

## Ep #78: Goldilocks Goal Setting with Dr. Nicole Plantner



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*with*  
DR. PRIYANKA VENUGOPAL

### Full Episode Transcript

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Priyanka Venugopal

## Ep #78: Goldilocks Goal Setting with Dr. Nicole Plantner

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal and you're listening to the *Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast, Goldilocks Goal Setting with Dr. Nicole Plantner*. Hey friends, I am bringing back another amazing Unstoppable client, Dr. Nicole Plantner, who is a veterinarian and a mom of three kids. Today on the podcast, Nicole is sharing how our work together in the Unstoppable group, not only changed her experience of weight loss, But how it really impacted her both at work and at home.

One of the things that I love is how Nicole very forthcomingly shares her hesitation and even skepticism around my Goldilocks goal setting process and how our work together helped her drop some of the pressure in hitting goals on a weekly basis. Before we get into this amazing conversation, I want to make sure you know that the *Unstoppable Group* is open for enrollment for just a few more days.

This is your last chance to work with me in 2023, so if you want to have support through the holiday season, through Halloween and Thanksgiving, Diwali, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas, and wake Up New Year's Day, lighter on the scale, this is the time to join. You can head on over to [theunstoppablenombrain.com/group](https://theunstoppablenombrain.com/group) and hit the apply now button. This is a short application that will help determine whether we're going to be best fit to work together. I will be personally reviewing every application that comes in and within 24 hours, you will get an email response from me. The moment that you join the *Unstoppable* group, you're going to get immediate access to the video curriculum and all the call replays and literally you can start losing weight before we have our first call.

This group is designed for the high achieving working mom who is hitting goals in all of these other areas of her life, but just wants to crack the code for the scale. Don't wait another minute or another day doors are closing soon. So head on over to [theunstoppablenombrain.com/group](https://theunstoppablenombrain.com/group). And I cannot wait to see your application in my email inbox.

Okay. Let's get into today's conversation with Dr. Nicole Plantner. Hey, Nicole, welcome to the podcast. I'm so glad that you're here for everyone listening this is Dr. Nicole Plantner. She is a badass veterinarian who has kids and has been doing all of the things that I cannot wait for her to share in the group and Nicole, take it away.

Tell us a little bit about you and where you were before you ever joined unstoppable.

Nicole Plantner: Hi. Yes. Thank you for having me on the podcast. Um, my name is Nicole Plantner. I'm a GP/Urgent care veterinarian in the, um, Cleveland, Ohio area with three kids working full time. Um, mom, wife, uh, You know, kind of brought to coaching in 2020.

I think a lot of things changed. It changed for a lot of people, especially in health care. Um, and struggles kind of made me realized I needed to do some things differently, which led me to kind of my first coaching experience and made a lot of progress and in some key areas of my life. And then, um, you know, weight loss was just one of the areas that I was still struggling a lot with.

I lose the weight and gain it back and, you know, repeat, you know, times 50. And I was just tired of that cycle. And I had, um, heard about your podcast and, um, had started following you on Instagram and, um. You know, just hearing a lot of your story that, you know, really clicked with, um, some of the things that I had been experiencing.

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And we did that, that call and the rest is history. Here I am.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yes. I love it. So Nicole, let's just go back for a second, because I think what you said, I was smiling because you're like, you know, I would lose it and gain it and lose it and gain it. And it was like 50 times, you know, 50 times, if not more that I think so many high achievers who have wanted to lose weight have experienced that feeling.

So take us through, what were some of the things, have you struggled with weight forever? Was this like a forever thing or is this something that you noticed more as adulthood or maybe after motherhood? When did your weight come to your mind as like something you wanted to solve?

Nicole Plantner: It definitely after having kids, um, I gained like 50 pounds with my first baby.

I have three, two boys, and a girl. Um, so I gained a lot of weight with my first one and, you know, No, he was not a 50 pound baby at the hospital.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So I was surprised. Right. It's like, seriously. Yeah. Wait a minute.

Nicole Plantner: And, um, so I, I struggled to get the weight off with him and I eventually did, but you know, then I had baby number two and I lost some of the weight, but not all of it. And then I had baby number three. And so I was just a little bit heavier, um, each time. And then I don't know if it was just being in kind of, you know, late thirties, you know, approaching that, that 40, um, mark that just the normal things, you know, that the usual things weren't working, um, you know, the dieting and the counting calories and, you know, trying to do hour long workouts, it just, it wasn't affected like it, like it was previously.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Right. So let's just get into that for a second. So you gained weight with every pregnancy. You would lose not all of it, but a lot of it. But you were saying with every subsequent pregnancy, basically gained a little bit more overall. Yeah. What were some of the things that you tried that did work?

What were all the things that worked that did help you actually lose the weight in the beginning?

Nicole Plantner: A lot of diet mentality, you know, calorie counting. I had like, app on my phone where I would take, you know, you could scan the barcode of the food and it would, you know, automatically like load and you'd have your stats in there.

So it would tell you like, you know, how many calories you should eat and where you're at allotment wise. And, um, if you exercise, you know, then you couldn't. And I remember after my second son was born, I ran a half marathon and like, I remember like, oh, I can eat all of these calories because I've burned, you know, 800 calories training for this this half marathon and surprisingly that did not get the weight off. I still struggled even with kind of that high intense, you know, exercise and, you know, tracking everything that I was eating.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I'm just curious because I, you, like we've talked about this so much in the Unstoppable Group, but like the idea of calorie counting and logging every point and every single thing you eat. Like how, how does that affect your desire for the food? Like you still have the desire for the food, right? So I'm curious, why do you think it was, if you really counted every point in calorie, like you sure you'll lose the weight, but what do you think it was that didn't make it an effective strategy for you?

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Nicole Plantner: I think now that I've kind of been through the process, I realized my, like my head and my body were separated. I wasn't really checking in with like what I wanted or how full I was, or it was just like, oh, you know, I can have all of these things because I have the, you know, 500 calories that I can, you know, spend on this dinner or this lunch and, you know, would just eat all of that instead of, you know, checking in with how my body or my gut was, was feeling.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Okay. So, and I think that anyone listening to this is probably so familiar with that. If you've counted points and calories and macros and that's been your weight loss strategy, then we're all very familiar, right? Like, what am I allowed to eat today? I have, I remember, I think this was, I might've shared this, but like, I remember once I went on a date night with my fiance at the time since 15 years ago, and I had a piece of cheesecake. I was trying to lose 20 pounds for my wedding. And I was like, this cheesecake is going to put me over my allowed allotment. What do I have to not eat to be able to fit in within my calorie budget? Right. And so, and I think that what we do in the group and you tell me Nicole, whether this has been your experience, but like how that way of thinking about food and what we're allowed to eat for ourselves, like how does that pan out in the long run?

Like, why do you think that strategy didn't work for you in the long run?

Nicole Plantner: This it feels, you know, very restrictive and diet mentality and huge. Kind of [00:08:00] relying on willpower to, you know, not eat whatever, you know, you're craving or desiring at, at the time versus changing that your thoughts about, about the food and what you want and what your goals are.

Um, and I, you know, just kind of coached about this this week, you know, I can tell myself, no, you know, 90 percent of the time, but, you know, it's the 10 percent that, you know, can kind of undo things.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. Okay. So we have to get into the willpower piece because I think that was so, so beautiful, your experience of that.

But let's go back a little bit. So you tried the calorie counting, you tried marathons and half marathons and running and exercise. What else did you try to do? What other strategies did you kind of play with to lose weight? And did any of them work?

Nicole Plantner: I mean, that was pretty much all I had tried. I never really did like the weight watchers or counting points.

Um, it was more like tracking what I was eating and trying to, you know, essentially exercise my way out of a bad diet.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Okay. So the exercising your way out of bad diet, and this is tell me that if I exercise, I'm allowed to eat 500 more calories of the special food or the thing. Okay. So how much time do you think you spent thinking about weight loss, the strategy of counting and exercising and trying to like calculate your way out of a bad diet? How much time do you think you spent doing all of that?

Nicole Plantner: Well, that's a hard, hard question. Um, so I feel like it was always kind of buzzing in the background rooms, you know, cause you plan food every day or you're packing lunch or buying lunch, you know, if you're out at, at work.

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So I feel like there was always kind of a constant buzzing of like, what am I going to eat today? And what can I eat or what should I eat? What do I, you know, versus what, what do I really want or what do I need? Um. I mean, headspace wise, it just encompassed a huge part of that bandwidth.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I'm curious for you, cause this is again, one of the processes that we really get into a lot is how would you treat yourself or what would you do when you hit what we call plot twists, right?

Like when you went off the plan, if you didn't follow the calorie allotment, if you didn't like follow the plan to a T what would happen next for you?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, and a lot of just quitting on myself and I would say screw it and throw up my hands and like it's obviously not working. It's not going to work. So I might as well, you know eat whatever is in front of me that, that, you know, really don't need at the moment, but kind of want.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. So at that point, like, you know, after you tried the counting, you tried the exercise, what was it that made you decide that coaching was something that you wanted to get into as a solution to this?

Nicole Plantner: And I think I had such good success in 2020 when I did coaching, um, kind of working through a better work life balance with kids and, and work and, um, you know, recovering people pleaser and, you know, really carving out time for myself, um, by doing that work and I have a science background, so I really liked the thought model.

I could very logically see that, oh, like, you know, there's this circumstance or this event, and I have a very specific thought about it, and that leads me to a certain feeling, and then I take a specific action because of that feeling, and then, you know, that ends in, in a result, and you know, changing those kind of initial thoughts made, um, you know, huge improvements just overall in work life balance and quality of life.

Um, with that, you know, initial coaching and some of that coaching had been like around weight and body and things like that. But, um, it was more just overall kind of showing up the way I wanted to show up in my life for my kids and my husband and, and my patients, um, you know, in a way that you know, it felt true to, to me.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I think that so many high achievers like really grasp onto the think, feel, act cycle so much because it does make so much sense. It's like for our practical minded brains, it makes so much sense to understand, Oh, the reason that I have been overeating or ruminating or worrying is because I have been feeling this way.

And the reason I'm feeling this way is because of something I keep thinking. And I think that's why coaching is so powerful specifically for the high achiever, because we can use like little protocol to unravel what we're thinking that's creating every single result that we have. So I kind of want to get into a specific example.

I think it was either last week or maybe it was the week before we were really talking about over desire, right? Like the desire, the cravings that they feel for the high chamber is like every evening or at night. It's like, I just

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deserve a break. You want your evening plop down. And one of the biggest principles that I talk about in the group is you can have the best strategy.

The best plan, everything is like written out to a T, but if you have a lot of overdesire, that plan is not going to be sustainable. It's not going to last. So that's what calorie counting doesn't work, right? It doesn't really handle or acknowledge the overdesire. So talk us through what your experience has been in understanding your overdesire and how you started to release that.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, just, um, you know, just constantly having thoughts of like, I want this or I want something sweet, especially after dinner. You know, that was my big struggle. I can be busy all day and, you know, eat my own plan lunch and dinner. And it was after, you know, the kids went to bed and you know, husband having, you know, his nighttime snack or two or three and, you know, wanting, you know, seeing that and wanting some of that.

And, um, you know, that creating more and more thoughts of like, I want something sweet or I need something sweet. And, you know, that kind of leads to that, you know, feeling of desire and then you can say no to it 90 percent of the time, but, you know, that's 10 percent and it's kind of reprioritizing, like, what do you really want is kind of what clicked for me is, do I really, you know, want this, you know, plate of cookies or do I really want to feel good and light in my body?

And how will I feel? Not only after I eat this, but you know, the next day, um, you know, trying to, you know, undo something that I didn't want to, you know, really wasn't in my best, best interest.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: You know, that moment, like, tell me a little bit for you, like that, that moment that comes, I feel like any working mom can relate to this.

It's like you get home after a long day where you've been working and doing all the things and the kids are finally tucked away. Maybe the kitchen is cleaned up or not. You're finally sitting down. What emotion was it that you think you wanted to break from? Like, what were you feeling at the end of the day that you're like, you know what?

A plate of cookies or insert your snack of choice like this would be so good. What emotion was it for you?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, definitely stress, you know, the stress of juggling the day to day things, and especially if it was an emergency day, just everything is sick, and everything's not feeling well, and everyone's emotions are high, and like many clinics, everyone's short staffed, and trying to juggle those challenges, and then, you know, kind of working through the entire day without a break, and then coming home, and you know, the juggle of the kids and dinner, and you know, you know.

If it's school during school time, packing their lunches and meeting their needs and answering their questions. And it's just kind of another version of being at work. Yeah, trying to meet everyone's needs at work and then at home. And then by the time you, you know, plop down and the kids are, um you know, in, in bed, it's kind of that like stress kind of leaving your body, but then also seeking some type of rest and relaxation.

And definitely it was leaning on, on food for that or alcohol, you know, wine, things like that. So like, how did that work?

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So you would, you would feel stressed in the evening. You just want to break, just want to relax and enter cookies, a snack, the glass of wine. How, how effective was it for you to help you with your stress?

Nicole Plantner: I mean, it helps temporarily, I would say, but it does.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's why we do it. That's why we do it, you know, and I, and I wanted to kind of like, I, I, I feel like I can always share my opinion of that, but it's nice to hear, hear, like, I feel like the high achiever would benefit from knowing that if a plate of cookies or a glass of wine is relieving your stress in the moment.

It's because it does like chemically, you're just giving yourself some dopamine. You're having an endorphin hit in your brain. It makes a lot of sense that it turns into a habit and it's just a coping mechanism for stress or overwhelm or boredom even that turns into a habit and we just forget that there's so many other alternatives.

Right. And I think that what we got to get to do together is like, let's not forget. And I tell this to you all the time, like, let's not try to manipulate ourselves into the fact that we don't have real life stresses. Working moms have real life stresses. How do you think? We know that eating and drinking might be once one way that you can solve that.

Why would you ever want to not do that anymore? If it worked?

Nicole Plantner: I mean, it does work, but then you know, in general, the weight was starting to creep back up and, you know, I would step on the scale and I wouldn't like the number and then I, you know, you know, come Monday, you know, we're going to get back on, you know, eating better, you know, had too much, you know, an extra glass of wine and then I didn't sleep well, um, because a lot of times if there's, if I have too much alcohol, I'll wake up in the middle of the night or just toss and turn and it's just not a very restful sleep either.

So then I'm even more tired the next day. I mean, there's, um, Definitely consequences of taking that approach that aren't kind of in that immediate, you know, first five, 10, 15 minutes after you have something like that, it's, um, you know, long term, I think things start to add up and that's what I was seeing.

And I was kind of worried that if I continued on this road, it was just going to keep creeping up and up and up. And I, you know, would get strict and start over on Monday and go down and, you know, Plot twist would happen and I'd throw it all out the window and be back up again. And it was just, it was exhausting, honestly, mentally to keep doing that over and over again.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I, and I love that you kind of described, it's almost like there's this short term. So like you feel stressed, you plopped into the evening, you have your cookies, your glass of wine, and for five minutes, it really does feel really great. But you know, long run in the morning or even in the middle of the night, you feel kind of terrible about it.

It's almost like anything beyond that first five minute window doesn't actually feel good. Right. So, and I, and I love that you're, you're kind of sharing that there's this aftermath that I feel sometimes like we forget about, like, because then the next night comes along. And we know, here's the thing, high achievers are so smart.

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We know that we're not going to love it. We know that it's not going to feel so good. But we do it anyway. Why do you think that we do it anyway? When we know it's not going to feel good the next day?

Nicole Plantner: Because I don't think we've learned, like, another way. You know, nobody really has... Kind of showed us how to do it without food and it's so normalized in our culture like, you know Mommy's juice or you know Snack or wine.

It's just become kind of culturally very very normal or you know Yeah, you've earned it, you know have that cookie have that glass of wine or margarita, you know, whatever it is. You know it's kind of pushed a little bit sometimes too, right?

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And I think that that's so important to highlight is that it's not that you're weak if you go to food or [00:20:00] alcohol to feel better. It's literally been the main coping mechanism that we are taught from like a very young age and then socially normalized in every single circle that we operate in. Right. So if that's been you, it's, you're not alone, but what we're kind of, we're kind of exploring today is that what if there were some other ways of managing your stress and your overwhelm and your boredom that you didn't have to go to food and alcohol. It's one option, right? Like we're not going to take it away, but what if there was other options? So Nicole, for you, what would you say has been like, what have you learned at Unstoppable that you've been able to implement instead of food and alcohol, you feel stressed at the end of the day or bored or overwhelmed. What do you do instead? What's been helpful for you?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, I'm finding other ways to give myself that rest and relaxation. You know, sometimes it's, you know, a lot of it's, you know, doing something like instead, so taking a, a long hot shower, um, you know, I've really become, um, enamored with like yoga when I just need to do some like deep breathing. And [00:21:00] even if it's not strenuous, like trying to move in some way really helps kind of release some of that stress and anxiety from the day and can really be very grounding. Um, you know, reading, like making sure I always have like a book on Kindle or from the library or, um, you know, things like that.

You know, really kind of settle, settle in, in the, in the evening and enjoy that, you know, things that I like to read or just, you know, making sure I'm present with, um, you know, my, my husband, when we're just like hanging out on the couch in the evening, you know, put away phones or pick a show to, to watch together versus he's doing his own thing. And I'm doing my own thing.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And it's like actually having alternate activities to do, not just eating and not just, I even think, I'm trying to remember if this was something, I think this came up a few months ago, this idea of connecting with your partner through food, right? Like, I think we might've even talked about it.

Like, I know, cause my husband's the same. He'll bring out snack, two snack, three snack four, and it's like, we just want to connect with our partner. And we think that we have to eat the same foods to connect. I'm just curious, like, what has been your experience of connecting with your partner, but maybe not always having to eat the same, the same way.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah. And that was definitely kind of what I was looking for in the evening. Cause he'd get a snack out and, you know, culturally it's this very social thing to like have a meal or share and you can, you know, build that connection and just reminding myself that, you know, I don't need that. Um, you know, when



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we're sitting in the evening and, um, you know, just something as simple as that has really made a big difference.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. The other thing that you were, you've, you've talked a lot about, and I think this has been a lot of the coaching that we've gone through with you is the mean voice or like the strict, you know, that was a lot. So tell us a little bit about what your journey has been with the inner monologue, where like, if you go off plan or you maybe gain a pound, how you used to talk to yourself versus what's What's happening in your mind now?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah. Yeah, I definitely had a very like critical or negative self, you know, self talk or kind of loop, you know, anytime I, you know, ate something that, you know, I quote unquote wasn't supposed to eat or if I did that, especially in the scale was up the next day, I mean, it would just set me off in a really, you know, bad mood, um, you know, at the detriment to kids and husband 'cause then I'd be kind of snappy in, in general with them. And, um, you know, just telling myself, there you go again. You know, clearly you can't do it. You, you know, you're not strong enough, you don't have enough willpower. Like why did you, you know, make those, those decisions, you know, past decisions. Mm-hmm.

And just really kind of getting down on myself because thinking like that's how I would motivate my myself to Like make better choices or, you know, stick with whatever the, the, the plan was that I made, um, now it's a lot, you know, different kind of, you know, offering myself grace and compassion for, you know, those past decisions and, um, you know, trying to quiet that, that voice.

I think it's always going to be there, but just to remind myself that, you know, it's okay, we'll, we'll figure it out. And that's been like, the biggest thought is to not kind of use any kind of plot twist as a reason to, to quit on myself. Um, you know, to always kind of pick myself back up and we'll figure it out.

And like you would do with a kid, you know, you wouldn't berate them. That's not kind of, that's not going to get you the result or the behavior that you want.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. I, Nicole, I feel like this has been some of the best stuff. Like I think so often, and I think any high achiever woman experiences, when you hit a plot twist, when you go off plan or you make a quote unquote mistake, the very reflexive thought that high achievers have is there you go again, you're never going to figure this out.

You're not strong enough. And you tell me, but in the past many decades of all the things that you have tried, how, what percent of the time would that way of thinking about a plot twist drive you to quit?

Nicole Plantner: At least 90 percent of the time, I mean, I use it all the time and then it would be, you know, sometimes I'd be like, well, you know, I can't control it.

Like there's this event and this family event and this barbecue and it was like, I had no ownership over the decisions that, that I was making because I can't, you know, control these events that we have to go to and there's going to be food and alcohol, and I'm going to be expected to participate, you know, in, in those activities.

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So I was kind of almost a victim, you know, mentality. Hmm. Well, like I, I have to, so this is right how it's gonna be, right?

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: So there's two different pieces here, right? One is there are these social events, cultural, religious, like holidays, weekends, and vacations, right? That we go to these social events and we think we have to eat in a certain way, and we don't realize, and this is a separate tool that you can actually eat in a way, at any social gathering and not gain weight.

And in fact, lose weight if you wanted to, so that's one piece of it. What we're talking about is you go to an event, maybe you go off plan, maybe you gain a pound, and then what you tell yourself after the fact would drive you to quit 90 percent of the time. And Nicole, tell me if this feels true in kind of your history with quitting on you know, the goal or maybe quitting on the strategy is you would say to yourself, there I go again, you'd quit. And then the mean voice would come back. Like, let's just double down, get a little bit more strict and get back on plan. So tell us a little bit about the whole cycle and how that would perpetuate.

I like to think of this as just like this is the hamster wheel you get strict you lose it and then you gain it back. What would be your experience of that?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, I mean, it was definitely kind of like being on a hamster wheel. I would, you know, plot twist, go off plan, gain a few pounds, um, you know, either quit for a day or a week and eat all the things and then be, you know, really frustrated getting on the scale and then.

You know, doubling down on, um, you know, trying to be really strict and, and, you know, stick to the plan that laid out. No, I forgot like at one point I did like whole 30. Um, so like, I like cut out like all like the, the, the flour and sugar and like, I think even soy wasn't allowed. I don't, I can't remember, but you know, it works in a short period of time.

But then when you try and add those things back in, if you haven't changed your thoughts and relationship with yourself, it doesn't really stick. And that's probably what's been so high opening about this program is I feel confident enough to like go to a family cookout or an event or out to dinner with, you know, friends or family or whoever and, and know, like, I can figure out like what, what I can eat that will serve me and not use it as a reason to just, you know, throw everything out the window and, and go crazy and, and overeating.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And then like, think you have to double down again and like get super strict again. Right. So I love that you're saying this because one of my mottos and one of my intent, one of my like biggest dreams for the high achievers to know that it's not if you make a mistake or if you go off plan, it's a matter of when.

Right? Like, I think I even shared at the very start when we worked together, I'm like, listen, I don't want your weight loss to be linear. I know that you want it to be this perfect line down. I don't want that for you because I want all any client that ever works with me. I want them to change their relationship with themselves as they navigate a plot twist.

The relationship in the past has been, you hit a plot twist, you make a mistake and you're just like, there I go again. I'm never going to figure it out. You quit. And then like you, you're in the cycle. And what we do

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differently, I think, you know, with our auditing process, our weekly audits, our, I think of it as like the perfectionist audit, how you like learn how to leverage plot twists.

It's the alternative to be mean to yourself and quitting. And I just wanted to highlight one thing. I think sometimes people think me being compassionate or patient with myself is going to make me complacent. It's going to mean like, I'm just going to get lazy and sit and eat bonbons on the couch. Can you talk a little bit about how, what we do in the group through the lens of compassion and curiosity is literally the opposite of complacency.

Like I make you guys really get in the weeds with your evaluations, share how you are with plot twists now using that filter.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, definitely. It's not, um, a free pass to be complacent. It's more to allow you to kind of get curious. Like, okay, this happens, you know, we're going to figure it out instead of beat yourself up over it and kind of asking yourself, well, like, why did I do that?

And, you know, trying to. You know, get to the root of the, you know, feeling or thought that kind of, you know, created, um, eating kind of overeating or going off plan. And, you know, there's still some flexibility and, you know. What you decide to do sometimes in the moment and that can be okay. Like you don't have to, just because you didn't follow it exactly to the T, um, doesn't mean that you, you can't be flexible with what's available and what's there.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I kind of feel like. I love watching how you do your weekly audits because you've been sharing, like, it's like you get to know yourself better and better. You get to peel back a little layer at a time. And sometimes you have like a pretty big breakthrough and you're like, Oh, this is why I've been, you know, this is why I didn't follow the plan when we get curious and when we're compassionate and we put the mean stick down for a minute.

We get to reveal so much about ourselves. And to me, that's why I think about leveraging plot twists as like the hidden gold that so many high achievers are unfortunately not gleaning wisdom from. They're like so quick to double down that they don't even figure out why they overate to begin with. They don't get to actually get to know themselves.

I'm curious what your experience has been with the layers that you have uncovered for yourself in going through the unstoppable process where you do these weekly audits, getting to understand why something happened the way that it did, and how that's helped you navigate moving forward.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, definitely the, the weekly audits and kind of looking at what, what worked and what didn't work allow you to kind of tweak for the next week and, and build on those small successes or big successes to create, you know, even even more results. I think that's been, you know, really powerful to kind of look back at the week and and see and also like just a good, you know, motivator to like I have this, you know, evaluation coming up. You know, I want to make sure that I'm logging things and, you know, pre planning and and things like that.

And I think that's also helped me kind of cultivate more of a belief model because for so long, it's like Well, I can't do it because I haven't done it yet and look at all the times I have tried and failed or I'll, you know, have

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some success and then, you know, it all goes by the wayside. And then, you know, I regain everything that that I've lost.

Um, and so that has really, you know, kind of helped cement the belief portion of it. Um, cause when you don't believe in yourself, you kind of end up with that results that you don't want. Um, so that's really been, you know, interesting and, and really neat. To kind of get through all those layers and, you know, slowly feel that belief kind of like sink in that, you know, you can do it and using that to build on, on the next step and the next step.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And to me, I mean, I say this all the time, but like believing in yourself is so much better than a cookie. Yeah. Like really believing in yourself that you can do this, you can solve this, even when you hit a plot twist is so much better than the cookie. I think the other thing is, and Nicole, tell me if this was your experience, but did you ever feel like you worried about messing up?

You worried about like possibly going off plan? You're going to go to this event or it's Friday night and you're worried like, what if I mess up? Did you have any worry or fear in advance of mess ups?

Nicole Plantner: Oh, yeah, definitely. I mean, because I think to being high achiever, you want everything to be perfect in a certain way.

And if it's not, then you haven't, you haven't done a good job. You know, if you haven't done exactly what you set out to do in the exact order that you set out to do it. At least that has been my, my experience. And you know, if it doesn't go perfectly, then you have to call it a failure versus, you know, learning and tweaking and being flexible is, you know, just as good as following the plan from, you know, A to Z.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yes. And like, to me, this is like the mission that I have is if we could just forever stopping afraid of failing and be like, let's just imagine it's not if it's when it happens, if we could stop being afraid of it. What if we had our own back through it? What if we could get curious about why it happened?

To me, that's like skyrocket like fuel to just hit any goal. How do you feel now about, I mean, listen, nobody loves plot twists, neither do I, right? We like, we don't love them, but what's your experience and your relationship now with the possible imperfect moment?

Nicole Plantner: Um, it doesn't cause any like sense of angst or anxiety, you know, if something came up, um, like this happened just yesterday was, you know, grocery shopping and my parents called and they like impromptu wanted to go out to lunch and I was like, yeah, I can definitely do that.

But then like, You know, old me would have been like, but I had a plan for my lunch and I'm supposed to eat this. And if I, you know, go out to lunch, like, what are they going to have and what's on the menu and, and what will be acceptable. And just having that sense of like peace and ease when I knew I was going to go out, like, Oh, like I'm sure I'll be able to figure out like, you know, what will work, um, you know, with the way I want to eat, that feels good.

And that's exactly what I did. And I brought half of it home because it was too much food. And, um, that was. You know, really nice to be able to, like, have something like that come up and just, you know, not even, you know, a minute of negotiation in terms of, um, you know, how I'm going to make this work. You just do it.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yes, I love that. So like what we were sharing at the start was when you were in the old way of trying to lose weight with counting every point in calorie and really overthinking the plan. You spent a lot of time and probably a lot of energy just with that low buzzing in the background. So tell share a little bit about how much time and effort, I feel like this is a big one for high achievers. We think it takes so much time to like hit goals. What has been your experience now? How much time does it really take for you on a day to day or week to week basis to create what you've been creating?

Nicole Plantner: I mean, day, I mean, daily, it's probably five minutes, maybe, you know, 10 at the most. I mean, definitely longer on the days that I'm evaluating. Cause I like really sit down and, you know, look back at the week and, um, evaluate what went well and what didn't go well. So on average, probably like 10, if you're, you know, factoring that out over the week, but it's, to me, it's been very simple to just kind of sit down for five to 10 minutes, either the night before the morning of the day and, um, kind of plot everything out and you know, obviously if there's stuff that comes up during the week, um, you know, reach out for coaching on Slack or bring it to the, the call. Um, that's been helpful to kind of for the bigger things that seem a bit harder to surmount or talk or work through. Um, yeah.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's so good. Cause it's, and I always want to emphasize that because again, high achievers, because we haven't solved this problem, we assume it's going to take more time, more effort and more energy.

And I want to just shatter that like in five minutes a day, when you have the right strategy and when you know the specific needle movers to focus on, like you can actually spend less time. And have better results and feel better, right? Like you're not having the low buzzing in your background. So, so share with us now.

So you were saying that generally it takes you about five minutes per day. It feels really simple for you to maintain, but like sometimes some big things come up or maybe an obstacle comes up or a challenge comes up. So you bring it to Slack or you bring it to our live coaching call. What's, what is it that you get out of coaching?

Like, what do you think if somebody was listening to this book, I don't understand what happens on a live coaching call, what happens in Slack? Exactly. That helps you overcome like an obstacle for you.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, it's just, it's having kind of that outside person that's not in, in your brain and kind of looking at a circumstance and kind of catching where, you know, you may want to think or show up a little bit differently to get, you know, a more desired result.

Like when I was sitting in the frustration soup over, um, you know, stressors that at work and, you know, it was just kind of ruminating and couldn't kind of you know, let that go or process it and you, you know, came in and kind of like shifted my perspective. Um, and it just, you know, really helps, um, you know, see it from that light and you can't, it's hard to do that when you're, you're stuck in the muck of it.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Right. And so it's like, what we're doing is not just like, we're not talking about just meal plans and food in the Unstoppable group. We really address the whole working mom life. We talk about work and family and kids. And I feel like we've kind of coached on all of those things together. What do you think has been the impact for you?

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Like just starting with work and then we can talk about family and kids, but what do you think has been the impact for you? How has things shifted for you at work? Just being in the Unstoppable group and getting coached.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, just, um, you know, some of the frustrations and struggles at work and, you know, not talking myself out of those, those feelings.

Um, you know, some of that toxic positivity where you're like, you know, just put on a happy face and, you know, and a [00:39:00] smile and it's like, no, it actually is really hard and frustrating and it's valid and, you know, is there anything you can do procedure wise or from, you know, management perspective or from your day to day, you know, what control you have over your schedule to make the experience a little bit better, even though it's not an ideal circumstance.

Um, so it's been, been really powerful to, you know, kind of make those, those changes and tweaks.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: And I think that that's so, I feel like this is so important because I, I can see sometimes how people can use coaching tools, like, you know, your thoughts are creating your feelings and your feelings are driving every result that you have.

So like, just change your thoughts. And that is very effective. Let me just be honest. Like, that's kind of what we talked about on the coaching call yesterday. Power habit 90 was all about the power we have over our thoughts, but I think sometimes we use it as like a form of manipulation and it feels like we're trying to manipulate ourselves to think differently when.

We really don't believe it and I think what you and I are talking about when we get into the, we can get into the strategy, like maybe sometimes things that work and this is for any working mom. Listen, you're working really hard. There's so many things happening and you're going to feel frustrated. And I'm like, okay, now what?

Right? Like we can try to solve your frustration from the top down, but what I also like to do is have you navigate frustration or life stress or that overwhelm more powerfully. So what do you think has been for you, like, now when you experience a work stress or a work frustration, big or small, how do you feel now when you experience that?

How do you handle it differently now than you did before?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, I, you know, don't talk myself out of it. I, you know, I acknowledge that, oh, this is frustration or this is stress and that's understandable. And, you know, what ownership do I have and what can I do to, you know, change the outcome? Um, or you know, mitigate the situation and how do I want to show up when I do that? Um, it's important.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, and I think it's so important for all of us to know. Sometimes we can change our circumstances. We can change the job. Totally, right? We can change. We can sometimes make decisions to change those things. But what we're talking about is what if those things didn't change? How would we want to change our experience of it?

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And like, what if we could take back some more power and getting out of that victim mode that you were talking about when you think about, um, kids, tell me a little bit about how some of the coaching that we have done in the group has changed how you feel about the mom life, the evening, the kid stuff.

Let's come up for you with that.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, it's, it's definitely helped. You know, again, kind of validate some of the, the, you know, typical frustrations, especially like, you know, dinnertime and it's chaos and, you know, similar chaos with, with bedtime and just really, you know, recognizing that and, and kind of at the end of, you know, either dinner, putting the kids to bed, you know, giving myself a pat on the back that, yeah, you, you know, You know, orchestrated all of that and everyone's fed and lunches are made and everybody's in bed instead of, you know, focusing on, you know, why somebody threw a tantrum, you know, over a sock on the floor, you know, that kind of, um, shift in perspective and just acknowledging to the hard work that everyone does as, as a mom, um, and recognizing that.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. And I think of it, it's like, uh, what we were sharing at the beginning being, we're so focused outward. I think we were, we beat questions a few months ago, like focusing on the clock, like the clock, the minute hand is taking forward and these kids are not getting to bed. Right. Like we're so focused on the clock, but like what we really, what we, I remember what we coached on was like, what we really wanted was just to connect with the kid.

We like wanted to just connect with the kid and have this like nice sweet evening bedtime routine and they're not listening and we're just focusing on the clock right but I think that that will be kind of got to uncover on that one was like, what would it feel like? What would our experience be if we just focused on connecting?

And I'm curious, what was your experience with the nighttime routine? I think you tried it the next night or the night.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, it was a lot better. And actually I forgot about the clock thing. Cause I don't even like look at the clock and anymore when we're starting the bedtime stuff, it's, it's just about like.

You know, spending time reading or just laying in bed, um, and talking with, you know, whoever happens to be me and my husband kind of rotate who gets which kid and they all, you know, have a preference and who, who sings to them and, um, who tucks them in and it changes, you know, sometimes minute to minute. So, um, You know, I had kind of forgotten that, that

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I don't, I have not forgotten that. I just remember that coaching was so, and I think the reason that it sticks in my mind is because I feel like so many working moms are so focused on the clock.

We're spending so much time thinking about like, what time is it? Or, I mean, I know, cause I do this too. It's like, and then we flash forward. If they don't get in bed by this time, then tomorrow's going to get messed up.

And we're so focused on flashing forward that we're not present in the moment. And all we want is to just be common present in the moment. So I think that it was so, I'm so glad we got to coach on that because it just starts to shift. These small shifts to me kind of create so much more space, creating more of what we want to be actually living our life.

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Right. Taking a little bit of a pivot. Tell me a little bit about, I like to really do Goldilocks. We talk about Goldilocks goal setting, Goldilocks strategies. Tell me a little bit about this past strategy workshop. We talked about not setting a goal too high. We talked about having a small, tiny little goal.

And I think everybody in the room who's a high achiever is like, what do you mean tiny goals? Like we want big goals, right? But what you have found, I think what so many of my clients are finding is when you said tiny little achievable goals, you get farther, faster. Yeah. So what has been your experience of the tiny goals we set and how it's like blowing, blowing it all up for you? Yeah.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, that was, I remember being hesitant because I'm like, you know, supposed to, you know, set big goals and work hard and push to, you know, get to where you want to be. And, um, I think that for me adds a lot of pressure. Um, and then every little plot twist or, you know, you know, a couple extra bites of food or eat something off plan.

It's just like, Oh, well, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna, you know, hit that, that goal. And I remember being a bit like hesitant. I'm like, okay, I'll try it and see how it goes. And then I like kind of blew it out of the water. You know, I think we lost twice what I had set, um, for the goal. And I think it was also, you know, it was a very manageable, achievable goal.

So it felt easy, you know, to do. It was just like as simple as, you know, setting a coffee pot. It's like, you know, you push the button and it's done. Um, you know, there's no, there's no pressure or worry that you're not gonna, you know, hit, hit your goal. So it helps you like, believe that, that you can do it because it's, it's done in your mind.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's so, and that's the beauty of Goldilocks goal setting. When you create a goal and this is like the six month goal, of course, that we set together, but then also what is your micro weekly goal? When you get to believe it's done. This is so simple. It is so done to me. That is like such a gift to yourself in how you're going to start hitting that goal. And then if you just repeat that week after week after week, you would be surprised by how far you get. And I think what, one of the biggest mistakes that I know, cause I did this and I see so many high achievers do this is we set a goal that we want, like, I want to do three pounds a week.

And the thought we have is I hope I can do it. I hope it's like fingers crossed. I hope I can. And if you really check in with how that feels, it does not feel very good. You feel pressure. You feel worried. And then the first sign that something is going awry, give it up. You give it up completely. So not only do not forget the three pounds, you will gain a pound. Yeah. Because you'll do the quit, right? Like how I'm curious what you think about that.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, definitely. Because then when the moment there's a plot twist or you go off plan, you're like, well, I'm not going to hit that goal anyway. So I might as well just, you know, go all in on, on this bag of chips and then start over again on Monday.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Right. And so this is the thing. So it's like, not only do you not forget the three pounds, you don't even hit the micro goal. That you would have hit if you had just set the micro goal to start, which is why Goldilocks goal setting is just one of my favorite things. I just love it so much. So tell us a little bit about this, this idea of fresh starts.



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Do you feel like you still like the Monday more? I feel like this has been a big one for all of us. Like we love Monday morning, fresh starts. What is your experience now going through the group? And how do you feel about needing fresh starts versus meeting yourself where you're at?

Nicole Plantner: Um, I don't really like focus on the Monday anymore. It just feels like every day I'm you know, not that every day is a Monday because I'm not really trying to, like, undo the weekend or undo, you know, um, the decisions I made in the past. It's more just showing up and how do I want to take care of myself and give myself, you know, rest and relaxation and, you know, fuel my body with the things that make it feel good.

And that doesn't mean, you know, that there's not treats and sugar or flour, or, you know, wine or anything. It's just, how do you do that in a way that honors what your body needs?

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: I love that you're sharing that because I feel like sometimes we think we have to eliminate every single thing to hit our goals and yes, that will work, but what we're kind of talking about is more nuanced approach.

So just kind of, as we wrap up, can you share what do you think has shifted for you so that you can lose the weight you want without the restriction and deprivation. I feel like that was a big piece for you where you used to feel like, Oh, I'm not allowed to have something. And now you don't, I don't think that you experienced that as much anymore.

So what's, what's shifted for you so you can lose the weight without the deprivation.

Nicole Plantner: Yeah. And it's realizing I have my own back and I, you know can check in with my body and, and what's feeling good. And, um, you know, I can have another glass of wine, you know, the next day or three, three days from now, it's not, you know, a get it while you can kind of mentality, which was also kind of a trap I would fall into when I would quit and say, screw it and have all the things.

It's like, well, I got to get all of this in before I have to start over on Monday. Um, you know, definitely none, none of that anymore either.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Um, I love that. And I think if you think about the sustainability, if you are doing the whole, like, let me get it while I can, and I'm going to fresh start on Monday, just it's, we can just imagine flash forward 10 years from now.

That's just not the way we want to be with ourselves in the way that we want to lose weight. So. The last thing I wanted to ask you about is what are your thoughts about the group? I feel like sometimes working moms, high achievers are like, Oh, I have some unique obstacles. It's something unique to me, but I'm curious what your thoughts are about being in an intimate group, like Unstoppable where you're surrounded by other high achievers. And what have been your takeaways?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah, I've definitely enjoyed the group setting. I haven't done the group setting with coaching. So it's a little bit hesitant, like, Oh, like, I don't know, you know, will, will I get as much out of it if it's if it's not one on one versus group, but, you know, a lot of the issues are kind of very similar across the board, um, cause we're all moms and we're all working moms. And, um, there's a lot of other people that are in the

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healthcare profession, whether, you know, doctors or veterinarians, and, um, it's very relatable, the things that, you know, they go through with, with staffing and, um, you know, the stressors and frustrations of parents, of being a parent, you know, seeing they're kind of, you know, frustrations and hearing you coach on them. And I was like, Oh, this could definitely apply to like my kids who, you know, or my son who struggles with getting along sometimes. And, um, you know, it's been frustrating when he, you know, lashes out cause he's upset and, um, You know, seeing those similarities.

One, I think it helps to know that you're not alone, um, you know, with those struggles and we are all working kind of towards a similar goal and, you know, supporting, um, one another is, is really nice.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah, and I think that when I think about the group that that's one piece of it that you will now know you'll now know forever.

You're not actually alone in the struggle or in the obstacle. It's not something unique to you. And I think the second piece is sometimes you get and I'm curious whether you would agree. So you get coached on the obstacles that you're having and I think that your needs like I really pride myself on meeting every single client's needs and slack or on our live coaching calls but I think the other piece is you get the coaching that you didn't know you needed because you hear other people getting coached on things that didn't come up for you yet and then you get the benefit of that too.

Which I just think is so, I just think is so fun. Any last thoughts, Nicole, that you want to share with anyone listening about the group, your experience, anything?

Nicole Plantner: Yeah. I think the group has been amazing. I mean, for years I've tried to, you know, do the weight loss on, on my own. And I wanted something that, you know, I knew would, would work, but then also would be lifelong and lasting.

I didn't want to do this yo yo thing, like back and forth. I think I had asked you that like on the initial call, like, well, how do we know, like, once I go through this, like if I lose the weight, like, you know, is it all just going to come back and you're like, it's it's just like brushing your teeth. Like once you learn it, you can't unlearn it.

And that, um, you know, was that made sense. And then I can definitely see, you know, that with the program and the work that I've done that mean, I can never Unlearn what I've learned, um, it's about, you know, whether or not I apply it and I'm definitely going to continue to.

Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: Yeah. It's like, I can, somebody could just be like, stop brushing their teeth.

I mean, you could just take the toothbrush and not brush your teeth, but you won't ever not know how to brush your teeth. So if somebody was like, Oh, what if I joined the group? And what if I gain it back? What would you say to that person?

Nicole Plantner: And you can always, you know, use those tools that you, you know, have built and have learned and he just, you know, get right back on it and have your own back.

And, um, You know, don't, don't quit on yourself.

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Dr. Priyanka Venugopal: That's it. It's like, I think that this is the resounding theme. Whenever I bring anyone on, that is the one message. Don't quit on yourself. Just, just remember you don't have to quit on yourself and it can be simple. It can be simple. Which is so good. Thank you, Nicole, so much for coming on the podcast and sharing your story.

It has been so awesome. I am so thrilled that Nicole was able to share her story around how our work together in the *Unstoppable Group* not only made her experience in weight loss feel so much better, but she started to feel better both at work. And at home, the *Unstoppable Group* is open for just a few more days.

So make sure you head on over to [theunstoppablemombbrain.com/group](https://theunstoppablemombbrain.com/group) and get your application in. You're going to hear back from me within 24 hours. And if I determine we are best fit to work together, I will send you an email with the link to either sign up or book a sales call with me.

In the *Unstoppable Group* we have live weekly coaching calls, daily written coaching and personal mentorship and on demand video curriculum, call replays, a private podcast, and so much more. You can fit in the strategies, skills, and tools that you learn in this group into your real working mom life. And for me, my intention is to help the high achieving working mom, not just hit her weight loss goal in 2024, actually feel confident in maintenance.

I cannot wait to see your application in my email inbox, and I hope you all have an amazing day. Bye.