

**EPISODE 9**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:01] AS:** You know battling food and your body doesn't work. You want to love and accept yourself. And because you're insatiable, you want results too. And wouldn't you know, you bring the same intensity to your life, wanting to maximize your time, potential, and experiences you have here on this beautiful and wondrous planet Earth.

Fair warning, it will be a rollercoaster. But for those insatiable, that's your prime time to thrive. We're here to say "YES!" to the hunger of wanting it all. I'm your co-host, Ali Shapiro, a health coach who helps people end the losing battle of dieting and find a truce with food.

**[0:00:44] JB:** And I'm Juliet Burgh, nutritionist, fitness expert, and a co-owner of Unite Fitness Studio Franchise.

[EPISODE]

**[0:00:53] AS:** Hey Insatiable listeners, Ali here. After we finish this episode, I realized that what a lot of my clients think is emotional eating is actual hunger. They don't recognize it as such because they don't actually know what healthy hunger feels like. There's all these misunderstanding around what real hunger is and so I created a webinar to clear up the confusion.

It's this coming Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8 PM, Eastern Standard Time and I'd love for you to join me. It's completely free and you can opt in to the webinar at [alishapiro.com/healthyhunger](http://alishapiro.com/healthyhunger). Hope to see you on the webinar.

**[0:01:32] JB:** Welcome to episode nine, the four patterns of why we emotionally eat.

**[0:01:39] AS:** Juicy topic.

**[0:01:40] JB:** I know. I feel like this is the one I've been waiting for.

**[0:01:44] AS:** Yeah but we could obviously make this topic probably a thousand episodes. We're going to talk about it today but just know that this is the first of many conversations about it, because Juliet and I have both struggled with it. So we'll talk a little bit about that today. Do you think you're ready?

**[0:02:02] JB:** Oh I'm ready.

**[0:02:03] AS:** You're ready?

**[0:02:05] JB:** Yeah.

**[0:02:06] AS:** So we're super excited too because we just first want to thank everyone for your excitement and how you're sharing this on social media and we're just so excited. We were chatting, texting each other about when we were both in the throes of our emotional eating, we thought we were so alone and that no one understood.

It makes our heart happy that other people know that they're not alone in thinking about being interested in nutrition, thinking about it and also frustrated by it. So thank you so much for your feedback and today's episode was actually inspired by someone who was listening and had read some stuff on my site and it really resonated but felt like didn't even know the first place to start with emotional eating.

So yeah, that's where a lot of people I think come from so we're going to talk about that today. So we pay attention to what you ask, so keep sending in topic ideas and stuff like that. Okay so Juliet, where do you think we should start?

**[0:03:06] JB:** Well, I think that we're talking about the four patterns of why we emotionally eat and we'll definitely get to that because it's juicy stuff but I think we can start a little bit just by giving a little background on where emotional eating presented itself for you Ali. Is that what you called it when you were in the throes of your eating issues? Would you have associated it with emotional eating or did you call it something else? How did it feel for you?

**[0:03:37] AS:** Yeah, that's such a great question because I until we have language for it and today, we're going to talk about some of the ways that we've both heard our clients talk about it. It's funny how you look back on things and like I shared in some earlier episodes, I was looking back through my food journals as I was creating a free mini course for my list like blind spots to help you with weight loss and I realized that I was eating a lot more poorly than I thought I was.

But what happened in my journals is, I would log everything but then when I was off track, what I called "off track", I just stopped journaling and I'd come back and be like, "What happened? What happened?" So I would never have said I was emotionally eating. I would just have felt like I couldn't trust myself if I was around sweets. I have a sweet tooth.

So some of my clients love salty, I am sweet. I just felt anxiety, trepidation any time I would go somewhere where there would be tons of desserts. I would just be like, "I want all of the desserts," and I would think about them a lot and sometimes I would have, sometimes I wouldn't but I felt more controlled by food and I definitely emotionally ate but it felt more being out of control or that I was being "bad" in a way.

I probably would have called it bad eating and I didn't think of myself as emotionally out of control so I wouldn't have thought of myself as emotional eating. I just thought, "I can't trust myself around this. I love food and I eat badly."

**[0:05:07] JB:** Now when did you start associating that feeling around food? At what age did you notice it?

**[0:05:15] AS:** Well, what's interesting now that I know what I know about weight loss, when I was eight years old I was exposed to pesticides in this really bizarre way. I was doing gymnastics in my neighbor's yard. Maybe I was six or seven, I forgot the exact age. But I was rolling around and these lawn chemicals and I woke up the next day with this horrible rash and the doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong with me and for two weeks I had to live in an oatmeal bath and whatever.

I gained weight after that and now I know and understand that toxicity and inflammation cause weight gain. It's not just calories in and calories out but I think looking back at what happened at

that point then was I started to really like sweets and I think in a way felt out of control in own body because I didn't understand why I was gaining weight but doctors didn't know what was wrong with me and so I remember and my dad was the one in my family who really was conscious of his weight. It wasn't my mom.

My dad was heavy set growing up, not super heavy but he was chubby. He grew up in really poor conditions and lived in a very dangerous neighborhood on government food so he was always growing up saying that he was running from the fat man and I internalized that. So he was trying to help me and he meant this in a dear way.

So I want to provide that context but I remember being like, he'd give me \$5 a week and every time I would eat sweets like if I ate sweets like Twizzlers or whatever I'd really like, I'd lose a dollar and I just remember never being able to last to get the \$5. I know, it's so sad and my dad wasn't like, "Hey, you have to lose weight," that wasn't the thing. I wanted to do it, I've always been very like, "This is what I'm going to do."

I think from that and then I remembered going to the pool and even though I was gaining weight and on the swim team, I'd want to go to the snack shack and get all the Swedish fish or get all the gummy bears. My parents used to joke too, they would put me up for a nap and all of a sudden, I would hear the ice cream truck in the neighborhood.

I would just like bound out of bed and find change and go to the ice cream and they were like, "I thought you were sleeping?" So I had internalized then that I just loved sweets and was out of control. It started at a very young age and I went to weight watchers when I was 11 and all that stuff.

**[0:07:39] JB:** You were probably reinforced by your parents in a way because, "Oh, this is Ali, this is what you're into, you love sweets." So then you create a persona around that you tell yourself and you believe yourself that you love sweets.

**[0:07:56] AS:** It's such a great point and that's one of the things in Truce With Food. Shameless plug, it's coming up in March so check out my site if you're interested in it. It's a three month coaching program where I really helped clients see that they don't love sweets that there's

reasons that they are having a moment where they like sweets. They aren't someone that can't live without them or whatever or that identity.

So yeah, it definitely reinforces that. How about you though? When did you first have your emotional eating episode or would you have called yourself that? Or when you became super conscious of feeling powerless around food I guess?

**[0:08:40] JB:** Yeah, there is a lot of different pieces to this but I can date it back to being in elementary school and being in the basement of our home where, we had a finished basement and it was often where I would go and isolate myself and watch television after school and I would just eat. I would just sit in the basement and eat and I remember feeling like I could never get enough.

I never had that feeling of being full or satisfied and I felt sort of powerless over food. I remember taking trips upstairs to the kitchen because the kitchen was right up the stairs and I can remember this distinct memory of fruit rollups. We had a box of Fruit Roll-Ups and I would get one roll of Fruit Roll-Ups and go downstairs and eat it and then I would feel like I have to go get another one and then I would get another one.

I went up and down the stairs until I finished the entire box of Fruit Roll-Ups and that pattern continued for me with other foods too like cookies or whatever it was, I had to finish the entire box of it before I felt satisfied. It was like an obsessive feeling around food and just feeling powerless over it. My dad was, I would say, an emotional eater. He was an over-eater.

He actually passed away from a massive heart attack when I was 16. He was really morbidly obese and he had issues with food from as far back as I can remember. He just kept gaining weight and gaining weight and gaining weight and he maybe went on a diet once in my life and didn't really lose that much when he was even on it but he always taught my brother and I that food was this celebratory thing.

Food was pleasure and we were encouraged to have second helpings of things, third helpings, there was really no boundaries when it came to food and that was because there was really no boundaries for him and it was all about, "We're going to celebrate tonight. We're going to go out

to this restaurant and you guys could order whatever you want,” and so I just learned from a really young age that food was this really amazing pleasurable celebratory thing.

I definitely had a lot of mixed emotions around food and weight gain and seeing my dad and how big he was and not wanting to gain weight as I became a teenager and were going to do an episode a little bit later on trauma and weight gain, and trauma and emotional eating. We're not going to get to too much of that today but I did have a lot of trauma in my life.

A lot of different traumatic experiences between my father's death, my mother's mental illness, my brother's mental illness and I found food as a way to control a lot of that so I started dieting at a young age and it was very much in conjunction with almost like an obsessive-compulsive disorder for me where I would just use food in this way, “If I could control how much I'm eating or when I'm eating and everything is going to be okay in my life.”

That started in my teens and the body image problems that I was having just being a teenager was also escalating all of that obsession that I have around food and what I was eating. They kind of just fed out of each other into a really negative cycle that I was in that really just kept going until my early 20's and it morphed in many different ways. I didn't really find any relief in it until I start dealing with the traumas in my life and healing those past experiences. That is kind of it in a nutshell, emotional eating for me was tied a lot around trauma.

**[0:12:34] AS:** Well, what's interesting to me is that at five years old and I think this is a reflection of our culture, right? A lot of us think we're alone and we're like, “Why am I using food to cope?” Well, that's the tools that our culture offers. They offer alcohol, food, shopping and sex, right? And sports. These are the tools, so I think what's interesting is why were you isolating yourself?

**[0:13:05] JB:** Yeah, well that goes back to a lot of the trauma in my life. Before there was any major trauma like death and sickness, there was — well the sickness part with my mom being mentally ill from really the time, she always had mental illness from the time that I was born and my dad was kind of an absentee father. I forgive my parents and they did the best that they could, but I really was neglected as a child.

I wasn't really given the proper attention or love and support that I needed at such an impressionable age. There was a lot of chaos with my parent. They did not get along, they ended up divorcing when I was 12 but it took them forever to get the divorce. So I remember them fighting my whole childhood. So honestly, I think isolating myself was to get away from the chaos that was happening in my household.

So I would just say, "I need to be alone and you could be waking and yelling. I'm going to go in the basement, I'm going to just stuff myself with sugar," which releases a lot of feel good chemicals. It makes you feel like you're being rewarded and it's a relaxant, chewing is a relaxant to you for those of you out there, you are relaxing when you're chewing. I just got myself into these habit of, "This is what I know, this is how I relax. I watch TV by myself and I eat."

**[0:14:26] AS:** When you think about a five year old, that's actually pretty brilliant. You understood that whatever was happening upstairs was not healthy right? You didn't need any psychological you just intuitively knew and so you did the best you could with the resources available to you.

**[0:14:48] JB:** Yeah and I mean that's where a lot of people, it doesn't matter how old you are, food issues are really a side effect of stressors that are happening in your life. If you can start to look at it like that, that you might feel powerless over food and your patterns with food but you're really doing it for a good reason. I know that sounds funny but you're doing it to protect yourself or to cope. As Ali likes to call it, it's "the good girl drug" food instead of doing lines of coke or drinking here...

**[0:15:18] AS:** Stealing from people.

**[0:15:20] JB:** Yeah, your outlet is food. It could be worse, but I know a lot of you do feel like you are at a rock bottom with this stuff. So we want to talk to you about how we can kind of become more self-aware around what your patterns are with emotional eating.

**[0:15:38] AS:** Yeah and I'm so glad that this is a beautiful bridge that you just set up so thank you but I think we have to have compassion for if we are emotional eaters or struggling with food because I know, clients come to me exasperated like, "Why can't I fix this?" And they're

defensive and they're angry at themselves and really, think of yourself as this is the best skill set you have right now. You can change it and if now is the time, wo-hoo, we will cheer you on. If it's not, that's cool too.

But it's a level of understanding. Einstein said, "We can't solve a problem at the same level of consciousness that it was created," and I think a lot of the conventional dieting industry and when you watch these weight loss shows, they're like, "You don't want it bad enough," and they're still at the level that, "Hey, this is just about you not wanting it bad enough or this is about you being weak or about you being lazy," or whatever you even tell yourself right? You don't even need to go on a reality weight loss show to feel like shit.

**[0:16:36] JB:** And I honestly, I wanted it bad enough.

**[0:16:40] AS:** We all want it, that's the problem.

**[0:16:40] JB:** We all wanted it, you want it bad to continue. For me, it was all I ever thought about. It's just my body wanting to change my diet and wanting to look and feel better. So it's like I don't know how much more I had to want it for it to work but that wasn't the answer.

**[0:16:56] AS:** Right and what I always tell my clients is, if this was a logic problem based on willpower or based on drive, you would have figured this out already but often that drive is actually the problem because we need to have compassion for this rather than just try to pile through it. So I think thinking of it as, "Wow". So let's talk a little bit about how we're defining emotional eating so you can understand like, "Okay for right now, that's the skill set that I have to deal with whatever I'm eating from. It's food.

It's not that I'm bad, that I'm weak, that I need to fix something, this is just how I know how to cope right now. So we talked about four different areas and I think that the first one and what you talked about is celebratory or a reward. Right? What I often hear my clients say is, "Well, I just tell myself I deserve this," or "I'm going to have a cheat day," implying that you're rewarding yourself from deprivation is often the language I hear with my clients when it comes to reward.



**[0:17:59] JB:** And when we say deprivation, it could mean a bunch of things. It could be deprivation from your eating a certain way, Monday through Friday and then you're like, "Okay, I can finally eat what I want. It's Friday night, all bets are off." But deprivation can also mean that you are starving yourself of other kinds of important pleasures in your life like socializing, like relaxing, doing things that are not revolving around your job. If you really have an off work life balance, if it is really out of balance, then that could also be deprivation.

**[0:18:40] AS:** For sure. I remember a big turning point in my weight loss and food was, I had this really prestigious job and I was travelling to Europe and it's exciting but it wasn't fulfilling me and I was living in Philly at the time and commuting to the suburbs and I was like, "This drive, not only does it take two hours of my time but it isolates me in the burbs."

I was living in the city and when I was like, "I just want to make my career goal that I can walk to work." And people told me I was committing career suicide and I was like, "I'm 24, I need to figure myself out." This is something intuitively I just listened to but just eliminating my commute, my night time eating went down significantly because that's another big way that people use food as a reward, a night time treat, in treating myself. That night time ritual of eating is often about reward.

**[0:19:33] JB:** Because you're depriving yourself throughout your day of just feeling good.

**[0:19:39] AS:** Yeah meaning, of having meaning.

**[0:19:41] JB:** Meaning and when I say you're depriving yourself, a lot of times it's not on purpose. You have a job, you have stress that's happening throughout the day but it's this pattern that we get into which is like, "I can't take a deep breathe until I get home," you know? "I can't relax, I can't slow down until I'm home."

**[0:20:00] AS:** Exactly, well beautifully put so that's one pattern of emotional eating. The other pattern that I see and this was my pattern was the all or nothing pattern. I'm either on or off and again, I wouldn't have called it emotional eating. I would have just said bad eating but it was like, "I'm going to eat all the blueberry muffins in the office," and sneak it because I can't do it publicly. No one can really see me.

Or I'm going to an event and I'm so excited because I know they're going to have dessert there and I'm going to eat the desserts. So that all or nothing is when you're off, you're just really off. People often do this on vacation, that's all or nothing. It's part reward too but, "I'm not just going to care for this week." That's another way that I think people do all or nothing if they're traveling. That's one of those categories.

The other thing that I see is the energy pattern. To your point, if people aren't taking a breath, they're often really tired and I notice this for myself. About a year ago, I was having dark chocolate every afternoon and I don't think dark chocolate is unhealthy but I was like, "Why do I want that?" And it was really I needed a nap. I needed a 10 to 15 minute nap.

But I felt so guilty, I was telling Juliet before we started this podcast. In my head I'm like, "Oh my god, you are so privileged. You should not be taking a nap, please." It made me feel really guilty to take a nap even though I needed one and I finally sometimes let myself do that and I didn't realize even as aware as I am from having so many food issues, it really took me a month to figure out, "Why am I going to that?"

I was like, "Oh my God, it's because I'm tired," and a lot of people over caffeinate to mask this or if their blood sugar isn't balanced in the morning they crave something sweet and it feels emotional because when your blood sugar drops you also feel sad and you could feel a lot of things.

**[0:22:11] JB:** Hangry.

**[0:22:12] AS:** Hangry, yeah but that's often with that mid-morning snack is about too. It's an energy issue and I find also a lot of my clients will find that transition from work to home and they think that they need the ritual book ending the day at work. But often times, they're exhausted and they just don't even realize it because it's become so normalized.

**[0:22:35] JB:** Yeah and I had a client who's making me think of this and we were trying to work on night time eating for her and what was happening is she was bringing a lot of work home.

She already had worked all day in the office and then was trying to do this work at home but was procrastinating and using food to distract herself and just kept eating.

Then I said to her, “So did you eventually get your work done?” and she said, “No, I never do”. It is a pattern that she got and she was in which was, she was trying to do this, trying to get the work done but it never was happening. So ultimately, we were like, “Well, don’t try to get the work done. Don’t do it. You don’t have to do it anyways so just accept that you’re not going to do work when you get home and actually be home and allow yourself to be home and relax,” and her night time eating disappeared. She didn’t need it anymore.

**[0:23:34] AS:** That’s amazing. You bring up a good point. Another way that this emotional eating shows up is people eat between switching tasks. So if you’re going, going, going and then all of a sudden, you’re switching a task, unconsciously you’re like, “This is my only chance to breath,” right? People who are energy deprived often have this pattern of eating in between tasks as a procrastination as a chance to catch their breath to power through but that’s another sign that you’re not eating because you’re hungry or whatnot but what people would think of as emotional eating.

**[0:24:07] JB:** Yeah, that was something that Ali worked on with me when she and I first met. I had about seven different teaching jobs for group fitness and I was running around the city like a maniac, going from one teaching gig to another, expanding all those energy actually working out whether it was teaching spin or yoga or working out one on one with people.

So I am burning a lot of calories so I did need the extra food but the problem was, I was eating my food super-fast in between appointments. I would be eating my food standing up, sometimes I would be eating my food while walking to the next appointment and then I would always get home at the end of the day and I would need to book end my day, like you were talking about and I never really had the chance to enjoy my food during the day because I didn’t give myself the opportunity to actually taste the food.

I was just shovelling it in my mouth. So when I would get home, I would just milk every second I was home to enjoy food because I didn’t have that during the day. So just a simple shift I made was, I made sure that I took a lunch break and to this day, I’m obsessive about my lunch break.

I don't schedule appointments during certain times so that I could have time to sit down and eat and enjoy my lunch and enjoy every major meal. If I could do that, breakfast, lunch and dinner, I don't feel that same need to overeat at the end of the day.

**[0:25:32] AS:** That is such a good point because rather than trying to squeeze it in, you end up leaking energy in a way and you're like, "No, I'm going to take this all in" and then you don't think about it as much you get the pleasure from it to the point of what you were saying earlier, food is pleasurable. It should be. That's another thing. My clients are, "I love food. I don't want to love food." I'm like, "No, I want you to love food just not in a co-dependent way."

**[0:26:03] JB:** It's so good, it's so healing. It is so pleasurable on so many levels, on an intracellular level, it's so good. I was thinking now even when I'm home and I'm having dinner and Mackie wants to talk to me, I really, really just want to be with my food and enjoy it and slow down and eat it and I can't do two things at once. I don't want to be trying to talk about my day or I'm not on the computer or I don't take phone calls while I'm eating. I'm like, "No, I'm just going to eat my food. This is very pleasurable."

**[0:26:41] AS:** Well and I've noticed a pattern when people genuinely don't care about food. I think there is also some underlying depression.

**[0:26:50] JB:** I don't trust those people.

**[0:26:51] AS:** Well no, I talked about I think it was on episode five? Yeah the New Year's Resolutions. I shared a little bit — I listen to it today, I was like, "Oh I shared a lot." But that year that I was working with Bob and depressed, I did not care about food and I just really think that was a metaphor for just not being in life at that moment, which brings up the fourth pattern actually.

I see this with a lot of clients. I see this all the time but it's the social aspect. When we feel really isolated, well first of all, it comes out in celebratory ways, right? Thanksgiving, Super Bowl's coming up — well, by the time people listen to this, it will be February, Valentine's Day, any holiday food, because again, it's a big tool that America uses.

Food is so central to social situations so people eat socially to celebrate but they also eat socially when they don't want to look like they're on a diet. They also eat socially when they don't tell the server about food allergies they have because they don't want really know the people they're out with and so they want to ignore that.

So that I think is anything that's disconnecting you from what you really need or isolating you in a social situation I think is also emotional eating because it's not in alignment with what you need personally. Any other things you think of as how social emotional eating comes up? It's the fourth pattern.

**[0:28:14] JB:** No but just that I can remember utilizing certain friends in my circle that I knew that I could get away with binge eating and they wouldn't judge me because they also did the same thing or they also had food issues. I had to work on almost re-evaluating certain friendships that I had and what are friendships based on.

I had certain friends that I know this friend I can have her come over and we could order a kind of Indian Food and just binge eat on and then we could go get ice cream and there will be no judgement on either part.

**[0:28:57] AS:** I had a friend in college who I think our whole relationship is our food obsessions and diet.

**[0:29:01] JB:** Yeah, that's not a real friendship you know?

**[0:29:04] AS:** But it's a time where you're like, "Someone gets me. They understand," because a lot of my friends didn't understand. I have a couple of friends who I can think of and they're the only people I know who don't have food issues and I seem to have found them.

**[0:29:17] JB:** That's awesome.

**[0:29:18] AS:** But I hid that from them and they knew I was always trying a diet and they're like, "Oh what can't you eat?" Like kind of joking around but they never knew how tortured and held back I felt by all of those years. I think we wanted to give you guys some ways of recognizing

that what I have normalized or I am eating out of alignment with my goals and what I want, that's some of the ways that it shows up and often, again just what we talked about, take a look at yourself. Do you see yourself in any of that? Do you think about, "I am eating as I switch tasks, wow, that is the pattern."

**[0:29:56] JB:** I just thought of one other thing Ali that I think is super, super important. The whole being rebellious with food thing, right?

**[0:30:05] AS:** Oh yeah.

**[0:30:07] JB:** Yeah which is also what I was talking to you about having certain friends that I would be able to just go off the rails with. A lot of that was like, "I'm going to be rebellious," and a little bit of the all or nothing mentality but if you're so on it, you're so good in your life, you're getting all your tasks done, your boss loves you, you try so hard, you have that pleasing mentality.

Always trying to please yourself and others that it's like, "Well you'd better go off the rails with food because you got to live a little somewhere." So that rebellious thing is also very an emotional trigger with food.

**[0:30:45] AS:** For sure and I think it brings up the point that emotional eating is not always about the food itself. You eluded to the trauma and we'll talk about, we'll have a podcast about that because that is also a big piece of my own healing with food but the all or nothing or the "I'm so good everywhere else," our ideas of good and this is what I call "the good girl gridlock".

That's what we really diagnose each person's gridlock and often how we're trying to be good, we may know on an intellectual level or we think we're just trying to be accomplished and achieved but the really nuanced ways that affects us and drains us is often a blind spot because you have normalized it for so long and it's things that you don't even question.

I think that's how you really, and we'll have to do some later podcast on this, but really get underneath the emotional eating because once you've started to emotional eat, the best thing you can do is look back and think about what happened because in the beginning, you're going

to just have to catch it after the fact I think, as you start to understand, “What is my trigger? Is it because I’m tired? Is it because I’m bonding with friends?”

That’s a big way that woman bond is through dieting. Is it because I’m in a nothing streak and why do I feel like I have to be so perfect the other days?” You know? But yeah, I went off on the tandem but I just agree with your point and I think that’s one of the first things that we want to talk about in this episode. Its bringing awareness to “bad eating”, “emotional eating”, “I deserve this”, however it’s showing up for you.

**[0:32:32] JB:** There are stages to this. Think of it like you are peeling back the layers of an onion. There are definitely stages to uncovering emotional eating and why we emotionally eat. So as we’re kind of foreshadowing trauma and all these stuff and you’re like, “Oh no, I want that now. Let’s talk about that now,” you don’t need to.

**[0:32:52] AS:** Or some of my clients are like, “I’ve never had trauma.”

**[0:32:55] JB:** Or you never had trauma, yeah but there are stages to try to figure this stuff out that this first episode on emotional eating, trust that work and we’re going to talk about what are really the first things you have to do to start to stop or decrease this pattern.

**[0:33:12] AS:** Yeah and awareness is such a big piece of that. So let’s talk a little bit about that awareness. I think a lot of times especially like some people wrote in, “I don’t even know the first place to start,” and again, thinking back to the times you did after the fact or even if it happens this week thinking, “Wow, what happened leading up to that?”

What happened leading up to that is a really interesting question because by the time you’re at the bag itself, it’s not really about loving chips. It feels like it’s about loving chips but it might have been an e-mail that you got that you thought, “Oh my god, now I’m going to have to stay late,” or an e-mail that was like, “Oh my god, there is a conflict here and I’m really uncomfortable with conflict.”

**[0:34:02] JB:** Well for me, and I would say, there is no end all cure for being an emotional eater. The thing that you’re going to end up doing is catching yourself ahead of time and

understanding your patterns and what your triggers are so that you're not feeling over powered by these patterns and feeling out of control with food. For me, it's always creating space and time. When I don't leave myself enough time, it always will make me crave food or I will eat too fast and then I'll end up overeating.

So I just know myself that I have to build in time. For example, I had a dinner with somebody and I had a really, really long day and I had to rush home and get ready for dinner and honestly, at that point all I wanted to do was have more time at home and I should have built that in because when I got to the dinner, my head is not in the right space and I ate really quickly and that to me was a way of eating emotionally, for me, for my standards.

So I know myself that I usually build in, okay go home for an hour, it's almost like a way to meditate for me. It is to be able to not be around people for a little while because I am around people all day and to have an hour alone and maybe this goes back to my childhood and having that alone time but I just value it. I value time by myself and if I can get that time, then I could have gone to that dinner and I could have felt more centred and engaged with the person and not wanting to not be there.

**[0:35:52] AS:** Yeah and what you're describing, first of all let's back up, I think it's important though because there is not a cure all. I think you meant there is not a formula.

**[0:36:01] JB:** Yeah.

**[0:36:01] AS:** I know both of us are at a place and part of why I wanted to do this podcast with you is we've both done the work to be on the other side of it. So does it mean that we always eat "perfectly"? No but there's no guilt around...

**[0:36:14] JB:** Exactly. Yeah, I didn't go home after that and go, "Oh my God, why did you eat so fast? Why did you take rice off her plate?" There was no guilt at all. It was just you just notice it with completely neutral feelings and compassion and you move on from it right away.

**[0:36:39] AS:** Yeah, well and I think it comes back to and again, you're the one who said this. I mean I said it but you're the one who used the word before we got on the podcast is, I think it



becomes a problem when you feel powerless over what you just did because that sets up the guilt and the vicious cycle of you eat what you don't want to and then you don't trust yourself and then you feel out of control. So you eat more and it just perpetuates this cycle and that's when things get dangerous.

I say I don't emotionally eat anymore but I do I still — over Christmas I eat more than I normally did this year but did I care? No. Did I try to cut back the next day? No. I just let my body balance itself out. So the emotional part of eating is when the guilt is tied to that or the powerlessness and feeling out of control and it makes you doubt yourself and frustrate yourself, that's when I think is the issue, it becomes an issue that if you want to work on, by all means.

**[0:37:40] JB:** Yeah, it's this common scenario I can think of is this image and I remember when I was working through my food issues, I had wrote down on a piece of paper, "I'll know that I'm better or healed from this affliction when I can have a plate of cookies in front of me and I don't have to feel like I can't stop eating them. I have to eat them all. They have to be all gone."

Because as we talked about that, that was a really emotional thing for me with food. It was eating it until the plate was completely clean and eating the box of fruit rollups until the box was empty. So for me, it was knowing that I could have a plate of cookies in front of me and I could have a cookie or maybe I'll have two or maybe I ate the whole plate but I didn't care, that I didn't feel bad about it anymore.

**[0:38:31] AS:** Yeah and another thing too, this isn't a linear process and so it's not like one day you don't feel guilty and then the next day you do. I think what happens is you chip away at the guilt and the drawl of food overtime and the more that you refine the skills that you need to do that and to identify what's really underneath the food, then overtime that cycle really it goes from powerlessness to really powerful.

I think it's such an important process to go through that's why I created Truce with Food, that's what I teach, is the skill sets on how to do that. It's because unfortunately, in our culture food is taking on even greater importance. Now there is all these moral baggage attached to it which in a way is good. We're learning where our food is coming from and all this stuff.

I always use the example of growing up, the amount of chocolate that I can buy right now for Valentine's Day is out of control. The amount of food that you can buy for St. Patrick's Day, I never even remember celebrating St. Patrick's Day beyond a leprechaun hat, you know? Easter, it's like now Easter brunch. It's like every food, everything, food and food blogs. Food has exploded and it's everywhere now. And so trying to just manage it with willpower alone and not getting underneath it or understanding the emotions, it's going to be a really exhausting life. So that is kind of a tangent.

**[0:40:04] JB:** Yeah and I was just thinking about some of the tactics that I had tried to help me with my emotional eating problems with the different books that I have read and articles. A lot of them were just more stress and it's actually exacerbating the problem. It was like, "try harder" or one of them that I remember thinking about was like, "I don't think there's any way that I could do this." This was the tail end of it was, "Only eat when you're hungry."

**[0:40:38] AS:** I hate that one. If I could do that, I wouldn't be reading your book, you know?

**[0:40:43] JB:** Yeah, "Only eat when you're hungry and all of your problems will disappear, your emotional eating problems. Just listen to your body."

**[0:40:50] AS:** Yeah, oh that's my favorite. I say listen to your body but at least you have to teach people how to do that because I was like, "My body wants Doritos," and well, cookies. I was more a cookies type of person. But yeah or like, "Sit down and meditate on your food." I'm like, "If I could do that and the reason I'm reading this book is because I'm standing in my fridge eating all the cookies because I can't sit down."

**[0:41:13] JB:** Yeah but all of that is just more doing and more stressing and more thinking. It's not really feeling which is what we're going to talk about as far as becoming aware, it's going to be a lot more about feeling than thinking.

**[0:41:31] AS:** Completely and it made me think of what you were saying like, "I'll know I'll be done with this affliction." When you were using those words, it just reminded me of how important framing is because it creates a feeling and when we look at this emotional eating and

feeling out of control that we're actually powerless or we're out of control, thinking about it that way rather than, "Whoa, this is a symptom. I'm not out of control, this is a warning sign."

When we've reframed that, all of a sudden, you can take one of the other tools we wanted to share today is evaluating versus judging and being curious like, "What is the warning shot?" I always think of the revolution, the shot that was heard around the world. What is this draw toward cookies is about? What is this warning me about? And bringing in the curiosity and the awareness, that is going to bring you to that other level of consciousness that you can then understand this problem at because you cannot understand it at a thinking level.

**[0:42:35] JB:** Yeah and just talking about feelings, actually when you're at the Mexican restaurant and the chips come out.

**[0:42:44] AS:** And you're starving.

**[0:42:45] JB:** Yeah, you're starving and I would notice the heart rate would elevate, my breathing would actually get a little rapid. It was almost like a drug addict response to food and rather than judging that, just being like, "This is really interesting. Like check out what's happening right now in my body. My heart rate is up, I'm breathing rapidly, I'm panting a little here, this is really interesting over some tortilla chips, what is this about?" You know?

**[0:43:19] AS:** Well and by doing that, if you were like, "What the F is happening?" that actually drains you more?

**[0:43:25] JB:** Yeah or saying, "Don't do it, don't do it, you don't need it, don't even have one."

**[0:43:31] AS:** "How are you going to feel in the morning? You have to weigh in."

**[0:43:35] JB:** Yeah.

**[0:43:35] AS:** Right but that actually wears you down but what I found ironic about, not ironic but you remember that book *Willpower* that came out several years ago?

**[0:43:44] JB:** Yes. I can see it in my head, the look.

**[0:43:48] AS:** Yeah, yeah and the conclusion was like, “Oh willpower takes glucose,” which is all of our food in our body breaks down to glucose, “So it takes food to have willpower but then you have to eat to not have the willpower not to eat.” And people are like, “This is why it’s so hard,” and I’m like, “No, what we need to work on is why do people think they need willpower around food?”

That’s what emotional eating is about and getting to the root of that. Willpower and trying to should all over yourself or beating yourself up. It feels constructive but again, if you measure how much that’s helped, you’ll probably find it hasn’t. Well maybe you think it’s helped in some ways but the problem is still there.

**[0:44:30] JB:** Let me ask you this Ali for our listeners out there, what is a tangible tool that you can give somebody for that scenario of they have a hard time controlling themselves around the tortilla chips at a restaurant? They feel like they can’t stop eating them.

**[0:44:50] AS:** Yeah, well the first question that I often like to ask people is, “What do you love about that? What do you love about just eating all the chips? What do you love about just going into the kitchen and eating the muffin? What do you love about face diving?” Not that people are face diving but, “What do you love about it?”

Flip this framing. If this is a really brilliant symbol which I believe the psyche and I know this to be true if we take it this way but emotional eating is a really great opportunity to have some sort of healing. Again, it doesn’t have to be from trauma but it gives us a way to step into our power, right? Because all of our wounds, and Juliet and I were talking about this before, being in American culture is traumatic. Especially if you’re in a female body.

It doesn’t matter what your size is or whatever, it’s just traumatic and research shows, you don’t have to go through “big T trauma” to feel traumatized. So this emotional eating is, “Wow, this is a chance to heal.” So I would first ask, “What do you love about this?” Let’s not think of something bad, let’s think it’s something really brilliant and it’s the best way you know how to handle a situation right now.

[0:46:01] **JB:** So do you mind if we use me as an example from my past to kind of walk?

[0:46:04] **AS:** Yeah, let's do it.

[0:46:05] **JB:** Okay.

[0:46:05] **AS:** Oh my God, I love this stuff.

[0:46:07] **JB:** So I would say that what I love about it. We could pretend like I still do, I probably would have said, "It taste good. It feels good, it taste good."

[0:46:19] **AS:** And what do you love about it tasting so good?

[0:46:22] **JB:** I think that there is a sense of relief. It was relieving something, some need.

[0:46:30] **AS:** So relief?

[0:46:31] **JB:** Relief, yeah, pleasure and relief.

[0:46:34] **AS:** Yeah and why didn't you want that to end?

[0:46:36] **JB:** Because who wants pleasure and relief to end? Those are two major things. It sounds like sex.

[0:46:45] **AS:** So what made you think — I mean this is hard because often times when you're in the moment, you get a different answer than reflecting back on it.

[0:46:53] **JB:** Yeah for sure. I feel like I wouldn't have had, I knew I didn't have the awareness. It would just have been a taste good and I don't want to stop it. I don't want to stop because it tastes so good.

**[0:47:05] AS:** Yeah, so what my next question was gonna be — so what you said was it was relief and pleasure, and what makes you think that pleasure and relief starts and ends with food?

**[0:47:18] JB:** Makes me think that?

**[0:47:19] AS:** Yeah.

**[0:47:20] JB:** You know I probably just, it was just something that I always — this is what I always associated food with that all throughout my life, you know? Growing up, like I was telling you about my father and how we were just brought up to feel like food was going to be relieving and pleasurable. That's just what we were taught.

**[0:47:44] AS:** In your experience, was it? In the moment and afterwards?

**[0:47:52] JB:** I think when I was a kid, it was both, in the moment and afterwards because that was before I had any sort of image concerns but I think that later, it was just during. The afterwards it was not. Afterwards, it was actually painful because it's guilt ridden.

**[0:48:10] AS:** So telling yourself that it's pleasurable and relief isn't completely true.

**[0:48:16] JB:** I guess not then, yeah. Relief in the moment, you are feeling in the moment you think its relief but really it's actually creating pain.

**[0:48:25] AS:** Yeah and again, it's hard in retrospect but in Truce with Food, what we get to is what about that moment makes you feel powerless? Because again and I talk about this on an earlier episode and I think your clients given how they train are probably very similar to my clients that they like a challenge. These are not people who are sitting there being like, "I'm just going to tip toe quietly in life," right? But when we feel defenceless in the face of feeling powerless is when we feel powerless.

But if we have skills and tools, all of a sudden that same stressor becomes a challenge instead of feels powerless and so really understanding and what we talk about in Truce of Food are the

beliefs underneath the emotion because emotions are very powerful but they're often created by our own beliefs in the world that we're living in. So you have to x-ray that often at a time when you're not so emotional or in it.

**[0:49:30] JB:** Yeah and I think what we were talking about when I was kid, it's like, "Okay, this is relieving and pleasurable," but that was just the story that I came up with as a child but that's not really what it was about and in retrospect, you can see that.

**[0:49:46] AS:** Yeah, so if we are coaching in real time we would have zeroed in on a specific point. Like a client example that came up this week is, a client of mine she went away for a weekend, like a girl's weekend and she knew some of the people there, some of the people she didn't and she tore all of these homemade desserts and all that kind of stuff.

She was like, "I ate a lot less than I would have been in the past, however I still felt like it was hard," because they were just staring for hours and it was just sitting in front of them and I helped her see that — she had a similar experience early in the week where there was food and sweets and she had a little bit then and then didn't think about it anymore. I helped her see that the difference there was when she was away that weekend was, there was more uncertainty.

There was more like, "I don't know all these people. I don't know all these activities we were doing". There was a lot of like, "I don't know what I'm doing. I feel a little bit awkward" and all of that awkwardness is what gets projected on to the food which why it feels like it's a relief and why it feels pleasurable or I would say a relief. That's probably what she would have said, maybe not pleasurable but it felt like a relief to project all of that onto the food but it was about her own un-comfortabilities.

**[0:51:12] JB:** Yeah and really, maybe for that split second while you're eating the food, it takes your mind off of the un-comfortability but it comes right back. It's not like it's actually, it's not a magic trick where you have food and then all of a sudden you are super confident in the group and it's not how it works at all.

**[0:51:33] AS:** Right and a lot of this stuff we've normalized for so long. "Well I've always loved — food has always been pleasure and relief." So it's how we kick this call off, Carlos is a writer

so I can't help but think of when he talks about narrative. In all movies and books, there's the inciting incident, right? It's the thing that you're like, "Oh!" That kicks off the story, the tension.

Not all of my clients struggle with food forever. Some of them is after their first baby or once they're in collage or high school but all of us have that first incident where food becomes the salve, it becomes the relief and again, it's probably the most brilliant tool we had at the time and yay for us for finding something that would do the trick. But now, we have to grow up parts of ourselves and really, that's where our power is. That's how you don't feel powerless without food.

But then what's also interesting is a lot of my clients say, "Oh if I could just take care of this food thing then everything would fall into place," and what they don't realize is that food thing and the skills that they're going to develop is going to help the things they want to fall into place be even more powerful. Because again, we have normalized a certain level of confidence but we can have even more confidence when we restore the sides of our self that feel powerless around food.

It's super exciting. I mean wouldn't you say, as someone who has done the work, I feel a level of confidence that I never knew I needed or that when I thought I was confident before I realized like yeah, you were — I wasn't insecure about it but I have a sense of empowerment that I didn't even know I was missing.

**[0:53:28] JB:** Yeah and for me, it is a little different because I always was somebody who lacked confidence and feeling empowered. For me having food as a side effect was the way that it was able to like — it was like the key to unlocking pretty much everything I had gone through in my childhood and all that trauma and thank God, it showed itself through food.

There's a lot of other ways it could have presented itself so I'm really grateful for that. You know? There are a lot of people in my position who became drug addicts or alcoholics and like we were talking about "the good girl drug" but for me, it was using food and it was really the doorway to me having confidence now going through all those issues.

**[0:54:16.5] AS:** That's what I'm saying.



**[0:54:17.0] JB:** Incredible.

**[0:54:17.9] AS:** Yeah, it was for me, me too. Super transformative. I wish I would have learned it faster, I'm not going to lie.

**[0:54:24.0] JB:** I know right? Well, for all the listeners out there, hopefully this is really helpful as it was for us.

**[0:54:32.5] AS:** Yeah, remember the awareness piece first and again in the beginning you may have to look at it after the fact. But another thing I was going to say too Juliet, think about what you love about it but I loved your recommendation of space. Space is basically, give yourself time to think about this. Like journaling, it could be thinking about it, whatever way that you can reflect the best, it's amazing your own answers will come and you got to trust it but they will come and I think that's such a powerful tool in this awareness piece.

And then the evaluate, being evaluative — evaluate versus judge. Get curious about it, what do I love about this? Why does it make so much sense? Like, what is so — don't ask why because why, you won't know. What I do I love about this, what about this makes a lot of sense? You know, the answer may not come the first time, it probably won't' but if you keep asking yourself that and journaling about it. I think you'll start to get some beginning inklings.

**[0:55:36.0] JB:** Yeah, and accepting where you are right now and giving yourself permission to have food issues right now.

**[0:55:44.6] AS:** Yeah.

**[0:55:45.7] JB:** I think that was huge for me was it was a really big turning point for me when I just accepted that I am going to eat this entire jar of peanut butter right now. I'm just going to accept it. It's funny when you accept it, when you give yourself permission in a sense and you're not like, "Don't eat it or only have a little bit," or you start to have boundaries around it when you just kind of let it happen. It was neutralizing in a way, I got to the point where I'm like, "I'm good, okay."

**[0:56:15.9]AS:** That's paradox, I mean you're speaking my language, that's the crux of change is "what we resist persist and what we embrace dissolves".

**[0:56:25.9] JB:** I gave this advice to someone recently a family member of mine actually who funnily enough she has it with peanut butter and I said...

**[0:56:34.8]AS:** Is it genetic?

**[0:56:38.0] JB:** I bet you most people listening would raise their hand and say, "Me too!" I have so many women, female clients with a peanut butter thing you know?

**[0:56:44.9]AS:** Make sure you get organic because it's a very heavily sprayed crop.

**[0:56:48.2] JB:** Yes, yes organic. I said to her, "Well why don't you just buy five jars of peanut butter and just let yourself eat peanut butter?" Because she was like, "I can't have it around me at all." "Well just buy a bunch of it." She was like, "Just let myself eat peanut butter until I'm sick of eating peanut butter?" "Well, I mean, you might not have to get sick of it but it neutralizes it for sure I think."

Like what you were saying, what you resist, persist and the goal is to not have food issues. Like I was saying when I wrote down in my journal is, I don't want to feel powerless over food. I want to be able to have a jar of peanut butter on my fridge and not have it on the back of my mind the entire day.

**[0:57:29.2]AS:** Yeah. I would just add, I mean I agree, you totally have to neutralize and normalize and I would also say though that it's helpful to get help when you're a support when you're doing that because there are — and I think this is probably where I differ from some of the intuitive eating. Although I'll have to read more about intuitive eating. I eat intuitively but I don't know the exact principles but one of the big reasons I created Truce With Food was so that people didn't spend years normalizing having eating whatever they wanted.

Because then, there is a physiological component that you then kind of start to like, “What is working for me, what isn’t?” Your blood sugar is out of whack. It’s delicate but you do have to do that and it’s just how you do it that I think. I know you would say the same thing. You coach people and all that stuff.

**[0:58:18.1] JB:** Oh no, I just tell people that they can buy boxes of Oreos and they just eat as much as they want. No for sure.

**[0:58:24.5] AS:** But exercise according to your body type.

**[0:58:26.3] JB:** Yeah, I should probably rephrase it. That piece of it doesn’t come till later with people. I don’t address something like that until much later into coaching. It always starts with balancing blood sugar and making healthy food changes first and then we kind of start to see if those patterns are coming into play and what we would need to do and how to address those later on.

**[0:58:51.6] AS:** Yeah, because a lot of that stuff, we should do like a podcast on our different ideas on the different diets because I think a lot of diets start with the emotional piece but it’s so much easier to deal with the emotional piece. A lot of cravings and thinking about food clears up when you get someone’s blood sugar balance and their gut online. That’s just, it makes it easier I think.

**[0:59:13.7] JB:** Yeah, oh yeah definitely.

**[0:59:16.0] AS:** I’m just going to shamelessly plug Truce with Food again because it is coming up in March and we do all of that in the three month program so check it out at [Alishapiro.com/truceswithfood](http://Alishapiro.com/truceswithfood) and depending on when this releases, I’ll probably be doing some classes or a webinar around the program. Definitely check it out and get it on my list and it will be, the link will be in the show notes but I don’t even know when this will be released. We’re that organized.

But yeah, the awareness piece, the curiosity and then again I think Juliet to your point being compassionate and realizing that this is actually a really great opportunity. I know it may not feel like that and I think if someone told me that, I would have like given my middle finger. But given

what we talked about it being the best tool that you have right now. It doesn't mean that it's your tool forever but it's helped you cope in a very traumatic world. It can also be a very big doorway into restoring your power. Any closing thoughts?

**[1:00:20.5] JB:** No, I think you said it all. This is just one of many, many podcast that we will do on emotional eating in a different component. We would love to hear from you guys so if you have questions about emotional eating or if there is any particular topic in this space that you want us to address, we are all ears so please email us with your questions.

**[1:00:42.1] AS:** And too yeah, if you can also leave a review on iTunes, an honest review. That will really help us get into new and noteworthy and then that helps us help you because then we can get really cool guests that will then want to come on our podcast. Anyone you would like to be interviewed, let us know, leave a review and remember that we will be doing food diary reviews up until March. Once a week we'll pick a person and we will do a 30 minute food diary review for whoever has left a review. We want to reciprocate the energy that you put in to giving a review. Thank you so much.

**[1:01:18.1] AS:** Hey insatiable listeners, Ali here with one last reminder about that Healthy Hunger webinar. I'd love for you to attend so that you can really make sure that your hunger isn't consuming your life. You can register for that webinar at [Alishapiro.com/healthyhunger](http://Alishapiro.com/healthyhunger) and it's this Monday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8 PM.

And if you're listening to this after that date, still check out the website because the recording of the webinar will be available. Let's clear this up so that you can feel back in the control seat of your hunger.

[FINAL MESSAGE]

**[1:01:55.1] JB:** Thank you so much for listening to the insatiable podcast, we hope you enjoy today's episode, you can connect with us on social media, follow me on Twitter and Instagram @julietunite and Ali @alimshapiro, M stands for "Marie". Please feel free to also email us any questions, we would love to hear from all our listeners, you can reach us at [ali@alishapiro.com](mailto:ali@alishapiro.com) and [Juliet@unitefitness.com](mailto:Juliet@unitefitness.com). We'll see you next time.

[END]