

Elizabeth B.:

Hello everybody, and welcome back to the Primal Potential podcast. I am Elizabeth Benton, and the countdown to 2017 is on. We have two episodes left in this wonderful year of 2016. It has not been an easy year for me, but it has been an incredible one, full of lessons. In today's episode, I'm going to get a little bit personal and share kind of as I reflect back on some of the lessons I've learned this year, be it mindset lessons, nutrition lessons, lessons about my body. There's been some big ones there. Also, I'm going to share some of the best books I've read this year. I'm going to create a pretty detailed show notes page over on PrimalPotential.com so you can check out some of the books and different things like that that have been a big part of my year.

I don't know how many Spotify users there are out there. The Primal Potential podcast is on Spotify, in case you didn't know that. They sent out an e-mail last week to their users, and it was kind of like, "Your year in review of music." It shared how many minutes of music you've listened to, and what your top songs were, and I laughed out loud when I saw mine. My top two songs of the year, like that I've listened to most often, they couldn't be more different, but they're also very reflective in very different ways of kind of where I've been at. I thought I would share them with you because they're just pretty funny. My number one song of 2016 was the song Let it Go by James Bay. I'll link to that over in the show notes. Number two was No Mediocre by TI.

It made me laugh, because Let it Go is soft, it's sad, it's mellow, it's beautiful. Kind of a message of just chill out, let it go. If you haven't heard it before, the chorus of it just says, "Let it go. Just let it be. Why don't you be you, and I'll be me? Everything that's broke, leave it to the breeze. Why don't you be you and I'll be me?" When I look at that, I'm like, "Mm-hmm (affirmative), I can see why that's number one." Number two, though, it's different. TI is a rapper if you don't know that, and is my number two song of the year. Sensitive ears shouldn't listen to this one. It's about sex, and that is unquestionably not why it's one of my top songs of 2016 for damn sure, but the message is, "I don't want mediocre. I want everything far from mediocre. Far from average." That's, I think, because one of the primary themes for me personally of 2016 is that I don't want average. That's not good enough for me. I want an exceptional life. I want an exceptional business. I want exceptional health. Through my choices, I can create that or not. The ridiculous dichotomy between those two songs, it's pretty funny. Again, final word of caution: Even though I'll link to it over on the show notes page, sensitive ears should not listen to No Mediocre, please and thank you.

I've learned a lot this year. I've moved multiple times. I've been riding solo, independent for the first time in a long time. No safety net as a business owner. Not only that, my body and my brain weren't exactly on the same page for a good bit of the year, and I was trying to outsmart my body, realizing, or not realizing actually, that I had an undiagnosed thyroid and

immune issue. I want to share with you some of the primary lessons that stand out to me when I look back on this wonderfully challenging year, and the first one that stands out most is probably, "Set it down." Or like the song, "Let it Go."

I've shared with my Fat Loss Fast Track clients, but I don't know that I've shared this regularly with you guys, that several months ago I was doing one of Tara Brach's guided meditations- I love Tara Brach- and she was suggesting that we envision our future self in this particular guided meditation. You basically pick a point in the future and you focus on an image of yourself at some future point in time. So I did, and this me that I imagined, while, yes, she was physically smaller than I was at the moment, that didn't really strike me as unusual or even all that interesting. What really struck me was that she looked light. She looked easy, relaxed, happy, peaceful. It just looked like she was content, but not settling, right? Because there's a difference. Content but not settling.

At the moment that I was doing this meditation, that wasn't really where I was at or what I was feeling. I wasn't feeling relaxed, or light, or easy, or peaceful, or any of those things, right? While I was doing this meditation I had what felt like, for me, a fairly significant moment, where I realized that maybe the extra physical weight, for me, for you, for anybody, is just a byproduct of the extra emotional weight that we're carrying, and that maybe instead of trying to let go of the physical weight, to lose the physical weight, if we tried to let go of the extra emotional weight, the physical weight would take care of itself. If you think about it, if you are weighed down emotionally- sad, frustrated, lonely, carrying other people's burdens- that takes a lot of energy to do that. Some people get that energy from sleeping a lot. Some people get that energy from eating. Some people get that energy from drinking. Some people get that energy from anger, or resentment, or bottling it up.

That meditation really stands out as a big moment in the last year for me, a significant moment where I realized, "Set it down. Set it down, let it go. Release the emotional burdens, the emotional weight. The worry." That day I put up little signs around my house that say, "Set it down," and "Travel light." I routinely ask myself, "How can I travel light today? What do I need to set down? What do I need to let go?" In fact, as we record this, I'm sitting here with a coffee mug from my sister, who put on the coffee mug, "Travel light." She knows that that's something that I'm constantly trying to remind myself, that there's so much of what I carry that I don't need to. I ask myself every day, "What am I carrying that I don't need to? What is non-essential for this day or for this moment?" I would say that's probably the biggest lesson I've learned this year, and it's made a really big difference in every aspect of my life.

A close second to that lesson would be, "Do things that scare you. Things you think you can't do. Things that feel intimidating." Whether it's

physically, emotionally, financially. I did a lot of those. I sold basically everything I owned except my books and my computers. Not kidding. I moved back to New Hampshire, where I grew up, kind of on a whim, into a place I had never seen before. I saw it on the internet. That was a big deal. I started taking yoga classes, which I never wanted to do because I hate group exercise, and I felt really intimidated by something I wasn't good at in an environment where I'm not comfortable. I hosted the first ever Primal Potential in person event, and I coordinated every detail all by myself. I carried a 200 pound, seven foot table out of my car and up the stairs of my home all by myself. If you haven't read that story yet, it's on the blog. You should really check it out. It's pretty crazy and pretty funny.

Here's what those things did, though. They built my confidence. They expanded my perspective on what I think and what I know is possible for me. When I was over 350 pounds, I didn't believe in myself. I believed very much in my limitations. I was very, very sure of what I couldn't do, but I had lost touch with what I could do. The circle of things I thought I could do was very, very small, right? It was a challenge at every turn to lose weight, to start a business, and everything in between, because I didn't have that confidence. For me, that confidence grows when I do things that feel hard, that feel scary, that I think I can't do, because it shatters limitations that you've accepted in your own mind. Now if something scares me, I want to do it.

For example, and this is just a small example, but it's meaningful for me personally, and every one of us will have different things. I give blood regularly. I don't do it because it's important and people need blood, although, yes, that's true and I get it. I do it primarily because I'm terrified of needles. Every time I give blood, I leave feeling really proud of myself, and confident that fear doesn't have to stop me. That uncertainty doesn't have to stop me. Every day I look for opportunities to impress myself, to surprise myself, to prove that I'm capable of more than I think. It's a perspective that I carry now, looking for things that I think I can't do, or I don't want to do, or scare me, and do them anyway. It's a perspective that has changed me for the better, and you can do that too, things that scare you. Things you think you can't do.

For one of my clients, it was walking into a Crossfit gym and doing a workout without quitting. She was super uncomfortable, and she had to scale many of the movements to make them easier for her, but she did it. You know what? She was on cloud nine for weeks afterwards, and even now, though it's been a couple of months since she did that, she can go back to that moment and think about how that felt and kind of get more mileage out of that moment. She can bottle that up and have it forever by continuing to do those kinds of things.

I've also learned some different kinds of lessons about my own body. I wish somebody had told me this years ago, but hey, I'll take it now. That is, me

and my body, like my body and my mind, we're on the same team. At some point this year, my weight loss stopped. Worse, actually, I started gaining weight. I looked at that as my body rebelling, right? Instead of looking at my body and my mind as the same team and trying to work with my body, I looked at my body as the enemy. Something that was betraying me, and I tried to outsmart it. I tried fasting. I tried different workouts. Every fat loss strategy that I knew, I was just trying to outsmart my body as if we were enemies.

I have to say, when I learned that my thyroid was basically not working at all, I wasn't really upset. I really wasn't. I remember journaling that week and saying to myself, "So, you can't outsmart your body with your brain. You're on the same team." It's not your brain against your uncooperative body. If you try to work against your body, you will lose. When you work with it, when you care for it, when you're listening for and looking for what it needs and what it doesn't need, you will win, but for as long as you think you can outsmart it, outmaneuver it, and feel like it's not on your side, you're screwed. That was a pretty big shift for me. It's not me against my body. We are on the same team.

I guess the other lesson that stands out to me related, and it's kind of more on the food and fat loss side of things, it's also about money. I'll tell you this: I'm cheap. I'm super cheap. I pick up pennies off the ground and get excited about it. That's really true. I did an episode recently, 273 I think, on Paleo Power Meals, a meal delivery service, and I've talked myself out of this no less than a million times because it's expensive and I'm cheap, and because it's more than I would spend on a trip to the grocery store. In fact, the only reason I talked myself into it this time was because I felt like I could justify the price, because I would share my experience with you guys. I kind of saw it as a work expense, and a learning opportunity. Here's what it taught me: I had tunnel vision on the money part of it. The dollars and cents part of it.

I often tell my clients that they have tunnel vision about their food choices. Like if they're facing a temptation, let's say a cookie, and they're debating this cookie, and they start thinking, "The cookie would be good. It looks awesome." It's just a cookie. If I don't have the cookie, I'm going to be pissed. I'm going to feel like I'm missing out. It's just a cookie, right? When they do that, that's tunnel vision, because they aren't considering factors beyond the cookie, like, "Is it worth it? How do I want to feel? How is it going to make me feel? Does this choice, if I choose the cookie, does it take away something that I want more? Would I feel better if I didn't have the cookie?"

This tunnel vision that I warn my clients about regarding food, I had it regarding money, because, uh-huh, the Paleo Power Meals, they're expensive. They are more than I would spend on groceries, but it wasn't just about the money. In fact, it wasn't even mostly about the money. It

was about two things: Time and energy. I hadn't really considered the amount of time I would save, even though I was spending more money, because I didn't have to go to the grocery store. I didn't have to plan meals. I didn't have to think about what I was going to eat, or prepare food, or clean up, or run out to miscellaneous grocery trips when I wanted something different or I didn't have something I needed. I had more time. More time to work, more time to work out, more time to rest. Also, energy. My mind. I earned so much emotional freedom that came along with every single dollar I spent on the food, because there was no negotiation. Like, "Oh, well I planned to have this, but I should have this." There was no, "What should I eat? What will I eat?" That kind of thinking takes a lot of energy.

I guess in short, and I could ramble about it forever, it really wasn't a dollars and cents purchase when I tried this out. For every dollar I spent on food, yeah, I got food, but I also got time back, and I got energy back. With all things I want to avoid tunnel vision. Sidebar: If you're like, "What the heck is Paleo Power Meals?" Go listen to episode 273. They were nice enough after I reached out and told them that I really enjoyed their stuff, I wasn't compensated in any way to try it. They gave me a coupon code for you guys to use. I'll link it up in the show notes, but also check out 273. The coupon code, if you want to try them, is EBPrimal20, and that will give you 20% off on Paleo Power Meals.

I'm also going to link over in the show notes to some of the best books I read in 2016, because I would be lying to you if I said that some of these lessons I had weren't a result of things I had learned from things I had read. It's not just my experience of the world. That's shaped by what I read, and I'm a big, big reader. Some of the best books, Deep Work, by Cal Newport, I think it is. Tools of Titans, which is Tim Ferris' new book. The Way of the Peaceful Warrior was definitely one of my favorites. The Most Important Thing. That's a book about investing money, and The Slight Edge. Definitely all of those are in the top, and I will link to those over on the show notes page for this episode at PrimalPotential.com.

I thought it would be great to wrap up and share another lesson that actually doesn't come from me. It comes from one of my clients. Within the Fat Loss Fast Track, one of our challenges ... We have weekly challenges. One of them was about identifying a good choice, a better choice, and a best choice. Because one of the traps that I share with them that we sometimes fall into, especially when we're improving our health, improving our eating habits, improving our body composition, is that we justify things because it's, "Better than I used to do." Which is really true and valid, but at some point, you can't keep using that.

If you're getting results with it, you absolutely can, but at some point, like if I now said, "Oh, well, I can have four slices of pizza because I used to eat the whole pizza." Like, that's true. I used to eat a whole pizza. Not a lie, but

that's not going to get me where I want to go. At some point, it got me here, but it's not going to get me from here to where I want to go. We kind of transition away from, at the end of our Fat Loss Fast Track, from, "Is it an improvement?" To, "What's a good choice? What would be better? What would be best?" It's not so that we always make the best choice. It's just so that we increase our awareness of the fact that there are more options than just, "The way I used to do it, and what's a little bit better?" Anyway, this lesson from one of my clients that she posted in our private Facebook group for the Fat Loss Fast Track, she was defining how she thinks about "Good, better, best." She said a good choice is when she can say, "I'm not disappointed in this choice." A better choice is when she can say, "This represents an improvement for me. Win!" And the best choice is when she can say, "Wow. I'm really proud of this. Go me."

It's not that she always makes those best choices, but increasing your awareness of them is a powerful, powerful first step. I know many of you are like, "Fat Loss Fast Track. I've heard you talk about that." I have, very recently, because the next one launches on January 8th. If you want to grab your spot, you can go to PrimalPotential.com/Winter17. Winter17. Winter 17, and you can register there for our kickoff. It's a 12 week coaching program, and that link also has tons of information about how it works and all that. I shared with you guys in the last episode that some of my clients in the fall group were sharing towards the end of our 12 weeks, one of them asked, "What were the biggest takeaways you had from our time together?" One of my clients wrote, "Change is all about doing the work. It's not magic or mysterious. It's simply practice. Asking curious questions, answering them honestly, and taking action based on what is discovered, one thing at a time."

Another one commented, and she's just so sweet. She was talking to me, because I had responded, and she said, "You have such a heart for us. I am changing still because of what you have taught me, but I'm sad I don't get to hang out with you via webinar on Sunday. But I will use these next two weeks to review all of my notes from the webinars, see where I can improve, and count down the days until January 8th," because she's going on as a veteran into the Veteran's Group, which is after your first group. Anyway, she says, "I just want to give you a big old giant hug. So grateful, so thank you. Have tears in my eyes listening to your heart for all of us. Love you, EB. I am forever changed because of what I have learned here with you and from this group. Fat Loss Fast Track, best money ever spent. Ever. Worth every last single cent." Then she said, "Merry Christmas, Elizabeth, and every single one of you in this group."

I like sharing their lessons too, because my lessons are based on my perspective, but I think it's great to see where people are at after 12 weeks in a Fat Loss Fast Track, and the lessons that they have. For those of you that are like, "Yeah? I want that. I want that freedom. I want to believe in the power of my choices and get out of the rat race of yo-yo dieting." You

can go to PrimalPotential.com/Winter17, and make sure to grab your spot before the January 8th kickoff. As you hear this, as of when it airs, you have a few more days to register before we kind of start the onboarding process. Hope you guys have a really great day. After this, we've got one more episode left in 2016 and I can't wait to share it with you. Have a great day, guys.