

A BETTER LIFE WITH RACHEL ROFÉ

A CONVERSATION WITH
**STEPHANIE
BURG**

**IF YOU HAVE A
CHOICE, CHOOSE
A BETTER LIFE.**

Rachel: Hello, everyone. Today we're here with Stephanie Burg. Stephanie is a certified nutrition and lifestyle coach and professional ballet dancer. Through both roles, she's able to share her love of the human form and creativity that we each possess. Her coaching programs, classes and workshops have helped dozens of successful, high-achieving women who struggle with their weight, diet and stress levels to achieve the body they really want so they can live the life of their dreams.

I asked Stephanie to be with us today because I think she has a story that you can learn a lot from. She used to be a full-time professional dancer and she was forced to treat her body terribly, always looking at her body as something to control and push against. She's come a long way to unlearn that.

Today she's in an amazing relationship with her body. She has flourishing health and a ton of insight as to how to feel better in your body. I know you're going to learn so much from her. Stephanie, thank you so much for being here.

Stephanie: Thank you, Rachel. I'm so happy to be here. Thanks for having me.

Rachel: My pleasure. The intention behind A Better Life was to show people that if they have a choice to choose a better life. In that spirit, can you take a minute to just brag with us and share some of the things that you have going on that you're most proud of in your life right now?

Stephanie: Sure. I always feel a little bit strange bragging but since you're asking me to. I am a wife and a stepmom and I am so proud of both of those relationships. They've been some of the most rewarding in my life to date. You mentioned my background as a professional ballet dancer and that is something I am so proud of.

It was my dream as a little girl. I put a lot of intent, focus and blood, sweat and tears into it. We'll probably talk about that a little bit more. So much joy has come out of that experience for me. That's definitely something probably top of my list, I would say, of brag worthy things. Also, you mentioned that I'm a nutrition and lifestyle coach and that also [indiscernible 2:11] proud of.

Over the last year I have worked with almost 100 women, and some men in there too, but almost 100 people helping them to really foster deeper, more loving relationships with their body and really feel great in their lives and overcome a lot of health conditions. Just being of service to these people has been one of the most wonderful, amazing experiences that I've had and feel honored to have accomplished.

I am also a choreographer at times and I'm really proud of the dances that I can create. I love teaching dance. I teach a couple of adult ballet classes

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that I'm really in love with. I have this newer role that I'm wearing of woman entrepreneur. I feel like I'm just so proud of maintaining the integrity and connection with my artistic spirit that I've had for my entire life and that element of creativity that I've always had and really staying true to that even though at times I wasn't sure that it was going to be something I could support myself with or something that I could actually do. Those are just a couple of things that come to mind.

Rachel: You did a great job bragging. That's awesome. I love that you've just started with the entrepreneurial spirit but at the same point you've worked with 100 people already and I know that you're able to give them so much help because of just where you used to be with your body and the struggles you used to have to go through.

I remember you were telling me about these contracts that you used to have to sign about your weight and how you would be forced all the time to keep pushing, keep pushing. I'd love if you could tell people who are listening what that period in your life looked like so they can get how intense your relationship with your body was at one point.

Stephanie: Oh my gosh, yes. It's something that I'm really happy to share. When I started dancing as a little girl (I was five when I started), fell in love with it. It was such beautiful, magical thing and it was something that I just became obsessed with, in the most healthy way, I guess. For a little girl, it just became this dream I could really see myself doing.

As I got a little bit older, I never really thought about the future, what that life would really look like. I just only really focused on becoming a professional and really would do whatever it took to get there. At age nine, the first time I ever was asked to lose weight was then, as a nine year old. I remember feeling, at that time, really upset and shamed, like something was really wrong with me.

I was a very healthy child, a very healthy weight. It wasn't like I really needed to lose weight at all. I had this teacher that asked me to lose a few pounds in order to be accepted into a summer school. I think at that time my mom was really surprised by it and like, "Whoa! This is really kind of crazy."

She didn't really push that on me but I took it to heart so deeply. Basically from then on, I had this insecurity about my weight and I continued to feel more and more just really deeply insecure throughout the years. I can think of landmark ages and times when that conversation would be had with me again, asking me to lose weight.

Ballet is really based on a specific body type and I totally understood that going into it. In Russia, they would handpick children starting at age eight that has this structure and form that was ideal for a ballerina. Here in the

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States, we don't have that system so really anybody can start dancing and anybody can choose to pursue this career.

There's so much more heartbreak that comes for a lot of dancers, particularly women, when they hit puberty and their bodies change and they start to become not a right fit for that career. Throughout the years, being asked to lose weight, that was part of the job, as I mentioned. But my first professional gig, I signed a contract with a three pound weight range. You can't go above or below, this contract stated.

Particularly for women, menstrual cycles, shit, you're already breaking a contract if you have a tendency to retain water or anything like that. We had that clause in the contract and it stated if you went above this three pounds you could be paid. Of course, if you went below that three pounds nobody really said anything. It was celebrated.

Going above it meant a lack of a paycheck. We were weighed once a week, sometime twice a week. We were generally weighed after a holiday, like Thanksgiving. I should say this is not totally typical in the dance world. I don't know if this was standard decades ago. This is very much particular to the company that I was working for, which was a pretty dysfunctional environment. I just want to put that out there.

I really feel at this point in time, at this stage in the game, that I chose that environment in order to heal this relationship that I have with my body that started really young. After signing that contract and having to be weighed in front of my colleagues on a weekly basis, I started to feel this deep sense of shame over my eating habits or over an extra pound or an extra ounce.

Growing up in front of the mirror in the studio, [indiscernible 8:55] learn at a really young age how to use the mirror as a tool to fix your body, to correct your form, look at your technique and watch how you're doing certain things in order to fix them some so that they are the best that they possibly can be.

Often, growing up in front of this mirror, you focus so much on the negative aspect of your physique and the things that you can't control. I was born with certain genes and a certain skeleton and there's not really anything I can do to change that. The width of my shoulders or how tall I was, those are all things take into account as you're dancing in order for you to get a job. It's very much based on your appearance.

I would look in the mirror and I would cringe. I didn't like seeing myself. I became more of a self-judging person, more of a self-disciplinarian. I had to enforce certain rules and work habits and eating habits and all of these things on myself in order to be really the best that I could be.

It's only now as I'm out of that world, very newly, it'll be three years this August that I've been out of the professional world, having that time away and not having anyone to answer to for a job or having to be weighed in front of people, I really recognize what a gift it is to be able to dance and how much beauty I was able to create at that point in my life.

I could never see it then. I was always just focusing on the negative and thinking that I was fat or not good enough. That's a little bit about where I've come from. I don't know if there's anything else that you want me to share about that but there's a little background.

Rachel: That's extremely helpful to just paint the picture of what you were going through. If you could even just take a second to touch on I remember you were telling me about how they would tell you to do certain moves and even if you were in pain they would make you do them. You would tell them, "I'm in pain. I can't do it." "Do it anyway," right?

Stephanie: Yes. There's certain elements of "No pain, no gain," in any elite athlete world. You have to have this high pain threshold in order to push through some of the things that aren't necessarily human. We're not necessarily supposed to, in terms of dance, have this extra rotation of the hips or always lift our legs to create [indiscernible 11:54] flexible.

All of that stuff, standing on your toes, you have to have a high threshold for pain in order to accomplish those things. There is sort of a disconnect for me that seemed to happen in order to push through. I would sometimes disconnect mentally and physically having to push through that pain.

One of the major turning points in my career was this neck injury that I sustained. Part of that was getting to this point with the injury. I knew that something was wrong. I was working on a duet with a partner and I was asked to repeat this particular lift that we had been working on and it just wasn't getting any better. It was something that wasn't working for us.

It wasn't anybody's fault, really. We just couldn't seem to get it to work for a way that the choreographer wanted it to look. Instead of taking a moment and pausing and stopping and saying, "Okay, this isn't not working. Maybe we should change it," it was like, "Do it again. Do it again."

Keep pushing me to do it again and finally I said, "This is really not a good idea. I'm having a lot of pain. I just felt something tear in my neck." This particular person asked me to keep going, "Do it again," just ignoring that. It was almost like in my world that if you recognized your pain or your exhaustion you were weak.

In my mind, I equated stopping as a result of those things to being lazy. There were often times in this particular company that I worked for that we would be asked to do crazy amounts of repetition of certain movements, like 150 repetitions of something on one foot. Things that you normally wouldn't be asked to do.

I would push through those things even though they were painful just to prove to myself that I could do it and not appear weak and really ignoring my body's signals of exhaustion or pain or quite frankly cries for help, which I experienced as I got a little older. I was pretty healthy, for the most part, physically as a dancer until I hit 29.

I became much more aware of my habits and how they weren't really serving me. I suffered my first injury at 29 and then I had, basically back-to-back injuries. I had three in a row that were major that took me out of my career for six months to a year each time. That was really devastating for me because it takes so much time to recover from the injury and get back into the physical shape that you need to in order to sustain this driving, physical performance level.

Going through that experience of injury and recovery, I had to take a lot more time to focus on myself and nurture my relationship with my body. The last injury that I had was the neck injury that I just mentioned. That was sort of my last straw in a sense. I had that incident of being pushed and also pushing myself passed my limits, became injured, which I now have a permanent partial neck injury as a result of that.

I'm not supposed to lift over 50 pounds. I still have pain a semi-consistent amount of the time. With that experience I remember being so angry at this choreographer for pushing me, at myself for continuing to push and to not listen to my body. Mostly I was so scared like, "What am I going to do? I don't know if I'm going to be able to perform simple tasks from day to day. I'm having a hard time holding my head up," with my neck being hurt.

"How am I going to be able to live, let alone dance?" As a dancer, any time you are injured it's like you're mortality as a dancer is called into question. You don't know if that's going to mean the end of your career. In this particular case, I was very fearful that that was the case, that I was done.

Like I had always done over the years and with the last two injuries before that, I would always push myself and ignore what was going on in order to be the best that I could be. I would skip meals a lot of times, count calories in a totally unhealthy way. At point I was doing 700 different ab exercises a day, really going to this obsessive place.

Believe it or not, I never really had an eating disorder. Definitely disordered eating, like I said, like counting calories and skipping meals, et

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cetera. In terms of my body, it was this machine that I controlled. There wasn't much of a loving, nurturing relationship between mind and body. I was this self-disciplinarian forcing myself to suck it up and keep going even when I didn't think I could.

After the neck injury was completely healed as much as it was going to heal anyway, I remember there was this particular moment where I was in the studio and I was trying to get back into shape so that I could go back to work in this dysfunctional environment that I really didn't even enjoy anymore. I didn't really like working there anymore.

Again, what am I going to do if I don't dance? Having this moment in the studio, really pushing myself and having this pain in my neck that wouldn't go away, I remember feeling physically so broken and angry and frustrated with myself. The checklist, the cascade of issues that I had with myself was starting to rain down on me and I just started crying.

I sat down on the floor bawling and I had this internal dialogue with myself saying, "This is it. You have to make a choice. You have to choose whether you're going to continue to push yourself in this totally unhealthy way and maybe next time you're not going to be okay. Maybe next time it's a much bigger injury that not only will end your dance career but will affect your quality of life.

"You only get one body in this life. You only get one life. Are you going to continue to do this to yourself, continue damaging your body, your brain, your spirit, your heart with the way that you're behaving towards yourself? Or are you going to figure it out and stop?" At that point, I made the decision to quit my job. I sent an e-mail that every moment on my iPhone quitting.

It was the scariest thing I'd ever done. I had no idea what was going to happen next but I did it.

Rachel: That's amazing. You had your breaking point. After three injuries, I'm glad that it came then. That's obviously just so much to have to go through. I think even people listening who maybe aren't dancers but they know that relationship with your body where you're constantly wanting to lose weight and constantly judging every single piece of food that goes in your mouth or looking at your weight all the time.

I think there's so much that people can see themselves in what you're saying. I know you now to be somebody who has a great relationship with your body and you have such great health. I'm wondering what the mindset shifts or the choices were that you made to help change you from this person where it was before just total prison of your body to this place now where you're having thriving health.

Stephanie: That in and of itself has been a journey. During my last rehabilitation when I started to study holistic nutrition, I started to recognize how broken this relationship was with my body and my mind and myself. I'm probably going to paraphrase because this has been a few years in the workings. I made this choice to not be so judgmental with myself and to really approach things in this sense of curiosity versus judgment.

That was a big part of changing my relationship with food as well. Sometimes you're going to have a piece of pizza or a piece of cake or a cupcake. Our body would be okay if we just allowed it to enjoy that treat and move on but our brain creates this huge thing out of it. It becomes this really negative, judging and we're miserable about it.

We beat ourselves up about it. That cupcake's probably out of your system but you're still holding yourself to shame and guilt over making the choice to eat it. I eased up on myself a lot, which has felt really weird over the years. I started slowly allowing myself to have foods that I had put on this "naughty list," these foods that I wouldn't touch because they had too much this and too much that.

Peanut butter was one of those foods. I would never eat it. During that time I also had flings of eating a lot of peanut butter, or whatever it might be. It was allowing myself to explore and create my own personal roadmap, my own outline or blueprint for health and what that looks like to me because clearly what I was doing in the past wasn't working. Clearly, this rigidity and, frankly, craziness that I had created for myself in the past, these restrictions or rules, that really wasn't working for me either.

Again, I took everything as an exploration and really tried to see what it felt like to explore certain areas or certain foods or try different types of movement that maybe stood in my body a little bit better. Honestly, continuing to dance was also a big part of that too because it was something that I love so much.

I found that after I left the professional world I was still able to dance and perform in a way that still made me feel satisfied. I guess, basically, the answer to your question in a nutshell is the mindset shift would be to have more acceptance towards myself and less judgment.

Rachel: Absolutely. You make some really good points. There are a couple of things that I wanted to comment on. One of them you were saying about how you're looking at a piece of pizza and it might be like beforehand your brain was like, "I shouldn't eat this. It's bad," et cetera, and that's something that I've been noticing myself.

I've been keeping a food log and I've been noticing how I feel before and after foods. For example, I had ice cream one time and I was with a friend and I wrote in the food log, "I'm just going to have this ice cream because I

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know it's not going to feel good in my body and then I'm not going to want it anymore."

Like I said, I was with a friend and we were having such a good time. I was paying attention to my body but I never felt bad about it at all. It felt completely fine in my body. But then I had it again a week later and I was by myself and I noticed that I was thinking more about how bad this ice cream was for so in my body it felt much heavier, it felt like I shouldn't have it and my digestion was completely off.

I'm noticing that over and over that when I'm with friends or when I'm doing things that nourish me when I'm eating without distractions and my environment's pleasant the eating and the digestion is so much better than when I'm so busy telling myself I shouldn't have something or eating it quickly because I have guilt around eating it in the first place.

I think what you're saying about exploring with this curiosity instead of judgment is so awesome and makes so much sense. Also, about how you said you continued to dance, I think that's another really important piece is just continuing to follow the pleasure, follow what makes you happy.

Stephanie: I so agree with you about that, back to what you said about how you feel and the way you're thinking about the foods. Number one, scientifically there is such a gut and brain connection. When we're stressed all the time and a lot of that stress is created in our minds, that does have a physiological effect.

Our bodies really do produce certain hormones and all of that can lead to how you digest your food and whether or not you hold on to excess weight. This is something I know we've talked about before, Rachel. We're designed to move towards pleasure and away from pain. As human beings, we want things to be pleasurable.

I was actually talking with a client yesterday and she said that she had this recommendation from her doctor to go to the gym even though you hate. This is something you have to do. You might hate it and it's going to suck but you just have to do it. You have to suck it up and do it. I was like, "I'm sure that your doctor's coming from a very loving place with all of that but ultimately we're going to be so much less likely to do things that we really hate."

Encouraging this particular person to find movement and activities that she really enjoyed so that it wasn't like a burden and this stress and this dread. All of that factors into our sense of wellbeing, whether it's your job, your exercise methods or food or anything. We really do want to create things that we enjoy in our lives, pleasurable experiences, so that it's not a pain in the ass.

Rachel: Absolutely. It does help in so many ways. Even if it didn't, at least if you're following things that make you happy then your life is happy. Why wouldn't you want that as your regular way of being anyway?

Stephanie: Absolutely. You absolutely have the choice, I think, and that's something that I've recognized from coming from a place of feeling like I didn't have any other choice but to be a dancer because that was what my dream was and I loved it so much and all the varying choices that come with that territory.

Now in my life I feel like I recognize there's so much opportunity to choose how you think, how you feel, what you do with your life, how you spend your time. As we know, what you appreciate, appreciate. What you spend your time on you create more of or what you spend your energy and thoughts on you create more of. If you can, choose something that's going to make you really happy and really enjoy your experience of life.

Rachel: Totally. I'm curious, because obviously your whole way of life changed so much when you were going from rigid, rigid, rigid dancer to exploring, how it affected your relationship, the people around you? How did people respond to you? You could tell me the positive and the negatives. I'm really curious.

Stephanie: That's such a great question. My husband, obviously, is amazing, the most wonderful person ever. He's been by my side through all of this, which has been one of the greatest gifts in my life. He's been so supportive. He knew how unhappy I was in that job, especially those last few years. He could see it.

I found that as I've become happier it's definitely sort of rippled out into my relationships with other people and seeing just how much fuller my life feels. More of the positives, I think, actually having more time, less focus on my physical being and my regimented, rigid schedule of things that I held myself to. Having more time to actually do things that I love, spend time with people I love, that's been huge.

I wouldn't say negative, but some of the in between is I did end up losing a lot of relationships through leaving that particular job, recognizing certain relationships that weren't really serving me or that would pull me back into that dynamic. Releasing those, that's actually been really positive. I'm coming up a little bit short with an answer but I think mostly I would say having more time to be able to deepen into relationships that were already present, to feel like I had less worry so that I could be fully present within those experiences.

Also, being able to release some of the negative aspects of relationships that I had from my dancing. I'm probably going to think of five more things after we end our call. That's just coming up right now.

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Rachel: That's perfect. I think that you made some really great points about sometimes you do have to lose relationships. Sometimes it's just a matter of people are just scared that they don't know who you are anymore and it's just a matter of being able to talk with them and co-creating a new vision. Sometimes the relationships aren't going to work anymore.

I love what you were saying about when some of your relationships did have to end it gave you more time to deepen the ones that you had. That's such a beautiful thing to come out of all of it. I think it's great.

Stephanie: Yes. Another result of that, some of those relationships were, I don't want to say troubled, that's not the word I was looking for, but I found myself having a lot of anger or resentment or feeling in those more negative and maybe a little bit cattier or more dramatic relationships that seemed to be part of that dysfunctional environment.

I also noticed that being able to release those has also allowed me to look back on them with gratitude versus resentment, which I felt a lot of that in the past. I feel like definitely I'm just happier now that I am in a better relationship with my body and with my life.

Having that connection to things that really make me happy, obviously, that benefits me to be a happier person so I'm a better wife, a better stepmom, better friend and better sibling. It's been really positive just getting out of that negativity.

Rachel: For sure. Obviously, as you said, it impacts your body as well. Touching on the body piece again, just because I know that so many people are going to get so much out of this, you have such a wealth of information around this. I'm curious, what's something, an action step, that you take every day to insure that you're living in a body that feels really good to you?

Stephanie: That's a great question. I'm such a nerd. I even have a little reminder in my phone. It's like an alarm that goes off every day at the same time that says, "Results take daily emphasis, effort. Don't give up!" That is also geared towards making the best possible choices in every minute. I have my less rigid routine these days but I definitely have my routine.

One of the things I've noticed that is essential to my wellbeing is having some sort of movement in my day. It's something that I have such connections with. Moving my body as our bodies are designed to move. But our lifestyles even tend to be more sedentary than they ever have been. Mine has been more sedentary too so for me I try to find at least one small thing that I can do each day to move my body, whether that's even a gentle walk or doing Pilates mat, just something small.

It can be more than that too, depending on the day. Just something to really appreciate my body by moving it, celebrating my human body, this amazing machine by moving it. Really viewing the exercise as something that is a celebration versus pain in the butt.

Rachel: Totally. When you're working with clients and you're telling them about moving, have you encountered people who have resisted having to move?

Stephanie: I do. I do. It's interesting. I think one client that I had in the past in particular. She might know who she is. She was like, "I just don't exercise. I don't really enjoy it. I'm not really a big exerciser," but she would ride her bike everywhere as a means of transportation and walk everywhere. She doesn't drive.

That was one big thing. You're already building it in to your repertoire. It's already there. I know a lot of people who don't like going to the gym or something like that. Our daily activities around the house or in our lives also count as movement. Just trying to be aware of that and committing to maybe doing small things to expand what we're already doing.

That is the old parking in the back of the parking lot, take some more steps during the day. Little things like that. That's not the greatest answer.

Rachel: It's a fabulous answer because that's what I was going to ask. What do you say to people who say they don't like to exercise? I think you make a really good point of just starting it. I just started this exercise routine and basically the person, Liz DiAlto, who's an earlier podcast, said in the first video, "I know some of you aren't going to want to do this so I just ask you to do this first video and I think by the end of it you're going to enjoy it so much that you'll just want to keep doing it over and over."

That's all it is. Just take a little bit of a step and then see how it goes. You're so right about the small movements. As you were talking, I was also thinking about another friend I have who in her kitchen she designed it to be as inconvenient as possible.

She'd have the cups on one side of the kitchen and the plates on another and the bowls in a completely different place. It was meant to make her keep moving. She has some stuff actually in another room. Of course, it was inefficient but it was a really great way to keep her moving. She loved it. For her it was whimsical.

Stephanie: That's really awesome. I love that.

Rachel: Me too. This is great. I think people have some really good steps. I think the exercise is a really good piece that nobody's touched on in the podcast, which is great. I want to be real with the people who are listening. I don't want them to think that you get to some Utopia and everything's

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perfect. What is something, and I'd love even specifically around your body, that you're working on right now? I know there's always growth. And what are you doing to get through it?

Stephanie: That's a great question. I think being a nutrition and lifestyle coach people think that I have it all figured out. I definitely have a lot of tools and I've studied this and it's what I try to do but I'm still on my own personal journey as well. I'm still learning. I learn about my body every single day. I learn about my relationship with my body every day.

Part of the biggest struggle that I'm having now is approaching myself as a real, regular person and not a dancer. Entering my day to day without the routine and the regiment and hours spent on my physicality and how I approach my diet. Just shifting in the mindset of a very rigid ballerina athlete to one of like a normal woman, a woman who is healthy but is maybe not necessarily having to be lifted by men or standing on her toes.

Just being me, who I am as non-dancer Stephanie. It's been much a mental thing that I have going on. Part of that in terms of tangibly that effects me. Over the years, I've flung from, "I'm not doing any exercise. I'm not doing any movement. I've done enough in my lifetime. I'm never going to do anything again," to be like, "Oh my god! I have to get back on schedule because I'm not feeling the way I used to in my body."

Again, for me, it's like I try to at least make sure that I'm active four times a week. It's minimum for me. Try to be active four times a week. If I'm not, being okay with it, like it's not the end of the world. I feel like it feels a lot more complex in my brain as I'm hearing myself say it. It's not as complex but it's hard to view myself as a person who doesn't have to be weighed for everything or be seen on stage in next to nothing.

Just really viewing myself as a capable, powerful, strong, healthy woman and all the beauty that a woman's body has. It's so hard, I think, when you have such a skewed view of yourself for years and years and have to be so judgmental to yourself to really appreciate the curves that you have or just feel good if you have a little extra weight.

Extra weight meaning what I used to be to now, which isn't really a big difference, but it feels differently. So just really accepting myself in this moment and how I am from day to day.

Rachel: Totally. I think even the people who are listening now who maybe weren't dancers but as women so many of us just have this thing where it's like, "If I could only lose this little bit of my weight," or "If I could just do this," "If I could just do this," and then making decisions from that place. I think one of the big messages that people are going to get from listening to you is

that it doesn't need to be this always coming from a place of doing something wrong or something needs to be fixed.

You're obviously very gentle with yourself now, which I think is something that so many people can learn from. It's so counterintuitive, but it does, it just calms down your nervous system. It makes so many things so much better when you're able to be gentle with yourself. I think that's something that so many people are going to get a lot of insight on. Thank you for sharing that.

Stephanie: You're welcome. Women are so hard on themselves. Things take time in order to change them. Really having an extreme, authentic appreciation for where you are in this moment, right now. In order to move and change or shift anything, you have to really start from where you are and be really appreciative of where you are in time and space, this very moment.

I could use the example of one client who was trying to lose post-baby weight. It took nine months for your body to change, it's probably going to take a good bit of time for you to get back to where you were. You have to realize all of the beauty in where you are right now. Your change making efforts, really approach those in the sense that you get to learn so much through the process.

It can be really miserable if you're focusing on all the difficulty and the strain and the negative aspects of where you are or you can choose to view it as, again, this exploration and you're going to be learning so much about yourself in the process. That's what's been helpful for me.

Rachel: If someone's listening right now and they're thinking, "Stephanie, that's good for you. You were a ballerina so you were starting off with a great body anyway. For me, I'm not in that spot," and maybe they're feeling, "I'm not going to accept this. Are you kidding me? I'm not okay about this," and they're feeling scared to lose control, what advice would you give them?

Stephanie: I would say some of the most miraculous shifts that I've created in my own life have been the result of pain or discomfort or uncertainty. A lot of times if you are having whispers of that unhappiness or fearing really tapped or fantasizing about getting of a situation, any of those things that might be coming up, [indiscernible 45:24] to that, those message are coming from a part of you that's so much wiser and more brilliant than you are and your fear, your ego brain.

If you have this secret desire or hope or dream, it's really there for you to observe and make happen. Otherwise someone else would be having that hope or dream instead of you. You have so much more to lose by staying stuck in a position that's really making you unhappy, whether that's a job or whether that's a lifestyle habit or relationship.

Ask yourself where you are holding on to the fear or this image of yourself too tightly. What are you actually going to lose if you make the decision to leap into the unknown? What does your heart really want? That's something that I think a lot of people ignore out of security, staying in a relationship or a job just because it feels safe or secure. It's really detrimental in the long run. You do lose so much by staying in a situation that makes you really unhappy.

Rachel: I think that makes a lot of sense. Tim Ferris talked about when you're worried about doing something think about what's the worst possible case that could happen. If someone's listening to you and they feel like, "I have 20 pounds to lose so I'm not going to let myself eat a piece of pizza," and then you think, "What's the worst possible thing that can happen if you eat this piece of pizza?"

Maybe it's you gain a couple pounds of water weight or something. You eventually lose it, right? Thinking out the entire thing that could happen and what the worst possible thing is and then also looking at the benefits of what could happen. You're saying if your heart's giving you a little bit of a nudge and the positive could be just being able to break free from the shackles that you have of decision on yourself. Going through both perspectives, I think, is really helpful, usually just a perspective thing, like just having the full picture.

Stephanie: Totally. I know I have sort of a, I don't want to say rainbows and unicorns approach, but I definitely like to be much more focusing on the positive. I have a mutual friend of ours, Rachel, [Jeannine Yoder](#). She's an amazing life coach and she said in one of our conversations, "Sometimes it helps to focus on the negative," like what the negative outcome will be if you eat that piece of pizza.

Are you going to feel bad about yourself? Are you going to have indigestion? Are you going to feel overweight or full or fat? What are the things that you're going to lose? What's the bad stuff that you're going to feel? Sometimes, for some people, because we're all different, that's how we respond to things.

For some people, having that negative focus is something that helps them. I don't want you to think that it's all got to be rainbows and unicorns. I like to focus on more the positive. Again, some people respond better to that negative reinforcement. That helps them to make the better decision for themselves and thinking about it that way.

Rachel: That's a great point. Where can people go to learn more about you? I think you've shared some things that some people are really going to be nodding their heads to and they're going to want to be able to visit you and learn more about your coaching packages and everything.

Stephanie: I would love to hear from anyone who feels inspired or wants to share anything as well. You can find me on my website, which is <http://StephanieBurgCoaching.com> or you can always e-mail me as well if you have questions or thoughts or feedback after listening to this podcast, Stephanie@StephanieBurgCoaching.com.

Rachel: Awesome. Thank you so much for your time. This has been really great.

Stephanie: Thank you for having me. It's been really awesome to be here.

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