

Food Freedom 2: Feel in Control, Not Controlled by Food – Insatiable Season 10, Episode 3

[INTRO]

Welcome to Insatiable Season 10: Research-Based Weight Loss: Rebuild Your Biology + Psychology Feedback Loop

Have you ever read about the past and thought, I can't believe people actually believed that? In the 19th century, doctors thought that "bloodletting" could cure illnesses and Dr. Joseph Lister was shunned for his thesis and early research proving that bacteria caused disease. While Dr. Lister was being denigrated, Charles Darwin was being celebrated, falsely claiming that women were less intelligent than men. In Darwin's time women rarely went to advanced schooling, they needed to preserve their limited energy for baby-making. The 20th century wasn't immune from junk science and outrageous claims, Domino's sugar advertised a sugar diet as a way to lose weight touting that it had less calories per gram than fat. Cigarettes were also marketed as healthy.

It sounds laughable to most of us now. But only because brave, curious thinkers were willing to question, test, and disprove the status quo and limited thinking.

In Season 10 of Insatiable, Research-Based Weight Loss: Rebuild Your Biology and Psychology Feedback Loop, we'll explore emerging research and viewpoints, now on the periphery, that will make the current mainstream thinking of weight loss as willpower and calorie-cutting look just as misguided as soothing babies and colds with morphine syrup (which was a medically endorsed thing in the Victorian era).



We will explore how taking the steps towards weight loss individually and societally can be a form of resistance against the toxicity and industrialization of our food supply. We'll question the convenience of telling women that weight loss is giving into the patriarchy and male gaze—and how this silences deeper questioning about why we all have gained so much weight and what other consequences come with this physically and mentally.

We will do this by taking an integrated and holistic look at the biological and psychological feedback loop that goes into maintaining a natural weight and how our industrialized society has disrupted it.

We'll discuss how what you eat informs how you feel and your habits which in turn influence what you eat as a constantly self-reinforcing infinity loop.

We'll examine how our culture and thus education and medical systems are not holistic, and results in a siloed view of human biology and health which allows the public and experts to continue to frame weight loss as about willpower and only about food.... and how very convenient this is for those who set and profit from our industrialized agriculture policy.

We laugh about Domino's sugar diet, but the same reasoning still informs our modern dietary guidelines. Even the mainstream is noting that "The Sugar Research Foundation" with the help of three handsomely compensated Harvard scientists in 1967 handpicked studies placing the blame on fat rather than sugar for heart disease. In 1977 one of these researchers would become the Head of Nutrition for the USDA and outline nutrition guidelines, enabling the low-fat weight-loss craze to become a thing, and we'd all get fatter, sicker, and more depressed in the years to come.

If in your gut, you feel there are more important (and potentially revolutionary) root causes to your weight battle or if you want to learn the viewpoint that people will likely have 50 years



now— that willpower and a simple view of calorie counting as the key to weight loss makes about as much sense as giving morphine to babies—this season is for you.

[EPISODE]

“I’m scrolling through my Instagram feed and I see that Intuitive Eating meme about “Should I eat the cookie?”, where there’s a straight line to “yes”, eat cookie and move on. And I get overwhelmed trying to weigh those voices with the fact that I often truly do feel crappy after eating certain foods. I get that the IE people aren’t trying to make me eat “bad foods” - they are trying to help me not have emotionally loaded foods. But it’s hard to know if it’s the shame of eating or if it’s truly not feeling good in my body, you know?”

This was a question I got from one of my clients as she was embarking on my self-study Why Am I Eating This Now process. I loved her insight that there is a nuanced difference between feeling shame from eating a cookie and then actually feeling physically crappy from food.

Of course, the goal of IE is that by “legalizing” all foods, you eventually don’t binge on said cookie, chips or whatever foods are hard for you to each just one of and can then hear your bodies natural cues. A main IE theory is that bingeing is often because of restriction and overeating and bingeing will go down the less you restrict.

This is all true AND...I’ve found there are two main root causes that IE leaves out that make it hard for us to hear our natural intuition around food and thus, feel out of control:

- The foods we overeat or binge on are designed to hijack our physiological design and disrupt our natural intuitive eating cues, which are more subtle than the extremes of blood sugar highs and lows, felt as anxiety and hangry, that processed foods create. So “just eat the cookie” turns into “I just ate the bag” and we feel physically tired but wired, irritable and “junky” inside.



- Bingeing and overeating aren't only about restriction. They are also about our story that creates patterns and behaviors that make us feel out of control - or restricted in freedom - in an area of our life that we then turn to food. For example, for some of my clients, it's their relationship with their partner where they are tired of having the same fights or it's feeling like they have to choose between work and being healthy. This is where "a cookie isn't just a cookie".

When a cookie isn't just a cookie, the shame from eating is because we are chronically eating out of alignment from our goals and we believe we are broken in some way because we are out of alignment with our values or who we want to be. But we are turning to food when we feel out of control in our story.

An easy example of the holistic nature of why we turn to food is people will often overeat if they skipped the gym and feel guilty or are now behind with their calories. They think the day is ruined so F@#\$ it and I'll start tomorrow. Either their story is active in how they exercise OR, they missed working out because something outside their control - like a sick kid or it's a busy time at work.

The shame spiral from eating is the same spiral we feel when we are out of control in other areas of our lives.

So how do we untangle this infinity loop that our out of control eating is partly fueled by the addictive nature of processed foods like bread and Peanut M&Ms (because no one is overeating steamed chicken breast or broccoli), and sometimes "being bad" is from emotionally feeling out of control elsewhere in our lives, more consciously known as "Chuck it F@#\$ it" or "I'll get back on track after the holidays, after my travel is over, etc."



In today's episode, we'll discuss:

- How Intuitive Eating is a great start yet doesn't go far enough in helping us feel in control of food
- The difference between control and choice and how choice gets you further with your health and nutrition goals
- How to choose to align with your physiological and psychological feedback loop

First, we need to understand that what feels like being in control around food is actually about having choice. Being in choice enables us to feel more empowered in our lives because we can work with what's unfolded versus trying to do the impossible, control everything.

People often think eating disorders and disordered eating is about control. Because I don't work with people who have an active eating disorder like anorexia, I can't speak to those situations.

But for those of us with disordered eating, which I define as any eating that is out of alignment with our goals (i.e. bingeing, overeating at night when you don't want to be), feeling out of control around food is actually about being out of choice. Being out of choice can happen from physical and emotional imbalances.

Let's take two examples.

It's your birthday and you want cake but you are worried one day of eating cake will lead to a week until it's out of your house. You think "I'm on a good streak, I can't have the cake in my house so I'll tell people I don't want cake and serve fruit with keto whipped cream". On the surface, it looks like the "Good" choice and you're in control but actually, you're out of choice and thus, feel deprived. And deprivation eventually leads to overeating or bingeing.



Or, you eat the cookies even though you know they make you feel like shit like my clients example. It can look like the “good” legalizing food choice yet it’s out of alignment of your goals because you don’t want to feel crappy. Hence the shame spiral of “why am I doing this to myself?” etc.

In both situations, being out of choice feels like being out of control.

As I replied to my clients email, I will never tell anyone to just eat the cookie. Rather I’ll ask: do you want the cookie? Do you know if you really want the cookie? Do you know how to X-ray the cookie to recognize it’s not just a cookie? If you want it, great. Eat it. If you aren’t clear, let’s look at those mental gymnastics over “I shouldn’t but I want to” or “I don’t want to but I can’t not” as a symptom you are feeling out of choice in your story.

Many clients say simply knowing the difference between control and choice is helpful.

As an overall definition, I think of control as an external process where we are trying to get our bodies and the world to bend to our will. We also feel at the mercy of life and in this space, life is happening to us.

This includes relying on external ideas of “good” and “bad” foods to follow a certain diet plan for weight loss even though the drastic calorie-cutting means we will eventually “fall off” because it’s out of alignment with our physiological design, which doesn’t support drastic calorie cutting.

It can be trying to prove our point to our sister so she understands us.

It can be trying to do a good job so we can keep our job.



Whatever it is, we are trying to influence an external outcome: how we look physically and to others. Control isn't all bad. In fact, my clients have had great success with control in their lives. That's why they try to use the structure of diets or even a more compassionate framework like IE; having a structure in their life whether it was schooling or a certain career path enabled them to succeed.

Yet when we try to exert control on things that are more dynamic and thus uncontrollable - like our bodies physiological design, other people, the mystery of life - we often fail. As we say in the coaching world, when you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail. In other words, we try to apply this same idea of a "formula for success" onto something that needs a more fluid navigation system.

Feeling in control of food is about the internal process of two choices: what do I want to choose based on my physiological design and owning my story? Choice is an internal process of really getting to know our bodies and our emotional needs and wants. When we have a framework to figure this out - which is what my work is about - we discover "being good" and "being bad" with food and our story gets radically revised.

So the question becomes: what foods work best for their bodies so they can choose health - which is feeling good, not an intellectualized idea of good.

This is different from a weight loss focus - it's not about the high of "being good" or thinking we are "good" if we push through hunger or cravings. Quite the opposite: it's about choosing what feels satisfying.

Now of course, copious amounts of refined carbs aren't good for anyone. But they are the solution, not the problem, when we feel out of control in our story.



If we extend the satisfaction metaphor, because how we eat is always telling a story, what do we need to choose to satisfy our needs and wants? And this question is more matrixy than you might think!

Because when we are in our story, we are trying to minimize risk and so believe we need and want things we actually don't care about. It's exactly like what happens in Western Medicine...it's great for stopping the bleeding, things not getting worse, which is what we assume in our story.

But if we want to be well, we have to ask different questions and orient in a different direction towards life and vitality, which is all the feels! When you ask yourself what you want versus what you should or have to do, you get drastically different answers.

Let's first start with choosing how to eat based on our physiological design based on my client's dilemma of "should I eat the cookie?" and feeling like physical shit. We went over in great detail a lot about our nervous system design and how our bodies blood-sugar works in Episode 1. If you haven't listened to it, highly recommend it.

What most people don't realize is that each time we eat, we are choosing to align with our physiological design or not. This isn't something we can argue with. Food is medicine. It doesn't mean eating well is guaranteed to prevent cancer or completely resolve your arthritis AND it does mean food will influence how you feel day to day from how you sleep to your moods and energy.

I'm reading a great book on baby and children's health by Dr. Aviva Romm, who is also a trained Midwife and Herbalist. She brings up how Western Medicine, with its over-reliance on doctors and pills makes us think "health happens to us" versus health is cultivated by our choices to support our bodies.



As a result, we think the medicine is fixing our body versus with natural medicine, you are supporting the body to do what it's capable of. You are choosing to cultivate health.

This so resonated with me because when I was depressed, had IBS and acne, I never questioned taking antibiotics, Accutane, antacids or all the anti-depressants I tried. I was looking for some magic in a pill to happen to me, just like I thought skinny would be magic. I had no idea I even had other choices because of this unknowing consciousness.

Dr. Romm says we should change informed consent in medicine to informed choice because consent implies we will consent to what the doctor says when really, we should challenge and partner with our doctors.

This learning how to learn skill is not something we are taught in school. Many of my close friends, who are considered super "educated" in a traditional sense are unaware they are even making health-care choices; they just trust what the doctor recommends. They are choosing to trust the doctor's answers. That is OK. And you have my full permission to question the doctor too. Or find another one. That is a choice!

My best friend from childhood recently visited me - hi Kelly if you're listening - she is brilliant. She went to Harvard to get her MBA. And when I was telling her all the choices I made in my labor and birth - she said, "Wow. You really thought about a lot of things."

Hell yes, I did! It dawned on me after she left that without my own Truce with Food, I wouldn't have known I could question things like taking Penicillian for the B-strep I tested positive for. Or that I didn't want them taking my baby away right after birth and wanted the umbilical cord to pulse for as long as it needed. So many people think what is normal with our food and health-care is "what's best".



So if you take nothing else away from this episode, know you are always choosing. And there are always other choices.

So when it comes to food to feel good, the key is we have to unlearn our external ideas of “good” and “bad” foods based on calories or macros and re-orient to what feels good and bad, specifically with our moods, energy and focus.

This can be challenging because our intuitive eating, or ability to know how foods work in our body - have in part been disrupted by highly palatable, addictive, processed foods.

As packaged food became big business, companies realized in economic terms, hunger was an inelastic demand. In other words, people can only eat so much. This isn't going to grow your profits every quarter. So how do you make something like hunger elastic or increase the demand for food? You disrupt the bodies natural feedback loop with processed foods.

Processed foods are dangerous for two reasons: they contain excess refined carbohydrates (and not just high-fructose corn syrup) and unhealthy fats. This combination put us on blood sugar highs and lows, making us feel anxious only to crash and hungry and hungrier.

The smells of these foods are also highly engineered. I had a friend who used to help with these smells but quit because it felt so unethical to her to be controlling people's biochemistry this way because smell triggers our appetite too.

Now, I don't think the CEOs of Kraft or Coco-Cola are all vacationing together and thinking, “HAHA, 10 more million people will be diagnosed with diabetes and that's why we got this bonus and can afford this vacation and boarding school.”

But I do think they want to know how they can increase revenue and cut costs and increase market share. And the result is processed foods with cheap carbs and fats. So whether it's a



Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte or Gluten-Free Bun Chicken Sandwich and Fries, these foods will make you hungrier than when you first ate it! So it's physically impossible to just eat the cookie and move on.

What's also tricky here is that many of us think we are eating "real food" or "healthy food" when it's processed enough to disrupt our bodies. I'm talking about egg whites, vegan butter spread, 2% yogurt and even healthy "green drinks" that are mostly fruit and no fiber - disrupt our biofeedback loop.

Yes, many of the "health foods" we believe are good are bad for our biochemistry. And if you do a quick google search, you will see all the big food companies now own most of the "health food" companies. So they are going to be applying the same profit motive.

For example, Horizon Dairy which is now owned by Dean Foods/WhiteWave, has been and is under incredible scrutiny because of their liberal definition of organic and "grass-fed". You might not think it's a big deal but when you know that grass-fed dairy has more CLA (conjugated linoleic acid which is a healthy fat) and will feel more satisfying because of this. CLA is so influential in our health that it's one of the top-selling weight loss supplements.

I share this minor nutrition detail because the more we get away from foods in their natural state, even from how animals are fed, we are going to be hungry and depressed, let alone the environmental impact.

One of the easiest ways to align with our physiological design to feel good is choosing whole foods over processed foods. In doing this, we are choosing to better stabilize our blood sugar and gut health by the absence of refined carbs and fats.



I like to start with blood sugar because you can get quick wins or what I like to call, the “quick fixes”. Plus, blood sugar control makes or breaks your physical cravings, which is why one cookie turns into as many as it takes to make you feel “junky” and not “clean”.

Here’s a classic client example of unconsciously choosing processed foods to destabilize your blood sugar:

The bread basket when out to dinner.

You arrive at dinner slightly hungry, which signals your blood sugar is on the decline. This feels like really craving the bread. Which even at fancy restaurants is often highly processed. But you’re not just choosing the bread - you’re choosing to get on your blood sugar roller coaster. And this is when one piece turns into a couple.

Your meal with some real nutrition comes and can help stabilize you. Yet you may feel quite full from the volume of bread (and not the nutrition) or you are now craving more carbs to stabilize the roller coaster. Either way, you don’t eat as much of the protein and fat that will help get you off this roller coaster. And then it’s dessert time and we all know we have a dessert stomach 8-) So you eat the dessert and keep the roller coaster going.

So you felt out of control after one piece of bread yet you were unaware you were choosing to destabilize your blood sugar. Instead, you think “I just love bread and too much”.

What I find happens - as was with me - I didn’t know I had other choices because I believed in my ideas of good and bad foods so much, including what a whole food even was, even though most of them weren’t even food!

I used to eat quick oats for breakfast (much of the nutrition is removed which is why they cook so quickly!). In theory that’s healthy, right? But quick oats are really processed.



I'd then get a salad at my work's cafeteria. I didn't realize the dressing I was using was full of industrial seed oils and sugar and the soup had more chemicals than ingredients.

I'd crash by 3 pm, looking for whatever was in the office like cookies or leftover breakfast bagels, more processed foods.

And then for dinner, I'd eat veggie patties with some sauce I picked up at Whole Foods that I thought was healthy but had a ton of sugar and was made from soybean oil. I'd, of course, be craving something sweet afterward and if it was an OK day, I'd have just a few high-protein cookies if I was being good. Yet the protein was soy protein isolate - again, highly processed.

My blood sugar was essentially never stable and so I never knew how I could eat a cookie or a piece of birthday cake in a blood-sugar balancing stabilizing way.

We have a physiological design that we can't control yet we can choose to align with it. The more you learn what whole foods work best for your body, the more you understand that each meal is a choice to balance your blood sugar or not.

In this process, we often discover a nuance of when we can eat "bad" foods and they don't make us feel like shit. Mainly, they don't destabilize our blood sugar enough so we can eat just a cookie or one piece of pizza, enjoy it and be done with it like the "just eat the cookie" meme says. You don't need to eat whole, real food 100% of the time to still get the benefits from whole foods.

Or sometimes, you just don't care and as long as it's your choice, enjoy. For example, I don't do well with a lot of dairy. But I've learned my body enough to know the nuance of how much I can tolerate. Sometimes I'm willing to take the hit. I love heavy whipping cream in my coffee during



winter - I used to think I was being good with skim milk but then came to learn that is highly processed and I feel more satiated with the fat from cream!)

But if I feel my immunity starting to take a dive like a scratchy throat or I get too many pimples, I back off because I don't want to get sick and don't like zits. But all of this is genuinely to support, not shame me at this point in my journey.

As I started being willing to unlearn my ideas of good and bad foods and eat aligned for my physiological design, my choices compounded. I was able to reverse my depression, anxiety, acne and IBS, with food as my main medicine. But I certainly didn't start out that way because I didn't even know I had the natural way as a choice.

The more you choose, the more choices you discover you have.

This happens to a lot of my clients and it's one of my favorite parts of our work together: they wake up inside the matrix and fight like hell to get out.

I had one client who was put on birth control in her teens to mask a bunch of symptoms the doctors couldn't explain. She told me I was the first person to ask why she was put on birth control. I helped her connect some of her symptoms and weight gain to the pill but she got curious and went down some deep rabbit holes herself and eventually decide to get off the pill.

We then worked at the root cause of why she was put on the pill in the first place. In addition to changing her diet, she owned her story so she could be consistent enough to clear up many of the root causes.

Her skin got better and she lost weight from getting off the birth control pill and cleared up the root causes. And she's had so many other health experiences along the way that she is able to



better navigate and be in choice to avoid over-treatment - even during an emergency visit - and continues to heal and get healthier.

With her food, we didn't do much drastic changes. But we started getting off packaged foods. When we do this, our ideas of good and bad foods change.

We learn egg whites and canola oil butter spread aren't whole foods.

We can start to taste the difference between grass-fed and "regular" dairy.

We realized our healthy, store-bought "Naked" green smoothie is full of sugar and no fiber. And even if it's sugar from fruit and vegetables, it's not a whole food and makes us hungrier. And we also discover Naked is owned by Pepsico.

So to avoid feeling physically awful from "bad" foods, you have to choose to know how your blood sugar and gut health work so you can redefine good and bad foods not from an intellectual and weight loss standpoint but from an internal, immediate "health" perspective: energy, focus and moods.

This is how you know if what you eat is aligning with your blood sugar. A few experiments to help you see how processed foods make you hungrier:

- Eat a piece of bread with a main meal of whole foods instead of on an empty stomach and see how the real food stabilizes needing multiple pieces of bread
- Eat an appetizer like "chips and salsa" with chips and guacamole and salsa and notice how the guac and salsa stabilize the processed chips
- Make a cookie from almond flour and a natural sweetener like maple syrup or honey instead of any old off the shelf cookie. See if it's easier to portion control.



Then connect this to one “quick fix” metric that matters to you. Is it decreased hunger? Decreased cravings? Is it better mood? Energy? You pick what matters to you and connect each choice to that internal metric that is beyond external ideas of good and bad that are connected to weight loss. The more you do this, overtime, you will redefine good and bad foods more as aligned or unaligned choices and realize when and how you can have rich foods in moderation and when you want to choose that.

And remember, processed foods aren't a category but a continuum. If you start thinking like this, you'll be surprised at how you're definition of healthy changes.

Now, onto the shame spiral of eating out of alignment with our goals. Because most of us have struggled with food for so long, we feel shame because we believe we are wrong. And if we are inherently wrong, we can't change and must be broken.

And what I'd like to suggest is not that you are wrong, but that you made a wrong choice for you, elsewhere in your day. You chose something out of alignment with your emotional needs. And you made that wrong choice unconsciously because you didn't even know you were choosing.

When we are in our story, the choices we are making are about minimizing risk, not necessarily choosing what we need or want. When we choose what we need and want, we are opening ourselves to risk.

For example, have we chosen a job or even make choices within our career that are the safe route or do we take risks? One of my clients who was a bad-ass Corporate marketer decided to take the risk to go to a start-up that was more aligned with her interests and where she'd have more influence. She said our work together helped her take that leap. Or some of my clients start asking for more money when they are up for new jobs and promotions rather than what was first offered. And they get it!



When we play to win, we are aligning with what is true for us and the choices we can and want to live with. It requires taking radical responsibility for our bodies and lives versus assuming someone else, even the experts, have our answers.

Or for example, many of my clients feel like they have to choose between their careers or being healthy. Or many people think they have to burn 300 calories each time they exercise to make it count (i.e. be good).

If we use my clients email thoughts/example about the IE meme, is that we don't often know what other choices we have because we are only focused on the cookie or pizza not what's underneath the cookie or pizza. We don't know how to look at root causes.

As I told my client, the WAIETN process she was about to embark on would help her answer: Do you know when a cookie isn't not just a cookie?

My clients and I discover that bingeing and overeating is from feeling frequently out of choice in our lives because of our story.

For example, one client found herself bingeing after family gatherings. Through our work together, she realized her story was very active in her relationship with her sister. She used to get really frustrated by her sister's meanness and neglect when she asked her for support. She knew intellectually they are very different people. Yet she felt like she was "winning" or in control when she'd get the reaction or response she wanted from her sister.

That used to make her feel safe in her story because she perceived she wasn't being misunderstood. Her unconscious goal was to not be misunderstood.



But through our Truce with Food work, she discovered what she really needed in this situation was to know she did her best to express how she felt and stay in her truth.

And she could choose that, which she found so freeing. And in choosing that, she was “playing to win”, trying to be in a real, authentic relationship with her sister, which doesn’t have to mean they see eye-to-eye but rather, do they truly see each other?

Like health, relationships require cultivation and don’t just “happen to us.”

With my client who emailed me, she discovered in the WAJETN process that what she often wanted was belonging and not the cookie. As I said in episode 1, our story is about how we can belong to where we want to belong.

But first, we need to belong to ourselves. Belonging is much deeper than connection. It’s owning what we want or need, not what we think is “good” or “bad”. In our everyday way of thinking, it’s “I’m choosing this instead of what I believe I should or have to do.”

We got these ideas of good and bad, right or wrong, pre-packaged from our families, medical system and culture. They protected us. And now, we can choose if we want protection (what I think of as trying not to lose) or do we want to play to win?

Much like getting off pre-packaged foods to become naturally intuitive eaters, we have to stop digesting pre-packaged ideas of what we think we need and want, starting with thinking we love cookies so much! Not only do we stop eating the cookies, we become aware of the power we have and are more likely to be able to paradoxically, control our lives!

For example, my recent birth experience. I have a history with hospitals. I got treated for cancer in one and had a real fear of hospitals and being in this field, I also have a real fear of overtreatment, which happens a lot in hospitals during birth. It’s very “cover your ass” medicine versus evidence-based. And I can understand why: it’s a high-risk experience. None of this is



done maliciously but just because many people in health-care don't know they aren't practicing evidence-based medicine, it doesn't mean I have to choose to go along with this.

Anyway, I learned at 39.4 weeks that I risked out of being able to give birth in the Midwife Center, which was my original choice. I had a fibroid and a condition they call poly which made it more likely I would hemorrhage and TMC wouldn't allow me to birth there for my own safety. I was devastated. I mean crying uncontrollably.

If I hadn't healed my relationship to food, I would have eaten because I would've thought, "This isn't what I want" and felt scared, sad and angry and that once again, my body let me down.

But because of my Truce with Food tools and all the empowerment I've witnessed in myself in the 10 years using these tools, I knew it was most important that I felt in choice, not in control, of what unfolded. I was able to strategize that my end goal and metrics along the way were an unmedicated, healthy birth for both myself and Eca or based on how things unfolded, as little intervention as possible. And while the experience would be different, I could still be in choice about many things.

I was able to still in choice for about 80% of my decisions (I had to be induced and didn't want that because I assumed it had to be pitocin, which makes contractions even more intense. But I learned I could choose to be induced in a very low intervention way so I didn't need pitocin or medication...we did a Folly Bulb and the Midwife broke my water and then my body took over) and I got the unmedicated, empowered and healthy birth I wanted even though it was a different path to get there than I had originally planned. I couldn't 100% control TMC policies or how my fibroid or labor unfolded AND I could keep my eye on the milestone choices and long-term goal so I felt like my voice was heard in this process. I know myself so deeply now and even though we all change, I know feeling heard and considered is what matters most to me.



And while the Great Mystery helped my labor take off, I also did the work to be clear about my choices and feel confident in them. And apparently this is rare as our birth ended up becoming a case-study in how to do low-intervention birth in a high-tech environment! And I was really excited as the nursing student who supported us asked our Midwife if she could intern with them because she loved being part of our birth and hadn't ever experienced birth without an epidural.

The key was knowing what I needed, wanted and the choices I had, which many of us aren't aware of in our story because we are focused on minimizing our risk instead of staying open to what we most deeply want.

I find a great area to start to experiment with and connect this holistic way of understanding our food choices is with exercise. Exercise's role in weight loss has been largely been distorted by Big Food companies like Mars and Coca-Cola. They shift the focus there as a way to distract from the role processed foods has on obesity, even though another study has implicated processed foods in what will make America 50% obese by 2030. Or even by exercise companies. The 10,000 steps a day idea was started by a Japanese company, which started the trend in the mid-1960s with the launch of a pedometer called Manpo-Kei, which translates to the "10,000 steps meter." Walking clubs popped up and by the late 1990s, the 10,000 steps fitness routine swept America, becoming the unofficial standard for ensuring good health and fitness.

Many of us have rigid ideas of what is "good" or "bad" exercise, i.e. what counts or doesn't count. And often we are overeating in reaction to how we've exercised. Research shows people whose relationship to exercise is fueled by how they eat overestimate how much they burn during a work-out and underestimate how much they eat. In other words, we want rewarded for the "sacrifice" of exercising.

To get out of our own exercise matrix - which is often where our story is also hiding out - we need to redefine what we want to get out of exercise. Not just if it was a calorie burn. What



exercise do we want to choose based on what role do we want exercise to have in our lives? This is something you will have to choose to experiment with because even if we logically know exercise doesn't help with weight loss or Coca-Cola has influenced how we think about exercise, we will still remember that in our own life, when we worked out religiously, we were thinner. Not that we had less stress, more time and/or were in generally more active because we lived in a city and weren't sitting for 10 hours a day behind a desk with blue light.

That's the thing about our stories: we can't accurately see what's happening. We will trace everything back to the pre-packaged narrative we've been following - whether we are conscious of it or not.

But as you start to experiment and take real action and now how to connect what you want to be doing to the outcomes you want, you'll be able to change. Many of my clients find, they actually start to be more active not less once they find what works for them or that their weight doesn't change even though they are now doing less of a calorie burn. And there's more freedom because they know how to tune into what they are feeling like that day or season of their life instead of being driven by "shoulds", "have tos".

In my own life, what finally made me more consistent with exercise was realizing I need it to boost my moods (and in cases of extreme stress...release the physical nature of anxiety), boost my creativity and my energy. In my own inquiry process to learn how I wanted exercise to work for me, I realized many times I would skip working out because I was tired. And the work-outs I was choosing like lots of cardio, would make me more tired. I truly didn't have energy for them and they made me more exhausted (and then eat carbs for energy. I also discovered often when I thought I was tired, I was actually stagnant and more movement would get my energy up. Not cardio but walking in nature or barre classes or even weight training. Regardless of what I felt like doing, I now had more choices open up to me.



So the key here is to become consciously in-choice about what you need and want in the dynamic areas of your life that make you turn to food, when a cookie isn't just a cookie. This is where your story is most likely active and you are trying to minimize risk...not gain weight or not feel guilty for skipping the work-out or not feeling lazy...versus "what do I want?" What would feel good beyond pre-packaged ideas of "good" that involve "should" and "have to"?

These areas are dynamic like in relationships or exercise, meaning the answers will change but the more you learn your body and self, the more you can tune in easily and now how to get what you want and need.

To start to experiment with this, next time in your life you hear yourself saying "I should, shouldn't, must or have to" do X, swap in "I'm going to choose X because it will be easier or more fulfilling for me" and see how it goes. You don't have to wait on your weight for more ease and fulfillment. You can choose to get started right now.

Conclusion

Pre-packaged foods and ideas of what we think we want and need prevent us from being intuitive eaters

Processed foods and foods that contain processed carbohydrates and fats especially as the main ingredients will trigger your blood sugar and make it harder for you to hear what your body wants.

Your story makes you turn to food and not really want the cookie. It's when a cookie isn't just a cookie.



When we are eating out of alignment with our health goals, it's a sign our story is active and we are ignoring our emotional needs and wants. These emotional needs and wants are as important to your health as what you eat.

In an area of your life where you feel “stressed”, think about what you truly want and need? What do you want to choose for a win-win rather than “I should, have to or must”?

To do this, you have to find the “quick fix” metrics that matter to you in that area of your life. For example, with exercise, what are the immediate benefits of moving your body versus focusing on an imaginary gold star for getting in 10,000 steps or burning 400 calories? Will it help your creativity? Rejuvenate your soul? Increase your energy? Connect you with your “people”? Think of what you need or want and then go make it happen. That is playing to win instead of trying to minimize the risk of “falling behind”, or “being bad”. And looking bad shows up as a fear of “being difficult”, “people being mad” or “being high-maintenance.”

Sometimes you need a little space for the answer to come. But the goal is emotional fulfillment. If we are bingeing and overeating, restriction is a deeper metaphor your true self is trying to get you to see!

Tune in next week, where we discuss “**How to End the Binge-Restrict**” cycle, which includes black and white thinking, which is part of why we can't see all our choices!

[END]

