

Ep #94: The Convenient Roadblock



The
Unstoppable
Mom Brain
podcast

LIVE LIGHTER
LOSE WEIGHT

Feel Unstoppable.

with
DR. PRIYANKA VENUGOPAL

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Priyanka Venugopal

Ep #94: The Convenient Roadblock

Hey, this is Dr. Priyanka Venugopal, and you're listening to the Unstoppable Mom Brain Podcast. Today, we're talking about the convincing roadblock. Today's episode is going to be the main story. I'm going to help you uncover the main story that takes real life hurdles in your professional working mom life and turns them into large, hard to overcome obstacles. We all have them. And if you have found yourself on the weight loss roller coaster or struggled to lose weight, then this episode is one you're going to love. Let's get right into it. I was at my lowest personal weight in my adult life. On my wedding day, I've shared this story before, but I worked really hard for about six months leading up to my wedding with counting every point, tracking every bite of dessert and hitting the gym six days a week to lose about 20 pounds in a six month period.

It worked. I felt fabulous. And then six months later, medical school started. Rather than keeping up with the small 1 percent daily needle delivers, I started to tell myself a compelling, convincing, and convenient story that I didn't have the time and I was too busy. Starting to tell myself that sentence again and again and again with the added benefit of confirmation bias, being in medical school, and having a lot on my plate led to the very First day that I avoided taking action the first day that I didn't stand on the scale. And then that first day led to a few days, which then led to a few weeks. And then many months, I kept telling myself I didn't have the time and I was too busy. And not only did I stop stepping on the scale, I stopped taking small, 1 percent daily actions that took little effort and little time. This story that was very compelling, convincing, and very convenient led me to avoid taking small daily actions, and it was this story that turned into my biggest roadblock to maintain the weight that I had lost.

Avoiding taking small daily action is what led to my personal slow and steady creep up. I didn't need the scale to tell me that my weight was creeping up because my clothes stopped fitting comfortably. Once I eventually got to residency, my scrub size went up. This got even worse in pregnancy, where I would basically act like a delinquent patient. I would get blood pressure checks at the nurse's station in the hallway, I would do urine dips in between patients, and I would self report my weight because I wasn't actually stepping on the scale. I was avoiding the numbers. I didn't want to know because I kind of already knew. And of course, I stuck to my very convincing, compelling and convenient story. I told myself I didn't have the time, the energy or the emotional bandwidth to deal with it. So very naturally I stuck my head in the sand for a little bit longer on taking small daily 1 percent needle moving actions. Over the course of my pregnancy, I gained probably around 40 pounds, and surprisingly, I only had a six and a half pound baby. I remember deluding myself into thinking that somehow after having the baby, maybe with all the fluid shifts, the immediate postpartum stage, that somehow the weight that I had gained would maybe just melt off, and it didn't. So my story stuck. The further and further I got off track, the more weight that I started to gain, and the creep up that kept creeping kept my story strong, that I didn't have the time, the energy, the emotional bandwidth, the effort to put in to turn the ship around, the longer I kept avoiding the work of weight loss. What I created in telling myself this convincing, compelling, and convenient story was my self fulfilling prophecy. I ended up gaining a little over 60 pounds in 10 years, and now I was left with a mountain. It was a lot to deal with. It was going to take more effort. And yes, it was now going to take more time. I'm sharing all of this without any self blame or criticism, just reflecting on the actual facts of what happened and really having some introspection around the story that I was telling myself that ever led to the creep up happening.

My story was incredibly convincing, and I want you to know that if you have a story kind of like me, then you will also have a very convincing and compelling story. For me, as a busy OBGYN physician with an unpredictable schedule, long hours, and two young kids, my story felt like fact. But in reality, it was a

Ep #94: The Convenient Roadblock

convenience story that took me out of small daily actions that compounded in an undesirable result. But that story, while it seemed like fact at the time, was a convenience story that took me out of taking small daily action that could have kept me from building this mountain. Now, why would any of us? ever do this, right? It sounds really counterintuitive. It sounds like a lot of self sabotage towards you hitting your dream ideal weight. Why would a smart, high achiever, professional working mom ever tell themselves a quote unquote convenient story that takes them out of small daily actions that will Literally be the way that you lose the weight, you want to lose. The reason is because this is what our most natural, normal, most primitive brains are designed to do.

There are two parts of the way that we think. The first part of the way that our brain operates is from our most primitive senses focused on survival, and more importantly expending the least amount of energy. The other part of our brain, our more evolved prefrontal cortex is focused on high level decision making problem solving and absolutely future goals. When we are not aware of it, our primitive brain is really good at getting into the driver's seat. This part of us is really good at telling convincing Compelling and very convenient stories that will take you out of action in the moment simply to conserve energy in the present. But here's the thing that part of us, the primitive part of us that is telling us this very convenient story is doing it without any foresight. That part of us is not thinking about the fact that it's a small amount of effort, a small amount of time, and a small amount of energy right now that's going to save us leaps and bounds of energy and effort in the future. And in many ways, the familiarity of keeping your status quo is what will keep your current habits. But as my story reveals, this has a huge fallacy built in. It's the ultimate roadblock to you hitting your dream ideal weight and Always create your self fulfilling prophecy. Now, we don't need any self criticism, blame, or shame as you reflect on what your compelling, convincing, and convenient stories have been. Because just that, being self critical of your patterns of the past, is going to keep you in the loop. It's pretty meta to think about the fact that our self criticism of our past and the stories that we have told ourselves will create another story that will take you out of action again. So for the intents and purposes of this episode, just take a moment and give yourself permission to drop the blame, to drop the self criticism, to drop any shame that you have around any of your stories that you have told yourself in the past and simply drop into getting curious.

The best news when you practice curiosity with the lens I'm about to talk to you about, our stories and our obstacles are completely overcomable and this becomes a solvable problem. When we look at what our primitive brains have created for us, that convincing, compelling, and convenient story that took us out of small little needle moving actions in the present, it has inevitably created more work for later. AKA your present right now. It takes more effort and it takes more time. The other thing that happens when we allow our more convenient, convincing, and compelling stories to take us out of small needle moving actions, we lose out on the benefit of compounding results in little steps. And worse yet, because of the self fulfilling prophecy that we create, our mountains get bigger and bigger.

Here's the best news. Just being aware of what your roadblock story has been is a game changer. And know this. There is, in fact, no mountain when it comes to losing the weight you want to lose. Your dream ideal weight, whether it's 5 pounds or more than 50, is really not that far away. Yes, it's not going to happen overnight, but with small little 1% daily needle movers, it is guaranteed. I invite you after you listen to this episode to write out what has been your convincing, compelling and convenient story that has led you to avoid the scale or to avoid taking small, simple needle moving actions on a daily basis. We all have one and we all put our own flavors on them. It might sound like you're doing so much, you deserve a break, you have a lot going on, weight loss is so hard, there's so much to do, it's so far away.

Ep #94: The Convenient Roadblock

Just the tone and tenor of the way that I tell the story around my life, around my responsibilities, around my time, creates a very convenient, convincing, and compelling story to drive me to not take any action today. But really check in. How does it feel when you tell yourself the story in this way? How do you feel about your weight loss goal? How do you feel about you actually achieving success? For me, in the stories that I reflected on today's episode, I felt overwhelmed. And when I felt overwhelmed, in the work of weight loss, it made a lot of sense that I stuck my head in the sand and I completely avoided it. Worse yet, I kept believing the false story that weight loss was hard, that it was going to take so much. And in keeping that in small little moments, day after day, year after year, I crept up on scale. When you uncover your convenient, compelling story, I do not want you to shame yourself. You didn't do anything wrong, nothing wrong happened for you having this very convincing story. It's normal. Just remember that your primitive brain was designed to create stories like this for you to stop you from taking action, for you to keep your status quo, for you to keep your current habits.

It does not want to expend any additional effort. And remember, it doesn't have foresight that we're creating more work for you later. So this episode has two parts. The first one is to really uncover your roadblock story. What has been your convincing, compelling, and convenient story that has stopped you from taking small actions today? What story have you told yourself that has led you to avoid the skill that's led you to avoid the small daily work of weight loss. And the second equally important part of today's episode, do not villainize the part of you that created that story. When we can do both pieces where you start to uncover your story, you become really aware of it in real time and you don't judge it or criticize it or shame yourself for even having it.

Magic will start to happen because now you can access the other part of your brain, the prefrontal cortex, the evolved, more adult part of you that can reflect and look at what that story has actually created for you. I call this putting on the hat of your playful scientist, where you become super honest and objective and really curious about the results that that compelling, convenient, and convincing story created. How has that story that was convincing, compelling, and convenient wasted more time for you? How has it created more work for you? How has it created more effort for you? Just being honest and writing down the facts of what your convincing and compelling story has created will be the ultimate shift.

And here's why. You don't actually ever have to stop telling yourself this compelling story. In fact, your primitive brain, because she is so brilliant, will come up with the next one. There will always be a convincing, compelling, and convenient story to take you out of taking action today, to keep your status quo, to keep your old patterns and your old habits.

And what I want for the world of professional working moms is to never believe that something is going wrong when you notice the story, we can drop the criticism and the judgment that our brain is operating perfectly to not expend energy and instead be aware that it is just a story. When we become aware of some of our patterned thoughts and beliefs, when we become aware of the stories we're telling and we separate them from the facts of our life, we can start to create so much more power and agency in how we take small little 1 percent daily actions.

And I'm telling you to cross the mountain that maybe you see ahead to reach your dream, ideal weight, whether it's five pounds or over 50, it will always, always happen in small little moments compounded over time. Imagine that you started catching that story today. And instead of holding on to that convincing, compelling, and convenient story as truth, recognize it for what it is.

Ep #94: The Convenient Roadblock

Your primitive brain trying to get out of taking small efforts today. And instead, remind yourself of what is more true taking small little actions today, following through on the plan that you have designed for yourself will in fact save you time, effort, and energy in the present and in the future. I hope you all enjoyed this episode and that you start practicing becoming aware of your roadblock story.

I would love for you to share them with me. If you do the exercise of writing out what your convenient, compelling, and convincing story has been, share it with me. You can email me your story at info@theunstoppablemombbrain.com or DM me. My Instagram handle is @theunstoppablemombbrain. I would love, love, love to hear what your roadblocks stories have been. And what I want to tell you is that as a professional working mom who has high achieving tendencies, who loves hitting goals, who hates making mistakes, many of your stories will be very familiar. They're going to center around your time, around your task list, around how busy you are. And all I'm here to invite you to consider is that maybe weight loss might in fact be simple when we drop that story and just start taking small needle moving action today.

I hope you guys have an amazing week and I'll see you at the next one. I hope you enjoyed today's podcast episode. It was one that I really loved. It was actually inspired by a conversation that I had with my friend, Steph. I was telling her one of my stories around something coming up in my life. And she said to me, Priyanka, you know how convenient of a story it is that you're telling right now? And it just was a light bulb went off in my mind where I realized how much my primitive brain will tell me the same convincing, compelling, and convenient story to keep my status quo. so much. And that one conversation that I had with my friend, Steph inspired this whole entire episode. And I hope you enjoyed it.

If you're loving concepts like this, if you love folding in mindset skills into your weight loss strategy, then I highly encourage you grab my Five-Day Mini Course, where I will send you a short email with a video into your email inbox over the course of five days is going to teach you a five tiny, but mighty concepts that will help shift the course for how you lose weight this year. And truly show you that weight loss does not, in fact, have to be so hard. You can grab your Free Five-Day Mini Course over at theunstoppablemombbrain.com/email. I will meet you in your email inbox. Bye.