

Module 7 Lesson 4

Transcript

Hey TNSers. In this lesson we are focusing on psychological factors in weight loss. A broad topic, I know. But it's really important to put this lesson in because there are some things that needed to be covered in this module that sort of stand alone when it comes to mental health, but they don't necessarily flow. So consider this my miscellaneous or catch all lesson in mental health and weight management. Before we really get into it, here's an overview of what we'll cover in this lesson. We'll discuss the effect of dieting on our brains and hormones. The many reasons why diets fail and successful psychological approaches to weight loss. I need to start with a statistic that most of us have heard. 95% or more diets fail. If people do follow a diet, any diet, and it can be anything from Whole30 to keto to counting macros to, good old Atkins and actually lose weight, only 5% of the people keep the weight off and most people don't even make it through the first few days or lose those first few pounds.

What is going on here? Well, even Oprah with unlimited funds, a chef and all the support money can buy struggles. That's because dieting in the good old fashioned sense of it does something our brains aren't hardwired to do. Dieting makes us obsess about what we can and cannot eat. It makes us body check like crazy. It forces us to step on the scale obsessively. I know you know about that. Our brains do not thrive when we deprive ourselves, so our desires start a battle with our biological drive to eat, conserve calories, and look like people, not magazine ads. Plus being hungry throws off our hormonal balance, dropping our lectin levels and pumping up ghrelin in our systems so we're never satisfied with diet sized portions and the what am I going to eat next?

Obsession continues to cycle. After diet is started, at a minimum, our brains experience guilt if we eat an unprescribed bite of bread. At an extreme, that bite of bread can set us off on a binge or somewhere in the middle we may throw in the towel and give up. We feel like a failure because we were unable to follow a simple diet and then all too often we rush out to try the next diet of the moment, even though we didn't give the last diet a fighting chance. I don't need to tell you that the cycle repeats here. I feel like we can all swap stories on this over and over and over again probably. I have a client named Jeremy who lost 20 pounds through a modified keto diet. He met his goal, but it came off pretty quickly and he really didn't enjoy the experience. When he was at his goal weight he added back in some things he was really missing.

Like for example, I think it was a sandwich from his favorite deli and pizza on Friday nights I know he loved. It didn't take long until those 20 pounds came back and then he tried counting macros. That was his next thing. He was so frustrated to be back on the dieting bandwagon and

back in this cycle and found it nearly impossible to be as strict as he wanted to be, that he actually gained a few more pounds on the counting macros plan. He gained even more back, meaning he set himself up for failure by feeling so deprived. When dinner came around, he went crazy. After macro County, he tried Whole30, then Atkins and intermittent fasting as well as a whole bunch of others. I know you know people like Jeremy. He came to me feeling like a total big failure.

I'm pretty sure you have similar stories with clients of your own. And that brings me to the next part of my soapbox monologue here. We feel that because we caved to fries or a pasta dish that we have no willpower. Just the word willpower feels like a setup for failure to me. It literally just makes me cringe. I think I just started to cringe. It's loaded with negative energy. I'm convinced it is the most sabotaging way to look at weight loss and it's built into just about every diet out there. Willpower induces stress, cortisol and feelings of deprivation. We should ditch the term from our conversation and teach our clients to do the same. Instead of saying, "Oh, if I just had a little more willpower, I could skip the burger, or if I could just have a little more control, I'd have already lost the weight."

We all know the biggest set up for failure is telling someone what they can't have. There are so many reasons diets fail and I say diets fail because our clients don't fail. The diets fail them. When we look at successful psychological approaches to weight loss, I always look to the national weight control registry because they've studied people who have lost 30 pounds or more and kept it off for one year or longer. These participants have a lot of things in common. Most do some physical activity every day. Most popular is walking. Not surprising. They adjust their eating, but they do it in a way that works specifically for them. They eat breakfast every day. They weigh themselves weekly. They cut down on TV and screen time. What these people have in common that really jumps out is that they have focused on behaviors, not specific foods.

Successful weight loss starts with a healthy psychological foundation starting with motivation, which means that the client has to be ready to adjust their behaviors. Some are more motivated and can change a lot at once. Others need to take steps and build on it. Either way is fine. Going off plan is part of the plan. It's the nutritious life philosophy to be really transparent here. Ask your clients how motivated they are and ask them what their expectations are based on that level of motivation. "Hey, it's the holidays. Are you thinking we can keep going with this super tight plan lifestyle you're on? Is that working well for you or do you think it's a solid idea to shoot for some weight maintenance right now until the new year?" Whatever the answer is, set expectations and plan based on where the motivation takes you. Your clients also need to know they are going to be faced with real life, which may mean pizza, cupcakes, a glass of rose.

That's great. That's wonderful. Going off plan is part of the plan. Going off plan is part of the bigger picture. So if the foods and behaviors of sleep, stress management, exercise and self care are in place, the client can absolutely enjoy treats for the sake of having something that's delicious. They can do it in a controlled conscious indulgence kind of a way. Then they can get right back on track. Near the end of my appointments with pretty much each and every client, I take a few minutes to look ahead. I have them open their calendar to make another appointment if they haven't done so and then I ask them, "What's going on in the calendar between our appointments that may cause you to be thrown off?" Dinners, parties, travel and whatnot are so common. If someone has a dinner planned at a restaurant and they want to indulge, we may choose a conscious indulgence so they can really look forward to it, enjoy it and feel empowered doing it.

If a client is going to the beach and needs to pack a lunch, we may also include having an ice cream if that's what really they're looking forward to. Sometimes we may look at a span of one or two weeks and say, "Yeah, looks like this is a hard week, but we make a game plan." Other times the week looks pretty chill and I'll say, "Hey, do you want to plan for an indulgence?" When it comes to weight loss as long as folks are doing the work, say, I don't like to give you an exact number, but let's just say 85 to 90% of the time and they're being consistent, they will be successful even with a little indulgent here and there. Successful weight loss takes a ton of, as I just said, consistency. You know I love that word. Consistency. I love saying patience and consistency.

You may remember me talking about consistency and patience in level one. I'm not just talking about a few days or a few weeks, but a most of the time mentality where your client really sticks to the work you're doing together so much that it becomes just part of their new identity. Most of the time your cup is full of water or tea. Most of the time you have your favorite yogurt or oatmeal at breakfast. Most of the time bedtime is 10:30. String all of the most of the time behaviors together and you get to a nice healthy weight loss, nice healthy place. Of course, you need to remember to be patient. You can't expect the weight loss every week. Even if you're eating the same consistent way. Hormones, sodium and even the weather can impact the rate of weight loss. Be consistent. I had to say it again. Be patient. I had to say that again too.

Sometimes it takes a lot of work to undo that diet mentality. You're going to have to talk about patience and consistency more with your clients. Clients are going to come to you having spent years counting calories, believing fat is the devil or avoiding fruit because of the carbon sugar content. Build trust. Know the nutritious life philosophy works and offer tons of support and accountability to help rewire your client's brains so they can lose weight and be healthy successfully. The TNS community is a great place to share wisdom and bounce ideas off of each other, so reach

out when you have a client who's particularly challenging or share your successes so we can cheer you along. I want to take a moment now to review the most important takeaways from this lesson. 95% of diets fail because our brains do not thrive when we deprive ourselves. Remove the word willpower from your vocabulary and help your clients do the same.

The idea of willpower just brings negative energy. Like I said, it makes me cringe. The one big thing that people who have lost weight successfully have in common is that they focus on behaviors, not food. Successful weight loss starts with a healthy psychological foundation, starting with motivation. Be realistic with clients looking to lose weight and help them find ways to consciously indulge so they don't feel deprived. Going off plan is part of the plan. It's part of the bigger picture. Be consistent and promote a most of the time mentality where your clients sticks to the work you are doing together so much so that it becomes part of her identity with a little wiggle room here and there. I'm so happy you stuck around for this lesson and I will see you in the next one.