

**Ep #86: People Pleasing and Weight Loss**



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*with*  
DR. PRIYANKA VENUGOPAL

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**Priyanka Venugopal**

## Ep #86: People Pleasing and Weight Loss

Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal and you're listening to the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast, people pleasing and the weight loss situation. I asked over on Instagram recently around what podcasts you want to hear the most, what you would get the most impact and value out of during this holiday season.

And this was a topic that I heard you wanted to hear about. And that is all about people pleasing, or as I like to call it, eat pleasing. The people around you at social gatherings where you find yourself eating foods that you don't really want to be eating, you know, you're at that social event and maybe you just feel awkward for saying no.

So you pile some food on your plate or you pour yourself some alcohol just to not be rude or feel different than everyone else. Yes, that is exactly what we're talking about in today's episode, and I'm going to be sharing with you my three step process for how to stop eat pleasing in any social scenario that you find yourself in. Better yet, I really like to think about this three step process as something you can apply beyond food and weight loss. If you find yourself having some people pleasing tendencies, some people pleasing behaviors, whether you find yourself just saying yes to things you wish you could say no to, or you just find yourself spread too thin because you're not sure how to cultivate a powerful, no, this is going to be the episode for you.

And at the end of today's podcast episode, I will be sharing some really fun and exciting details on a VIP Bonus Masterclass that I'm hosting for my unstoppable clients in the *Unstoppable* group. So if you're not familiar, the *Unstoppable* group is my intimate six month coaching program for high achieving working moms. Our next enrollment is going to be happening in January. But I'm going to be having early access and early enrollment happening on December 1st. And for anyone that joins the *Unstoppable* group during this early enrollment period, we are going to be hosting a VIP Bonus Masterclass called “Fabulous, Fun and Five Pounds Down”, which means you're going to walk away with your specific roadmap on how to drop five pounds during the month of December while feeling fabulous and having fun. So you wake up on New Year's day, five pounds lighter. It's going to be so much fun. You can get all of the details for exactly how to enroll and how to get early access over at [theunstoppablenombrain.com/group](https://theunstoppablenombrain.com/group). Simply sign up. There's a “join the waitlist” button, enter your information, and I will send you all of the details to your email inbox.

Okay. Let's get into today's episode on people pleasing and weight loss. 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 weight loss 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.

A few months ago, I was invited to a family hangout. And for those of you that are new to the Unstoppable universe, I'm fairly new to the Washington DC area. So I am really on a mission to meet more people, make new friends. And this is more than just like my kids having friends to play with. It's really for me for the adults.

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I want to make more adult friends in the Washington DC area and in the town that I live in. So anytime I have an opportunity to meet more people, I jump at the opportunity of saying yes. It was one of those things that was like three times removed. It was like a friend of a friend of a friend invited us, me and my whole family to kind of a family hangout. And it was a really lovely couple. They threw out there at the very last minute, by the way, we're ordering some pizza. Just want to let you guys know, can't wait to see you all. We'll see this evening. Now, this is amazing because my kids both love pizza and it just kind of took dinner off of my mind. Like I didn't have to deal with, you know, dinner for the kids.

Now, typically I don't eat lunch until at least 1:00 or 2:00pm just because I'm not hungry. I have really trained my body to become a fat burner and I really only eat foods when I'm actually hungry. I talked about this on the podcast in many episodes before 'The Truth about Intermittent Fasting', 'The Truth about Flour and Sugar', and 'The Hunger Tool' are three episodes where I really really get into how to become a fat burner, so I don't want to spend any time on this episode. But suffice it to say, I really only eat when my body's hungry and typically I don't get hungry in the morning. So I normally eat lunch around 1:00 or 2:00. And this was a day just like any other where I had eaten lunch probably around 1, 1:30. And we were going to get to this amazing family gathering at around 5:00pm. So we get there and all the kids are running around. The kids are just grabbing slices of pizza off the table. And the host who is being so gracious is going around making sure that everyone has a plate, has a glass, has something, you know, to entertain themselves with. Comes around and says, "Hey, Priyanka, how about you? What kind of pizza would you like?"; Now I'm just going to put this is like enter the rude moment, right? This is that moment where so many, so many of us find ourselves in where we are being asked either by the host of a party, or maybe a friend or family member, like, "Hey, how about you?, What are you going to have?, What do you want to drink?, What are you going to eat?" Now, before I used to eat-please my way through these moments. And I'm going to call eat pleasing is basically people pleasing somebody else, but in the form of eating food when you're not actually hungry. So what I would have done in the past is I totally would have grabbed one slice, and probably two. And I, I would have done it simply to number one, not be different than anyone else because everyone else had a plate in their hands. I didn't want to be other. I didn't want to look different. And also I didn't want to be that weirdo at dinner that just like had nothing, had nothing in my hands. I remember. And again, this is another like kind of fun fact about me. I generally find myself feeling fairly awkward in social gatherings where I don't know anyone. This is still true to this day when I go to a social gathering and I don't know anyone I feel a little awkward. I feel a little self conscious. This has just kind of been a vibe that I've always had. And one of the ways that I used to solve for this when I was younger is to kind of cover up my awkwardness, to cover up my kind of socially very aware self, I would definitely pile on food onto a plate, pour myself a glass or two of wine simply to fill the space and kind of cover up my personal awkward vibes.

How many of you have ever done this now? I used to do this for so many reasons. It would be either I didn't know what to say, I didn't know how to sound smart, or maybe be funny. And I would just find myself very easily nibbling on food, being able to talk about the food, being able to talk about the drinks as an easy conversation piece to help myself to not feel awkward. Now because of this, because I didn't want to look different, I didn't want to be other than everyone around me, I didn't want to be rude to the gracious host, or I simply was trying to cover my own awkwardness, I would often find myself eating in many social gatherings when I wasn't hungry. I would be eat pleasing my way through almost every social scenario.

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Now it's no surprise that eat pleasing, or basically eating when you're not hungry, is going to undo your weight loss efforts. The efforts that you put in Monday through Friday will very quickly and very easily get undone if every social gathering, every holiday event, you start eating food beyond your personal comfort.

It is the simplest thing that when you're eating food, when your body's not hungry, she is very brilliantly going to store that food in the form of fat. So it's no surprise when we find ourselves eating in these social gatherings and we're eating when we're not actually hungry, that we're undoing our Monday through Friday or our regular day weight loss efforts.

Okay, so I want to tell you the end of the story. What happened this go around? So I told you what I used to do when I used to eat please. And people please in social settings, is definitely overeat, but in my personal work, definitely since I discovered coaching and ever since I started to really undo some of these learned behaviors and learn habits, I have learned how to stop eat pleasing other people. And when you listen through to this whole entire episode, I think you also are going to feel so empowered when you learn my three step process in how you can also stop eat pleasing. So let me say what happened at the end of the story. So my, my lovely gracious host comes over and says, "Priyanka, what kind of pizza would you like?" And I'm going to tell you exactly what I said. I said, "Actually, I had a really late lunch and I'm not quite hungry yet. Thank you so much for asking. You guys are amazing. What a spread." Done. No more explaining. No more words. I didn't have to go on and on and on and explain why I was saying no to the pizza.

How many of us have done this before? I'm going to go off on a little tangent. How many of us have done this where you find yourself saying no to something and then you feel the need to explain yourself, give all of the justifications and all of the reasons simply because you want the person that you're talking to, to agree with your decision. Right? But if you're really paying attention to how that feels for you, when you find yourself justifying and over explaining yourself, you're going to find that it doesn't feel so good. And at some point along the way, it's going to feel kind of silly to you too. Now, here's what I'm going to tell you. Most hosts at this point, we'll just get the message. Like, "Oh yeah, it makes sense. You had late lunch, no problem. Pizza's there whenever you want it."; And they will move on. They get it and they will move on. A lot of people will understand this. But. There are going to be some people, some of those very extra gracious hosts who will persist.

Some people, some gracious hosts will have thoughts of their own. They'll have thoughts about you saying no to the food that they specially prepared, the food that they bought for this event. And they will have a lot of opinions about you not eating. They might think that they're only gracious and a good host if you actually eat their food. Can you really hear that? Like, first of all, let's flip this. Have you ever done that? Have you ever thought that like your event is only a success if everybody else is eating and drinking and seemingly having a good time? Think about how much pressure you're putting on your guests if you're doing that, right?

But so often, and this is again, so well intentioned, hosts want their events to be fun for all the people that they've invited and they inadvertently will put a lot of pressure on their, on their guests by being like, no, eat something seriously, eat something. So you might find someone thinking, Oh, my event is only a success if everyone has eaten or drank something. And this person is saying, no, how annoying. They also might internally judge you for not eating their food, the food that they've specially prepared, taking time out for or bought for the event. They might think you're rude. Third, The gracious host might think and even say something about the fact and make a comment about the fact that you're not eating.

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They might say something like, “Oh, are you on another diet again?” Right? There are two broad categories of hosts that you will encounter. The very first one, which is they get it and they move on. You get to go back to having fun and laughing and mingling and connecting with your friends and family. And it's just a non issue. But there will be times that people will persist. They're going to have thoughts about you. They're going to have opinions about you. And they might even say something to you. They might say something like, “What's one slice?”, Like, “why not just have one”, “what's one drink?”, “Come on. Seriously. Are you on a diet or something?”

Now, what I have found in my experience, and I've encountered both, both kinds of gracious host is that I can't ever actually control what the other people at the event, the host, the people around me are ever actually going to think about the way that I eat. The biggest thing I've learned and the biggest nugget is you cannot control what someone is going to think of you. You're never going to be able to control what they think of your food choices, how you eat and how you drink. And really, it is incredibly liberating to remember that. I thought that this episode was going to be particularly timely as we're in the holiday season, because if you want to stop eat pleasing, if you want to stop undoing your weight loss efforts, and most importantly, if you want to feel calm and confident and in control in any social scenario, there are a few things that you need to know and to be aware of.

Let's just start with this. Let's just start with really unraveling. What is eat pleasing? What is people pleasing? And where does it even come from? People pleasing is just an action. It's a behavior, often habitual, that might be at a point where you're not even aware of all the little and big ways that it is manifesting in your life. It has likely started years and years ago, decades ago, probably when you were a kid. And I want to talk to you first before we get to how to overcome it, why it even became a habit. How is it possible? And why is it the case that high achieving, smart, brilliant women ever became people pleasers to begin with?

The reason is, and I'm going to speak about this in a really broad and basic sense is that as a kid, you were likely rewarded for being agreeable. When you were agreeable as a child, when you said yes to things, even if you didn't want to, when you didn't ruffle any feathers, you got a nod of approval from a big person in your life. You might've gotten a smile from a parent or a guardian, a pat on the head from your teacher or coach. And at that time, your child brain learned it's really good to be agreeable, to please the big people in my life so that I can feel safe. And loved and accepted and protected. Now I'm spelling it out like this in a really simple way.

But what I want you to know is as a child, you didn't know that you were doing this. You didn't know that you were learning and creating a people pleasing pattern in your mind. But just being aware of where this habit even came from is I think so important to understand because so many of us learned these behaviors when we were really young. So as a child, you learned being agreeable, got you nods of approval. You felt accepted, loved, safe, protected, and validated. And very naturally, your brilliant child brain was like, let's turn this into a thing. Let's make this into a habit. And as you grew up, as you got older and older, these people pleasing tendencies grew into your adult life.

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The way that I see people pleasing showing up for most of us as high achievers, broadly speaking is we are saying yes to things. That we don't want to be saying yes to that is what I define people pleasing as, or even eat pleasing as, as the high achieving working mom is very simply, you're saying yes to things. You don't want to be saying yes to, you'll know that you're doing this if your yes doesn't feel right, if it feels inauthentic to you, if it downright creates resentment or frustration for you for having said yes to something that you didn't want to do, or you'll find yourself saying yes to something simply to get somebody else's approval because you want to be validated. Now, I want to really highlight as smart, brilliant, high achieving women, why are we keeping people pleasing behaviors? Why are we ever saying yes to something that we might want to say no to? The reason that we're doing this is simply because you want to feel a certain way in that social setting. Or you want to avoid feeling a certain way in that social setting.

For example, you might say yes to something that you actually want to say no to simply because in that social setting, you want to feel connection, belonging, and acceptance in a group of people. Or you might say yes to something that you actually want to say no to simply to avoid feeling awkward or different or judged or even embarrassed.

Let me just say that again. The reason that you will ever keep your people pleasing behaviors or eat pleasing behaviors is simply because of a feeling just this wanting to feel a certain way will drive you the brilliant smart high achiever to eat food that you don't want to eat. To say yes to things you don't want to say yes to. You'll find yourself people pleasing your partner, your kids, friends, family, colleagues, and worse at the core of it is you might find yourself experiencing a lot of rumination. You'll be thinking a lot about what Other people think of you and that will be driving so much of how you show up. And before we get into overcoming this and the three steps that I like to suggest that you incorporate, if you want to overcome this, I really first want to validate any people pleasing tendencies that you have.

I want to really remind you that this came from a really young age. It came as a super skill. As a child, it was your way of feeling accepted and loved and protected and safe. And so it makes a lot of sense if you find yourself reflexively going to some people, pleasing or eat pleasing tendencies. Can we just recognize that for a second? I mean, how brilliant were we as children to come up with this, to come up with and pick up on these little cues that we got from the big people in our life, but the beauty that we get to do together and we do together on this podcast is. We get to look at and challenge some of these tendencies, these belief structures, these paradigms that we picked up as children. And what we're getting to do is ask, how is it serving me now as a grown adult? Now, if you get the sense that people pleasing and eat, pleasing is holding you back from being your true and authentic self. If you find yourself feeling like you just can't be you without worrying about what somebody else might think. Or from a food and weight loss angle, if you find yourself eat pleasing at social gatherings, just to fit in or not be rude, then this is your work. Here is the truth. It's a bitter pill to swallow, but it's just real. People are going to judge you. They're going to have thoughts and opinions about you that you have absolutely no control over.

I would say more often than not at social gatherings, people aren't really paying any attention to how you're eating and drinking. Maybe they make an offhanded comment, but then they move on. But let's just say for argument's sake that the people at a social event or social gathering are having a lot of thoughts about you.

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Let's just say that they are judging you. I want you to feel liberated with remembering that you can actually control what they're thinking. Instead of trying to predict, manipulate, and control what other people think of you, I want to walk you through three steps that might make you feel more empowered in any social setting so that you can overcome your eat pleasing tendencies.

Step one is to create safety. Step two is to have ownership and step three is to feel any emotion. Let me walk you through each of these steps in detail so you can see how it works and then try practicing it for your own life.

Step one is to create safety. This means you purposely remind yourself that you are safe. Okay. Even if you don't say yes to something, you're not a kid anymore and you don't need nods of approval. Pats on the head or validation from a friend, family member, or colleague to define you. Having safety, saying no to the food at the party or no to a glass of wine is not going to get you kicked out of the party.

Step two is about having ownership. This is a really important step and where you can have the most power. Focusing on the one thing that you actually have 100% control over your own thoughts, reminding yourself that you can't actually control what other people are thinking, no matter how agreeable you are, is such a gift to remember. And here's the kicker. And something that I think is so important to remember, just because someone thinks something of you or has an opinion of you doesn't make it true. Just because someone thinks you're rude for not eating their cookies that they spent hours making doesn't make you actually rude. Their thoughts are their opinions. And I think the biggest mistake that women make is we borrow somebody else's opinions as our personal truths. Step two is about giving yourself permission to free yourself from that paradigm. Some people will not like you. I know. How dare they? And it's okay. Instead of focusing on those people, focus on the ones that like you and accept you for who you are, when you're your most authentic self.

Step two is really about bringing your attention to having your own back. In what you think of you, what you think of the way you're eating and drinking, what you think about saying no powerfully to anything that you want. This second piece is basically an exercise of you validating yourself, creating self confidence in being your most authentic self. But to do this, it requires that you accept yourself. First, let me say that again. Step two is about you, accepting you first, you taking control of what you think of you, you owning how you want to make your decisions. Instead of borrowing the thoughts and beliefs of the people around you, stretch yourself to deciding on purpose. What do you want to think of you? What do you want to choose? To think about saying no to something step three, and this is a step you cannot bypass that is to let yourself feel an uncomfortable emotion. I'll be honest, as you practice this, as you practice breaking out of your people, pleasing norms, you might feel a little afraid. You might feel a little awkward, maybe embarrassed, and that's okay. I want to remind you that when you feel that feeling awkward, embarrassed, judged, different, other, nothing is actually going wrong. Let yourself feel it. Take a breath and have your own back. Nothing is wrong. When you experience that emotion, it is just a vibration passing through your body. And I promise you it will pass. When you go to that social gathering and you don't fill your plate up, I want you to remember these three steps. Number one, creating safety. Saying no is okay. Step two is to really validate yourself and remember that you only control your thoughts about you. And step three, to let yourself feel an emotion.

When you love your decisions and you practice these steps, you will know and learn how to say no powerfully without over explaining yourself. No thanks is a complete sentence. "No, thanks. I'm not hungry right now." is a complete sentence. "No, I'm not on a diet. I just don't eat when I'm not hungry." is a complete and rather comprehensive sentence.

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“You're so amazing. I love your spread, but I'm good.” is a complete sentence. When you feel confident in this and you stop needing other people to agree or approve of your decisions, and rather you accept that they may or may not have thoughts about you, you will find yourself delivering these sentences with so much more authenticity and confidence. You won't need to explain yourself and you don't ever have to feel inauthentic at any social gathering ever again. And be willing to practice, don't let perfectionism hold you back from applying this tool at any social gathering coming up for you. It is true that people are going to judge you where you are right now, but I want to paint this picture.

People that do judge you, people that have opinions about how you're living your life and how you're making decisions have a really myopic lens. They're looking at you in this moment in time, this social gathering, your plate right now. But what most people forget that are judging you in this moment is they're not seeing your tomorrow. They're not seeing your growth next week, next month, or next year. That's your job. No one is thinking about your Thanksgiving plate the following week. But when you find yourself eat pleasing and people pleasing through social gatherings, I promise you, you will be thinking about it later. Your body will feel like, Oh, why did we do that? You're going to regret your decisions and you're going to wish that you had made decisions differently at those social gatherings. This episode is all about giving yourself permission to change your narrative. I know you feel that buzzing desire to let courage and boldness break through and remembering that other people will have opinions. They totally get to, it's totally okay. You get to focus on your opinions because they matter too.

I hope you enjoyed this episode and found it valuable. If you did, share it with one friend today and go on the quest together to break out of your eat pleasing and people pleasing together. And if you do this, I want to hear from you. Drop me a DM over on Instagram. My Instagram handle is @theunstoppablemombrain. It's really me responding. So come over and share with me whether you're going to be applying these three steps in breaking out of your people pleasing and eat pleasing tendencies during the holiday season. I would love to hear from you have an amazing week, my unstoppable friends, and let's break out of eat pleasing this season.

Friends. I also want to make sure that you know about something really exciting that I'm doing this year. I'm going to be hosting a VIP Bonus Masterclass on December 8th for my clients in the *Unstoppable* group. It's going to be “Fabulous, Fun, and Five Pounds Down by January 1st”. The *Unstoppable* group is my six month intimate coaching program for high achieving working moms who want to lose weight while living their real life. And we are going to be getting started with our next group in January. I'm opening early enrollment for my January group. And if you claim your spot for the January group in early enrollment, then you will get to join me for this VIP masterclass. Here's how early enrollment works. Go to [theunstoppablemombrain.com/group](https://theunstoppablemombrain.com/group). There, you're going to see a button that says, “join the waitlist”, click that, and enter your information. You're going to get an email from me with all of the details. On December 1st, doors for early enrollment are going to open during this period from December 1st through December 7th.

You're going to get to book a sales call with me on the sales call. We are going to talk all about you. We're going to talk about exactly where you are, what your body goals are, what you've tried in the past, and specifically how the Unstoppable Group is going to help you lose the weight that you want to lose while feeling fabulous and having fun, if we mutually decide that we want to work together, you'll get a link to make payment and sign up. And the moment that you do, you're going to unlock immediate access to the whole on demand curriculum, our coaching call replays, and of course, an invitation to this VIP Masterclass. Early



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enrollment is for you if you feel this desire to get a head start on 2024, you want to wake up on New Year's Day, five pounds lighter while having fun during the holiday season. And I think that the best thing that we can all give ourselves and my mission for working moms is for you to enter 2024 feeling calm and confident that you are going to be hitting your body goal this year. You get to have the gift of having a solid game plan ready and in place to support you hitting this goal. The next time that I'm going to be opening enrollment is only going to be in January of 2024. So seriously, make sure you grab a spot on the waitlist and you enroll during the early enrollment period it is going to feel like such a gift.

I cannot wait to see your name on the list. And I will meet you in your email inbox. 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](https://theunstoppablemombrain.com).