Dr Mike T Nelson: [00:00:00] Welcome back to the Flex Diet podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Mike T. Nelson. On this podcast, we talk about all things to increase muscle performance, improve your body composition, all without destroying your health in a flexible framework. Today, from Prosper Nutrition Coaching, I've got Jennifer Broxterman.

She is a registered dietitian, and I first got to meet her finally in person. And the super coach summit this past August, she gave a great talk there. I was able to attend also was on a nutrition panel, which was super fun. And I wanted to have her on here so we can geek out over nutrition coaching.

So we talked all about everything from just the nutrition coaching philosophy, kind of the pros and cons of macro accounting. And then even into, I could say, more of the mindset of exploring what is a [00:01:00] client's past, how do you have good conversations with clients, making sure you keep curiosity in your coaching, which I think does make it better for both the coach and for the client.

And at the end, she gave us an awesome metaphor regarding a toothbrush, which you definitely want to hang out and listen for. This podcast is brought to you by Tecton Ketone Esters. So if you want to get into a state of ketosis within about 10 to 20 minutes, and have a ketone drink that tastes pretty good, if you've ever had any of the ketone esters on the market, most of them don't taste very good at all.

Like, tasting bad, I would say, is almost a compliment. Like, some of the ones I've had are, Extremely bad. But this one's actually quite good. I like it. And because it's a ketone ester, it is able to make it through digestion and increase your blood levels [00:02:00] of ketones relatively fast and to pretty significant level.

So check them out below. I like using them primarily at the end of the day for some cognition bump. Or if you're doing a longer period of fasting definitely seems to help with that too. So you can use the code DRMIKE to save some money. Full disclosure, I am a scientific advisor and an ambassador to them there.

And we also have Element, my other favorite beverage. If you're looking for a great electrolyte, drink that you can add to water and it tastes really good. So go to the link below and I've been using them now for, oh man, probably almost over three years. I typically put one packet, my little one liter container of water here and my goal for myself and for most clients is to consume one of those in the morning and one of [00:03:00] those later in the day.

The assumption here is that Yeah, you're consuming mostly a whole food diet. If you are living on a ton of processed foods, then you probably don't need more electrolytes and you definitely don't need a lot more sodium. But for most people who are following decent nutrition, I found it's been super beneficial.

If you want more content from myself, you can check out my newsletter. We'll have a link down below via the website. This is probably where 90 plus percent of the content goes out. So make sure to hop on there. So thank you so much for listening to the podcast and enjoy this nutrition coaching conversation with Jennifer Brocksterman.

How are you doing today, Jen?

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Great. I'm so excited to get to talk to you again after we met up at Coach Catalyst. Perfect.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah, it was a great event. I know you did a great presentation there. How'd you get hooked up with [00:04:00] those guys?

So Trevor and Cain.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): internet friends forever. And then you realize you've never met your internet friends in real life. That was a little bit with Trevor and Kane. So I was looking for a habit based nutrition app to use with my own clients and was shopping around different services. And the reason I went with them was a hundred percent because they're awesome human beings and their level of customer service.

And that's the way I run my small business. And, like game respects game, like respects and I just got such good energy from the two of them that I signed up and I've been friends with them ever since via using them for customer support.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Well, that's awesome. Yeah. Shout out to those guys that coach catalyst, which are great.

Yeah, very similar. I ended up meeting Trevor, God, six years ago, something like that at a seminar and I was presenting there and just started talking to him. He's Hey, yeah, we got this new app and stuff. And I'm like, Oh, where are you from? He's I live in Minnesota. I'm like, Hey, so do I. And yeah.

And so like the FlexDiet cert I have, obviously you have a [00:05:00] certification. Once they've gone through the certification, it'll drop like all the

little 40 action items into the Coach Catalyst app and they can drag and drop and makes everything super easy for it. So,

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): yeah, I love it too. Same thing. I have a certification that my nutrition coaches go through and then they get plug and play nutrition coaching programs in that Coach Catalyst app because they just made it so easy for us to deliver the information that way.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. And that's one thing I've recommended is Just if coaches are new, the biggest mistake I made was thinking I had to figure everything out on my own, which you can do, but it's a long process. You piss off a lot of clients. It's a pain in the butt. Well, not really recommend it. I think if I would go back in time now, I would just buy somebody's system.

Obviously both of us sell systems for nutrition and just learn how to do it really good and get really good at it. Start building up your business. And then. Hey, if you want to add a few more things from other people [00:06:00] or whatever, I think at that point, yeah, you've earned the right to do that.

But I think just leveraging somebody else's system is, it seems so simple, but yet I think that message still gets lost a lot of times.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): One of my favorite quotes to play off of that is I always say, success leaves clues. And I think you'll agree, the best coaches we meet when we're at those conferences presenting on stages are the ones who never stop learning.

And they're just like, who's smarter than me, who's a little bit further down the train tracks than I am. How can I, download their brain, download their learned wisdom and lived experience faster. And then that boosts their business up a little bit quicker. Where that coach is like. I've taken my level one cert of whatever, I'm done for life.

They've got a lot of hard learning in front of them to, sort through the lessons of being not only a coach, but a small business owner.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah, especially if you're running your own business, you have the whole business aspect on all that too, because yeah, shocker, it's it's a business, so you have to do business stuff.

And then today we're also talking [00:07:00] about, do you use a counting macros based approach? When would you use it? When would you not? I think.

I think still in the industry, there's, if I were to pick a rough division, I would say it's the macro counting people versus the non macro counting people. And some people are like, well, it's all calories and calories out.

And if you just count your macros better, everything works out. And then the other counter argument is, well, some people maybe don't have the time, maybe they don't have the skillset and maybe they don't need to learn it. Maybe they don't need that level of detail. What are your thoughts on the counting macros versus not counting macros?

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): What's so funny is I've been in both camps and I'll maybe tell you both

Dr Mike T Nelson: of my own business. So yeah.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): And I'm not, I've tried not to like, say like only one way is right. But there's definitely one way I skew a little bit more towards and I'll explain why that is. So when I started as a brand new nutrition coach, I did what I thought nutrition coaches were supposed to do.[00:08:00]

So I was a macro meal plan. Let me give you a template. Great. you counting your calories because, the truth is what, what gets done. I thought I could be a really supportive coach and really enthusiastic and hold these accountability check ins, but as a business owner, when I started to actually evaluate what was happening, There was this three to six month sort of expiry date of that type of approach.

And either two things were happening. Either clients who weren't thriving with macros, they started to ghost. They wouldn't respond to check in messages. They start canceling follow up appointments. They start putting their head in the sand, being like, Oh, I don't want to meet with you yet because I've been off track.

Let me get on track. Change

Dr Mike T Nelson: mode is what I call it.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Totally. Totally. So that started to happen a lot with my macro clients or the opposite. I actually coached myself out of a job because there wasn't anything fresh and new really happening in the nutrition coaching sessions. And it was like, Hey, what's [00:09:00] going well, let's review your numbers.

Okay. Where are you struggling? Let's review in the numbers. What do you want to work on next? And it became just so robotic and repetitive that they're like, no, I'm good. You taught me what I needed to know. I know what numbers I need to hit. You know what? I'll call you if I need more support down the road, but I'm good for right now.

And so either way, when my initial nutrition package was coming up for renewal, I remember as a new coach, I started to sweat. Being like, Oh, are they either ostrich mode avoiding me or do they feel like they know enough and they don't need my help? And I had this come to Jesus moment where, you know, when you're in the right place at the right time and the right hallway, having the right conversation.

Well, at the time I was a university professor in our local foods and nutrition program. And I bumped into a colleague who was asking me like, Hey, how are things going at your nutrition, private practice? I was like, pretty good. But, this is the problem I'm really experiencing. And at the time, I did not have a super [00:10:00] in depth understanding of what motivational interviewing was.

In fact, if you were to ask me back then, I thought it was like, you like yeah, motivate, cheer the person on what the heck is this? And so she said, I'm currently doing a research study. For personal trainers, health coaches, nutrition coaches addiction counselors, basically anyone who's in the behavior change coaching field.

And we're running a pilot program to test just motivational interviewing strategies over the more didactic models of I'm the expert, let me tell you what to do. And she's I have a couple of spots left for enrollment. If you want to participate, but here's the kicker. I got assigned to the motivational interviewing group.

So I had to agree that for a one year period, I had to leave my old tools behind, which was macros, meal plans, didactic coaching. And I had to follow asking powerful questions and gamification and coaching exercises that I was learning. And then they were [00:11:00] following our financial and client. results. So how are the clients doing and then how was the health of the business doing?

I'm so glad I got assigned and randomized to that particular group. I made so much more money that year. I started to actually get a wait list of clients wanting to sign up and work with me. And of course, I still have the tools of macros and meal plans in my toolkit as a coach. But now that I have even more

knowledge of how to coach properly, and I use a lot of habit based coaching, behavior change psychology.

Am I motivational in reviewing? I do a lot better than I did in my early days when I was in the hardcore macro only camp. So I'm not hating on macro coaches, but I was very grateful to have my eyes opened up to just some new skills and strategies to be a better coach.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. I started off just, thinking, Oh, nutrition coaching.

I know a fair amount about physiology. This is easy. And I remember the first couple of clients I had. I'm [00:12:00] like, okay, just write down everything you eat. Alright, we're looking at it. Guy comes in. Cool man, alright. Looks like you eat a sleeve of Oreos everyday. He's yeah, I do, I feel bad about it.

And I'm thinking, all right, would you agree for your fat loss goals, not eating a sleeve of Oreos is a good thing. It's yes, agree. All right, so let's not eat the Oreos. Okay, cool. Everyone who's done coaching can predict how this is gonna go. Guy comes in next week. So we're just doing once a week meetings.

This is in person stuff. And he's yeah, still eating all the Oreos, man. I'm like, ah, we decided Oreos are not good, right? Oreos are bad. Don't eat the Oreos. Yeah. This goes on for six weeks. I'm not very bright and he's eating more Oreos and he feels worse about it. And I'm feeling frustrated going, I don't know what the hell is going on.

And then I finally decided I'm like, okay, so why would he be eating more Oreos? And at the time I started taking a neurobiology classes just for fun

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: because

Dr Mike T Nelson: I realized, and I had two other clients where all the same things were [00:13:00] happening. And I fast, quickly realized that. I shouldn't have been an exercise physiologist.

I've not studied nutrition. I should have been a freaking psychologist. I picked the wrong field

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: So

Dr Mike T Nelson: enrolled in neurobiology classes. One of the things I learned was that your brain is very visual So if I say don't think of a pink

elephant You think of a pink elephant, even though you can cognitively, associate the negative.

And so this poor guy and other clients, I'm berating them about Oreos, but subconsciously all they're thinking about is Oreos.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: So

Dr Mike T Nelson: I came back and said, all right, you can eat as many Oreos as you want. He's I said, but you have to eat 40 grams of protein before you have any Oreos. Really? But I can use as many Oreos as I want then.

I'm like, yep, we're just going to track protein. Here's what protein looks like. Here's some sources, blah, blah, blah. Yeah. And he only ate half a sleeve of Oreos. Then he only ate a third of a sleeve of Oreos. Cause I realized the whole time, I'm telling him not to do something he's Thinking about it.

So I went from that and then I went to doing the [00:14:00] hardcore macros for a while and then ran the same problems you had. People either be super compliant and I still use macros to this day, just depending on the client. But when I did the flex that I had cert ended up trying to figure out what is more of a habit based thing.

So people don't have to count macros. And then also, as a registered dietitian, some states counting macros and giving someone a meal plan is no bueno. It

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): gets you in trouble. Yeah. We'll

Dr Mike T Nelson: get in trouble for that. And I didn't want to be one of the people saying, Oh, here's your solution to all this, especially as cause you have a certification.

You have people from all over the world taking your certification. I don't know what the requirements are in a lot of different places, even in the US. So yeah. So now I do A hybrid approach. And I've literally, I just did a call last week and I'm like I'll do whatever works better for you.

Some people really want to know exactly what they're doing. They have very detailed goals and that works for the life. Cool. Let's do that. We'll keep track of it. Other people are like, I don't even know what you're talking about. I don't want to track anything. Great. We'll do more of a habit based approach.

I think you can do [00:15:00] both and be useful.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah, I think what you just hit on is the testament of really good coaching. What you're describing is just being client centered. And so the best coaches I always, I very much think in metaphors and games and storytelling. So I think about being a good coach is a good general contractor.

And so it's like sitting down to me like this. Describe to me your dream house. Do you want to live in a log cabin by the lake? Do you want to live in a tiny home? Do you want a mega mansion? Do you want a beachfront house? And with having all these tools and meeting with the client and being like, describe your dream, and then I'm going to use the different tools I have to go build what you want versus just being like, I solve every problem with a hammer and you're going to get one type of house to live in.

And so I think it's not bashing one coaching tool or style over another. I think the most skilled coaches have really good listening skills. They have really good problem solving skills with their client. They understand their client almost maybe better than the client understands themself. And then that way they can lead the client from being [00:16:00] stuck with good intentions to unstuck with momentum and consistency and follow through because they're like, well, here's the next solution

Here's the next tool to help get you further up that path that you're trying to climb. And I always use the metaphor of a mountain, which is why I have them over my head. Nice. And I always am like, I'm your Sherpa. So I go up and down this mountain all the time with people. Now there's some proven paths.

I know that I can get you to the top a little bit faster with dialing in things like protein and vegetables and sleep and water and stress management. But if you want to climb the mountain on the vegan, vegetarian, plant based side, cool. I'll get you up that path. If you want to go a little bit more macro or hardcore carnivore, like sure, we can figure out your path that way.

And so my job as a Sherpa isn't to go, this is the. Only way up because there's a lot of different ways I can, climb my way to the top with the client, but I also have to go at the client's pace and then appreciate that different clients come in with different levels of pack weight and some have a lot of trauma.[00:17:00]

They've had a lot of dieting failed history. They have maybe disordered eating in their background. Which is different than someone coming in with maybe a

healthier relationship with food or a little more time, a little more energy, maybe a little bit less family responsibilities, work commitments that they can maybe shoot up the mountain a little bit faster.

And so that's learned, taught me to be a much more patient coach where I'm not like, come on, you're supposed to be here by now. Wherever they are, it's the right spot on the mountain. And we're just going to take it a step at a time at their pace.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. And then also I think the advanced level is showing them.

Hey, this might be an easier path. So if we take the example of a vegan, the first question I'll ask them is this for ethical reasons, like a religious reason, or do you think it's healthier? Tell me why. Right. And if they're like, Oh bro, it's like the healthiest thing to do.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): I watched this Netflix documentary.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. Game changers all day. Like in the back of my head, I'm thinking, okay, I'm going to try to educate you and see if you're open to another path, but that's probably not going to happen right away. If it's, part of the [00:18:00] religion or ethical reasons. Okay, cool. Like we'll work with that, but then what are the limits?

So, for guys, like if. If you're a vegan, will you consider using a rice protein supplement? What everybody has, they're lying in the sand and figuring out what that is and presenting them options that may be, right on the edge. It's Hey, this might be a convenience option for you.

Is that good or bad? Like you said, with the Sherpa, like we're just trying to find a little bit easier path within the, constraints of where you're operating. I'm not going to try to. Blow your constraints and your belief system out of the water on day one, because that's never going to go well.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah. And I think you have to earn the trust from your client where you give them a suggestion, they see some progress. And then again, it's not to change your client's mind, but just like you said, to illuminate, well, there's a couple other options here that might have less friction to still allow you to get to where you want to go faster.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. And back to the motivational intervening, what would, what did you find from that process was the most helpful?

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Oh gosh, do I have to [00:19:00] define it to just one or can I give you just, give me a couple. Okay. So the first exercise that like made me almost hold my head in shame as a coach and was so enlightening is we had to record a video session of us coaching.

And then from the transcript, we had to look at what percentage of the time did we talk versus what percentage of the time did we let our client talk. I was mortified when I got that data back because in my older model, I very much had to control the conversation, what we were going to work on what we were going to talk about next.

And I just watched myself back and was like, I'm not being client centered. At all, even though I think I am with a question here, a question there. So that was the first thing is very simply, we have two ears and one mouth. So think about that ratio in your coaching sessions. We should be listening at least twice as much as maybe we're speaking with the clients.

So that was the first humbling thing I had to learn with motivational [00:20:00] interviewing. The second thing is there's no shame, and using a cheat sheet. So one of the things that we got as part of the research study with it was this like multi page resource of just some of the better questions that they studied and found that got people exploring constraints, finding, obstacles or certain exploring constraints, finding their strengths asking people tough questions when they're stuck, giving them space to explore without pushing.

And so I would just review my cheat sheet of questions before I sat down with new clients or clients I was going to follow up with. And I'd always go into the appointment with a couple of questions in mind that I thought could really spark a conversation and get them talking. And so just this intentional practice and year of asking better questions.

Oh my gosh. If you ask good questions and you get people talking, people will think you're the most brilliant coach in the world. I'm not, it's just, they're hearing themselves think things through. And because it comes from themselves, they feel like [00:21:00] you just pulled the best answer, in the world out of a hat.

But it came from themself. So that was also a really neat thing with motivational interviewing. And then this was partly motivational interviewing.

And I actually, at the time, have CrossFit to thank for this. So my husband and I owned a CrossFit gym for 16 years before we sold it. And I was switching my own fitness to CrossFit.

From very much a follow a boring program in a global gym and do it alone to this sensation or this class idea of make it more fun, make it a little bit gamified, make there more of a community element and a sense of more social support to what you're doing. And so I started to bring elements of playing games and being creative and making it more interesting.

And so that whole repetitive model of let's review your numbers, what's going well. Where are you struggling? The same Oreo conversation over and over. I was starting to add, for lack of a better word, more variety into my coaching because I [00:22:00] was making up games and resources and getting unstuck and stress eating.

And like just cool things to play with in a session. And I brought in this element of just like curiosity and so much more psychology, like so much more behavior change brain coaching and mindset stuff. And I just was having a blast as a coach and I wasn't burning out with the old way, but I would definitely acknowledge that I was a little bit bored after a certain number of sessions with a client.

I was like, what am I going to talk about with them? We've covered protein. We've covered their needs. We've covered their numbers. Like what else is there? And so now I'm 14, 15 years into being a dietitian and I am I'm so excited to go to work, but it's because I'm not trying to control the conversation or keep it to a limited number of topics, there's a lot more variety.

And I don't know if that's for sure a tentative motivational interviewing, but that was one of the things that motivational interviewing started to force me to do way back in those early days.

Dr Mike T Nelson: [00:23:00] Nice. And if anybody hasn't read the original motivational interviewing book I would say on the, Maybe you may agree or disagree on the psychology of change for.

Nutrition coaching. I still think it is probably one of the best books even though you can find the original version for Three dollars you use it or something. It's really cheap boring as hell But yeah, the way they talk. I call it

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): the black bible. That's a good starting point But don't talk like them because they talk like robots.

So you're gonna see. Yes. Oh my god their exact scripts But great starting point.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Extremely useful. Probably the most useful book in that realm I've ever used, so.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah. And if we just like riff a little bit more on motivational interviewing, don't, if you're like new to this, don't think it's this whole big stuffy thing where you have to get it perfectly.

No.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: No.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): My simple definition of motivational interviewing is just stop and ask them more questions, more powerful [00:24:00] questions. And it's not like the clipboard method of okay, more questions. Do you take supplements? Do you drink alcohol? Do you grocery shop? Do you like to cook? Yeah, I guess you're asking questions and you're learning about them, but just stopping to explore of Hey if you look back when you've been most successful in the past, what are some of the things that were,

And I even took it to I'm very much a systems girl when I coach. And so I have now a team of coaches that represent me and my business because we've grown so large in size. And I wanted to recreate the magic of this variety and bouncing around into being able to. Give it to someone else on my team and then wow, another new client in the same way.

And so what I realized is that very first initial assessment is where you can introduce motivational interviewing. And set the tone for the coaching relationship. And so I'm, I am very open to mixing up the questions, but these [00:25:00] three are my most powerful default MI questions when I meet someone new.

Do you want me to share them with you? Yes, that'd be great. Okay. So, So I had to do this because I had one coach screw this up really badly and failure, there's no such thing as failure, there's only feedback. And she was just a new grad and got really nervous and like verbal diarrhea came out of her mouth and the session just went sideways.

So what I did is I wrote down a post it for her. And I put three bullets past, future, anything else. So here's how I open up with a client. I start with, Hey, quick intro. It's so great to meet you expectations. This is how long we have for this session today, but here's what I'm thinking before we start to get into the nutrition coaching part as your coach.

I just want to learn more about you because the better I can understand what you've been through and what your goals are, where you want to take this, that will really help me individualize what we're going to work on. to you and your life and your circumstances right now. So if you're down, here's what I thought we could jump [00:26:00] into.

First, I want to just explore your past a little bit more. If you were to go back and give me the short version of the most important things you think would just be helpful for me as a coach. So what I'm thinking is more, you're eating history and where your struggles have laid with food in the past.

What your exercise habits have been like, did you play sports? Have you liked exercise? Have you not? And I guess any other important life events you've been through, having kids, going off to college big stuff, that's like shape the trajectory of your life. Start with that.

Start with your past and just fill me in. And I just stopped talking and I, start taking notes and not along and acknowledge. And then there's this very natural kind of point where they feel like they've got you up to speed. But here's the cool thing about the past question. I used to do the clipboard.

So I used to do the whole, Hey, Do you drink alcohol? Do you like to cook? Do you take supplements? And it felt like a bad job interview where I was just going through [00:27:00] my list of questions. But when I say, fill me in on your past. I can't tell you, Mike, the things that people have shared with me in confidence in that first meeting.

I'm talking, they were having an affair on their husband and got pregnant with someone else's kid, and they weren't sure yet if they were going to have an abortion or keep the child and leave their partner. I've had people obviously reveal, pretty bad disordered eating in their past. The stressors of their everyday life, the hard stuff that they've been through.

And so by just keeping it so, I don't have a clipboard question of are you cheating on your husband and you're actively pregnant right now and considering keeping the child or not?

Dr Mike T Nelson: I don't have

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): a question for that.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Like a Jerry Springer show. Right.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): That was very much connected to their stress with food right now because they felt like uncomfortable to be at home and cook in the kitchen, and they're not really wanting to be around their significant other.

So like it's mind boggling when you ask the most open ended question. And then it leads to this really nice transition point where, you do a thing like, wow, thank you for [00:28:00] sharing all of that with me. I already feel like I know you so much better. And that backstory, that history really helps me just understand what you've been through.

So you know what? That actually leads me to my next question. If we were to look ahead, just the next six months to a year, and I often call this like Netflix season two we just jump into the second season of of this series. Where would you love to see yourself? What's going to make this a really successful experience for you?

And as your coach, what would really give you the most support from me to help you get there? So I'll say that again, cause I don't say what are your goals and I'll talk about why I don't ask it that way. So if I were to look ahead six months to the year, which I'm timestamping, that's probably how long I'm going to be in your life at a minimum as your nutrition coach.

And if we were to just, arrive. You were there, you're successful. What does that look like? Paint me the scene. What's, what's your definition of success? And as your coach, what do you need from me to really help you get there? Now [00:29:00] I'll get answers like, oh, well, I don't really care about what I weigh on the scale, but I would like to, be a bit leaner, feel more comfortable.

I'm someone that I've already tried weight training. Weight Watchers and Noom and I know what to do, but I'm someone that really needs accountability and I'm a mom with young kids. So, family friendly recipes as my coach, like if you can really help me with dinner ideas to just make it more simple, cause I don't want to be a short order cook cooking for me.

And then my kids eat differently. But notice if I say, Hey, what are your goals? I'll often get a much more pared back answer. Weight loss. I want to weigh this. I want to have more muscle. I want to, compete in this particular race if I'm an athlete and hit a certain time or do well. So I find that if I ask the future question about just tell me your goals, people hold back a little bit more and they give you the safer, More generic answer, but if I say Hey, paint me the picture, what really does success look like for you?

And what do you need for me to help you get there? Now they're actually [00:30:00] telling me what kind of coaching they require. And again, I can be much more individualized. So that's question two. So past future. And then I have one bucket question. That's my catch all. I go anything else. So again, acknowledgement.

Wow. Thanks for sharing that blah, blah, blah. And then I wrap up and I'm like, okay, I feel like now I have a really good sense before we move on to jumping into nutrition coaching. Is there anything else that we missed, that you think is worth me knowing whether that was against lean from your past, we just forgot to talk about or anything coming up.

If you're going on a Disney cruise and you're going to be away for two weeks or you've got a kitchen reno coming up or you're an accountant and your busy season is in two and a half months and you are slammed as an accountant through the tax season. So yeah, is there anything else that we missed?

And the reason I added the anything else is for people that are a little more shy, a little more nervous. Now I've broken the ice with them. And I've started to warm them up and it's a [00:31:00] second sweep of their past or their future. That is probably important for me to know that if they hit that the first time, there's maybe a chance they're going to reveal it.

And that's usually where I'll sometimes get revelations of binge eating, disordered eating stuff, more shame around body image around food. So it's a very subtly disguised question to just get more information that could be helpful. And those are my go to MI questions every time I have a brand new client.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah, I like that. And it's, yeah, It's the same idea you talked about before about getting the client to talk most of the time.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: Yeah.

Dr Mike T Nelson: I made that mistake on assessment calls for quite a while just to see if it's a good fit for coaching. And pretty much any, especially the early calls I did, Yeah, I talked way too much.

So now it's like I have a very It's a system, but yet it's very open ended.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yes. And similar to what you describe it.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. And similar to what you did, I actually took a slide to do some training [00:32:00] for a formal interview process when I worked in a biomed company for a while. So I just adapted that to it.

So I would start with, yeah, okay. Yeah, similar to you said, the goals, but more in the future, trying to get details, trying to give them you can tell like when people just give you the short answer, well, I want to lose weight. Okay, well, why do you wanna lose weight?

What's going on? What are all the things wrapped up in that? And then I just think about in my brain, starting general and then getting specific.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah.

Dr Mike T Nelson: So you can be like, Hey, tell me about your nutrition. And even just paying attention to the wording that they use. Yeah. Oh it's amazing. I am really good with nutrition.

Oh, but you said you wanna do this school, that goal. I'll be like, what did you have for nutrition yesterday? And then try to get more and more specific. 'cause you realize. Nutrition's a weird thing because people are almost, they have this weird thing where they know they want to reach this goal, they know their nutrition's off, but pretty much everyone if you just ask them, how is your nutrition?

Oh, it's good. [00:33:00]

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: It's good. No one really says

Dr Mike T Nelson: it's bad. Or wonderful.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: Yeah. Right?

Dr Mike T Nelson: So again, it's pretty weird. Trying to get specific information, but not, in a leading way, but not following a checklist per se. I just think about them as areas we want to touch on and then try to get them to give as much info and detail as they can.

A

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): hundred percent. Yeah. I know there's so many, if you can just this was one of the, a coaching exercise I had to do when I was in that university research study is they were trying to stretch our brains on asking better questions with more variety. And so we had to sit down and think about five to 10 of our ideal clients and then write at least 50 different questions.

We could ask them. And, you get to 10 really easily, 15, not too hard. And then you're just like, Oh, okay. What else can I ask? Or what's a different way to prod or explore? And so, again, as a coaching exercise for anyone listening. That's a really fun one is, your [00:34:00] avatar, your niche really well.

So some of you might be working more with high performance athletes, maybe some of you more with gen pop clients, some of you more with seniors or teenagers. And so to sit down and be able to ask 50 different questions that would get your ideal client to open up and share a little bit more. It is a very good mental coaching exercise to do to challenge your skill set as a coach.

If you're interested in motivational interviewing.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah, and related to that too, I've even Get people like some of the framework that I operate on is that so for most of the time it's oh Well, you fell first into a birthday cake So therefore the assumption is your air quotes a bad human being because you made a bad choice

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: Yeah, I'll

Dr Mike T Nelson: explain to him that you're Probably looking to again, this is if clients are on the more technical side, like you made a biochemical decision, to feel better at that reason.

Now we can argue if that was the best decision or not, but [00:35:00] tell me what went into that decision process, and some clients will even play what I call the awareness game. It's okay, yeah, there's no foods are good or bad, but do you know what was the reason you had that? And then, just talk about it, because I realize that a lot of times it's almost It's an unconscious thing, and no

one's ever asked them okay, Eh, why do you have three glasses of wine every Friday night?

You're not saying it's good or bad, just, tell me about that. Oh, it's a social situation or whatever, just, I think a lot of it is also getting them to be more aware and conscious of the decisions they're making because it's so easy to be unconscious or semi conscious of that a lot of the time.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): I love that. And you know what? There's a tenet I'm going to pull out from what you just shared. And then I'm going to share a little game back that's like probably in parallel or identical to yours. And what you're hinting at or you're talking around is you're very curious. I can tell as a coach, you get very curious with your clients because you're like, Hey, like I'm not judging.

Just let's [00:36:00] explore that. Let's figure things out. Let's look for patterns and trends and try to connect the dot together as a team. And so I love that because curiosity is such an important tenant of. Great coaching and motivational interviewing. So important for me that actually in my office behind my main desk, I have a sign, three framed words, and it says, be curious, be kind, be honest.

And because we have sort of those words pinned behind us, it does get people to open up a little bit more. So, the game I use, I think it's really similar to your awareness game, is I call it the Setback Tool, or my nickname for it is the Ghost of Christmas Past. So, you know when the Muppets Christmas Carol, there's Scrooge and the ghosts come visiting in the past, the present, the future?

We watch it

Dr Mike T Nelson: every year, actually.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah. So, it's a fun one. I do again to break up the seriousness and the shame and the judgment. This is why I use a lot of gameplay to help with that. And so in the setback tool, what we do is I'm like, okay, imagine we're detectives going back to the crime scene, but we're not going to call you bad for [00:37:00] this.

And we're just going to get all the patterns, the clues, the trends. So were you alone? Were you around other people? Was it in the kitchen? Did it happen in the family room on the couch? Were you watching a show? Were you not watching a show? Were you stressed, mad, tired, bored, lonely? So we're just

going to look at not only what happened in the moment, but also maybe what happened, in the hours or days or weeks leading up to that moment.

So were you sick? Were the kids really sick for a while? You've been stressed out. You've been under a deadline with work whatever it is, we're just going to get, and I'll just bullet journal as they talk me through what's happened. And then what I do is I go. Okay, we're going to have two forks in the road.

The first is a do over. So the ghost of the present is going to zip back to the ghost of the past of four weeks ago, and it's going to whisper in your ear and go, here's what's going to unfold. Can I swear on this podcast?

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: Yeah. Yeah.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): It's going to hit the fan. So we know that this is going to go sideways and this is going to go [00:38:00] sideways and this is going to blow up in your face.

And I'm the ghost of the present. Coming back to the ghost of the past or ghost of the future, coming back to the ghost of the past. And if I were to whisper some advice in your ear. You fill in for me. What is your ghost of the future going to whisper into the ghost of the past? So they might be like, okay, I need to take some pressure off.

I need to delegate better at work. I need to ask for more help from my significant other with blah, blah. You know what? It's my busy season at work. I need to just pay for done and buy the veggie bucket, the chopped up veggies from the grocery store and the pre made salads and the roast history chickens.

Like I just need to buy the easier options and make my life simpler. So the ghost of the future, I'm like, you tell me, whisper the answer of what do you want to prep the ghost of the past? So now they get a do over and the goal is to just improve their score. To not be perfect, but if you were to improve your nutrition score, here's the advice you'd give yourself.

So now, cool, we're informed by the ghost of the [00:39:00] future and the ghost of the past. Now we're going to huddle with the ghost of the present. Today. You can choose your nutrition choices informed with this info. So what can you do today? What can you do this week? That still moves the scorecard along a little bit further.

And so when they look at their like, okay, we have ghosts zipping all over the place. And we've got future ghosts and past ghosts and present ghosts again. It makes them not feel so judged. But what's cool is by giving them the do over, they do actually come up with a better plan of Hey, here's what I could have changed or done differently.

But then it doesn't just leave it as a hypothetical. If you were to do it over, what would you do? It's now I'm calling you to action right now. Like, how do we get a better dinner into your body by the end of the day today? And so that one I find works so well for people who face planting into a sleeve of Oreos and they can't seem to break the cycle.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah, I like that. That's great. Yeah, very similar. I'll do something where [00:40:00] I'll ask them for feedback or ask them, what could you have done different in, X, Y, Z scenario. And then I'll also usually add and I have some ideas. Cause I don't want it to, especially a newer client.

I don't want them to feel like I'm pushing everything back on them, but I also know if I just tell them everything to do and they don't have any

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: feedback, input,

Dr Mike T Nelson: it's just, they're not robots. They have a life. They've got other stuff going on. If they, knew how to do it, they would have done it by now.

So,

Yeah I agree with that. I like that.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Oh, I love that. Yeah. I feel so much alignment. And obviously I felt that way when I got to chat with you at the super coach summit, but it's just so fun. Like for any of those engaged coaches who listen or, healthy eaters who listen to podcasts like this, it's just so fun to be like, okay, yes, I don't have to be so robotic about food.

Cause I think, sometimes when I look on Instagram and social media and you see the coaches that just yell at people to be more [00:41:00] disciplined, it's like, well, people would be if they could be. So let's. Come at it a different way.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah, I often joke that rarely did yelling at somebody just try harder ever solve anything,

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: right?

Yeah,

Dr Mike T Nelson: that's that's the most useless information ever. But yeah, it's also Yeah, I think if people saw like, when I was in South Padre, what I actually ate on a normal day, fitness people would probably be horrified. It's Yeah, I got done kiteboarding for three and a half hours. I had two pop tarts and a beer and I had a protein shake for breakfast cause I was in a hurry and yeah, I had some good meals when I got home, but.

It was far from perfect. It's not what I do every day,

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: but on

Dr Mike T Nelson: certain days,

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: eh,

Dr Mike T Nelson: with that amount of movement I was doing, I don't worry about it either. But I've noticed that in people I've coached who have been successful, like I think they realize they have the [00:42:00] skillset to hit their goals, especially if they've gone up in weight and gone down in weight, that.

it becomes less of an issue. So if they gain a few pounds, they don't tend to freak out about it because they know the action that they need to do. And they have the history of being successful doing that,

Jennifer Broxterman, RD: where I think it's

Dr Mike T Nelson: really hard when clients are new, because the reps that they've accumulated have been in the wrong direction.

And so there's this kind of almost this underlying subconscious thing where, you know, They don't really truly believe that they can do it. So they're, sometimes even borrowing that belief, I think, from the people that they work with. Obviously, there's skill sets, there's things they need to learn along the way.

But I think that's a, it's a hard process because they technically haven't been successful yet. So it's hard to, instill that confidence in them. But once they do

it, Then they're like, Oh, okay. I got it. Oh, I did do this thing. Oh, I'm at the, Oh, I know what to do now in this situation.

Oh, cool. Like [00:43:00] it's cool to see that whole process unfold.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah, I so agree. Can I share one last little metaphor? This is for the new clients for coaches, especially to like very new clients. Cause I think what you're hinting at is this lack of self confidence where they just don't trust themselves.

They're like, Oh, I'm going to fail. Cause I always fail. And that's like my lived experience. Right. So a great example, especially for the clients that are very early. Like the new clients that come off with that all or nothing vibe of I'll wait for the right time, I'll wait for after the holidays, I'll wait for things to settle down.

This one just like cuts through the crap and is honestly something clients tell me 15 years later. They're like, I still remember that you taught me this in the first appointment. So I call it the toothbrush metaphor. So I'm going to ask a question for you, Mike, and anyone who's listening along. Did you brush your teeth last night before you went to bed?

Yep. Me too. Now, I'm going to out myself here. Has there been at least one night in the last year or two where you went to bed and you just missed brushing your teeth? You were maybe tired, you flopped in bed. [00:44:00] Yep. I've also done it. Not a lot, but it's happened. If tonight, for whatever reason, you didn't brush your teeth, how would you problem solve that tomorrow?

Tell me what you'd do.

Dr Mike T Nelson: I would brush my teeth.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah. No, notice. Okay. I'm going to point out some things that in your answer, you got right back on the horse right away. You didn't say, ah, screw it. I've blown it. So if I'm going to be bad, might as well be real bad. This weekend, let's get off track and get my teeth all fuzzy with sugar.

But Monday's when I start again, you're like, nope, tomorrow, next soonest opportunity. I'm just going to do it. Notice that you didn't say, I'm going to yell at myself. and call myself names and I'm a loser and judge yourself and scream at yourself all day long and like pound on your head being so hypercritical.

You didn't really get mad at yourself, which is cool. Notice as well that you didn't freak out and overreact and call your dentist in a panic. Like you have to get me in for an emergency teeth cleaning. I did the worst, most horrible thing last night. So, [00:45:00] you didn't overreact, you didn't have a hissy fit that you had to wait for the right time to start, and you just were like, oh, moving on, getting right back into it.

But I'll point out something really cool, and it's something I call in my iceberg of success, the invisible train tracks. So you can tell I really love mountains iceberg behind, copies the idea of a mountain, but when I teach about behavior change, I'm like, this is what diet culture does. Have a lot of willpower, try really hard.

I'm going to teach you the rules of the diet. And then off you go, just be strong be, focused and don't screw up. Well, no wonder those diets don't actually do well. So below the water is mindset, environment, and habits. So back to brushing our teeth. Notice the mindset of the screw up. No big deal.

Next soonest opportunity. I'm going to get right back on track. I'm not going to be mean and bully myself, and I'm not going to overreact and freak out. The good habit is brushing your teeth. What's the glue between the two? [00:46:00] It's your environment.

Your bathroom for a second. Is your bathroom optimized for the consistency of the good habit of brushing your teeth?

Is your toothbrush and toothpaste right there making it very easy for you to do that choice? I'm sure it is. If I were to wager a million dollar bet, I'm going to win my money. You're not like looking like Elf on the Shelf for a moving toothbrush throughout the house. One day it's not in a shoe.

The other day it's in a box in the attic. Another day it's in the glove box of your car. And every night you have to go on this search for a toothbrush. Or imagine if you had to make homemade toothpaste from scratch every single night and mix up your paste in order to brush your teeth. I bet. Your consistency would go down.

So what I teach my clients is how we're going to change your habits is we actually have to have the three layers working as a team. I'm going to do some behavior change mindset and self talk and coaching up in your brain. I'm also going to get you doing things to make your environment more supportive.

How can I help you [00:47:00] make the healthy choice? The easiest choice in your fridge. In your freezer in your pantry, and then we're going to focus on just like repping out these positive healthy habits that stack on one another. So you can feel the momentum, feel the winds, feel the consistency. And yeah, there is a component of knowing what the right choices are and working on, self discipline and restraint and delayed gratification.

But if you try to do this entirely from willpower and grit, it's like your fickle friend. It RSVP's yes to the party, but willpower isn't always going to show up when you want it to. So at RSVP's good intentions, yes, I'm going to do this for you, but it's that friend you can't rely on if it's really going to show up at the event.

So we can't rely on willpower, and this is what we're going to do instead. And so whenever someone screws up, I'll just coach the cube. toothbrush and they're like okay, whatever. Brush my teeth, get right back on track. Don't make a big deal about it. And so I find for the newbies who think [00:48:00] they have to be so rigid and so all in, I was like, brush your teeth, man.

Like just be consistent. If you miss a day, you get right back to it.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Oh, I love that. I,

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): yeah.

Dr Mike T Nelson: One of the little phrases I use is a violin consistency.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Oh, that's great. Yeah.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. Cause it, and I, people send me interesting emails, they're like, why does it have to be violent? It's so, it sounds so mean.

But it's just the point of that it, it's, initially it's a hard process that takes effort to be consistent, but it's the best way to go. Like you were saying, you have to put the effort in, you have to set up the environment, you have to do some things ahead of time, but when you've done those things, it is that consistency over time that is going to make the biggest difference for sure.

For sure.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): I love that.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. And the other analogy I use is similar to you is that, if you got a flat tire alongside the road what would you do? Well, you would not

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): slash all four tires.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Right. Yeah. You would get out, you would change the tire, you would go somewhere and change [00:49:00] the tire. You wouldn't get out and slash all three tires and go, well, I'm F now, so yeah. Yeah. Same thing.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Love that.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Cool. Well, awesome. Well, thank you so much for all the info and sharing all your tips and strategies. Really appreciate it.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): My pleasure. Can I leave your listeners with a little bit of a fun game if they want to go grab more of this? Yeah. So I have a freebie little nutrition coaching course called Liftoff and all it is it's motivational interviewing for coaches completely for free.

where there's games and resources and powerful questions. If you go to prosper, nutrition, coaching. com slash freebies, be like a kid in a candy store, go help yourself to that. There's some other coaching handouts. But yeah, I love when I get to share this with other, experts in the field who coach the same way.

And if we can elevate the skillset and the capacity of coaches out there who aren't just like yelling at their clients to try harder, nothing makes me happier when we like dispel diet culture and raise coaches.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Awesome. And I know you have a certification too. So tell us more [00:50:00] about that.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yeah.

Thanks for asking. So I have a nutrition certification called Prosper Nutrition Coaching. We run it four times a year and it's basically what we covered in the conversation today. So for coaches that already have a certification or a foundational kind of understanding of nutrition, physiology, and, health and human basics, this is more the.

Arts side of coaching. If you're like, I just want to coach bodybuilders to get as lean as possible, this is not the certification for you. But if you work with like general population people who are maybe struggling to get and macros only

isn't working. This really fills in the gaps on the habit based behavior change side of coaching.

So yeah, you can put your name down on the interest list if you go to prospernutritioncoaching. com.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Awesome, and is that all online? Does it open up again next year coming up [00:51:00] then? Yep,

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): so opening up again, we have it running in January, March, June, and September. It's not actually taught in a group format, so everyone gets their own individual account with videos of the certification.

And then I think what's a little bit different about it is every coach gets one on one individualized mentoring. So just like our most successful clients get direct one on one access to us as a coach, we directly coach the coaches who go through the certification one on one to help them implement this into their own coaching practice.

And then. Just help a little bit on the business side of things too, right? So many coaches have hearts of gold, but are struggling paycheck to paycheck, like hitting a 10 K month seems like beyond their wildest dreams. So we really help with the system side of just making your coaching practice more successful as well.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Cool. Awesome. And they can find information at the link you just mentioned above, I assume, also?

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): Yep. Perfect. So prospernutritioncoaching. com. It's all on [00:52:00] there.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Awesome. Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. I would highly recommend people check all of that out. And thank you so much for sharing all your wonderful information with us.

Really appreciate it.

Jennifer Broxterman, RD (2): My pleasure. This was a ton of fun, Mike.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Yeah. Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Bye. Thank you.

Dr Mike T Nelson: Thank you so much for listening to the podcast here. Big thanks to Jen for coming on and discussing all things nutrition coaching. Make sure to check out all the wonderful stuff she has going on. I believe if you're listening to this podcast when it comes out. She also has her nutrition certification for sale or an enrollment at that particular time.

We'll have a link with all of her information down below. She has wonderful stuff. I'd highly recommend you check it out. I don't even get paid anything to say that. So there's no affiliate link or anything like that, but I always think that it's cool that. There's definitely not a lack of need for people to do better nutrition, exercise, and everything else, [00:53:00] so it's not really a whole lot of competition in my mind there.

So check out her stuff down below. If you want more stuff from myself, make sure to hop on to my newsletter. If you're interested in ketones, check out Tekton Ketones. If you're looking for electrolytes check out LMNT below. Thank you so much for listening to the podcast. Really, really appreciate it.

If you have time, if you can leave us a short review, give us a thumbs up or subscribe or whatever the old algorithms wants you to do nowadays, that's super helpful for us to get better distribution of the podcast. If there's someone you think may enjoy this, please forward it over to them. Thank you so much.

We'll talk to all of you next week

There's something wrong with this hearing aid. Yeah, what's wrong? I can't hear with it. Oh, no wonder. It's too far [00:54:00] away.

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