

This week, we will be talking about barriers to *lifestyle change*, the most common barrier that I hear in my practice when it comes to making any kind of change. Logistics can be just as important if not more important than the actual plan. We can get the greatest dietary advice or the latest exercise routine, but if we don't address the logistics of getting it done, **the how, the when, the where**, then the best laid plans are useless. One of the most important aspects of logistical planning is addressing our challenges and our barriers. We all have challenges and barriers to implementing something new. Not to mention that when we begin something new, we immediately put up barriers. It's our way of keeping ourselves safe, preventing the risk of failure and preserving the status quo. Even if that is not our choice, and even if that is not aligned with our true goals and desires for ourselves.

Sometimes, these barriers are obvious, and sometimes they're subconscious. Sometimes these barriers are real, other times they are perceived as barriers without truly being so, and sometimes it's not even clear. But ultimately, our barriers need to be addressed. They need to be named and addressed, so that they don't get in the way. By anticipating our challenges, we can troubleshoot them in advance. We will be prepared with a game plan when they actually arrive.

Let's discuss the most common barrier. Can you guess it? What is the most common barrier that we all stumble upon? It's **Time**, time is always a barrier to change. No matter who you are, a student, a homemaker, a business owner, an executive, a caretaker, everyone is pressed for time. I frequently hear, I don't have time to eat breakfast, I don't have time to cook, or pack a lunch. I don't have time to exercise. I don't have time to get more sleep. I don't have time to meditate, to read, to spend time in nature, or to take time off to care for myself, right? Nobody has time ever. But what we don't recognize is that time is actually in our control. Making time for our own care is a matter of priorities, values, and boundaries.

As I share in *Hungry for More*, time for our own care does not exist. Time does not exist, it is created. Time is created when we make ourselves a priority. Time is created when we value ourselves. Time is created when we set boundaries around what is asked of us, by the outside world, by our work, by our parents, and by our kids and our spouses. Most importantly, what we ask of ourselves. Time is created when we believe that we are worthy of the investment that it takes to care for ourselves. But when we focus on the lack of time, when we focus on scarcity of time, we really miss direct and shift our focus from the true limitation. It is the inability to prioritize ourselves and make time for our fundamental needs. In doing this, we really disempower ourselves from the opportunity to make ourselves a priority. Making time is not a matter of scarcity. It is a matter of setting boundaries.

I want to share a personal example. I wonder if you all can relate so many years ago I was a young physician working in the hospital and I had young kids. Mom or even dad who has other responsibilities, which we all do, working or not can probably relate to this. At the time, I was really the queen of no time. I was working long hours. I had family obligations to my parents and to others. And of course, my time was strapped for the kids. I did not think I had time to exercise. I didn't have time to journal or be mindful. I didn't really have time to do anything for

myself or by myself. But then all of a sudden, I would get an email from the school for their holiday party. The email would be a signup, genius, to bring plates or forks or meals. Guess who found time to make finger sandwiches, or time to make homemade lockers? Me, I'm sure you all have your own examples, right? When you're pressed for time, or even if you're pressed for time, if something arises that you feel really needs your attention, you'll make that time for the other person or the other thing. But often, we are not part of that equation. I don't want to downplay the value of being there for others, and of course, being there for your children. However, when we constantly dismiss ourselves in the service of other people and other things, no matter how noble or important those things are, we will never set the boundaries that make us a priority. Something or someone will invariably always take precedence over our own well being. Making time for ourselves then is really a mindset. There will never be time if we do not create time. We will only find time for ourselves and for our well being when we see ourselves worthy.

Now that we've addressed the mindset, let's tackle the more practical aspects of time management. We are literally going to find time. You can use a daily planner, if you have one, or download a timesheet from the internet. Something that will give you a log of your hours and minutes in the day. I recommend finding something that will divide up your day to a 15 minute time slot. What we're going to do is record in great detail our daily activities and schedule. Again, it's really important here to be as detailed as you can to the hour and even to the minute. When do you wake up in the morning? How long do you snooze before you actually get out of bed? drink your coffee or get to the door? What are you really doing during that time? Maybe you're checking your emails, maybe you're scrolling through social media, then take a look at what your day is looking like, what do you do between errands, work meetings, zoom meetings, or drop off with the kids? What about the end of the day? How long are you actually watching TV or again on your phone before you turn off the lights? In order for this exercise to work again, I'm going to reiterate that you need to be really detailed in tracking your activities. I suspect that if you do this, you'll really be surprised by what you notice. You will literally find time. Now circle those times in your timesheet. Those times that are kind of squandered away. Doing things that you didn't even realize that you were doing mindless activities and start to fit in some of those things that you've been hoping to do. Now, here's an important tip. Don't wait for a huge chunk of time. Don't wait for the perfect 40 or 60-minute time slot in which to fit in your exercise. Meet yourself where you are at this moment. Maybe you only have 15 minutes of time to get in a brisk walk. Or maybe you have five minutes of time to pack or prepare a lunch the night before so that you have something the next day to eat. Meet yourself where you were at this moment so that you can initiate that thing which you desire for yourself. Once you have created this space you have created an opportunity. Taking account of your time in this way is the first step in taking back your power. And taking back your power is the first step in truly allowing yourself to live in alignment with the goals and values that you have for yourself.

My tip for this week is reconsider your mindset around. Let's shift from a mindset of lack or scarcity, to a mindset of abundance. Know that time is not just there, it doesn't exist for yourself. It needs to be cultivated, it needs to be created. And that happens when you put yourself back

on your priority list. When you acknowledge that you are a priority, and you have a value. That you deserve the time that it takes, and the investment that it takes, for your own self-care.

I truly hope that you enjoyed this episode and that it helps in some way to take back your time and take back your power.