

Is Weight Loss Really the Right Goal for You?

This is the TD Fitness podcast with Coach T, episode number 75.

Welcome to the TD Fitness podcast, giving you ways to live a healthy lifestyle without giving up the things that make life worth living. And now your host, certified health coach and personal trainer, Coach T.

Hey guys, welcome back to the TD Fitness podcast. This is Coach T and this is episode number 75. Let me tell you that the most popular health related goal in America may not be the right goal for you. And the truth is that I could replace the word's health goal with just about anything, right? The most popular diet may not be the right diet for you. The most popular workout plan may not be the right one for you. The most popular city to live in may not be the right city for you, the most popular car may not be the right car for you. And when I make those statements, they're not really that surprising, are they? But when I say that the most popular health related goal, which in my experience is weight loss may not be the right goal for you, I get pushed back because many people would disagree. They'd say, "No, no, I do need to lose weight." And that may be true, but should weight loss be your goal? That's the question.

So let me provide a couple of non-fitness related examples maybe to serve as, to shed some light on what I'm trying to get across here. So let's say you have a five year old son and at school they learn about flying kites. So he comes home, he's like, "Daddy, daddy, can we get a kite? I want to learn how to fly a kite." So you're excited about it, you know, as a parent. But the week's pretty busy so you have to put it off until the weekend. So Saturday rolls around and the weekends are busy too but you carve out some time to go to the store, you take some time, pick out a nice big colorful kite, you bring it home. And you're thinking, you know, "I know we have a lot to do today, but I want to try to fit this in." Right about that time your son says, "Daddy, can we go fly our new kite now?"

And you say, "Well son, you know we were going to your friend's birthday party here in about 15 or 20 minutes, so why don't we wait until we get back from the birthday party and it's going to be a little bit nicer then. The wind will be, it'll be a little bit windier. It will be just a great time to go fly your kite after we come back from the birthday party." And what happens? Anybody with a five year old knows that a melt down ensues. Why is that? Well, it's because your experience as a parent and as an adult allows you to take the longer term view, but your five year old is not equipped to do that. Let me give you another example. This one's an example from work, so and the same thing happens with adults, right? So I'm in a position where I have the opportunity to mentor those in my career field who are younger than I am or who haven't been in the career field as long as I have.

And it's not uncommon for them to say, you know, "I'd like to just stay here doing the job that I'm comfortable with. The job that I enjoy, my family's comfortable here, I like what I'm doing." And I'll be honest, you know, at that point in my career, I actually said this the very same thing. But now having been through it and looking back, I know that it's important for these young professionals to go out and acquire a breadth of experience to set them up with more options for themselves and for their families in the long run. So again, my experience allows me to take the longer term view. So what are these two examples have to do with weight loss and healthy living? Well, again, the goal that is most often stated is the goal to lose weight. So you look for a diet or you hire a trainer or you seek counsel from a health

coach maybe, or you look into medical procedures all in an effort to lose weight because that is your goal.

But honestly, there are a ton of ways to lose weight. Some are harder than others, some are more expensive than others. Some take longer than others. For example, when it comes to diet, you can take two ends of the spectrum. You can starve or deprive yourself or cut out certain types of food from your diet. You can remove carbs from your diet for example, you could cut back on your intake altogether, that's one extreme. Or you could be less extreme and just cut back slightly on your intake and eat smarter all around. Taking that extreme approach will help you drop weight. Taking the less extreme approach will also allow you to lose weight, but at a slower pace. So which do you choose? Do you choose to fly your kite right now or do you take the longterm approach? Now, what's tricky here is that you may think that you can have the best of both worlds, that you can have your proverbial cake and eat it too. That you can get the rapid weight loss and maintain the ability to keep that weight off over time.

But I'll tell you that the statistics show that rapid weight loss does not work in the long run. Why is that? It's because you haven't learned how to maintain a healthy weight in a sustainable fashion. Years ago, I read a story about a personal trainer, very well intentioned personal trainer who intentionally gained a lot of weight and he did it to put himself in the shoes of those that he was seeking to serve. So he ate poorly, sat around a lot, you know, didn't exercise and ended up putting on quite a bit of weight. I can't remember exactly how much it was, but he wanted to, you know, get a sense for what it was like to move around being larger, to try to go about those activities of daily life, you know, with having to carry excess weight around. To see what it felt like on himself and his joints. So again, very well intentioned. And then after doing that, after experiencing it, he was able to lose all of that weight and get back down to the weight that he started, right?

He was able to maintain or reincorporate those healthy habits that he was used to, because he was a personal trainer, right? And he knew what he needed to do. So the criticism though was that while he may have gained that weight and then lost that weight, he still really didn't gain an appreciation for what it takes someone who is severely overweight to lose extra weight, because he was already accustomed to practicing those healthy habits. The hard part, again, isn't necessarily in losing the weight. Just about anybody can help you do that, the hard part is living a life in a way that breeds health, practicing healthy habit's day to day. Living in a way that allows you to maintain a healthy weight. From a longterm perspective, going on a crash diet or practicing those extreme dietary habits, I call them, even electing to have surgery, it's typically not a longterm fix.

One study that I found in researching for this episode showed that 50% of those who have bariatric surgery actually regained that weight within five years. I also read that a large percentage of dieters regain weight as well and part of the reason is that any quick fix or overnight solution doesn't necessarily set you up for success in the long run. In some ways it's akin to go into the slot machine, you know, spinning the wheel and winning on that first spin and then thinking that you can come back anytime to that machine anytime you need money. Right? That's just, that doesn't make sense. It's like, you know, I have a six year old and I still remember vividly the first time I took her fishing. It would have been like her catching a huge fish the very first time she threw her line in the water, which didn't happen by the way. But first time in the water she catches a huge fish and then she thinks that she can live on fish for the rest of her life, but that's not true.

And the reason that these aren't viable approaches is that you haven't learned a repeatable proven process, so it's not sustainable. So sure you can drop weight fast, but is that what you want or do you want to live healthier? Is your goal to lose weight or is it to maintain a healthy

weight? Because if you lose weight, that doesn't necessarily mean that you know how to maintain a healthy weight. However, if you learn how to maintain a healthy weight, understanding weight loss is a part of that knowledge. So what I'm offering here is that many people are asking the wrong question. That question being, how do I lose weight? Or what's the quickest way for me to lose weight? But what I want to point out here is that we often get caught up in this weight loss goal when what we really need is a quality check on our habits, because incorporating healthy habits leads to healthy behaviors and healthy actions, and those add up to a healthy way of living. And you'd be hard pressed to find someone with healthy habits and a healthy lifestyle who continues to gain weight.

So I'll ask again, should weight loss really be your goal? And to be fair, to provide both sides of the argument here, there are times when weight loss should be your number one goal. It should be a priority, there are certainly times for that. I understand that as a trainer and coach. For example, if your size or being severely overweight or obese is preventing you from performing normal activities of daily life, the ADL as we call them, then yes, weight loss should be your primary goal. If you have diabetes or high cholesterol that has sprung about because of a lot of excess weight that you're carrying, then okay, weight loss should probably be your goal. But again, that's not everyone, okay? That's what I'm trying to get across here. So what I want to do here is address the common misconception that the goal to healthier living should always be to lose weight. As I say in my fit life program, weight loss is a byproduct of healthy living.

Now I'll tell you that I was inspired to dive into this topic because just recently I've, it seems that I've gotten a number of questions and had a number of conversations about weight loss and living healthier, and the problem is that we often confuse the two. And the reason we confuse the two is, because most decisions in life are about balancing those short term results with longterm change. Right? When you think about it, that's what a lot of decisions boil down to. And I'll be honest, you know, as a health coach, that's what I deal with a lot. And it's an education process to help people understand that small gradual changes over time will lead to a way of life that allows you to live the way that you want. You know, I call it the pizza delivery versus the firetruck dilemma. Think about it. When you order a pizza and the delivery driver pulls into your driveway, he pulls in head first, right? He doesn't back in. That's because the goal in that case is short term. That's to get the pizza to this customer as quickly as possible.

But compare that to how fire trucks are parked at the fire station. They back in because they're thinking about the next call when they have to leave on a moment's notice, they can't take time to back out in the case of an emergency. So it's forward looking. It's a forward looking longer term approach than that of a pizza delivery guy. It's weighing what's important now versus thinking about the future. And decisions in life are a constant balance between short term satisfaction and long term gratification. You choose what's most important in every aspect of your life. So my goal here is to encourage you to think about the long term and to let that inform how you approach your short term solution. One person I worked with years ago actually put it more simply than I ever have. And he said, "You know, I didn't gain this weight overnight so I shouldn't expect to lose it over night either." I know that that approach takes patience and it takes trust, but I want what's best for you and it's important to consider the long term so that you can set yourself up for success.

So I'm going to shift gears here and talk about how I personally approach this as a health coach, because my message has to be a lot clearer, I feel, than it has been in the past. You know, as I said before, you can change your diet and depending on how extreme you go, it's entirely possible to lose weight quickly. You can opt for weight loss medical procedure and drop weight that way, you can hire just about any personal trainer to help you with quick weight loss. And if that's what you asked for, that's what they're going to give you. Again, just

about any trainer will do that. But the reason that I became a health coach is, because I saw the value in healthy living over the long term, not just short term goal achievement. And as I said, any trainer can help you lose weight. But I didn't want to be just any trainer. And if you're listening to this or you're watching it, you know that here on the TD Fitness podcast, I talk a lot about habits and about lifestyle.

And that's because I feel like you deserve much more than a quick fix that you can get just about anywhere. You deserve more than an approach that dumbs down the process to, here, lose weight. Because those lose weight fast ads are promises that appeal to everyone, but you're not everyone. You're someone, your someone with unique needs and your someone who deserves to learn how to live healthy. That's much different than lose weight now. So as I said, you can hire just about anyone. So if you're looking for just about anyone, then I can recommend Google or your local fitness club. But again, I can't strive to be just about anyone. My goal isn't to get you to drop weight overnight. I'm here when you're ready to help you learn how to live a healthier life. So hopefully that doesn't turn you off, but rather I hope it changes your outlook and maybe gives you a different perspective. That's really what I wanted to get across here.

I want you to be honest with yourself about what you want and what you need, and I want you to hold your fitness professionals and dietitians accountable. Don't settle for the quick fix solution. Insist on a longterm approach to healthy living and if you are currently looking for health coaching in that regard, just drop me a note, coacht@tdfitness.net. The latest iteration of my fit life program just concluded and I'm opening up a couple of slots into my personal health coaching program. So maybe you've been wondering how to incorporate healthy habits into your life or maybe you want to take that journey with an accountability partner and work together. That's always a great approach. So again, when you're ready, just let me know.

I'm going to conclude with a quote from Amy Porterfield, you know, my fit lifers are familiar with this one because it's in the very first module of the program. But she says, "People quit because it takes too long to see results, but the truth is that learning the process is the real result." I don't want you to be discouraged when the so called quick fix solutions don't pan out in the long run. Instead, I want you to invest in learning how to live a healthy life because that will pay long term dividends. Thank you all for listening, Coach T, signing out.