

EPISODE 29

[00:00:02.6] AS: Hello everybody and welcome to Insatiable episode number 29, *Why Affirmations and Mantras Suck*.

[00:00:12.6] JB: It is. It's all about how it's making you feel and so if you are reading a quote or a mantra or a meme out there and you snarl at it or your eyebrow raises and you're like, "Ugh, I mean I guess?" That's not the response. That's not your quote.

[00:00:32.5] AS: Clarity heals, it's getting clear on what exactly are you feeling right before you then go to, "I need to go on a diet." So today, Juliet and I are going to talk about the harm in using affirmation and mantras, which ones we don't like and seem to appear to be helpful but aren't, a process for figuring out your own, and how you can move forward so that you are really honoring your experience with how you feel in your body and your health journey without feeling silly.

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:01:07.2] 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.

[00:01:47.8] JB: And I'm Juliet Burgh, nutritionist, fitness expert, and a co-owner of Unite Fitness Studio Franchise.

[EPISODE]

[00:01:57.5] AS: Juliet, I don't know about you but I've had a lot of clients tell me that they've tried affirmations and mantras in the past but they just felt silly doing them like, "I don't believe this."

[00:02:05.9] JB: Well, it's sort of a "fake it until you make it" mentality, right? Stare in the mirror and tell yourself all of these wonderful things about yourself, which I'm not saying that they're not true but it does feel forced because it is forced. It is not coming from a genuine place.

[00:02:21.9] AS: Yeah and I think also it implies that you're always have to "be in a complete acceptance of yourself" and I know I found my biggest growth is looking from the areas where I have blind spots and where I am very defensive and I think that's probably the biggest take away I think of why affirmations and mantras suck is that if you're not feeling that way, there's a real healing that has to happen.

If you're not feeling accepting of yourself whether it's your body or it's a situation or the way that you handled it. I think just overwriting it and trying to be positive is missing out on an opportunity to get clear on what you're feeling and often times or many times, you are making the feeling worst or you're keeping that feeling going by doing self-sabotaging behaviors and we talked about this in last week's episode with Bob on body image.

So I definitely recommend everyone listen to that because we talk about that there as well but what about you? What was your experience with using affirmations and mantras when you were struggling with body image and health and weight and all that stuff?

[00:03:25.0] JB: Yeah, I mean I never have adopted affirmations before as far as looking at other ones and them really resonating with me. I've tried to — in the fitness world, that's pretty much all people Instagram or memes or sayings with quotes on them and that's just the trend and so I'm not going to say I haven't done that because that's the norm of what you do in my industry but as far as any of them resonating with me and actually progressing me as a person and me really driving with them, I don't.

The only thing that really ever worked for me was finding, like what you are saying, not even weaknesses, but where you're struggling and I always struggled with feeling a sense of safety in

my life anywhere. That's where a lot of my anxiety was resonating from. It was coming from being young and having a life of a lot of chaos as a child and so always kind of waiting for the other shoe to drop and just never knowing when the next tragic situation is going to happen.

I just kind of learned to be in a state of fight or flight all the time and was very guarded and I didn't realized that what I lacked was feeling safe and actually, Bob who we're talking about having on an amazing therapist. He and I worked together a lot and we ended up giving me just the word safe or safety to say if I was starting to feel panicky or anxious just to remind myself that I am safe because I was at a place in my life where I had stability.

There wasn't anything scary around the corner and to feel unsafe when there was no reason to feel unsafe was silly but to sooth myself, to remind myself, I would just say, "Safe, safe, safe," just in my head and it will help a lot.

[00:05:24.0] AS: What I thought was interesting in what you said is, "When I realized what I lacked". I think we jumped, for people who haven't heard the episode with Bob or whatever is that often times we think we hate our bodies. We think we're struggling with our weight and there's all these negative self-talk and we think it's our body, right? But what you're saying is underneath the bad body image or the trouble or the struggle was actually a sensation of feeling unsafe and I think that's really important.

[00:05:54.3] JB: Yeah, I mean my binge eating which then turned into late night eating. Not binging but still feeling like I need to have an extra snack or dessert at night, that all stemmed from feeling uncomfortable and unsafe. As silly as that sounds like, "Why would you feel unsafe? Why would you need to have dark chocolate when you feel unsafe?" It was just my tool for feeling safe.

[00:06:24.8] AS: For grounding yourself.

[00:06:25.8] JB: It was my blanket of chocolate, you know?

[00:06:28.9] AS: Well if you think about it, chocolate or processed carbs why would people go to it? It usually makes them feel up, right? Energetically up when you're feeling unsafe or

whatever the feeling is for you as a listener and not everyone — I think that's what's tricky about body image issues is that everyone has different feelings and often, it's an amalgam of seven or eight feelings, right? But I know that often my clients will use the terms, "Well I'm just overwhelmed or I'm frustrated or I'm stressed," and part of the work that we really work on is getting clear. Clarity heals. Is getting clear on what exactly are you feeling right before you then go to, "I need to go on a diet".

I was just in a session with a client this week and I am so proud of her because we are working on that trigger of what specific feeling, she was able to realize then as soon as she would feel that feeling and for her, she was abandonment, then it came to, "I've got to lose 20 pounds. I've got to go on a diet," and she's like, "Oh my god, I've gotten that. It's not that I need to go on a diet, I need to really explore this feeling."

And so I think that's so important. Why affirmations and mantras can be so deadly or feel so blah to people, that's not because you're doing the wrong. It's because you're broken. I think it's actually the body and psyche's innate response to that's not how I'm feeling and we can't override this. This is an opportunity to heal.

[00:07:51.0] JB: So when we think of affirmations and mantras, I know you have some Ali that you've come up with and we asked our listeners, we put a Facebook post out and we had some people come up with ones as well. What are ones that don't work?

[00:08:07.3] AS: Yeah, I think this is what most people would know wouldn't work but I'm going to thank Christine Mild for offering this one because I think it offers so much to explain but she said the one that she hears that gives her the side eye is "Nothing tastes as good as thin feels".

[00:08:30.5] JB: It's so depressing sounding.

[00:08:32.3] AS: Well, it's totally shaming, right?

[00:08:34.6] JB: Totally, yeah.

[00:08:35.4] AS: And I think what I find so interesting about this because it implies that thin feels a certain way forever. That all of a sudden life is great, it's easy, it's amazing but then there's this end point of success and it's that often success failure of dichotomy or a way of looking at life that actually sets us up for so much self-sabotage because anytime then we're not feeling thin, we're failing. Anything less than thin is failing but thin doesn't feel a certain way.

The same with fat doesn't feel a certain way. When you arrive at a healthy weight or stop struggling with your body, that's actually when I think a lot of the deep, deep work begins because you have to start to realize that life is an emotional roller coaster for better and for worse and so that's why I really don't like that one. I remember actually it was back in 2012 when I was working with Bob and I was depressed for that entire year.

I was going through the grieving process of having cancer, which I have never done, didn't know I needed to do. I can look back now and say I was definitely depressed and I remember struggling with something and Carlos was long distance and I was struggling with something in my business, I forgot what it was. But I remember being at my co-working space and being like, "Oh my God, the old me would have been like in 20 pounds, I would never feel this way."

The me that knows that really gets that's not true realized that I just have to deal with this and all of these feelings and so it was actually a loss. In that moment I realized the loss of believing what thin would feel like. It was like, oh no, you're still going to have life come at you and now you don't even have the fantasy trip of "Oh someday it won't feel this way".

[00:10:19.8] JB: I think a lot of the whole wanting to be thin is about social acceptance for people.

[00:10:25.8] AS: Oh of course.

[00:10:26.8] JB: But the underlying thing of, "Well, why don't you feel accepted now?" Or, "What does social acceptance mean for you? What does it look like for you?" Right? Are we talking about social acceptance pop culture social acceptance? Is that where this is coming from? Is it really that the people in your life don't accept you now? So a lot of it is just made up in our head.

[00:10:49.2] AS: Oh of course but also funny on that topic, I remember I had a client. This was several years ago and a part of her feeling that we had identified was being alone and that's one common feeling for a lot of people. She's like, "I think I'm also afraid of success because what if I do lose all of this weight and I'm still alone? Then I don't have that as an excuse."

[00:11:13.1] JB: So she was holding onto that?

[00:11:16.4] AS: Because then if she was feeling lonely or alone or rejected it was like, "Oh, it's because of that not because of who I am."

[00:11:22.8] JB: And it is hard for people to let go of certain things that they do habitually even for myself, it was really hard for me to let go of dessert at night and it wasn't until I again worked on that feeling of safety but I was just able to deal with the emotions and it was almost like, "Is that all there is?" There's that feeling. There's nothing miraculous happened when I didn't have dessert anymore.

The miraculousness of it is that you do get a sense of confidence with yourself when you're able to move forward with something that held you back. Whatever it is in your life that hold you back, it could be something so, so small that's habitual to you that you feel like you can't give up and there's a reason why you're not giving it up and like your client who is afraid of success. There is a fear surrounding these habits that we have or these things that keep us stuck, whether it's just a fear of who you are without it. "What am I without this thing? Who am I?"

[00:12:29.1] AS: Yeah and what you're describing is really at the core of self-trust like who will I be without this identity? Or who will I be if I feel so amazing like, will I be an asshole?

[00:12:40.6] JB: But also so many young women and just women in general, most of their life if they've been dealing with body image struggles and food struggles from their teenage years to the 30's, 40's, who knows how long, this has been like you're saying the identity. So holy shit, of course it's going to be like strange to not have the identity. If you've had this identity for 20, 30, 40 years, that's a little scary. That is scary.

[00:13:11.3] AS: Totally. I know my friends from high school used to always laugh because I used to always say, “Diet starts tomorrow,” and that was a joke in a form of bonding that we had and I just don’t care about that anymore and not that they ever did either but for a while it was like, “Okay, what else are we going to laugh about?” Like if we’re not laughing about all those times in high school that we overate, or whatever it is.

[00:13:33.1] JB: But I think we have to accept that change happens all around us. The flowers change, the trees change, things grow, they bloom and they blossom, it’s the same thing with humans and you’re holding yourself back from blossoming if you are maintaining an identity for years to come because it’s unnatural, we’re supposed to shift.

[00:13:58.9] AS: I love that you said that. I mean, look to nature. I think all the truths lie there. So in terms of affirmations and mantras, everyone knows that that’s a little demeaning but I think some of the other ones that look like we’re evolving the body image conversation are actually the same thing dressed up differently.

[00:14:21.5] JB: Oh yeah, like “strong is the new skinny”.

[00:14:24.9] AS: Yeah or I found one, “Skinny girls look good in clothes, fit girls look good naked,” and it was like, okay, so we’re pitting people against each other and we’re still making it about the appearance, meaning someone else rather than doing it for yourself.

[00:14:38.9] JB: I used to take a workout class and the guy would always be like, “Guys, we’re going to look good naked with the lights on!” Like that was supposed to motivate everybody. “Direct sunlight, you’re going to look so good!”

[00:14:58.1] AS: Juliet, you being in the fitness industry I feel like you here, and you said as we kicked off, these memes are part of the MO. Do your clients come to you and then feel like they’re in competition with other people? Do they feel like they’re doing this for other people? I think too the challenge is a lot of people will say, “I want to do it for myself,” and that is true but it’s also what snags them is that outside approval because part of safety is belonging.

We have only survived and evolved as humans because we've been in tribes and so that evolutionary need to belong is, I mean I think is as strong as our evolutionary desire to find sugar, salt, and fat in foods.

[00:15:42.2] JB: Not only to belong and I truly believe that gym communities, CrossFits, yoga studios, any kind of studio because it's more of community is the new religion. It's like church for people, you're going to a class, you're going to see these people, it's very ritualistic.

[00:16:03.4] AS: Yeah, one of my favorite books is called *The Vegetarian Myth* by Lierre Keith and she was a former vegan and her health actually suffered greatly but she talks about the existential philosophical evolution that she had to go through and when you're vegan, it gives you this way of looking at the world that isn't necessarily accurate and we have a lot of vegan listeners, I don't want to put them off but this idea that she had to basically come to accept is that life takes death.

That natural cycle and she shares about she's on these boards and people were recommending like in the African Safari, they should separate the animals that eat each other for survival versus the herbivores and how that's biologically impossible and would be bad for the ecosystem and she brought up these big questions like well the soil has bacteria, an apple is alive, where do we draw the line at life? Plants are alive, but it brought up for her to really start to eat meat again and repair her spine and all this stuff required a complete reboot of the way that she made meaning in the world.

[00:17:14.0] JB: Yeah.

[00:17:14.4] AS: And so I joke people who don't have religion, find nutrition. So you're right.

[00:17:18.2] JB: They find nutrition or work out classes and people have religion too because we are attracted to tribes and fitting in and feeling accepted. That's an innate part of being human but as far as being in the fitness industry, the trend or just with fitness in general, the trend has been moving away from being just thin but now it's moving towards women being very muscular. Women being not just fit looking.

So the body fat is lower, there's abs that are predominant and showing, you have toned arms, your butt is firm and lifted and you have a bubble butt. There's so much now and it's no different than we were talking about the heroine chic era where it's like, "Let's just be really, really thin so that all the clothes hang off of us." Now it's like, "Let's be super fit and all the clothes hug us in a certain way."

[00:18:21.1] AS: I feel like people who are using these, I feel like they have good intentions, a lot of them do. I know there is really slimy marketing and sales techniques, right? It's like that pick up artist booklet that's like, "Oh make women feel like crap and then try to hit on them," have you heard of — well, that's growing up with a tan.

[00:18:39.1] JB: I heard it, well actually Neil Strauss who wrote those books, apparently he's an author, he's a writer, he writes other books. That was just a book he wrote, it's not like his whole shtick. I thought that was really interesting. He writes like fiction.

[00:18:54.9] AS: Oh well but I feel like there's marketers that know they are prying on people's insecurities and then there's people who really have good intentions about this but the way that they're saying things isn't how people then experience them.

[00:19:09.5] JB: To be honest with you when "strong is the new skinny" came out, it did comfort me in a way because I have never been "a thin small person". I've always have a lot more muscle tone in my body even when I was a young girl. I've always had big legs, muscular, I have been able to put on muscle quickly and so it comforted me right?

But at the same point, I know that that is not what — we shouldn't be looking to these things to feel and accept ourselves. I accept myself and I don't need the media to tell me that strong is the new skinny to accept myself.

[00:19:46.5] AS: Yeah and especially when it's in comparison to skinny people. Then it becomes this whole skinny people then feel people don't have empathy if they struggle or it doesn't mean that they still don't have challenges with their health and I think overall, everyone is trying to say that there's one way to look at health and that's one of the reasons I loved when we interviewed Jennifer Jordan of Vibe Seattle.

She's struggling with depression and she's a fitness instructor, right? It's not always being up and I feel like a lot of these mantras and affirmations, you're supposed to constantly feel up and upbeat and positive. So many of these when I was Googling and to try to find them were all about being positive and I think in that same vein, that's why self-help is still around. It hasn't fixed anything.

The positive, only think of the positive, and I think you have to be devoted to something to any goal and devoted to it doesn't mean you're there just when things are up but it means you're also willing to work through the struggle, to name the feelings, to go work through the discomfort and I don't see any motivational quotes or affirmations or mantras saying that.

[00:20:56.9] JB: Well except for in Buddhism about life is suffering.

[00:21:01.3] AS: But that's a quote, that's like a philosophical...

[00:21:03.7] JB: Not one I resonate with, but it's how you move through the suffering that makes all the difference.

[00:21:11.7] AS: Yeah and I was going to say, when we were talking about quotes and mantras, I am in my nature a contrarian person. I just see the world of like, "You are not thinking of this or you're not thinking of that." So whenever I use — all of these quotes that aren't philosophical in nature, imply that life is so black and white and I think that is so important for people when they are having a different experience if they come across of like, "I should be feeling this," or, "I should love my body."

It's like, are you denying your own experience and what are the reminders that you can be where you are? I think that's really the best messages that are packaged in that. So I don't know.

[00:21:51.0] JB: What about "No Pain, No Gain"?

[00:21:54.5] AS: Or I saw, “Pain is weakness leaving the body”. I personally hate those especially because we even heard it’s from some listeners of Insatiable that listened to episode six of workout for your body type how they were having pain and then they tried to work out more for what would work for their body type and the pain went away. So I think assuming that it’s going to be painful to get in shape or that you should work through the pain of working out also implies that being healthy is about deprivation. It’s the same.

[00:22:24.5] JB: Yeah I mean obviously, you are talking about joint pain and whatnot.

[00:22:28.0] AS: Oh yeah, that was what I’m talking about.

[00:22:29.0] JB: Yeah, I’m thinking about muscle fatigue and burning and you’re so out of breathe that you want to throw up or you do throw up, that’s what I’m thinking about. Like Biggest Looser style accounts where you’re pushing past your threshold.

[00:22:45.4] AS: Well that’s an interesting question because I do think and I did read one quote that says, “Change happens outside of your comfort zone”, which I do believe that but I think if you’re straining and striving, you end up exhausting yourself.

[00:23:01.0] JB: Yeah, I think there needs to be a balance like we talked about, right? So when I work with clients, I’m not looking to give them a work out that’s going to shock them into like, “Holy shit, I’m so out of shape!” I’m looking to find this balance of pushing them out of their comfort zone and getting comfortable with being uncomfortable but not the type of uncomfortable where you’re making yourself sick or you want to cry. Those are very extreme. There is definitely a, if we’re talking about a scale of one to ten, we’re not going to a 10, we’re going to seven or eight.

[00:23:36.9] AS: That’s a great scale.

[00:23:38.9] JB: You know? And there’s plenty of change that happens there. It’s not a no pain, no gain thing.

[00:23:44.7] AS: Yeah because then people injure — I am thinking along in exercise standpoint, then people can injure themselves and then it's like, "Oh it's because I wasn't strong enough or because I'm fat," or whatever and that, the emotional — you stress yourself too much physically and then there's this emotional backlash.

[00:24:02.0] JB: But the whole point of why we wanted to do this episode is to say how these don't motivate.

[00:24:07.2] AS: Yes, they shame and the difference between shame and motivation. Often times we say we're motivating ourselves, but the motivation is really disguised as shame.

[00:24:17.3] JB: I can't tell you how many times people will say, "I want to put a picture of the old me up on a bikini up on my fridge," or a supermodel or a fitness model that really inspires me and every morning when I wake up, I will look at it and it's going to remind me to make the healthier choice with food or to go to the gym. Dead silence.

[00:24:39.9] AS: No, I thought you were going to go. I'm so glad you brought that up.

[00:24:43.1] JB: I know Ali is probably like, "Oh f!@#".

[00:24:45.9] AS: No, I was so glad you brought that up because I think that's the worst idea.

[00:24:49.4] JB: It's horrible. It's so shaming, it's so fucked up, it totally doesn't make you feel good about yourself. Then you wake up every day and you're reminded of how wrong you are and how your body isn't okay. Or you won't be good enough until you get to that place.

[00:25:06.3] AS: Yeah and that you failed, right? Because you used to be that way and then you let yourself go or whatnot.

[00:25:11.1] JB: Yes, especially if you have an old photograph of yourself. That's way more harmful I think than having a bottle or something like that. You're never going to be the old you. I like to remind people of that. That person doesn't exist anymore and living in the past like that is

so detrimental to not only your present but your future. It doesn't motivate and we are evolving and changing, you'll be a different you. You will never be that you.

[00:25:42.0] AS: Yeah and sometimes, that could be better.

[00:25:44.7] JB: It could be better, you know?

[00:25:45.3] AS: Yeah but I know a lot of people who, obviously I see people at a different place in their journey but it's like, "Yeah, I was skinny back then but I was miserable. I was always worried about gaining weight." Or, "I was in a bad relationship at the time." I think anything that doesn't make you curious about where you are or what your experiencing or what you're setbacks really mean is really not helping.

I think anything that confirms your own negativity or negative self-beliefs about yourself is not constructive and really looking for something that opens you up to your own experience and restoring self-trust is so important. What about the one Juliet that we were talking about before we started with the episode that was a little bit softer and that can be construed as positive but felt...

[00:26:35.3] JB: Positive?

[00:26:36.6] AS: It was like, "I love myself".

[00:26:40.0] JB: Oh, something like, "I am strong, I am beautiful, I am enough"?

[00:26:45.6] AS: Yeah, I am kind of chuckling. How do you feel about those softer ones?

[00:26:52.8] JB: If you don't believe it, saying it doesn't make you believe it, that's how I feel about it. Just saying something out loud isn't going to make you believe it. You have to do the actions behind those words that will then make you believe what you're saying out loud otherwise like we were saying, it's really you just putting on an act and hoping that those words will seep in and the words will be transformative and then change your behavior. But I don't think it works like that. I don't think the words transforms the behavior.

[00:27:24.2] AS: It doesn't and I am so big on people actually knowing what works and what doesn't and then also measuring if what you're doing is productive. I think often if we think if we're saying these things and trying to be positive, we're making progress but then we're still in the same place we were a month later or what not and also too, I think if you have to say it you're even questioning it in a way.

[00:27:49.0] JB: How do feel about, Ali, about naked, standing in front of a mirror, looking at your body and then being like, "I'm beautiful. I love my body"?

[00:28:00.1] AS: I would crack up. I am cracking up not just like I would.

[00:28:03.1] JB: Because that is an exercise that I know so many health coaches will give even therapists.

[00:28:11.0] AS: Yeah maybe because I am just skeptical and contrarian and side-eyed by nature, that would not work for me. I'm sure it works for many people. I think being able to see yourself but kind of to go back to the episode with Bob, you can look at the same mirror and feel differently about yourself throughout the day and I think the important thing is to notice, "Wow, why can I feel good at 12 but what just happened that now I feel so bad at 8?" That's the real issue that I need to work on and changing my body to whatever size or dying my hair is never going to change that if I don't get to the root.

[00:28:50.8] JB: I think I had brought this up in another episode about how we hold our body and we don't even realize we're doing things that we're doing like clenching the steering wheel for example, squeezing it super tight. I remember not realizing that I was doing that and then I'd be like, "Wow, I am like holding on for dear life," and that was so powerful for me because that's really what I was doing.

I felt so unsafe all the time that everything I was holding my body very tightly or I would sit and I would always place my purse on my lap covering myself or I have to be on the coach with a blanket on or I had my book bag on top of my lap. I was always doing those things and the way I was holding my body was a direct reflection of how I was feeling.

[00:29:42.3] AS: That's fascinating.

[00:29:43.3] JB: Isn't it?

[00:29:44.4] AS: And did that help you unwind what was happening?

[00:29:47.6] JB: Well yeah because when you realize these little weird things you do or things you — you're like, "Okay, I am going to remove the purse off my lap, or I'm going to uncross my legs, or I'm going to relax the grip on the steering wheel," and it's incredible on what you might notice. It's happening, what are you trying to cover up by doing these things? That is more powerful than being like, "I'm strong, I'm safe, I'm beautiful, I'm enough," you know?

[00:30:13.5] AS: Yeah, I know and too for me, that's not even how I frame the conversation anymore. If I go a week or two and don't work out. It's not because maybe I have gained a couple of pounds or whatever, I just don't feel the best. But I always feel grateful.

This past year have been me in awe of everything and being in touch with that and I'm just at the place and again, I've done a lot of work so I don't want to dismiss the people who aren't in gratitude for their body. But I just feel so grateful that my body works so well with all it's been through and that I have the energy every day and that I know what works for my body.

[00:30:53.3] JB: One of the reasons I was bringing that up about the body is because we were talking about the mirror exercise. The only thing that I could see that being helpful for would be if you are so ashamed of your body and you're always covering it up and you're not even looking at yourself. It's all from the neck up. Everything is in your head. So sometimes like releasing the grip on the steering wheel, taking the blanket off, removing your clothes and exposing yourself to that very thing that you're so uncomfortable about can be very powerful.

[00:31:28.9] AS: Yeah, it can help you reattach to life.

[00:31:30.4] JB: Exactly because you're detached.

[00:31:31.9] AS: Yeah, again. I think that might work for some people.

[00:31:35.7] JB: So it's not about, "I'm going to look in the mirror to love my body," right? Because I don't think that that's what's going to happen when you look in the mirror naked that you're going to be like, "Oh wow, I am so beautiful." No, you're going to pick your body apart and judge your body. That's totally normal. Let's be real, you're going to look at all the flaws, right? But the idea is that you have to embrace it so you can de-synthesize the fear about it.

[00:32:03.1] AS: Yeah or the shock if you do see yourself in the mirror.

[00:32:05.8] JB: Exactly.

[00:32:06.5] AS: Yeah I guess everything is about the intention behind it.

[00:32:08.9] JB: Yeah, it's totally about the intention.

[00:32:10.9] AS: So we kind of talked about some of these affirmations or mantras or whatever people are calling them that appear to be helpful but aren't but let's talk about what you found helpful for you because we do need — I think the intention of affirmations and mantras is to ground us back into feeling safe, because I also believe that no matter what feelings we've identified are driving us to want to diet or driving us to pick our body apart or driving us to eat.

They are ultimately, we want to feel safe and I think that's what most food and body stuff is about. Now, there's a million and one emotions that when we feel we don't feel safe but I think having something to remind you, to get you out of that emotional high jacking when you're feeling shamed or you're feeling isolated or you're feeling abandoned or you're feeling anxious like maybe you can't even phrase it yet.

[00:33:04.6] JB: I had a moment today actually.

[00:33:06.7] AS: Oh, do tell.

[00:33:07.8] JB: This morning I woke up, I was supposed to have a client at 6:30 and I woke up at 5:45 and I just wasn't feeling it. I just didn't want to wake up at five in the morning and go train this client and I've had early mornings this whole week. It's been a long week of really working and I messaged her and I said, "I'm really sorry but I don't want to do it. I need to honor myself. I need to sleep a little bit more today and we'll make it up another time this weekend or something." So it kind of started like that.

But I felt the sense of being overwhelmed this morning from the get go. By the time I left my house this morning to be at work, the second I stepped outside, I felt a wave of anxiety this morning. I just wanted to run back inside and just not come out. I didn't want to go today. I just didn't want to be in my life today and I was actually walking with my partner because he was going to work at the same time and we were parting ways.

Instead of holding in that fear, that anxiety that I was feeling because I was feeling very overwhelmed, I said to him, "I'm feeling very anxious right now. I'm feeling like I don't want to go to work right now. I'm feeling like I want to go back inside right now," and that takes the charge away right there. Admitting that rather than being like, "Why am I feeling like this? This is wrong, I shouldn't feel like this," or trying to hide it. It's always best to say out loud and honor what you're feeling. There's nothing wrong with you for feeling that way.

So I said it, I got to work, I told the co-worker, I was like, "I'm feeling very anxious today. I don't know what's going on but I am." It's like, "This is happening." But then also just saying it out loud and being honest with myself and then looking at, "All right, what is today?" Just being realistic about what today is and what I can handle and it took the charge away, that makes sense?

[00:35:11.1] AS: Yeah, there's some really great coaching research around emotional differentiation, meaning when you can actually label what you're feeling and you labelled it anxious but really being able to get at what you're feeling helps just take the charge out of it because then it becomes manageable by labelling it and again honoring what you're experiencing rather than judging it. "Why am I feeling this way? And then I cancel on a client," and that creates more of the response rather than, "Okay, what is this?"

[00:35:42.1] JB: Yeah and also you might not be able to pinpoint the feeling, right? Sometimes it's challenging to be like, "It's anxiety." It maybe, "I'm short of breathe right now, my heart is beating fast, I'm sweating a little bit." It doesn't mean you're having a heart attack. I know it sounds like it but that's anxiety right? For me it's, "I'm feeling like the world is closing in on me."

I think I said to you Ali that sometimes I'll have an image and our last podcast was all about imagery and how powerful it is. I had an image of just being in a white room, this was yesterday actually. So it all made sense this week of being in a white room, no sound, just white and just being alone and it was calm. I felt so clam. I'm overwhelmed with a lot going on. So your images are very powerful too like what you see for yourself.

[00:36:42.4] AS: Well that's really interesting considering that you just said that you felt the walls were closing in on you, which was the exact opposite of the imagery that came to you of you being in a white room with space.

[00:36:55.6] JB: Yeah exactly and so the world closing in on you right there, that feeling, if that's the feeling you're having. Everything is just overwhelming or crushing you, that usually means you need space.

[00:37:09.5] AS: Yeah and I should say, it takes a while to be able to identify and label what you're feeling.

[00:37:14.5] JB: But going back to mantras, I'm feeling anxious or whatever, to look up a mantra and say to myself out loud, "All is well in the world today."

[00:37:28.2] AS: All is not well.

[00:37:30.6] JB: "No, it's not mother fucker, all is not well!" That's how I want to respond to that. To be like, "You don't know!"

[00:37:40.0] AS: My favorite is and I used to be guilty of this. I realized how you know everyone quotes Gandhi? "Well, you could just be the change you want to be in the world." Actually in the New York Times this guy wrote that there's never any official record that Gandhi said that.

[00:37:53.8] JB: Really?

[00:37:54.4] AS: No but there is evidence that he said something along those lines but everyone left off the second half which was what he said was basically, “You need to change yourself so that you could then go out and change the systems in society that are oppressing people but we’ve just kind of been like, “Oh, let me just,” — and I am paraphrasing what Gandhi said because it wasn’t a direct quote, but what he said got cut off.

[00:38:19.8] JB: I see, I see.

[00:38:20.7] AS: I think that’s like a lot of mantras it’s like, “All is not well.” I want to do coasters for real life.

[00:38:30.5] JB: I think they have those out there for sure. Those are the best ones when I see those kind of kitschy little things like when I’m on vacation in beach towns and you see like coasters or cups that say that kind of shit, I’m like, “I love this.”

[00:38:46.5] AS: I know but then I’m like, again me being contrarian I’m like, “You can’t get too sarcastic because that’s very defensive too.” So okay, what worked for you was really labeling it and then do you still come back to that “I’m safe”?

[00:39:03.1] JB: Yeah, definitely.

[00:39:05.0] AS: How do you come to that? I think it will be very helpful for our listeners of how did you arrive at — was it just the labelling? I know that you did a lot of work on.

[00:39:12.9] JB: Yeah it’s just labelling what it is, right? What’s the underlying thing that causes me strife and anxiety? And it’s feeling unsafe. It’s feeling like something bad is going to happen and even though it’s not, it’s still a feeling I have, right? So I have to honor that feeling and so just by saying, “You are safe, nothing bad is happening. Nothing bad is happening to you right now,” right? Even if something negative is happening, I’m still safe. I’m not dying, I’m safe.

[00:39:45.2] AS: Right, well I think that's interesting because "I'm safe" doesn't imply that everything is okay. It implies that you're resilient and can handle it and I think that's such a big part of why we are so afraid of our emotions. We think they will annihilate us.

[00:40:00.4] JB: What do you think about, and I'm just thinking this and there's probably another word replacement of God, that God or whomever will never give you more than you can handle?

[00:40:09.2] AS: Oh my God, well okay two things. I think for people who believe that there is an organized God, I think that can be helpful for people if you believe in that kind of structure.

[00:40:23.0] JB: Well I think that can sometimes help people with resiliency. They're like, "Okay, I got this. I can handle this."

[00:40:28.7] AS: Yeah but I don't believe that myself because I don't believe everything happens for a reason.

[00:40:34.6] JB: But there are plenty of things that people can't handle alone or things can become too overwhelming and you need support.

[00:40:42.3] AS: Totally and again, the coach in me is like, "Well how are you defining handle?" You know, all of that stuff.

[00:40:51.9] JB: Yeah because we put all these framework around things like, "Handling it looks like this."

[00:40:56.4] AS: Yeah, handling looks like you're going to succeed, that it's going to be wrapped up in a pretty bow when, I don't know, the biggest change and transformation in my life has been pretty messy.

[00:41:05.2] JB: Right, where you have a death in the family and you go to work the next day. You're like, "I'm handling this. I've got this."

[00:41:12.5] AS: Yeah, handling to me is going through the grief cycle. So I also don't believe God's outside of us. I think if there is a God, it's within all of us because we're part of nature and to me that is God. But I also think life is really rough and hard and if that feels true for you and I think that's the big takeaway that I want people to realize about you can have mantras and affirmations but it's important that it resonates and feels true for you.

So for example Juliet, for you everything comes back to safety for you or right now as you know it and that really helps you to say, "I'm safe, I'm safe." For me being who I am, I'm going to read — for me it is actually a quote that when I'm struggling or I'm uncertain about something. Because a lot of my stuff comes down to safety too but it feels different. I don't get anxiety, I get something else. So I have this quote by Rainer Maria Rilke which I want to read and he says:

"Be patient towards all that's unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not seek the answers which cannot be given to you because you would not be able to live them and the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live some distant day into the answer."

And I just shared that because that to me, that grounds me. That resonates with me because I believe in questions more than answers because as a coach...

[00:42:45.7] JB: Yes you do.

[00:42:446.7] AS: Well as a coach I've come to realize we are all in our own worlds and hopefully they match up with other people and there's some clarity, but that to me feels more true. It's not that again, that's a quote. So I just think the point is for everyone is to feel what resonates with your values and how you see the world because what you ultimately need is some grounding and some reminders of what's true for you and that is something. I think the great thing is that you get to author yourself. Don't let someone else come to that conclusion for you. Start to trust that you can be grounded in that moment with those reminders.

[00:43:25.7] JB: It is, it's all about how it's making you feel and so if you are reading a quote or a mantra or a meme out there and you snarl at it or your eyebrow raises where you're like, "I

mean, I guess.” That’s not the response. That’s not your quote. Versus having an “aha moment” that makes sense. That comforts me.

[00:43:50.8] AS: Yeah, I’m so glad you brought that up because I think it has to be something that moves you. Moves you in a way of — because I think everyone thinks, oh that a mantra or an affirmation or something that grounds you has to make you feel really up or positive and I found the things that feel the most true for me aren’t positive or negative. They just feel like a truth and a calmness, which is neither up nor down. So I’m glad you brought that up.

[00:44:17.7] JB: One of my interns, she has a beautiful tattoo on her back. It goes all the way down her back and I said, “What does that say?” And it say, “Life doesn’t get easier, you just get stronger.” And that for her, she got it tattooed on her.

[00:44:31.9] AS: That’s a commitment.

[00:44:33.6] JB: I know, but I think that’s beautiful, I mean for her. It really resonates with her.

[00:44:39.1] AS: Yeah and I think talking about how these frameworks for stronger because a lot of the fitness runs around strength. I found that people think strength means becoming more fierce, more geared up, more hard bodied, right? Now that muscularity is in. But actually strength is that softening of, “What am I feeling?” It’s the vulnerability, it’s staying open no matter what’s happening and being open is, “Okay, what am I feeling, how do I label this? What is true for me right now?”

And so when I hear that, I feel like I’m stronger now as I have gotten older because I’ve actually, I don’t want to say confront because that implies an adversarial relationship but because I’ve been curious, because I’ve just finally learned to be with how I’m feeling.

[00:45:24.5] JB: Because you’re just observing yourself, not judging yourself.

[00:45:29.4] AS: And I feel my feelings more. I think that’s a part of the human experience that we’re all trying to bypass.

[00:45:35.4] JB: Do you cry more now?

[00:45:37.4] AS: Oh my god, well I haven't cried lately but Carlos would say differently. He's like, "You're just so sensitive," and I am. But yeah, I remember actually especially the year that I was working with Bob, I cried more then than probably the previous 15 years since I have gotten sick.

[00:45:53.4] JB: Crying is incredible, it's so incredible. I would love to do an episode talking about that a little bit. Well just because so many people, they are ashamed of that. They are ashamed of feeling anxious and showing it shaking, vulnerability, crying.

[00:46:13.2] AS: Yeah because that is how we have defined weakness and that strength is you know?

[00:46:16.9] JB: Yeah, don't we all say, "Oh my god, that person is so strong," when we see them cry or shake or like what they're doing...

[00:46:24.6] AS: Yeah, I've heard it more, granted that I don't really watch a lot of mainstream media but I've heard it more in the context of like, "Wow, that person is so strong. They don't even let it bother them, or they just keep pressing on." I've heard it more on that context but then there's also, this is a whole other episode but the double standard of if a woman cries at work versus, I mean I don't think I have ever seen a man, I think he has enough.

I think that society has closed that door enough for most men to cry at work unless of course maybe something personal happens but there are double standards too, but that's a whole other episode. But yeah, I've said this on the podcast previously, but everything to me when I hear mantras or affirmations, I generally think that the definition is like opposite day.

When people are like, "Oh you know I'm strong now." I'm like, "Does that mean you're more open and sensitive and empathetic?" But that's me. That's how I view the world and everyone is different. I do think there is though this you have to find the happy medium for what that is because you can't always just be soft and "emotional". But being able to label your emotions and then knowing what to do with them helps bring some more of that, what I would call

masculine energy to them. To help transform them rather than being swallowed alive by them. Because yes, you need to be able to feel them but then you also and this is what we do with Truce with Food is transform the story you have about what it means to feel rejected or abandon or unsafe or uncertain to whatever it is.

So I think the key take aways for this episode for everyone is one, honor where you are and how you're feeling and there's nothing wrong with that. Don't try to override it with an affirmation or a mantra. Two, you can add in, pipe in Juliet if you want to add anything, is find something that resonates with you, that feels like a steady truth to you rather than something where you're like, "Ugh", it feels "aspirational/shaming".

[00:48:32.6] JB: For sure.

[00:48:33.2] AS: Yeah and then check in and learn. I think three or maybe that should have even been the second one is learn to label how you're feeling and really start to identify it and I think too, one of the things that I wanted to bring up when you're talking about that, for me even though I have gotten so much better at labelling my emotions and all this stuff, sometimes it still isn't the answer that comes to me right away of like what exactly I'm feeling, why exactly I'm feeling "stressed or overwhelmed". But I'll find that if I ask the question in the morning, often the answer will come later.

[00:49:03.0] JB: But even if you don't have the answer.

[00:49:04.8] AS: No, I'm saying I won't have it all the time.

[00:49:06.3] JB: It's fine.

[00:49:07.5] AS: Oh yeah.

[00:49:08.1] JB: You don't need it.

[00:49:08.7] AS: But it will come.

[00:49:09.6] JB: It will come but you don't need it in the moment, right? Just the questions, just ask the question.

[00:49:13.7] AS: Yeah, it will come in the shower or when you're walking down the street being, "That's what it is." That's the cool thing about intuition.

[00:49:20.1] JB: Yep, trust your intuition. I was just going to say that.

[00:49:22.1] AS: Yeah and intuition is deeper than just the floating emotions. It's that truth. So any parting words?

[00:49:30.8] JB: No, just find the quotes, the affirmations, the mantras that resonate with you and make you feel safe.

[00:49:36.2] AS: Yes, yes.

[00:49:38.0] JB: And that all is well in the world.

[00:49:42.4] AS: I would say yes and I think [inaudible] and self-expressed, I think that's so important.

[00:49:46.5] JB: We just have to connect to it.

[00:49:48.1] AS: Yeah, excellent.

[00:49:50.7] JB: Well, thank you everybody so much for listening in today. We highly appreciate it. Don't forget to call in to our number that we have. Ali do you have the number up?

[00:50:01.2] AS: I don't.

[00:50:03.7] JB: All right, so if you go to Alishapiro.com/podcast, you will find that we have a phone number to call in and ask any questions you want, leave your comments, we would love

to hear from you and then also, we still need reviews on iTunes. You can also find us on Stitcher Radio and Google Play. So lots of places to find us. Any parting words Ali?

[00:50:26.2] AS: No just if they could leave an iTunes review that really helps us out.

[00:50:29.7] JB: We have had some amazing reviews recently and I'm so grateful. It's phenomenal.

[00:50:34.2] AS: We love doing this and we love that it's helping so many people. It's just such a win-win.

[00:50:39.6] JB: And definitely, we want to keep it going. So getting those reviews helps us to keep the podcast alive. So thank you all so much and we will see you next time.

[00:50:49.2] AS: Bye.

[END OF EPISODE]

[00:50:50.3] 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 stand for Marie. Please feel free to also e-mail us any questions. We would love to hear from all of our listeners. You can reach us on ali@alishapiro.com and juliet@unitefitness.com. We'll see you next time.

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