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Welcome to Devoured. The podcast for women ready to release the title of dieter for good. I'm your host Lucia Hawley, and I'm a certified nutritional therapy practitioner with my Master's in Social Work, Clinical Mental Health. I've lost 80 pounds, and I'm on a mission to get you into the life of your dreams without being the woman who is consumed by diet after diet trying to get there. If you're wanting more in your life and are tired of wondering when or how to make that happen, then this is the podcast for you. You'll learn how to make the radical changes you've only dreamed of 100% possible for you today. I'm so happy you're here.

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Well, hello party people. Welcome. Welcome. Welcome to another episode. As I'm recording this, I'm looking out the window at my office and it is a classic rainy Portland fall day outside. There are yellow leaves and there is one stuck to a window pane on my window, and there are little forgotten about, or gently placed rain droplets on the outside of the window pane. It's a calming day. It is a grounding day, at least for me, and I'm going to roll with that because I would love to embrace that today.

This week I'm talking about a subject that I'm calling Planned Flexibility. And so this subject is coming up because, I mean, I'll be honest. What I [inaudible 00:02:08] talk about here on the podcast, I record every week and I used to record... Well, I used to record every week, but in the spring right before COVID came on and this is 2020 if you're listening to this episode in some other year. Right before COVID came on, I started to batch my podcast episodes and I had more guests on the show than too. So when you're scheduling with a guest, you have to work with both people's schedules. So it wasn't necessarily that we would record one week and then the episode would turn around and get posted the next week. Oftentimes you would record, and then within a month or two, that episode would then air.

So with COVID and with me really basically having a lot to talk about, I loved having guests on, and clearly I recently had a couple of guests on. So they still come on and we're going to have more guests like I was talking about last week, but I really wanted this year to be more of a year of being able to share my own thoughts and theories and experiences as a coach and as a living, breathing human in a body that has gained weight and has lost weight and all the iterations in between and on the sides and upside down and inside out of that. I wanted a space to be able to share more of my reflection.

And so this reflection now, basically when COVID hit, what I realized is that every single week there was a different need that I was feeling from those that I was in communication with. Whether it was clients or family members or what I was seeing at large on social media or in the news, the headlines, the feeling of the headlines, all those different iterations. I pretty quickly came back into my pace of recording the week before, the episode, and then posting the week of. So a quick turnaround.

So this week, what I've been thinking about is planning. So in Lean and Liberated in my coaching program, we use a 24 hour plan and we use this plan in order to feed ourselves our food, and in order to decide, I mean, anything you want. You can add in whatever you want to the plan, but at the very least we're planing in when we are fasting and when we are not fasting, and on top of that are different food choices for the day.

And now the spin on the plan is that once you make the plan and it's either the day before or the morning of, once you've made your plan and set your intention for the day, your job is to stick with the plan. But before you stick with the plan, you have to rate your plan. And it has to be a plan that you like. It has to be a likable plan. And this is to help us start to reroute our brains. And it's a little more analytical, but we do this from a little bit more of an analytical standpoint with the daily planning in order to reveal to ourselves our thoughts.

So if your tendency for the plan for the next day is to plan in foods and there are no stacks and there's no dessert and you are only eating X amount of white rice, and you can't have brown rice because it's too much... If you start to get really, really granular with the plan, what you're going to find is that, that isn't quite a plan for life. If you're feeling this major pressure to be really granular and really prescriptive with your food choices and your beverage choices every single day as you're moving towards a weight loss plan, what you'll come to discover is that, that is how you're deciding you should lead your life.

Now for some people that should feels really liberating. So go for it. But for most of my clients, that type of a plan is basically a diet. And when you're coming to Lean and Liberated, you're coming in because you're pretty much done with diet. You don't want another diet, and yet you do have a desire to be losing weight, to be releasing weight off of your body. So we come to this middle ground where we say, "Well, we're going to have you practice being intentional, but it's going to be intentional in a loving way." So you're going to start out by making your plan and you might not know how to make the plan at first.

You might not know, but that's part of the living practice. And that's how we start to shift from being acutely analytical and logical with our food choices, right? And we start to shift into coupling that and merging that, that's a very left-brain approach. The analytical approach. We merge that into a more emotional approach by actually asking ourselves, "Well, how much do I like this plan? How much am I going to stick with this plan?" And when you're rating it, if you're not going to stick with the plan, you have to do the work ahead of time to figure out what to, for the most part, add in or take away from your plan so that it becomes a plan that you actually like.

And this is how we start to show ourselves that in practice, we can learn how to feed ourselves and think about our food ahead of time in a way that is loving that merges with our values. We do value work in Lean and Liberated as well, and additionally moves us away from the dieting thinking by allowing our emotions, our thoughts and our feelings to come up as we are consistent with our plans.

And so what I'm finding right now, which I think is so beautiful, and if you're one of my clients, you might be shaking your head at me as you're listening to this. And hi, hello. I'm so happy that you listen to the podcast each week. What you might be finding is that during times of stress, during times of duress, our brains will naturally, and from a place of perceived love, default to old habits, default to old patterns of thinking. And so it's really easy and natural and to be expected, that something like a plan, we might start to white-knuckle and shift and transform into a diet when we're stressed out.

Now here's the thing. When this happens, we can start to judge ourselves. "Oh my God, I think they're so stressful. I just need to fucking figure out my food, and then once my food is figured out and I have my really good plan, then that's going to be on lockdown and I won't be stressed out in that regard, and then my life will feel easier." We can start to try to solve for the rest of our lives by really doubling down on our food efforts. And then of course, because we are smart, competent, curious people who are trying to move away from dieting, we could start to judge ourselves for having that potential proclivity.

"Oh my God. I thought I was done with that stuff. Where is that thought coming from? Oh my God, why can't I figure this food stuff out? What is going on? I must be..." Insert any word there. That is probably not a very kind word if we're being real. So I'm here to say this week, that nothing has gone wrong when those thoughts come up. Those thoughts are actually literally part of the process.

Now, if that's frustrating, that's okay. That's also part of the process too. And that's where conventional diets, in my opinion, drop the ball. They drop the ball in being able to robustly hold space for all of our thoughts and feelings. Diets really just try to hijack, and there's a time and a place for diets, okay? I chat about that in previous podcasts. If you're someone who is looking to drop weight for a certain

competitive event, you have some reason that really feels like it, again, aligns with your goals and values, have at it.

But for the women that I work with, that's not part of the picture right now. Maybe it was previously, maybe it will be in the future, who knows. But for right now, the plan is to figure out how the hell do I feed myself in a way that makes sense for me and my goals of losing weight right now, and then my goals in the future of maintaining my weight in a way that doesn't suck the life out of me, and in a way that I can feel proud of.

So more times than not what we end up feeling proud of is doing the hard work. And the trippy thing is that the hard work is not necessarily doing the diet or the perfect food harder. And on the flip side, it might not also be letting go of the reins completely and feeling like your hard work was all for not, and you're just going to say, fuck it to these conversations and just push them down further or push them away further.

For a lot of people where the liberation resides is in this middle ground of really starting to get curious, "Why am I thinking certain thoughts? Where did those come from? Who gave them to me? What gave them to me? How do I feel about them being given to me? What would I like to do with that information now that I know that I have these thoughts or these stories, these concepts? It's either self concept or concept of the world, or concept of how I move through the world." Once we have these thoughts, they're going to offer us feelings.

And so nothing has gone wrong as I've said before when you have a certain thought or the thought feels bad or negative or overwhelming, and same with the feeling. They're just there. They might serve us more or less in any given moment. And that's the work of coaching, is that we start to say, "Well, let's create space from a place of safety," which is key, "from a place of safety for you to explore that capacity for your thought work and for your feelings work." But the thought work and feelings work is not to scrub out and make everything really, really positive and to never be able to handle or embrace tough times. And so this is where a lot of us are right now, is that we're in tough times. We know that the winter is drawing closer and we have a lot of thoughts and feelings around that. And we have potentially fewer places to fall softly upon.

We might feel more isolated. We might have fewer in-person connections. There might be more barriers to how we connect with others. Our jobs might be more stressful. They might no longer be what we had signed up for originally. We might feel like we're having to roll with a whole lot of punches. Financial situation with changing, family dynamics changing, health, all of it. Well, you don't need me to be telling you all that stuff. But because of that, what can be so interesting is that we start to try to get control in different areas. Or we feel that where we've been getting control is no longer working, and we feel like we're budding up against something that we don't want to be budding up against because we have additional decision fatigue these days. That's what I'm seeing when it comes to planning for ourselves, because how hard does it feel to plan when you don't know what the world's going to look like or the country is going to look like next week or the week after or in a month or two months, or you're bracing yourself and steeling yourself for hard times?

How do we create loving plans when things are hard? And this is where the concept of planning flexibility gets to come in. Planning flexibility inherently means that we do not have the answers for everything. It can be a bit of a bruise to the ego, but our egos are strong. Often on this podcast, I talk about the ego being a bit of a toddler with a temper tantrum. You'll love it. But also, you got to catch a break. Do the temper tantrum and then go hang out, right? We love her egos. But I want to say also on this podcast, because I can paint them in the light of being a little fierce, a little like [inaudible 00:14:27] all over the place.

But our egos are beautiful and they're here to protect us. So it's a really beautiful thing when we fall into those default habits that maybe aren't actually serving us in the moment, in this case of white-knuckling and trying to get a little more rigid with our plans or feeling like our plans are so damn rigid and that we should be doing them or we have to be doing them or we have to stick to them in order to get through these hard times.

To me, that's all coming from the ego and our egos are here to protect us. They're here to help create a shell for us to move through life with. But instead of saying, "Oh God damn it ego, how dare you crop up right now." I want us to simply say, "Wow, thank you ego for being here. Thank you any potential proclivity to rigidity or to judgment about myself or to all the meta thoughts I'm having around that entire process. Thank you." Something so simple can seem so frustrating, but what happens if we thank ourselves for our processes?

What I see is a release of that strictness, and when we release that strictness, that is inherently beyond that dieting cycle. That is how we move through the dieting cycle and feeling like we have to move around it and never touch it, and that it's big and hairy and weird sticky. We're scared of it or [inaudible 00:16:02] by it, pissed off by it. When we create the capacity and container to simply be with the ego, to simply be with our thoughts and our feelings without having to feel like we have to have a plan, we are then, by allowing that for ourselves, what we're actually practicing is that we're planning in flexibility with ourselves. And so if there is no other season than right now to be thinking on this subject, to be feeling on the subject, I really want you to get curious.

In what ways can I plan flexibility? Now, remember, it almost can sound at certain times and in certain situations, like that's a bit of an oxymoron. "How can I plan in flexibility, Lucia? I don't want to think one more thought." That right there is a beautiful question to be practicing that planned flexibility. So when it comes to the 24 hour plans that I was mentioning earlier, this is such a cool place. I've been talking about this with different clients this week, is starting to get curious, okay. "Where's my brain defaulting to plan rigidity? Whereas my brain defaulting to not liking that I might have that ability to get more rigid or strict? How do I plan flexibility? Not so I supersede things, not so I'm like, 'I did it. At the end of the week, yeah, I did that.'" Right? That's a bit of an ego stroke, which is fine, but not quite the intention here.

The intention instead is to say, "Wow, how was I able to be with myself in that moment? Not just in the moment with food, but in the moment before food, and the moment when I was thinking about food, but food wasn't there. What about in the moment after food? What if there's actually nothing to be solving for? What if my only job is just to be here, and by being here, I can be planning at times. And by being here, I could be eating at times. And by being here, I can be crying at times. And by being here, I might need a nap. And by being here, I might need a power through."

When we create the container to say, "Oh, if I allow myself the capacity for all of this, I allow the capacity for all of that for everyone else in my life. All those lives that I touch." I think even during these really hard trying times, this is how we come in to really shifting the narrative. And if that narrative shift doesn't change the world, well, I don't really know what else might. When we, even in times of stress and duress, create that compassion for ourselves, not to supersede our emotions, but to actually be with them, to be with our anger and compassion, to be with our loneliness and compassion, to just see the depth of the container that we actually have for ourselves, this is how we plan in flexibility.

This is where we start to dissolve the dogma that perhaps once was. And this is where we can start to be with that dogma as it's actually with us in the moment from a place of compassion and from a place of seen and wonderment. "Oh, I now see. And I now feel, and I now think with that instead of trying to solve for it."

So who knew that a food journal could get so damn meta? Well, it's what we do in Lean and Liberated. It's what we talk about here on Devoured. And I think we have to, I've seen far too many diets where people get to the body they want, or they build the muscle they want, or they lose the fat they want, but it doesn't give them the life that they want and it feels empty. And this is why this work is so important to me is that I don't know why the dieting cycle has to so inherently be empty.

Well, I do know why. That's a subject for a different podcast, but, well different episode. But if there's no time better than the present, then that also means that it's not the present moments that are perfect where there's no better time. It also means there's a capacity in the space for no time better than the present during really, really hard times. And during the times where we are bracing and realizing that there will be more hard times in the future is during these very authentic moments, and these very tired of moments.

This is where we begin to plan in flexibility. For the sake of being with ourselves and for the sake of truly being in our humanness, because humans are supple. We are not brittle. We are not strict. We are not rigid. It's very, to me, non human. It's non mammalian. That we're just mammals. We're mammals leading mammal lives, and so how do we create and maintain a suppleness and flexibility? We breathe. We aspire, right? We perspire. We're made of water. We flow. I'm getting in my field, very perhaps meta with this. But I, can't not because this is what we do here, and if we create this space here, you can just see it.

You can just see it and start to recognize that we have this depth of capacity. That we don't have to dig deep for the sake of digging deep for, but by exploring ourselves and our food choices and our nourishment, our hunger, our satisfaction. All that does is that brings us back into the present moment. And if we allow that to be a practice for no reason other than to be the practice, if we allow ourselves to be with that practice for no reason other than that we are with that practice, I think what you'll find is that you can just be.

Okay, everyone that's all for this week. Thank you for listening to this full podcast episode. If you want more of this information every day instead of just one podcast episode each week, consider coming over to Instagram to hang out with me. I'm [luciahawley_](#) over there. That's L-U-C-I-A H-A-W-L-E-Y underscore. And one more thing before this episode ends. Please consider leaving a review of Devoured on iTunes so we can keep spreading the word and together we can offer this free education, empowerment and liberatory nutrition principles that will change more lives. If you're someone who likes to empower other people, then please consider sharing this podcast with friends and family, and by leaving your review, it makes a world of difference.