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| Client | Elizabeth Benton |
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| Elizabeth: | Hello everybody. Welcome back to the Primal Potential Podcast. I am Elizabeth Benton and recording this as I sit here and watch snowfall out my window. I am in a good mood. I hope you are too. I know you will be after today's episode. |
|  | I'm talking today with Diane. Diane is one of my clients and we had such a great conversation. I'm sharing with you the highlights, because ... Here's what happened. We were talking about what has really helped her the most. What tools or strategies have had the biggest impact on her food choices. What she told me was tracking in affirmations. Writing down what she eats, how she's feeling, her sleep, and affirmations, the things she says to herself, like positive mantras. I said, "Okay." |
|  | Here's what I want to know Diane. Does this just make you feel better, or does this actually change the food choices that you make? Because I think sometimes when people hear things like tracking and affirmations changed me, did it just change how you feel in terms of, "Now, you're happier," or does it materially change the way you look at food and the food choices that you make? |
|  | For her, it really did change the food choices that she made. I said, "Okay. Tell me how." It came down to a conversation about expectations and control, because when we understand our behavior and we can predict where we might struggle, we have so much more peace and power. We don't feel caught off guard and we can develop an intelligent strategy. |
|  | When we operate from a place of understanding and having expectations and putting a strategy in place, we don't need so much will power and determination. When we approach things by working smart, which can only happen with a thorough understanding, we don't have to work so hard. It becomes about executing a strategy, instead of relying on strength, instead of relying on will power. |
|  | That's why for Diane, this awareness made everything easier. Yeah, she made better food choices. Yeah, she stopped relying on food emotionally, or giving into cravings when she was so tired. It didn't come from will power and sheer determination. It came from the strategy she was able to develop by working smart so she didn't have to work so hard. |
|  | We also touched on the idea of self-sabotage, on how to very tactically make improvements on, say, a habit of eating at night, after 9 p.m. We go into a lot of great stuff that I think you're going to find really helpful. |
|  | Just a quick reminder, if you want an opportunity to get some coaching from me for free, make sure you sign up for the free webinar series I have going on on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 13th and 14th at 8:30 p.m. Eastern Time. You can register, it's free, at primalpotential.com/december. If you want more information about the Fat Loss Fast Track, which kicks off in January, but registration closes as soon as it fills up. |
|  | You can either register for that webinar, because I'll talk about that at the end. You can e-mail me if you're like, "I need this. Let me in. Give me the link. I want to make sure I have a spot. Shoot me an e-mail," and I will make sure to get you squared away. There is a contact form on primalpotential.com if you're not sure of my e-mail address. You can just hit reply to any of the e-mails you've gotten on from me on the VIP list at any point in time. |
|  | I think you're really going to enjoy this conversation with Diane. Again, if you want to be a part of that free training on December 13th and 14th, just go to primalpotential.com/december. If you're like, "I need this Fat Loss Fast Track in my life," let's make that happen. Big thank you to Diane and I hope you enjoy today's show. |
|  | Diane and I are going to dive right in where I ask her about these tools that have helped her, and if she can give us an example on how they have influenced the choices she makes. We're going to start off when I ask her about these tools. |
| Diane: | The tracking is all about self-awareness and living in the now, making decisions in the now regarding what's going on with food right now. I've always thought of myself as in the now person. It was really funny for me to find out that I can be, but I hadn't been doing it with food, which doesn't even make sense. Yeah, it's all about self-awareness and why we choose what we choose to eat. Why we eat? When we do? How we do? How much we do? |
|  | The tracking, you end up with a book about yourself, about your behavior, about your thoughts and your motivation and your challenges. You can use that to learn about yourself, about your behavior, about your thoughts, and your motivation, and your challenges. You can use that to learn about yourself. Using that information ... It's new data, right? |
|  | When you have new information, you get to use it to make different choices that move you in the direction you want to go. That's been invaluable, because I've learned quite a few things about myself that I honestly didn't know. I thought I was a pretty self-aware person until now. |
| Elizabeth: | I totally get that. I'm wondering if for the benefit of somebody who's like, "What could I possibly learn that would change the way I make choices?" Is there an example that you can give about how understanding yourself and what drives your choices influences or improves the quality of the choices that you make? |
| Diane: | Yeah. I learned that when I don't get enough sleep or my sleep quality is poor, whether it's just one night or several, that impacts what I want to eat. I tend to have more sweet cravings, which is bizarre. There it is, a black and white. It's in my journal. When I haven't slept well, the next day, at some point, I'm going to crave something sweet. |
|  | That has shown me, "Okay. First of all, I need to prioritize sleep." Additionally, if it's out of my control, or whatever, I just haven't had a good night sleep, I can be on the lookout for those sweet cravings and I can say, "Aha! I know why [inaudible 00:06:32]." |
| Elizabeth: | I knew you were happening. Yeah. |
| Diane: | Aha! Then I have my little strategy for what do I do now that those sweet cravings are here. |
| Elizabeth: | You're not caught off guard. You don't necessarily feel like they came out of left field and now you're struggling to deal with on the fly. |
| Diane: | Exactly. One of the challenges was to create a strategy and have a game plan for things that are expected, or maybe will show up unexpectedly, but you know that they're going to at some point because they have before. It's about being prepared and having tools. They're all tools. |
| Elizabeth: | It's so funny because ... They are all tools. It's funny that you say it's about being prepared, because we have been eating since we were born. For most of us for our entire adult lives, often, even longer, certainly, for me, from childhood through adulthood, we make the same decisions over and over that either make us feel bad, or make us feel guilty, or leave us feeling lethargic, or don't take us towards our goals. Yet, these same things catch us off guard and we feel unprepared and ill-equipped. |
|  | When we understand them better, we no longer have to be like, "Oh my gosh! The craving monster got me today." "No. This was predictable. We can expect this to happen again." I know I've talked before about how if you walked into your office and every single day some guy jumped out from behind the door to scare you, at some point, he would stop scaring you because you would know, "Okay. When I walk though that door, that guy is going to be there," and you would no longer jump out of your shoes. |
|  | You can expect it and you can say, "I'm going to go in through a different door, or I'm going to just stand here and know that he's coming and whatever. I know he's coming and I don't have to react." With food, it's like, "Ha! There are the cravings again. Oh no! What would I do?" I'm not being flipping. It's just that when you develop this awareness through tracking, and journaling, and paying attention, and asking questions, those moments of temptation, they lose their power. |
| Diane: | Yes, they do. Yes, they do. |
| Elizabeth: | That is a game changes, because then it's not about will power, because you don't need it, because you have tools. You don't need to just be tough. You have tools. You can be strategic instead of strong. |
| Diane: | Yes. That's so different than anything else I've done in the past. It's always been, "Oh, God! I have little power. I got to be strong." Then you have this inner conflict going on with yourself. Often times, I would just give in just to be done with the conflict and the anxiety that it caused. |
| Elizabeth: | Giving in to end the discomfort. |
| Diane: | Yes! Yes! That doesn't happen anymore, because there is no conflict. |
| Elizabeth: | That's right, because it doesn't surprise you. You're prepared. You have a plan ahead of time. You know it's just a feeling, or it's just a craving, or it's just a moment. I don't need to make this larger than life. |
| Diane: | Yes. That's another thing that I learned too. It's okay to sit with uncomfortable feelings if I have them, and to learn from them, and to journal about them, and to see what that's all about. What does it mean? |
| Elizabeth: | To trust that it's going to pass. |
| Diane: | It does pass, and that was another thing. In the past, I would get, let's say, a craving, or just an urge, like, "Ooh! I really feel like something sweet. Let's go hunt in the kitchen." I don't normally keep candy and stuff in the house, but when you have a sweet craving, it's amazing how innovative you can be. I would have a couple of bowls of cereal, or whatever, until 30 minutes past and I would still have that same craving, so I would go off and search again. |
|  | It's just doesn't happen as frequently as it did because I have that awareness now, "Okay. This sweet craving is probably because I didn't sleep well the last couple of nights. Gee! What I have learned that I can use as a tool to deal with this right now and the conflict done?" |
| Elizabeth: | Understanding yourself brings so much power, and confidence, and peace. It's like I know when I was deep in debt. I didn't want to see the numbers. I didn't want to know how bad it was. That, of not knowing, it made the conflict, and the tension, and the anxiety worse. It was larger than life because I wasn't facing it. |
|  | When you understand, "This is what I owe. This is what I make, and this is what I can do about it." The tension naturally subsides and it's the same thing with food. When it's no longer like, "Oh, God! I hope today is a good food day." Instead it's, "Look. If I do this, this is what's going to happen. If I don't get enough sleep, I can expect these cravings. If I don't have this satisfying lunch, then in a couple of hours, I'm going to be jonesing for a candy bar." When you have that awareness, you have less anxiety. |
| Diane: | That's exactly right. |
| Elizabeth: | One of the things I like to ask, because sometimes we think that if we get started making progress, there's this expectation that everything is easy and we're just perfect. That's not real. We all have our areas of struggle. Where would you say that you find yourself having the most difficulty right now, or where you think things are hardest? |
| Diane: | Right now. I have noticed that it's more about my negative self-talk, or maybe it's not even negative. It's just about myself talk. I could give an example. One thing. The one thing that I have in my tracking and in my journaling is to not eat after 9:00 at night. That's late, I know, but that's a significant improvement for me. |
| Elizabeth: | Hey, that's all that matters. Improvement for you. |
| Diane: | Yeah. I'm going to stay there for a while. For the most part, it has gotten easier. Just a couple of nights ago, it was 10:00 and I was thinking, "Gosh! Actually, I had experienced a lot of stress that day. That's something right there, because I think that might have triggered ... It's just something to think about. I know I was on to more stress than usual that day and I also know I hadn't gotten ... Talking about sleep. Before ... I hadn't gotten a very good sleep the night before. Actually, the past two nights prior to that. I can remember all these, because I journaled about it. |
|  | I can remember sitting there and my husband had gone to bed and I've got the TV on and I'm just doing my thing of browsing online and probably shopping, and reading, and watching TV, or whatever. Thinking, "Gosh! I'm feeling like snacking," and so I did. |
|  | What I chose to snack on was a big improvement, it was almond butter and sugar-free jelly, just a few spoons full of that. It's like, "Okay. It wasn't a terrible choice, but at the same time I made not a good choice by eating after 9 p.m., when that's my one thing that I write down that I'm going to work on every night and be aware off, is just not eating after 9 p.m. |
|  | Yeah. I still struggle with the mindset, because I told myself, "Oh! It's okay, because I'm making a decent choice. Nothing with sugar, and I'm not overeating. I only had a few spoons full. Still ..." It's that mindset of, "Oh! It's okay. It will be fine." |
| Elizabeth: | Talking yourself into it. Yeah. I would go so far as to call it self-sabotage. The reason why I say that is because I think that it is unnecessarily emotional. You had almond butter and some sugar-free jelly. That's not espionage. Do you know what I mean? |
|  | When we use phrases like ... This might seem like semantics, but I think it's really important. When we use phrases like self-sabotage, and often even when we use words like binge, they come with all of these negativity and judgement, "I sabotaged myself." We are adding in so much more drama objectively. If we strip away the emotion ... It was after 9, you wanted to eat. You had a couple of spoon fulls of almond butter and sugar-free jelly. Period. The end. That's it. |
|  | When we say like, "I sabotaged. I told myself I wouldn't do it." That is subjective emotion loading, which doesn't help at all. That's one thing. |
|  | The other thing that I think can be really helpful. When we set a goal like not eating after 9, I think it's really important to do it in a way that is representative of the progress that needs to happen. For example, let's say that this is your brand new goal, not eating after 9 p.m. what I would first do starting out is look at your journal and say, "How many days out of the last 14 did I eat after 9 p.m.?" |
|  | Let's say that in 14 days, you ate after 9 p.m. 10 days out of 14. I would say in the next two weeks, my goal then is to only eat after 9 p.m. 7 out of the 14 days, or to not eat after 9 p.m. 7 out of the 14 days. However you want to word it, so that you're looking at it as an improvement. If we set this goal, let's say that in two weeks, you ate after 9 10 days out of the 14 before you set this goal. Then you say, "I'm not eating." That's a huge change, to go from, "I did this 10 days out of 14 to I don't do it at all anymore." That's a big change. |
|  | The reality is your body responds to what represents an improvement for you. If you went from 10 to 7, that's an improvement. That's progress. Do it in a way that's achievable, because you're not in a rush, and you want it to last, and you don't want to feel guilty. Then you can be strategic, "Next Friday, I'm going out to dinner with my husband and we might be out after 9, and I really want to be able to have dessert if we choose to have dessert." In light of that, the almond butter and sugar-free jelly is just not worth it. Right? |
| Diane: | Yeah. You know what? You're always talking about it's not about perfection, it's about progress. |
| Elizabeth: | Yup. It's about progress. |
| Diane: | That's an example of, "I still hold on to the diet mentality of all or none- |
| Elizabeth: | You can choose not to. |
| Diane: | Right. There's still work to be done. |
| Elizabeth: | Always. Forever. For the rest of your life. The other thing that you might consider after 9:00 you know ... No matter who you are. You're feeling tired. You're feeling run-down. |
|  | The other thing you can say is, "Look. Whatever I choose, whether I choose to eat or not to eat, I'm going to first say, "What do I really need? What is it that I really need?" A lot of times, we get up and we go to the kitchen because we're feeling restless. Maybe we're just bored. |
|  | Okay. Is food the right response to boredom? Maybe the answer is yes for you, but at least ask the questions. Be more committed to asking the questions than to answering the questions "correctly". Right? Build the discipline of at least asking so you can learn, because to your point, the more information you have, the easier things become. It's not about getting the right answer, so to speak, as if there was one, because, really, it's just about what's an improvement for you, but about the discipline of asking the question. |
|  | Sometimes that pause is enough to inspire action, but focus more on the discipline of asking than on grading the rightness of your answer. What is it that I really need? Am I truly hungry? Am I bored? Am I just tired? Am I just tired and I'm looking for something to keep me awake? Take yourself to bed. |
| Diane: | Yeah. Exactly. |
| Elizabeth: | I would commit to the discipline of at least just being inquisitive, not for the purpose of getting the right answer, but for the purpose of saying, "What's up? What's going on? Am I paying attention? What do I really need? What am I really looking for right now?" |
| Diane: | Okay. All right. Yeah, I can do that. |
| Elizabeth: | I absolutely know you can do that without a question. Let me ask you one last question. If there's somebody listening right now who is on the fence about the Fat Loss Fast Track, maybe you either is just sick of dieting and always trying, trying, trying and, "I'm [X 00:19:19] many years old and I still haven't figured it out." What would you say to that person now that you are almost through your first Fat Loss Fast Track. What would you say to them? |
| Diane: | I would say it's worth it. You are worth it. You're worth the investment and the time that you're going to put into learning about yourself, because nobody else could tell you about you. Nobody else could tell you why you're making the choices that you are, or why you're doing what you're doing. The answers are inside of you, and most of us don't take the time to sit and think about those things, or track them, or interact with someone else about them. This is your opportunity to do that for a solid three months. It's all about you. That's fabulous. |
| Elizabeth: | That's a lifelong thing you can learn from. You have, to your point, with your tracking document, with your journal, you now have all your answers that are specific to you, all of your tools, all of your everything right there in front of you. |
| Diane: | Exactly. That's so awesome. |
| Elizabeth: | There are so many things I love about that episode including the conversation about getting real with the term self-sabotage. Is it really that dramatic and awful? Did you really undercut yourself with a couple of spoon fulls of almond butter after 9:00 at night? No. Not really. A big part of the challenge is just that we have made things more emotional than they need to be. |
|  | I think this is such a great conversation about so many things including how awareness. The awareness that allows us to create a strategy based on our behavior, not based on somebody else's. Based on being a student of you and your choices and the way you think. That allows us to work smarter and not harder. That is the path to making your choices easier and easier instead of relying on will power. |
|  | I love this. I hope to see you and hangout with you and be able to answer your specific questions on this upcoming webinar series. It's a two part webinar. It's totally free. December 13th and 14th at 8:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Grab your spot by going to primalpotential.com/december. See you soon. |

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