and the trouble is like on Wednesday afternoon or Friday night or Saturday. In the middle of the day, like you might not feel like it.

That's the moment that I think we think something's going wrong. Like, Oh, maybe I don't even want the goal. Maybe it doesn't matter to me so much. And so we give ourselves a lot of justifications to stop taking action. And then you'll know you're doing this. If you start plan hopping, it's like Monday morning, see fresh start again.

And it's like that start, stop, start, stop, start, stop. That really is the reason that we stay stuck, which is why one of the core, I think of it as like a core tenant that I talk about is how do you take action when you don't? feel like and how do you keep following through?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: That's where the daily work shows up because at a time when I am showing up for myself, I can kind of recognize, remind myself, okay, I know I want this result.

This is why I know I love my plan. This is why. And Tomorrow when it's Friday night, I never feel motivated. I know this is going to be an obstacle. Like what am I going to do? And so it really helps to make that decision or commitment in advance. It really increases the chances that I won't make, go to those excuses because I'll remember it's pretty fresh.

Just yesterday, I was telling myself that I, this is going to happen totally fine, but I know that I'm going to take this action. It's not always easy, but that framework does make it more doable.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: How do you think the daily work really took you from maybe just checking off a box of like, I'm supposed to do this task. I'm supposed to do this concept versus really wanting to do it in a way that created sustainable results for you.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Well, one thing that I did is I made an amazing ritual out of it and this worked for me for a really long time and then it broke down a little and I can talk about why, but like creating a habit, part of it is like making you want to do the habit.

And so, and the way that you could do that is make it enjoyable. So what I would do is that I would like make it my me time. I, it would be the evening, my kids would have gone to bed and I would get like a warm beverage and light a candle. And I just made it like a nice relaxing ritual. And that's when I did that work.

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The other thing that I was able to do that didn't make it a checkbox is I tried to keep it fresh. So one of the questions in the daily work is, Well, why do you love your plan? And I would try to come up with a different reason every day. It was like, why do I love my plan today? That way I'm not regurgitating yesterday's reason and just checking it off.

So it like makes me kind of refresh my thinking about why I love my plan. So those things really helped. I did have, I think when it became spring and it wasn't dark in the evening. It wasn't as cozy like that ritual stopped being cozy, which I think that's what broke it down for me. So I had to like change it a little bit and kind of recommit to it and, and make it cozy even though it wasn't nighttime.

So that was, that's been the summer, but yeah, those are the things that made it something that I enjoyed. I made myself, it helped me enjoy doing it. So then it was able, I was able to make it a habit and to stick to it when I, even when I didn't feel like it.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I love that. I remember cause I've used your ritual example and I love it so much.

And how much time? Cause I feel like time is a big barrier for so many high achievers. We think we need so much time and we have to do so much to lose the weight. And then if you would perfectly to keep it off, can you share your thoughts on? How much time it really took you on a day to day basis and on a week to week basis for you to hit your dream goal.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: So I kind of committed to 30 minutes once a week to do Like my evaluation and plan and all that and then every day five to ten minutes to do this daily work stuff. And by the way, I think you call it or did hashtag daily work, which I think sets the work and makes it fun.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So, yeah, it's like slack, right?

In slack, we get to call it hashtag daily work and we get to share all of our things. And I just want to, reiterate what you just said. You said you would spend. You set aside 30 minutes per week to do your weekly audit or evaluation and five to 10 minutes per day to do the work it takes to hit your dream ideal weight.

And I'm curious if you could just share before the Unstoppable group, how much time do you think you were spending thinking about weight loss, trying to lose the weight, worrying about whether it's going to work, whether it's not going to work? Like, how much time do you think you were spending before the group?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: I think before. There was a lot of background activity. So just a lot of rumination that pretty much went away or is not a big issue for me. So there's all the background noise. And then I would probably like browse ideas or plans or every once in a while too. So it was probably more time than this you know, the 30 minutes once a week, plus the daily.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. It's like, I think that if we really calculated how much time we spent in researching new strategies in Googling, what might work in ruminating and worrying about us hitting our goal weight in doing excessive amounts of planning and then not hitting the goal and feeling bad about it. If we like calculated the number of minutes per week, we spent in that it's a lot.

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And I think that that's the biggest barrier that I want to help high achievers obliterate is you don't actually need a lot of time to lose weight. You just need one moment at a time. I think what you were talking about is how do you actually do that? It's joining this group. Yep. Yeah. What do you think it was about being in a group with other high achieving working moms that worked really well for you?

Because they're not all just like you, they all have different, I mean, there's physicians and veterinarians and team leaders and techies. Like what do you think it is about being in a group where people are different? But they have very similar perspectives.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Um, so first off being a group is not natural for me at all.

As I mentioned before, I have all these like social things related to connecting to people. So it does feel safer to be one on one. One thing I really appreciated about the group is it expands my learning to all of these other areas that other people are bringing up that pretty much all of the time I can see a version of myself in like, Oh, I have a version of that, huh? I hadn't considered that. So that has been huge.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I think that that's a common, a common thought. Someone listening to this might be like, you know what? But like, it's something unique to me. I need to be further along to join a group or like I might feel too shy or I might not be able to get exactly what I need in this group.

So I'm curious about what your thoughts are on anyone can be really anywhere in their journey. They don't have to be at a certain point to join this group and how, what your perspective is on how their needs would be met no matter where they are.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: There's nothing about where someone is in their journey that makes them more or less right for coaching. Like I think we're kind of in all like learning the same things at the same time, when I joined the group, I thought there could be a difference between someone depending on how much weight you have to lose or your, where you are in your life, but I think we just have way more in common or to learn from each other than the opposite.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I love that you're sharing that because this group has a wide range of like different kinds of perspectives in that, like we all have our unique obstacles. Somebody might have 10 pounds to lose and somebody might have 50 or 60 pounds to lose. And what's I think so fascinating and what we learn when we're in the spaces, it actually doesn't matter whether you have 10 pounds or 50 or 60.

It's our high achiever brains that are all very similar. We all have very perfectionist thinking. We all have the, you know, you have a PhD in optimization, but I feel like working moms are always trying to optimize their life and they always feel short on time and effort and bandwidth. And what if there was actually a solution to that piece of it?

And how that might actually help us solve this weight loss struggle in a way that feels really sustainable. And that was one of the things you said before we hit record, which is you hit your goal weight. And now we're practicing maintenance and you actually feel for the first time confident that This is going to be the way that you maintain your weight forever.

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What do you think is the difference that you feel confident now? Whereas maybe in the past when you've lost weight, you didn't.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: The confidence comes from the fact that throughout losing weight, I've had so many obstacles and made so many mistakes, but I was still able to do it. So like the work I learned is how to react to that.

And still be in the end successful. So I just feel based on that past experience. I know that I'll be able to keep doing that. And that has never been the emphasis before on weight loss. Like the emphasis you have is actually, it's good to make mistakes. Like you, you need to, these are, these are gold for yourself.

And that's a pretty different perspective. And then I think that makes me feel pretty confident with being able to maintain.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I actually think of this as like a secret super skill that I don't tell you you're going to get, but you get, which is you get really masterful at managing plot twists. Yeah.

And I'm like, yeah, you're going to get there. And I'll decide secretly, by the way, you're going to change your relationship with yourself. With every mistake you make, you're not going to ever feel the need to quit on yourself or double down and get super harsh and strict. What if there was a third road?

What if you got really masterful at managing plot twists without being like an asshole to yourself? And what would be the impact of like, to me, that's like the skill of a lifetime. What if we have 50 more years, like what if a plot just kept coming up and I knew how to handle them masterfully, what would the impact of that be to me? That's like the real super skill.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Yeah, I completely agree. It's a huge super skill and I'm so excited because now I can use like apply the same approach to my next goal. What do I want to make number one next in my life? And so it's like it's the skill of figuring out how to reach a goal and kind of a joyous way with plot twist with mistakes along the way, but that's fine.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I really love that you were sharing just like there are hard moments. Like I think that it's so important to not glamorize like hitting your weight, hitting your goal weight. It's going to be so easy. It is going to be easier than what you've been doing. Let me just say that it's going to be easier than what you've been doing.

And also there are hard moments and there's some work you have to set aside five to 10 minutes a day and you just set aside 30 minutes to evaluate your results and you have to show up right for yourself. Like there's effort there, but what if that was so much easier than what you've been doing? Don't quit on yourself.

That's like the biggest thing that we do is we abandon ourselves in that moment that we actually need to have our back the most. And that I think is my mission for working moms is I want to help hard working moms not abandon themselves when they need themselves the most. When you hit a plot twist is when you need yourself the most.

And I kind of think of myself as the coach that shows you how to do that, to stop abandoning yourself and stopping so harsh with yourself. What if you could leverage, I call it leveraging every plot twist in the best,

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most loving way. That's my mission. So Diana, if you could share kind of any last thoughts that you have, somebody who's listening and they've been considering the Unstoppable group, they know that they identify as this working mom who is hitting goals like they're, these are smart women who hit goals in all these areas of their life, but weight loss has just been this one thing they haven't figured out and they want to do it with ease and simplicity.

They feel like they have all these things they've tried in the past. What are some thoughts that you would share with them about whether this group might be for them and any last thoughts that you have to share?

Dr. Diana Pfeil: I think this group is for anyone that's really in a place where they can make a commitment and really see themselves putting something at the top or at least trying their best to consistently, then everyone should join. I think it's a really big gift and a good, great investment in yourself.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I think especially women, we're so used to giving to everyone else and we're willing to spend money on our kids and our partners and the vacation that you've planned on, or like, you know, the concert tickets, but something comes up at this idea of spending on ourself and investing in ourself and if you solve this problem, like what would that be worth? Right. To me, it's just, I think it's just priceless. So Diana, thank you so much for coming and sharing your story. It's been so good. And I love that I have gotten to be your coach. It's been amazing.

Dr. Diana Pfeil: Thanks for having me. Yeah. I really appreciate you as my coach. Thanks so much.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Diana's story isn't unique and I'm so glad that she got to share that she had so many plot twists along the way. I think my favorite piece of any client that works with me that loses weight and starts to feel the simplicity and sustainability in the process that I teach is that when you get to your goal, your life is not really going to change.

Your kids are still going to be exactly who they are. Your partner, your work, your time, your task list, and your responsibilities are still going to be there. So what would it be like for all of us to know that life is still going to be the way it's going to be. And at the same time, you can feel better in your body.

If you have hated your weight loss strategy before, or if you haven't known how to handle plot twists, if you have spent more time ruminating about weight loss than you want, I want you to know that the Unstoppable group is designed specifically for you. Join me on Sunday for the *Do Less Work, Lose More Weight Webinar*.

And you are going to hear about my strategy and my process for how to help you solve this problem and be ready to book your sales call with me on day one when doors open right after the webinar, you can grab your seat for the webinar for free over at theunstoppablemombrain.com/webinar. And you will get all of the details emailed to you, to your email inbox.

I cannot wait to see you on Sunday. It is going to be so great. Have an amazing week. Bye. Thanks for listening to *The Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast*. It's been an honor spending this time with you and your brilliant brain. If you want more resources or information from the show, head on over to theunstoppablemombrain.com.

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