

Elizabeth: Hello, everybody, and welcome back to Primal Potential podcast. I am Elizabeth Benton. Thank you so much for tuning in and spending a little bit of your precious time with me today. Forgive any weird sounds in today's episode. I am in a hotel so you just never know what's going to happen, but I wanted to get this episode out to you so we are doing it.

Today I'm going to be sharing my own top four personal success strategies, right? These are things I practice every single day and I believe that they are really the core things that helped me go from over 350 pounds, totally obsessed with and really more or less dominated by food and insecurity, from there to where I am now, where I feel like my food choices, and I never thought this would be possible, where my food choices are easy and temptation doesn't own me. It doesn't mean I don't experience it, but I never feel like it is stronger than I am. These are the four strategies that really took me from where I was to where I am now.

I'm going to be boiling it all down, but before we get into that, I want to give you a quick heads-up about a free webinar series. It's a two part webinar series, totally free, live, so I'll be there to answer your questions, we can hang out. I'm going to be offering that in a few days. Space is limited and that's not some weird marketing thing; the fact of the matter is I pay for a certain size number and it doesn't let me go over that, so space is limited. You can grab your spot by going to primalpotential.com/december. I'll tell you the dates and the times. Hang tight, but my goal, the reason why I'm doing this, is because I want to help you capitalize on this time of year where sometimes motivation is a little bit higher as we approach the new year, as we maybe look at holiday pictures. This tends to be a time of the year where motivation is higher than other times and I really want to help you capitalize on that. I want to help you switch from knowing and wanting to doing and having.

I'm going to do this two part webinar series totally free and it's going to be geared at helping you do just that. Go from knowing and wanting to doing and having. It's going to be on December 13th and 14th at 8:30 p.m. Eastern time. It's not the same thing twice. It's a two part series, December 13 and 14 at 8:30 p.m. Eastern time. Probably be 60 to 90 minutes each night. You can go to primalpotential.com/december to register. You do have to register. Space is limited. It is free. I'm also going to be opening up towards the end and taking questions about the 2017 Fat Loss Fast Track and give you guys a sneak peak into the process and how it works and all of that, but we're going to spend about 80% of the time on those webinars talking about finally ending all or nothing thinking. Right?

Losing weight for the last time, not like this time it's going to work and you're going to feel amazing and then you're going to do it all over again three months later. No. Ending all or nothing thinking. Specific strategies for generating consistency so you don't feel like it was either a great day or an awful day, and

then creating, for the first time probably, a lifelong relationship with food that isn't so totally crazy and bananas and nonsensical. It's going to be a two part series. It's okay if you can only make one. When you register, though, you register for both, okay? You're automatically registered for both sessions the 13th and the 14th of December. That's a Tuesday and a Wednesday, 8:30 p.m. Eastern. You just go to primalpotential.com/december to register.

I don't think I'm going to offer a replay. I know I'm going to get a 100 million emails. I'll tell you why. It's really simple. I am a business of one. I do everything myself and so I only want to spend my time doing things that work. Most people don't watch the replay. Right? They want it but then they don't open it. See, I can see how many times it's been opened when I send out a replay or viewed and it's not that many. I just want to spend my time doing the things that are helpful to people and not spend my time doing the things that aren't leveraged so at this point in time, I do not think there is going to be a replay. Register for that by going to primalpotential.com/december.

I love webinars. I love webinars so much. I think I love them ... Don't get me wrong, I like the podcast. It's cool, but I love the webinars because we're on there live and you can answer questions and I can address where you're at and what you need. That's just so fun for me. Anyway, primalpotential.com/december, and I'll link to it in the show notes for this episode. I'll probably mention it again on the next episode, too.

Let's get into those four strategies of mine. Now, you'll notice that none of these four strategies have anything to do with food. However, my food choices have changed dramatically. They're not food strategies. It's not like, "Oh, yeah, one of my success strategies is a Fat Loss Breakfast." Yeah, I do that. Right? I have my carbs at night, but those things aren't what's responsible for where I've really gotten to from being in a very, very dark place for most of my life with food.

These four success strategies of mine have nothing to do with food, but they drive my food choices. They have a huge impact on all of the choices that I make. They are responsible for creating a healthy relationship with food and really being aware of the crappy stories and excuses I was telling myself; that's what these strategies do for me, they helped my determination, my consistency, how I respond to temptation, all of that sort of thing because on their own, the food strategies are fine, but they don't solve the underlying problems I had about all or nothing, on or off, not knowing what it meant to sort of live in the middle and be able to enjoy food without totally gorging myself.

The food strategies are fine, but none of the most important strategies I've developed have anything to do with food, and yet they make a massive impact on my food choices. They are more efficient, I guess is what I'm trying to say, than a

bunch of food rules because they have a much broader impact. Like, yeah you can have food rules, and I see all these people posting all the time like, "My non-negotiable nutritional, blah-blah-blah," like okay, that's fine, I get it, I understand it, and that might work for some people who maybe don't have a dieting past, or don't have a long history with all or nothing, but those have a really narrow impact.

They have a really narrow impact on just what you eat. I think when you have these overarching strategies that you practice every single day that don't have to do with food, they're much more efficient in that they impact far more than your food choices, and I think that's really been the game-changer. I was recently reading Mark Manson's book, it's called "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F-U-C-K." Now I have to mark this episode explicit it, dang it.

Anyway, he says that F-word a 100 million times in the book, but it is a good book, I'll link to it over in the show notes. Anyway, he made some great points about change in that book, and as I read his points about change, and he was speaking kind of globally about change, I realized how true his thoughts on change were for me as I transitioned away from the way I made food choices at 350 plus pounds to the way I make food choices now. He says, "Growth is an iterative process."

We don't go from wrong to right, we go from wrong to slightly less wrong, but I think we don't realize that in the moment, and we're looking to be perfect, we're looking to do what is right, and then as soon as we do something that's not right, even if it's less wrong than what we were doing before, we beat ourselves up and that is so crazy.

Think about it. If you decide, "Hey look, I don't need to go from wrong to right, I just need to go from wrong to slightly less wrong," that is so freeing, right? You don't have to get it right, but what's a little less wrong? That's exactly what I mean when I say, "What represents an improvement for you?" I say that on the podcast all the time; I say that to my clients practically every day. "What represents an improvement for you?"

That's supposed to change, that's supposed to evolve. The way I started eating when it was time to get serious, when I was at my heaviest weight and I was like, "Enough of this dieting nonsense." The way I ate then was an improvement then. It wouldn't work for me now; I still had to grow and evolve. It doesn't mean that what I was doing then was wrong, it's just that what I was doing next was slightly less wrong, and then I transitioned slightly less wrong, and then slightly less wrong, and it gets better and better and better over time because growth is an iterative process.

Right? It's not right or wrong, it's where am I going along this spectrum. Right? Don't become so obsessed with figuring out what's right that you don't do anything at all, or you beat yourself up for better, right, because it's not perfect. That's not the point, so let's cut to the chase. These success strategies of mine, the four of them.

My number one success strategy is to slow down. Slow down. I was reading the other day in a book that said, "Humans are the only animals who speed up when they are lost." Humans are the only animals who speed up when they are lost, right? Every animal other than human like, "Wait a second. Slow down. Gather bearings. Reassess." Humans just create this frantic pace of chaos.

Slowing down, what that means for me is about not reacting to every little thing, right? Not feeling like I have to respond to every temptation, react to every emotion. Slow down, and let the urge pass without reacting. At least building a little bit of margin, a little bit of space between whatever the impulse is and whatever action I choose. This is huge for me.

I tell myself all the time, "Let your thoughts settle." I used to stir them up. Seriously, something would trigger me and then it would be, "Oh, what about this, and if I do this, and I could do this, and da-da-da," and I'd create this vortex of thought and emotion and chaos, and I made it so much worse. I would fixate on it, fueling it with my attention, making it grow.

I'd worry, or in response to a craving, I'd panic and I'd get upset and I'd get mad, I'd be frustrated. I'd create this whole litany of thoughts about how hard it was, or how hopeless it was, how I had no self-control, how it's not fair, and all of those reactions make the thing, the situation, the initial impulse, bigger, stronger, harder.

They make the emotion stronger. They make the intensity of temptation grow. The more we think, the faster those thoughts accumulate, and the faster we get kind of out of control, the deeper down the rabbit hole we go. It started as just one innocent thought or feeling, this small desire for something, and now it's an onslaught of internal dialogue and emotion that feels completely overwhelming ... Slow down.

We make it grow with every second of attention we pour into it. With every thought we follow, we make it grow like pouring fuel on a fire. Just slow down, let it settle, let it pass. Right? I grew up going to the beach every summer, and sometimes you'd be in the ocean and you'd see a big wave coming, and you'd sort of panic you know, and you'd flail; and the more you struggle, the more you struggle, right, the less control you have over your body, and then the less power you have relative to the wave washing over you about to push you under.

If you just relax and let the wave move around you, instead of feeling like you have to move around the wave, you have to somehow control that experience, right? You are not in control when you feel like you have to fight against something, but if you decide, "Hey, I don't need to move my body, or my mind, or my choices around this thing. I can just stay here and let this thing move around me." Right?

What I mean by that is, instead of feeling like you need to fight it, or own it, or control it, just let it pass. Like relaxing in the water as a wave goes under you, instead of trying to fight it. Let it pass. Slow down, right? This is what I practice every day with emotion and temptation. I don't fixate on it, I don't dive into the thought, I don't need to react to it immediately.

Slow down my thoughts, slow down my emotions, slow down everything. Be less reactive and more reflective; most people are not very strategic, and they're also not very calm. They're reactive and impulsive, they're impatient, but if you practice being calm, being less reactive, being more patient, this skill is a game changer. I am a huge fan of the author Robert Greene; he wrote "48 Laws of Power" and "Mastery." "Mastery" is my favorite by far; "48 Laws of Power" is like heavy, intense, and thick, but "Mastery" is amazing, great stories in there, great lessons.

Anyway, Robert Greene says this: "Strategy is a mental process in which your mind elevates itself above the battlefield." He says that strategy is a mental process in which your mind kind of rises above the battlefield, the chaos, and while I hate to argue with somebody who I consider kind of brilliant and much more intelligent than I am, I'm going to disagree. I'm going to say ... I don't think it's true, but I think it's simpler than that.

I think he is suggesting that you have to have a strategy. I think you just need to slow down. That's how you allow your mind to rise above the battlefield. That's how you train yourself to be less reactive and less impulsive. You don't have to create a strategy. You just have to slow down. Slowing down, in and of itself, calming down, saying, "I'm not going to kick up the dirt here and create all these crazy thoughts. Mm-mm (negative)."

When you just settle down, that is enough to allow your mind to elevate above the battlefield. Be more patient. Yeah, it takes practice. Yeah, it takes constant reminders and life is going to give you tons of opportunities to practice and that's a gift because that means the more you practice, the better you'll be, right? Many times a day I tell myself, "Elizabeth, let it settle." Like a snow globe. Don't just shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake. Crazy creating, right?

Just let it settle. Let it settle. Just like the wave is not going to crash over you and over you and over you and over you and over you. It's not like once it hits you it never leaves. No. If you just calm down, you'll see that it passes, that urge, that emotion, that temptation, that impulse, that desire. If you just chill and slow down, it will pass. Don't kick up dirt with your crazy thoughts like tornadoes. Let it settle. Slow down. It's not a food strategy but you better believe it has a ton to do with my food choices because I no longer feel this impulsive drive to make immediate choices that I regret later based on emotion or temptation.

My second success strategy is to focus on how I want to feel instead of what I want to achieve. I focus on how I want to feel instead of on what I want to achieve. See, when I wasn't successful, when I was really struggling, when life was dark and I was extremely obese, I was always stressed about weight loss, spending a ton of time and money and energy trying to figure out how many pounds I could lose in X amount of time, how I could get to this certain size by this certain date. It was always about the achievement, the outcome, the end-game, the result, but here's the thing.

When the goal was weight loss, it was easy to dismiss any individual choice. One cookie isn't going to make me gain weight. I'm not going to put on a pound because I ate a cookie, right? One day isn't going to make a difference, right? I can still lose 20 pounds if I have one day of eating whatever I want. Good choice or bad choice, right? Even a good choice didn't feel like, "Okay, great, so if I don't have the fries and I have a salad instead, is that going to be the thing that makes me lose five pounds? No." I was always dismissing choices as "this doesn't matter," so I was rarely doing the work when I was focused on the outcome. Right? When I focus on how I want to feel, how I want to feel like that day, right now, in an hour, tonight, then every choice matters.

For example, Thanksgiving. Just a few days ago in the United States. When I was focused on weight loss or fitting into a particular pair of jeans, I could totally justify having all of the pie after dinner because, I mean, it's one day. That's not going to make a difference in what my weight is or my jeans. I can totally make up for that tomorrow, and so it's easy to dismiss the good choice when you're focused on the outcome, but when you're focused on how you want to feel, I'm able to say, "Well, if I have three pieces of pie, how am I going to feel in an hour?"

I'm going to feel not good and I'm probably going to be thinking it wasn't worth it because, don't tell my mom, but I don't think her apple pie is like super amazing. It's okay, but I mean it's not super amazing and the pudding pie with box Jello mix, that's not ... It's good. It's tasty, but how do I want to feel and is this choice going to get me how I want to feel? Is it going to leave me feeling that way? If I go back for seconds, how am I going to feel about that in an hour? Am I going to be

glad that I did it, am I going to be like, "That was totally worth it"? If it was, great, go for it but when I focus on how I want to feel, every choice matters. Right?

Here's the other thing. When I was focused on the end-game, if I didn't feel like the scale reflected my progress, like I did what I thought was good work and the scale didn't move, then I'd immediately crack this story about, "Well, what does it matter anyway? Who cares? I can't do it." Right? When it was about weight loss, if I felt like I wasn't losing weight then my effort evaporated. Poof, right?

My habits, and my choices, and my attitude got worse, and that's basically what my life looked like all the freaking time. When my focus is how do I want to feel, the choices get so much easier; am I going to be glad I made this choice in an hour, am I going to be happy with how my body feels in two hours if I do this thing? Will I feel like it was worth it?

One of the specific ways I apply this is, "How will this choice make me feel physically?" For example, my hands get really puffy if I have sugar or too much starch and I hate that feeling, so what I do is I sort of fold my hands like prayer with my thumbs crossed over each other and all my fingers interlocked. When I can do that easily I'm so glad, but when my fingers feel like stiff and puffy, I'm like, "Ugh."

You know, that's just one physical way. I kind of say, "Is this going to make my hands feel gross," because I hate that feeling. I'm always like, "What did I do to create that?" When I can anticipate having a couple of pieces of pie will absolutely do that, and I don't want that, that's not worth it.

One of the things I started doing, probably within the last year or so ... I think it's just a habit; it's not any intentional strategy I guess, it's more habitual. One of the first things I do when I wake up in the morning as I get out of bed, is I place my hand on my lower belly and if I didn't make good food choices the day before, I can feel it. Physically, I feel bloated in that lower abdomen region, and I don't like that. I don't like that at all, so I have to ask myself, "Well, how do I want to feel?"

Is whatever I'm considering doing worth waking up in the morning and feeling, "Blah?" Probably not. Most of the time, not. It allows me to have much more control in a moment of temptation, what I'm really thinking about, "How do I want to feel?" How do I want to feel? I want to feel proud, I want to feel energized, I want to feel light versus like stuffed, and heavy, and weighed down so every choice does make a difference in that regard.

The second part of that one, which is the third strategy, is about being process-oriented, right? Part of it is not focusing on a result of weight loss or body

change, but rather how do I want to feel. The second thing is being process-oriented in a way that I enjoy the process. Right?

Think about it. If you want to write a best-selling book but you complain and moan and groan every time you have to sit down and write, "Ahh," you're in for a hard time. If you want to have a strong fit body but you whine about every single workout, well, your goal is on the line there, and if you want to achieve your physical goals, whether it's fat loss, whatever it is for you, but you complain about everything you eat and everything you don't eat, and how hard it is, and how much it sucks, your chances of success aren't looking so hot.

I can tell you right now that I hated almost every diet I was ever on and hello, I didn't stick with it. Why? I didn't like the process. I complained about it. I got to the point where if I ever saw another egg white again, I would go into like a blind rage. Or the thought of sugar-free Jello made me gag, or where I'd rather eat worms than have to wash another Tupperware from my pre-measured meals, those things aren't sustainable.

My first piece of advice is, don't diet. Right? I talked about this before, don't follow somebody else's food rules; create your own but here's the thing, guys. They have to work for your body, work for your goals, work for your lifestyle, work for your preferences. You must love the process, you cannot hate your way to sustainability and consistency, you'll always be looking for a reason to do something better.

That's the way we're wired, so create a process that you love, can do, will do, and enjoy. I promise that you don't have to hate the process; if you hate the process, you're doing it wrong. Period, the end. You either need a strategy adjustment, an attitude adjustment, or both. Or both. I've shared that when I'm feeling tempted or just one of those days where I'm saying, "Ugh, I don't care, go buy ice cream," I'll ask myself, "Well, what would be a meal that you would totally love and enjoy, both during and after?"

I still indulge, it just looks different. It looks like something that I love during the meal and after. No guilt, no regret, no physical discomfort, no emotion, no drama, no shame, none of that awful, "Why did I do that?" You know, that's so exhausting. Maybe for me, and this is just me, not you, maybe it's Brussels sprouts and a steak.

Or recently, now, moving forward, it's probably going to be this amazing cauliflower and parsnip mash that I made for Thanksgiving. It was amazing, and it's on the blog, but it was so good. That'll be a way that I do it. I still indulge but it has different criteria. What can I eat that I love that I'm still going to feel good about afterwards? Cauliflower Pizza was my thing for a long time.

The fourth success strategy is to pay attention to negative emotion. Pay attention, but don't react or overreact. Here's a paradigm shift for you. It's not something you need to run from; negative emotion is not something you need to turn off or get away from or ignore, it's a signal that you actually need to pay attention. It's a warning sign.

It's kind of like a smoke alarm, right? Kind of saying, "There's not an emergency yet but if you don't address something, there will be." We have this tendency though to want to clip the wire, to shut it off, to make it stop. If food is a distraction, or alcohol, or anger, or whatever, shopping, spending money, we just want to make it stop.

No, don't. Calmly assess the situation. Just like if a fire alarm was going off at home it wouldn't be helpful to cut the wire, remove the batteries, or turn up the TV to drown it out or run around in a wild panic, screaming. That's often how we respond to emotions, which are just little alarms for us to pay attention.

Pay attention to the fact that if we don't change something, if we don't address whatever in our mind or in our life is smoldering, we're in trouble. See it as a generous offer to help, right? Work with your emotions; your body, your brain, your heart is trying to help you. Respond with, "Oh, thanks for the heads-up, what's this about? What's up here?" Right?

They are a call for you to do something, to change something. We don't need to overemphasize them and let them determine our decisions, we don't need to make our emotions the scapegoat. Oh my gosh, I hear that all the time and I know it because I used to live it. Right?

That's so not helpful. "I know I shouldn't have eaten the whole pizza, but I was so upset. I know, I shouldn't have overindulged at Thanksgiving, but you know, my family was driving me crazy." Do not make your emotion the scapegoat. Get out of the mindset of, "My emotions made me do it." I get it, I understand, I've been there; it's not helpful, and there's another way to see it, like, "Oh, thanks for the heads-up. What's going on here? What's going on here that I need to address?" Right?

That takes some practice and it takes some patience, but holy Toledo, is it ever a game changer. All right, so those are my four strategies, and they take practice. They've taken years of practice, and I will tell you, life, thank God, gives me plenty of opportunities to practice; I could look at it as frustrations, but nope, opportunities to practice every day.

They're not your strategies necessarily. Maybe some of them are, maybe none of them are and that's okay, but understand that it's often not about the food stuff, it's about what underlies that, what draws us to the food choices that we make.

Don't forget, I've got this free webinar series on December 13th and 14th; that's a Tuesday and a Wednesday. Two part series, both at 8:30 p.m. Eastern time, to help you switch from knowing and wanting to doing and having, because you deserve it, because you are worth it. Just go to primalpotential.com/december to register and grab your spot so we can chat about all or nothing, consistency, establishing this lifelong relationship with food that isn't so crazy and bananas and sucks so bad.

I would love to see you there, I'll be on there live hanging out with you, so hopefully you'll head over primalpotential.com/december and register. I'll see you there. Have a great day guys, take care.