



EPISODE 83:

Floors and Ceilings

This is The Joyful You Podcast.

You have episode 83, floors and ceilings.

Welcome to The Joyful You Podcast.

On this show, I talk all about the tools you need to cultivate a healthy relationship with food, your mind and your life.

I'm your host, Rachael Collins.

As an eating psychology practitioner, a certified life coach and a weight loss expert, it is my mission to show you how to work with your body, manage your mind, process your emotions and create supportive habits so you can live well, feel well and become your strongest, healthiest, happiest, most amazing self, a joyful you.

Let's do this.

Welcome everyone.

I don't know about you, but not accomplishing a goal is super frustrating.

Last week on the podcast, I shared three reasons why we quote unquote fall off the wagon, even though our intentions are really, really good when it comes to accomplishing our goal.

I also shared with you a technique I have found to sticking with and accomplishing a big goal.

And that technique is to use the power of small and simple things.

By small and simple things, are great things brought to pass.

If we want the great result of accomplishing a goal, simplifying the process by creating small steps is what is going to work to get us across the finish line.

Now, I've got to be honest with you.

I did not believe this at first.

If it seemed like it was too simple of a remedy, I wouldn't do it.

I still have yet to figure out why sometimes we prefer the hard, or we think it has to be so hard in order for it to work.

I am really not sure about this, but here's what I do know.

When I first set out to accomplish my big goal of losing 50 pounds, I always opted for the hard.

I chose to starve myself on a 1200 calorie or less diet, I would push myself to run 5 miles every day, I chose to beat myself up when the scale didn't budge, and for some reason, I always chose to punish myself when I over ate, or when I ate off plan, or when I didn't follow through with what I said I was going to.

I was really making the journey harder than it needed to be.

And I'm not sure, but I think that my thinking was weight loss needs to be hard, it needs to be miserable in order for it to work.

Which of course, it didn't.

In my Joyful Body Breakthrough program, I start out by teaching what I call the fundamental basics.

These are very small steps that, if taken, will lead you to the ultimate goal, will lead you to weight loss.

And almost every time, my clients will want to start implementing harder rules for themselves.

They will ask me for a specific calorie count.

They want me to give them a meal plan that they need to follow.

Or they want a list of foods that they can and can't eat.

They want a rigid exercise program.

I get it.

I have so much compassion for them because once upon a time, that was me.

The basics just seem too simple.

I was so used to doing all the hard, miserable things that past diets had told me that I needed to do.

And this is part of the reason why all traditional diets fail.

They have us going at our maximum effort, and eventually it just ends up being too much.

And it is impossible to sustain.

And this isn't because we're weak, because we are not.

This is because our nervous system kicks in.

When the brain senses danger, it's going to override our prefrontal cortex every time.

Now our prefrontal cortex is the part of our brain that knows what to do, the part of our brain that knows what choices are going to serve us best, and motivates us to take action towards that.

But when our brain senses danger, it turns off this part of our brain, and it turns on all of our safety and coping mechanisms to protect us.

This is probably one of my favorite things that I work with clients on, is regulating their nervous system.

Because when the nervous system is not regulated, it's really hard to use that wise part of the brain.

So today, I want to kind of continue our discussion from last week about using the small and simple things to bring about great results.

So when I started implementing these small basics, I was able to easily sustain the changes that I was making.

These were so small that my lower brain didn't really recognize them, and it wasn't screaming at me, and my nervous system wasn't sensing danger, it stayed calm, and I was able to keep taking the actions that eventually led me to losing over 50 pounds.

A few years ago, I certified as a creation coach with Brooke Snow, and she taught a concept called floors and ceilings.

And that is what I want to share with you today.

So a floor is a tiny version of a step.

It's the bare minimum that you can do while still getting the result that you want.

A floor is something that is easy to consistently show up and do, regardless of how motivated you are, how much time you have, how well you feel, or your energy level.

And just like a floor in a house, our floors provide support.

They are going to support us.

They're going to support our body.

They're going to support our brain, our nervous system to keep taking action towards our goal.

So that is a floor.

But what is a ceiling?

A ceiling is kind of the opposite of a floor.

It is the highest level of a step.

It is shooting for an action that is big and challenging and takes a lot of time and effort.

Okay, so let's say that our end goal is to run and finish a marathon.

Now, my son-in-law, he just ran his first marathon last week.

So this example is on my mind.

Now, can you imagine never running before and you are attempting to achieve the goal of running a marathon by going for a ceiling?

We lace up our shoes, they're probably new and not even broken in yet, and we take off running, forcing ourselves to run all 26.2 miles.

We wouldn't get very far before we quit.

We would not get very far at all.

But this is what we oftentimes do with a weight loss goal or a health goal, or really any goal.

We start out with a ceiling instead of a small, simple, supporting floor, and we turn on the stress

responses in our body.

We lose momentum, and we burn ourselves right out.

So maybe we go from eating fast food every meal to following a really strict meal plan, which has us cooking everything from scratch, which we don't know how to do or don't like to do, or we go from never moving our body to starting an intense 90-minute HIIT workout program, or we go from doing no meditation to making ourselves meditate for 30 minutes a day.

These are all ceilings.

We are shooting for the stars before we've even got our rocket ship started, and we crash and we burn.

Now, we can eventually reach the stars, but we have to start out with the floor first.

Remember, a floor is a tiny, tiny version of a step.

How do we know if it's a floor?

BJ Fogg, in his book *Tiny Habits*, teaches that you'll know it's a floor if it takes you one minute or less to do, or if it's a starting step.

So let me give you an example.

Let's go back to our pretend goal of running a marathon, okay?

A floor would be to run to your mailbox and back.

Now, unless you have an extremely long driveway or your mailbox is down the street, it should take you one minute or less to run to your mailbox and back.

You could also implement a starting step as a floor instead.

So this starting step could be just putting on your running clothes, or maybe it's even just lacing up your running shoes.

A starting step is a prompt that initiates an action.

If I'm going to tie up my running shoes, I'm most likely going to follow through with the run.

Now, when you're creating a floor, I want you to think small and then go even smaller.

Now be really careful because a lot of us are going to get hung up on our floor being too easy or not big enough to make a difference.

It will.

I promise you.

Do you remember the analogy of the Magic Penny from last week?

All of it is compounding.

All of those small and simple things, all of the floors, are adding up to be big things.

If we start out too big, if it's too hard to keep going, it's going to be too hard to be consistent with our actions.

But if we start out extremely small, with a tiny step, with a floor, we are going to keep going, we're going to keep doing it, and all of that action is going to compound over time.

As a bonus, we are going to feel accomplished, which rewards our brain, and when the brain is rewarded, it creates a habit that eventually is going to run on autopilot.

Okay, so here's the last thing that I want to teach you about floors and ceilings.

In between the floor and the ceiling, there's a lot of space, right?

Now, let's pretend that in between the floor and the ceiling, we have a ladder.

And on this ladder, obviously, like all ladders, there's rungs or steps going from the floor up to the ceiling.

Each day, you may want to stay with the floor, which is your minimum, your small and simple starter step, or your one minute or less task.

But other days, you may feel more motivated and excited, and you may want to go up a step, or two steps, or three steps towards the ceiling.

And that's great.

But on the days that you don't have as much motivation or as much energy, maybe you're on vacation, maybe your kids are home from school that day, maybe you just are not feeling well, you will always still have the support a floor brings.

A floor, which makes it possible to do something no matter what, and to keep the consistency going, which in turn makes it a habit, something you don't really have to think about, your autopilot brain just takes over and you pretty much just go through the motions.

This floor supports you in your efforts and gets you closer and closer and closer to your goal.

This concept has been life changing for me.

Knowing that it's okay to just do the bare minimum, and if I feel like I want to do more, I totally can.

But if I don't, a floor is still going to get me to my goal.

I no longer have to sprint and wear myself out.

I no longer have to muster the energy to do all of those hard things.

I can set small and simple steps, and I'm still going to reach my goal, and maybe even faster than if I was sprinting there.

Because I won't exhaust myself, I won't be triggering my nervous system, or feel unaccomplished and give up and quit and then have to start again.

A floor is the way to go.

Now a floor may feel stupidly small, and yet it is extremely, extremely powerful because it allows you to actually take action and to take it consistently.

And it is consistency, not perfection, that creates results.

Remember all those tiny, small, simple floors are adding up and compounding into big, great results.

If you want to dive deeper into this, into floors and ceilings, check out episode 54.

It was called Habit ABCs.

I will put a link in the show notes, too, to that.

I talk more about this concept of floors and ceilings.

Alright, one last thing.

If you find yourself having a hard time sticking to something, it's probably not a floor.

You need to make it smaller and then make it even more smaller.

I want you to make it so small that it seems like it's too small.

That's how you know you have a floor.

And having a floor means you have support.

It's what makes achieving your goal possible.

Alright, that is it for floors and ceilings today.

As always, I am here cheering you on, and I will see you next time.

Thank you for listening to The Joyful You Podcast.

If you'd like additional support, I am currently accepting private clients.

You can direct message me or click the Work With Me link on my website, and we'll set up a call to discuss what it would look like to work together.

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