

## How to Stop the Sugar-Anxiety Feedback Loop with Dr. Ellen Vora, MD

### – Insatiable Season 11, Episode 3

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:08] AS:** When you're fed up with fighting food and your body, join us here. I'm Ali Shapiro, creator of the Truce with Food Program and your host for Insatiable, where explore the hidden aspects of fighting our food, our weight and our bodies and dive deep into nutrition science and true whole health. Fair warning; this is not your parent's healthcare. This is a big rebel yell to those who crave meaning, hunger for truth and whose lust for life is truly insatiable. Believe me, freedom awaits.

Had you ever had a colleague, a family member or friend who smoked and was agitated close to their smoke break or if they otherwise couldn't grab a cigarette, or you may know someone who struggles with alcohol and has trouble resisting a or many drinks. Perhaps you have similar feelings, but they're directed towards cookies, chips other kind of carbs. We have labeled the staples of the American diet as an addictive substance for many reasons. On one hand, our agricultural policy in food production that revolves genetically altered crops that produce cheap carbohydrates represents a bigger lobby and more electoral laws than tobacco whose powerful lobby allowed cigarettes to be marketed as a healthy way to relax and safe for years including by doctors, despite widespread evidence to the contrary.

In addition to not being regulated, the sugar industry gets an estimated \$4 billion in annual subsidies courtesy of US taxpayers. On the hand, lobbies and food politics aside, food addiction and consequences require a more nuanced approach than abstinence as possible for cigarettes and alcohol. We die if we avoid food completely, and food is much more fundamentally woven



into our culture in earliest memories than alcohol or cigarettes, which in all cultures are generally adulthood indulgences.

Do you remember summers at the pool with Swedish fish, or warm, salty soft pretzels from the snack shack, or holidays with grandma's amazing mac and cheese, or dad's famous mash potatoes, or like me, Friday night Pizza Huts where you cashed in your book reward for reading five books to a free personal pan pizza? Chances are if you scan your memory, some of your best warmest memories involve sugar associating this ingredient with pleasure, celebration, ritual and reward.

For the purposes of this season, by sugar, I mean we think of as traditional sugar, like sodas, candies, cake and added sugar in processed foods, like salad dressing, breads, pretzels and other salty carbs. On the flipside, your most difficult memories probably also involve sugar as a source of refuge. If like me, after another day of being bullied and isolated from "the cool kids at school", you found bagels in the fridge to eat and numbed the pain of being othered, or right before a spin tap to see how far your cancer had spread, your parents took you to the Pancake House to try and bring some sort of comfort during the scariest health scare you've ever had. Who can forget SnackWells? A dieter's low-fat bonanza where we thought we could eat the whole box because it was low-fat, not realizing that all the sugar was making us hungrier and hungrier.

Sugar has comforted most of us when we were isolated, in the midst of chaos, or for many of my clients, it was a lift when being emotionally neglected. Food companies methodically and relentlessly advertised to make us trust sugar and let these processed foods into our lives in a way not only we thought a warning label like cigarettes, but actually in a way we now come to see gout.

As a result, what was only used in a way that we use spices today, a little dab'll do ya is now in the stable of our collective diets. While now it's recommended to limit sugar, food companies

didn't create but can capitalize on our puritan Christian and capitalistic narrative of sacrifice equals reward to ignore the mind-body connection and the need for emotional intelligence and agility.

Adding insult to injury, we as taxpayers are paying to make ourselves and the environment, which is degraded immensely with our monoculture agriculture focused on sugar, corn, soy and wheat that will be processed in sugar and well, or subsidizing ecological collapse in the resulting in the pandemics like coronavirus. The decline of our personal and environmental bodies has led to an over-taxed healthcare that was never designed for the chronic diseases which in large part driven by our food supply and its consequences.

In this season 11 of Insatiable, we will look at how we as individuals and a collective can go in a sugar rehab physically and emotionally. We will explore how we arrived here, root causes of sugar addition, if sugar is really addictive and can we eat it moderately and how we can move forward with sugar and its proper place in our life and what does that look like for you?

Without further ado, let's enter sugar rehab together.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:04:52] AS:** Welcome everybody to season 11, episode 3. How to stop the sugar anxiety feedback loop with Dr. Ellen Vora?

When I start working with many of my clients, they often think they mainly turn to "bad foods", which are mostly processed carbs, but lots of sugar or salt or some homemade goodies when they are stressed or overwhelmed, that they are emotional eaters or that their binging is only about unknown emotional root causes, and this is true, and yet there's also another root cause, the anxiety that our body produces when we aren't getting the right foods for our body. About 50% of the "emotional eating and binging" is physiological. In other words, not eating the right

foods for our unique bodies creates anxiety. This shows up as a felt sense of anxiety and also needing something more to eat, but not knowing what that is or a general feeling of being unsatisfied from what they just ate.

If you've been in the intuitive eating world, you're told that these cravings are from a lifetime of restriction and it's important to let yourself have what you want to have. This can be true, and yet what's inconvenient about this advice is those foods can actually exasperate and continue the sugar anxiety feedback loop which feels like more and more processed food cravings. What I found is when I teach my clients about blood sugar, they have their anxiety and feel more satisfied from what they eat.

To help us go into depth and teach us about how to stop this sugar anxiety feedback loop, I've invited holistic psychiatrist and my new found friend, Dr. Ellen Vora, on this show. Ellen Vora MD graduated from Columbia University Medical School, received her BA in English from Yale University and is a board certified psychiatrist, medical acupuncturist and yoga teacher. Dr. Vora takes a functional medicine approach to mental health considering the whole person and addressing imbalance at the root rather than reflexively prescribing medication. In addition to her private practice, Dr. Vora is also a writer, speaker and a consultant for two healthcare startups.

Thank you so much for being here today.

**[00:06:51] EV:** Ali, it is so my pleasure. Thank you.

**[00:06:54] AS:** As I was getting ready for this interview, I was listening to some of your past interviews and learned that you watched In Living Color growing up.

**[00:07:01] EV:** Yeah.

**[00:07:02] AS:** I did too and loved it and I found out from my best friend growing up that she actually wasn't allowed to watch that show. I was like, "Oh my God! Am I the only one who watched it?" I love that you were a fan of that show as well.

**[00:07:14] EV:** Yeah, it was kind of considered edgy at the time, which is crazy and was probably just racist.

**[00:07:20] AS:** Exactly. I was like, "That was our family show on Sunday nights."

**[00:07:23] EV:** Same.

**[00:07:27] AS:** Before we get into discussing all your brilliance and your kind of rebel edgy approach even to psychiatry, one of the themes that we talk on this show is how so much of weight struggles and food struggles is about a sense of belonging and finding where we can show up as ourselves in the world, and I find that it's really interesting that you have this edgier approach to psychiatry. How did you come to this idea of a more holistic understanding and have that sense of self or I guess discovering sense of self that enabled you to pursue this much less road traveled approach to anxiety and mental health?

**[00:08:04] EV:** Yeah, I think it's funny. Every time I speak in a podcast, I get a similar question and I always kind of fumble through an explanation. I think in a way I still haven't. Maybe it's like the history is too fresh, but I still haven't fully made sense of why. I think what I usually say is that it was a crisis of – It was two parallel crises that was in in med school. One was that I really did not believe in what I was being taught, but then you can kind of go further and ask like, "Why did I find myself skeptical when everybody around me was like eating it right up?" But yeah, just everything sat wrong with me and I thought – Well, here's an example. I was in the OR doing an appendectomy where you take out someone appendix, and I asked the attending surgeon. I was like, "Why do people appendicitis?" He looks at me, and surgeons are

always like these like tall, fit, handsome, kind of intimidating men often, and he was just like – He's like, "We don't ask why."

**[00:09:03] AS:** Oh my God!

**[00:09:03] EV:** I was like, "I am a Jewish psychiatrist. All I do is ask why." This is what I'm about. It just felt wrong to me that a lot of medicine was like symptoms equal diagnosis equals medication, and there wasn't a whole lot of like why does it happen? How do we prevent it? Even when people discussed prevention, they were talking about like primary prevention by being on statins before you have a cardiovascular event. It was like –

**[00:09:32] AS:** Or yeah, colonoscopy is a prevention.

**[00:09:34] EV:** Totally. Yeah. Like it's still interventions and there's just nothing about like does it matter how we sleep, how we eat, how our relationships are? Whether or not we're estranged from nature? It just always felt like a bad fit, but then there was a parallel crisis, which is that my own health was a disaster and I was a smart doctor with resources and you think – I thought I was doing everything right, and yet everything was going wrong in my body. It was just a place where I was at a real, like I can't keep moving forward the way I am. What do I do? It was a very inefficient, let's call it like 10-year process of hoarding other trainings and figuring out how do I get myself well? How can I help my patients be well?

**[00:10:20] AS:** I love though. I feel like I often say the obstacle is the path, and I love that even though it was inefficient. You kept navigating because of that felt sense, because I think we often dismiss that way of knowing, right? Especially because it often can be – Not that men don't have it, but intuition and a felt sense tends to be women often come from that frame more than men, and I think men could too if they were allowed to be more emotional in our culture. But I love that you honor that way of knowing, because especially being a doctor, being

in a heady, I mean, Columbia, Yale, like very intellectual sense of community, that can be challenging to trust that like this just doesn't feel right and I can't even name why.

**[00:11:00] EV:** Yeah, it is so uncomfortable to challenge that kind of ivory tower establishment. I think in a way I did a lot of like Oscar award-winning performances of acting, like I learned how to talk the talk of like how do you be one of these rigorous academic medicine bullies and like learn how to kind of fake it while I was there just to survive and not expose myself as a total yahoo. But once I, like I progressively broken free each phase of my life, and now I don't even try to use that voice anymore. I just speak totally my truth about health.

**[00:11:32] AS:** Isn't that the medicine in and of itself, right? Finding our voice and being unapologetic, not like in an FU kind of way, but just I don't need to prove anything. It is what it is. I'm so glad you did that because we're going to learn so much from you today. Also, I do think it helps for people especially you are such an integrated practitioner that I think you're helping people who might not normally trust this stuff, be able to open to it. Thank you for doing all of that academic work and acting for those of us who need people like you, because I'm someone who definitely does. Thank you.

We're going to talk about anxiety and sugar today, but first I want to define anxiety, because I feel like everybody is anxious today. If everyone is anxious, what are we even talking about? I loved – One time you called the DSM, which is the clinical way that psychiatrist and psychologists diagnose people as a brochure for big pharma. I was like, "Oh my God! That is a brilliant visual." How do you define anxiety and is it normal and can you talk a little bit about that?

**[00:12:39] EV:** Yeah, I basically don't define it. If someone comes to me and they are subjectively experiencing anxiety, that they're identifying with anxiety, I will work with that. If somebody comes to me and they aren't using the word anxiety and haven't really called themselves out on it but they're demonstrating symptoms that I would say are consistent with

some anxiety disorder, whether it's kind of OCD tendency, or an agoraphobic tendency, or like a rumination way of thinking about things. I'm actually not going to put the label on them, because it ends up being more of a self-fulfilling prophecy than anything helpful in the end, but it's not even that common anymore for anyone to like be like, "I had anxiety and I had no idea." People are just very unanimously identifying with anxiety these days. Much more to me is actually let's start at the starting place of, "Okay, you're anxious. Now what do we do with this?"

I think that – I'm writing a book on it right now, which is really helping me get clarity on how I think about it, and lately my going hypothesis is breaking it down into true anxiety and false anxiety. I think about false anxiety as all the ways our body gets tripped into a stress response unnecessarily, and that these are actually really preventable causes of anxiety, but they're really common, and it's things like excessive caffeine consumption, chronic sleep deprivation, the blood sugar crashes, micronutrient deficiencies, thyroid issues, gut issues, like it goes on and on and it's kind of everything that the naturopaths and the functional medicine docs had been focusing on.

Then I think that part of what happens when – Like I love, it's so well-meaning and it's really what I'm about to kind of help people see like the way you're feeling. It doesn't have to be that way. There's a physical root cause. Let's fix it. I like that, but I also think that in some way it invalidates people who are struggling with anxiety and I think that there really is true anxiety that there's no amount of blood sugar stabilization or gut healing that's ever going to repair it and it's actually somebody's deep truth. To me, it's the people that are intuitive and sensitive and artist and they are sensing something.

I think we're recording this in the moment of coronavirus right now, like in certain senses, I feel like all of my anxiety patients are just like looking at the world and being like, "Told you so." They're like, "I knew –"



**[00:15:08] AS:** They just were, “I’ve been waiting for this. I’ve been waiting for this.”

**[00:15:11] EV:** I’ve had this sense of like existential dread all this time that some shit was about to go down and here we are. I think that there is like truth to anxiety sometimes and in a way rather as a culture, saying you’re too sensitive, or you should go on medication, or you should talk to somebody about this, or even the more enlightened like functional doctor like, “Ooh! Could it be her thyroid? Are you deficient in B12?” I think that sometimes it’s like, “Oh! Great sage. Tell us what you’re thinking. Tell us. What we want to learn from you. You are our artist and you can be our guide.”

**[00:15:45] AS:** I love that. I love that so much, because in my work, I mean I definitely work on blood sugar and gut health with people just from mainly getting people back to whole real foods, but on that, I guess on the real anxiety side, I often find that people’s stories and their unresolved trauma creates this felt sense, but they’re also just – My clients tend to be very sensitive. They’re in healthcare themselves. They’re literal rock stars. They are the artists of the world or they’re business leaders, right? It shows up in various capacities, but they are just sensitive. If they can kind of result some of that unresolved trauma, then it can reduce the anxiety to a level that it’s manageable and helpful, because I don’t think all anxiety is bad, right? It kind of keeps us on our toes.

**[00:16:29] EV:** I think what you just said is actually really profound and it’s got me scratching my head, because if there's anything that kind of bridges those two false and true anxieties, it's actually trauma, because in certain sense, having a history of trauma, it's almost like that is a little bit of a false anxiety and that we can work on the trauma. That’s still are knot in your body, in your brain that could use a little massaging, like use EMDR or somatic experiencing therapy. Could we help you work through it so there isn't blockage to the flow of energy? In that respect, it’s a false – It’s like an underlying cause of anxiety and it can be false anxiety. But then there's definitely a truth to anxiety that's fueled by a history of trauma, which is more just

like it set the pattern in your nervous system for how safe this world is and how much you can trust it.

I mean, I'm like kind of this has me thinking in a very trippy way that sort of like we also, on some level, need people. I mean, trauma is real. It happened, and that should give us information about how safe the world is. I think on some level, you don't want to completely let go of that, because it does represent reality.

**[00:17:34] AS:** Yeah. Yeah. I know, because what's normal isn't really normal, right? I mean, it's kind of the – I'm like people who are like blissfully happy, they're the ones, I'm like, "Wait a second. Are they –" Not that you have to read the news all the time, but I mean we are fundamentally on an unsustainable course environmentally, emotionally, all that stuff. But that's for a different podcast. We'll have you back and talk more trippy stuff. But I love that, and breaking that down into false and real.

We're going to talk today about one of the false anxieties, which is basically deregulated blood sugar and sugar. I would love that you can explain how sugar biochemically creates anxiety in the body, because I think people, again, think they're just anxious and I think maybe it's something outside of them, but there is something actually internally. I would love for you to explain why the body feels anxious when we aren't eating the right foods for ourselves.

**[00:18:29] EV:** Yeah, it's a couple of factors. To me, the primary, like the lion share of it is that when we consume refined carbohydrates or sugar, things that break down really quickly and basically our digestive tract is good at breaking it down quickly and then it absorbs quickly into our bloodstream. So we get a spike of blood sugar, and then our insulin says, "Whoa! Can't have this much blood sugar," traces it, and then we have this compensatory kind of crash in blood sugar. That crash precipitates a stress response in our body, and this is like a good design basically. It's part of what motivates us to seek food, but it's also – It's just the way the body works that if we have low blood sugar, the way that our body kind of starts this series of checks

and balances to correct that is with a stress response. It secretes adrenaline. It secretes cortisol. That communicates to the liver to break down stored glycogen and then it releases glucose into the bloodstream and we have blood sugar again. It kind of saves the day, which is great, but it leaves us like shaking and anxious and panicked and feeling like it's a five alarm fire.

To summarize that more clearly, when we eat sugary things, we have a spike in blood sugar, then a crash in blood sugar, and that crash is a stress response. The stress response feels synonymous with anxiety. That's the main reason, and I find like I'm not a very big – I mean, at this point in my life, I don't typically eat too much sugar. When I do, I always like first-hand have this experience where I have that uneasy dread feeling in my gut and I'm like, "Whoa! Now I feel that my patients are always talking about," and I can always track it back to something sweet that I ate. It's like it basically just leaves you in that state that we think just defines us, like we go through our whole life that dread anxious shaky feeling. We think it's just life is a lot to be anxious about, which arguably does, but it's actually a physiologic feelings first.

That's the main reason, and then there's some like I call them tributary or like side hustle reasons why sugar affects our mood, but one of them is the way it impacts our gut flora. I think of sugar as sort of like donating to the wrong campaigns in your gut. You're voting for candida. You're voting for pathogenic clostridium species. You're just voting for the wrong political candidates in your gut and you're not really voting for like the good guy, probiotic, like beneficial bacteria that don't so much thrive in that environment.

Then I think that it also has to do with like when we were eating shitty food, we are missing our opportunity for eating nutrient-dense food, and I think of nutrition as kind of a scavenger hunt. It's like most scavenger hunts are like almost kind of impossible. You know, this one is too. They're like, "Okay. Scavenger hunt in Brooklyn. Here's your list of 30 places you have to go see and check the box," and it's like, "Aah! You only have a few hours."

I think the same thing with nutrition in a day. It's like you're not going to get everything, but if you generally eat nutrient-dense foods and generally avoid kind of wasted bites, then you're going to do better at scavenger hunt. When we're eating sugary foods, it's pretty much a nutritional wasteland and we're missing our chance to get what we need. It's not just like be a virtuous good, moral, high-ground kind of person to eat nutritious food. It's literally the building blocks for our neurotransmitters so that our brain can function properly so we can feel good.

**[00:21:57] AS:** I love that. A client asked me in my Truce With Food group program the other day about why anxiety, when you're not eating the right foods, it causes anxiety. I gave the evolutionary reason. Basically, if you're not getting what you just said, the difference between nutrient-dense foods and almost clean eating, which I mean we didn't talk about clean eating, but I think a lot of people think those are the same things and they're not, and I love to use the word nutrient-dense, because from an evolutionary standpoint, we used to always eat. You wouldn't have had the word nutrient-dense, because there was nothing else. Can you define for people? Nutrient-dense versus what we think of as healthy food. I think that's where people get tripped up often. They think they're –

**[00:22:38] EV:** I love this. Yeah. Nutrient-dense, I think about it as like that bite is actually nutrition, packed with different vitamins and minerals. It checks the various boxes of macronutrients that we need, omega-3s, minerals, these things that we actually just need to function well. It's not like there's one food that solves all the problems. I mean, if it's anything, it's probably chicken liver pate, but it's basically like mother nature's multivitamin

But basically, it's that you kind of need to eat like just a variety all the time of – It's basically – I have a bee in my bonnet about clean eating, and it's like clean eating. Well, I mean we could say so very much about like even just the qualitative judgmentiness, the idea of the word clean, but I think that the trouble is, is that the health food world has really figured out, “Okay, here's what you take out of the diet. Drop the gluten, and the dairy, and the sugar, and the canola oil.” I'm like onboard with all that to a certain extent, but then it's like we forget what to add in and

you could eat things that all check the box of that is theoretically Instagram-worthy clean food. You just had your green juice, and you had your chia seed pudding, and you had your macho latte, like clean, clean, clean. Oh! With oatmeal. Great! But then you could really be hungry and lacking half of what your body needs and anxious and be totally clean.

It's like those are wonderful foods, but it's not the whole balanced eating what your great, great, great, great grandmother. I think that we've just like, as our national eating disorder, like one aspect of that is that we've completely forgotten how to eat enough of a variety of things and how to eat with balance.

**[00:24:20] AS:** Totally. Even like – I think people grow up, like I grew up taking the skin off chicken breasts, and it's like I started putting that on a couple years and I'm like, "This is delicious. Why did I ever think to not eat the skin?" I know why, but like I think people think – Like last season, we talked about whole foods being on a continuum, right? I think people think, like to your point, "Okay. If I'm not eating this, this or this, then the rest of my food must be whole foods." But no, there is – Throwing parts out, to your point, chicken liver pate, right? No one needs organ meats

Actually, the other day at our co-op, they had like some ground meat that had organ meats in it and I was like, "Oh! This is a great approach to getting in," because we'll have like spaghetti squash with sauce and ground meat and it tasted really good and I was like, "Yes! I'm on the path to getting more organ meats," because no one thinks about those, but those are powerhouses.

**[00:25:13] EV:** Yeah, we were taught for so long to get rid of it. I'm not necessarily proud of this, but at this point, I'm like the sneaky person in my family who eats only the skin and then I leave all these like just bare chicken parts for the rest of my family to enjoy without skin, but like, "Who ate all the skin off of the half rotisserie chicken?"

But the thing is, is that yeah, it's sort of if you came of age in the 90s and it was like low fat, which in many ways I think you've point this out on previous podcasts, is like the sugar industry kind of did a great marketing PR campaign where they're like pointed at fat and said, "That's the problem." So what happened was we all thought we were being virtuous in doing the right thing, throwing the skin off the chicken. Only eating like low-fat chicken breasts and white meat, and then eating a whole box of SnackWell cookies, because those were free, because there were fat-free. It's like there's no fat. So there's no problem with this.

I think that the thing is, is that we are, "Thank goodness." Of course we'll learn like 5 years from now, 10 years from now, what we're getting wrong in this moment, but at least now we're kind of thinking like real is probably right, and fake is probably wrong, which is I think itself like a very – I feel confident in that, at least like in that revolutionary way of looking at food.

**[00:26:29] AS:** Yeah. Even you saying about the word clean and virtuous, like I think it's hilarious that people are calling them or we are learning how powerful the dirt is, right?

**[00:26:37] EV:** Yeah.

**[00:26:37] AS:** Soil, and like you can have – I mean, yeah, I have a whole philosophical like rant I could go on about that. Yes, but I won't. But yeah –

**[00:26:46] EV:** I get microgreens at my farmers market and I'm like I talked to the farmer and I'm like, I don't wash these, because I want your like good organic dirt in my food," and the farmer was like, "I would." He basically knows like those chickens are pooping all over it and whatever. But I was like, "You're really bursting my bubble her."

**[00:27:07] AS:** We were talking about chicken skin, but what are some of the like things that you see people are really missing and ideas that you help clients get into those foods in turn? Because I find that – I mean, I've talked about healthy bads. I feel like I've been talking about

them for like 13 years since I've been doing this and yet I still find sometimes people I think are afraid to eat them because of – I mean, the idea of cholesterol is caused by fat [inaudible 00:27:30] instead of sugar or dehydration, like all these things, but I think people are still afraid because of the caloric load or they find them hard to find, because if you go out to a restaurant, even some of the “healthy restaurants”, they’re using soybean oil or canola oil in their dressing. What do you tell people to get into to stabilize anxiety? What foods and like what are your some ideas of how they can make that happen?

**[00:27:54] EV:** Yeah. I’m going to give you like a laundry list of the things that I think still fly under the radar for some people and then I’m going to totally backpedal and be like, “But everyone should be marginal about food.” Here’s the laundry list, is that I think that, yes, I think at 2020, like we now get that we can eat healthy fats, but I think they’re probably – We require a little bit of an expanded definition of that for some people, because people are like, “Okay, great! I can eat avocado and olive oil,” and it’s like, “Yes, and you can also have grass-fed [inaudible 00:28:22], and you can also have the chicken skin, and you can also the fatty cuts of beef as long as it comes from a healthy animal.”

I think that segues into another issue, which is that – Meat is a whole discussion and there's so much that goes into that, and when it comes to like an ethical decision, or an environmental decision, or a political, or a preference, or religious, like all of that is sort of sacred and I don't touch it. But if someone's not eating meat for health reasons, I usually want someone to step back and like do an experiment of what if you incorporated some? Do you feel better? Do you feel different? I think that we get meat kind of wrong.

If I have a five patients who I'm like, “Okay, try to do an experiment eating a little bit of beef and red meat.” Sometimes people need to be like encouraged not just the like white meatarians, they eat chicken and eat fish and they think they're doing the right thing, but like encouraging people to re-approach red meat.

I have a lot of patients who try that, but then only eat meat in restaurants and then never at home because they're like really, "I don't really want to like handle raw meat and cook it," but I think we actually do flip that, because restaurants, I don't blame them, but like just to get by to survive in a tough industry, they have to use canola oil. They pretty much have to use concentrated animal feeding operation meat. They're using this meat that's like ethically abhorrent and not healthy for our bodies and tastes great and it's cheap, but I think that what you really want to do is pretty much eat vegetarian in the world and eat as simply you can in restaurants to try to avoid the inflammatory oils. But then when you're home, that's where you can source really good quality meat and that's where you can kind of go nuts on eating the whole animal and eating nose to tail and making bone broths and all of these.

Those are a couple things on the laundry list, and I think starch is another thing that gets like interpreted incorrectly, and there're certainly people that do well with a keto diet. But I think for most of us who eat carbohydrates, people are always confused like, "Are carbs good? Are they bad?" But I think that people, like many of us do well to avoid the process refined carbohydrates, like the cookies, and cakes, and pastas, but then do great when we're eating starchy vegetables, so sweet potatoes, plantains, taro yucca, squashes. I think that like there a lot more effortful and they're a little bit less of a hit of drugs, but I think that so many of my patients, they start to eat healthier, but then they totally forget about carbohydrates because they picture health being like some kind of lean protein and then vegetables, which I don't know. It was like the early 2000's where like you'd see celebrities being like, "My personal chef just makes me a fish and steamed vegetables." Like, "No."

I always have to like remind people at the sort of troubleshooting check-in sessions, like are you eating carbohydrates? I encourage people to make like a vat of sweet potatoes, or mashed potatoes, or plantains and have that in the fridge and then you put a scoop of that on your plate for every meal.



**[00:31:17] AS:** I love that, because that's one of the ways that I've learned that I really do need carbohydrates at lunch and dinner. I don't need them at breakfast, but I would feel really anxious and almost like, when I don't eat them, it almost make me feel a little manic. Not manic. I don't want to use that term out of context, but it made me so much more like an adrenaline junkie in a way that I am not normally, and it was just like, "Oh my God!" It was too much like energy. Once I started eating – Like I love to do just the sweet potato, like with some gee and salt, and if I'm feeling really not lazy, I'll add cinnamon on it too, but I'm very lazy when it comes to food. But I find like when I do that, it's like, "Oh, I get that," like the consistent energy drip in the afternoon and also helps with sleep rather than that kind of like, "Oh my God! I'm on fire," which could be great for productivity for about an hour and then you just kind of crash because you're not getting that right combination of starch, fats and proteins.

**[00:32:16] EV:** Yeah, I see that so often in my practice. I think, in particular, for women of reproductive age, like carbohydrates, I think of as not so negotiable. When someone's eliminating carbs altogether, some people really do, do well with keto, and I do always have to kind of put that caveat in. But for the most part, I'll see women start to get this feeling, "Yeah, it feels like a mania or like an anxiety." They start to have insomnia. They start to have their hair fall out and their periods irregular and their anxiety is higher. Their fatigue is more pronounced and it's all kind of just solved by like putting a freaking sweet potato in the microwave. It's that easy.

**[00:32:52] AS:** I loved your idea about plantains. I love plantains, but I think of those as like a vacation food. If I'm going away, I have them. But I think I could make them at home.

**[00:32:59] EV:** Vacation every day at home. Yeah, we eat a lot of plantains in my household, and we're also lazy. But yeah, we just sauté in coconut oil and then sprinkle cinnamon, done.

**[00:33:07] AS:** Oh my God! I love it. All right. We are going to take a break from our sponsor, but when we come back, I want to talk a little bit about sleep and caffeine.

**[00:33:15] EV:** Yeah.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[00:33:18] AS:** Are you ready to take action from this insatiable season and experience what it's like to be free of sugar craving? Enter Freedom from Cravings, a five-week live group coaching program that starts right after Memorial Day. If you've wondered why you can eat healthfully but still having 3PM crash that sends you even more in our quarantine times to your cabinet for chips or peanut M&Ms or why you can be good all day and then overeat popcorn or coconut ice cream while watching Netflix at night? Sugar rehab will show you how sugar cravings are a biology game, not a willpower or discipline game.

Generic advice and magazines or nutrition experts doesn't take into account your unique biology and history. You need to learn where you fall on the vegetarian, Mediterranean, paleo continuum to learn what healthy and good foods are for you. This will help to prevent sugar cravings, no white knuckling required.

Rehab programs for other forms of substance abuse focus first on the detox portion to free the body from chemical dependency before delving into the emotional and spiritual reasons for addiction. Likewise, in Freedom from Cravings, we'll focus on the physical and chemical dependency elements of food to clear the way for subsequent work and focus on the deeper seated issues that may make you turn to food.

I will be personally guiding through experiences and experiments to determine what your biology needs are to not only prevent sugar cravings all day and at night, but to also feel satiated, focused, optimistic and energized. Be prepared to be surprised and redefine what healthy needs for you and your body.

Registration for Freedom from Cravings runs May 18th through May 20th. Save \$50 if you register by May 22. Enter coupon code early bird to save \$50. Sign up at [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com) to get on my list so you don't miss out on the early bird savings or this live program that I only will run once this year.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[00:35:09] AS:** Okay. We were just talking about starches and everything and without that, exasperating anxiety. I want to talk a little bit about caffeine's role in anxiety and also – Well, let's first talk about it, and then I want to ask you a question, because I think sometimes people actually like the role that caffeine plays, but they don't like it, like the anxiety it creates is almost addictive in a way. I want to talk and ask you about that. I think it calls back to our earlier point about trauma and we can come to expect to be in that state, and that's what's familiar. But I want you to first talk about caffeine's role in anxiety and then we'll go there.

**[00:35:46] EV:** So smart. Okay. There's so much I want to talk about with this. Yeah, I think that caffeine, like not an inherently bad substance. In fact, like coffee is a source of magnesium and antioxidants, and the research which I think is confounded and worth its own conversation does show that people who drink more coffee have lower rates of things like type II diabetes and Parkinson's disease. It's kind of compelling, but what I think we get wrong is that we're just very variable in how we tolerate caffeine and how we metabolize it. You could be the person that you could have an espresso after dinner and still sleep fine. So you can just keep doing what you're doing, and lucky you.

**[00:36:26] AS:** I know!

**[00:36:29] EV:** The rest of us, like if I had a coffee yesterday, I'd be acting right now like as if I was on cocaine. I'm sensitive to it and I had to grapple with that, because I've had an on-again, off-again, like full love affair with coffee throughout my adult life, and I'm off it now life does go

on. But it's a wonderful, delicious, warming, grounding, ritual, and baristas have nice forearms and like the whole thing is like just is our favorite thing. But I think our culture right now really romanticizes it, and we have like everything we do in American culture, like more is better. Stronger is better, and like sort of romanticize to drink like strong, dark, black coffee and like obviously don't be a softy who puts milk and sugar whatever, but don't be also.

I think that – But it's like now our coffee is so strong and it's so normalized in our culture, and I think we could do well to just recognize like, for some of us, we're slow metabolizes and we have to opt out of this mainstream culture on coffee. The half-life of caffeine is about 5 to 7 hours for most people. Say it's your average and six hours for you. If you have your one innocent cup of coffee in the morning, you might be doing okay, but if you had like that one more trip to Starbucks at 3 PM, it's effectively like you're having half a cup of coffee at 9 PM, and you wouldn't do that, but you're sort of unwittingly doing that, and that makes a lot more sense to us why that would impact the quality of our sleep, because then you plenty of caffeine buzzing around your brain while you're trying to fall asleep, and it's this really vicious cycle, because you're tossing and turning, you're not sleeping well. Then the next day it's like, "Please put in the IV drip of caffeine," because you didn't get a good night of sleep. It's sort of so on and so forth each day.

I think that it's just like for people to recognize, caffeine does provoke a bit of the stress response is one of these root causes of false anxiety. It makes your nervous system kind of ready for a fight, and if you introduce a stressor, which in modern life is not in short supply, like say you are standing on the subway or you get an uncomfortable email from your boss when you arrive at work or whatever it is, like the coffee just makes your nervous system just sort of like really chomping at the bit and ready to fight. Whereas if you weren't amped up on caffeine, you might have been able to be a little less reactive, take a deep breath, kind of go with the flow of what comes at you in a day.



I think you alluded to something, which I want to hear your perspective on this, but I think like with trauma, with the fact that we're kind of a familiar home-based is to be hyper-vigilant with their nervous system in a state of arousal, caffeine kind of provides that comfortable, familiar feeling. Then I also think just maybe this is shifting right now with COVID-19, but we're also in a culture that just like only values our productivity and our go-go-goness and rest, like the other, which should be the other half of the yin-yang. That is looked at as lazy or slothful and you shouldn't take up any part of your day, let alone half of your day. We use coffee to kind of feel like Super Mario the just got the mushroom. It's just like we like to feel that amped up feeling of like, "I'm on," and on is fine, but on should be 50% of life and not 99%.

**[00:39:45] AS:** Yeah. Yeah. What I've noticed, because I often have clients come to me with, "I want to get off sugar, blah-blah-blah," and then what they start to realize once we got through the process is that they actually – The spiraling. I mean, often it comes off as thinking about food, spiraling about food, built in our work we get to like, "Well, that's just the symptom."

But what I found is that people who have had a lot of trauma, and again, little t, micro traumas I think is you call them, not necessarily war or refuge. I mean, most people who listen to podcast now, we define trauma differently, but just in case someone's just listening to this episode. But what I found is that, yeah, often the spiraling that caffeine can do or even sugar with this anxiety, it's the way they're defining been on and the identity they're protecting is overcompensating for the trauma that they had as a child.

For example, if a client grew up in a house where there is a lot of chaos from hoarding, or divorce, or whatever. They're almost hyper over-indexing on organization and productivity and [inaudible 00:40:44] and it's like because they are afraid of – Do you know what I mean? It's like almost in reaction to running away from that kind of chaos, but they created the same sort of chaos, but it's a more noble societally accepted chaos, right?

**[00:41:01] EV:** Yeah. There's something like obliquely related to this, which I found so revolutionary when I first learned about it. There's a book by Gabor Maté called – I think it's called *Scattered*, and it's about like if you grow up with chaos or trauma in your home. It's sort of like the way that you cope as to escape, and that can look in adulthood with like ADHD and it's almost like you just learned to like not be present and not be there. Not be in the moment, because it was too uncomfortable and overwhelming to sort of be with it. I think that coffee in a way, people are often using it to sort of like pull themselves back into focus, but sometimes it is just working with the trauma in the first place so that you can be in the present moment just as you are, just a flawed human who isn't on steroids and that can sometimes – The work is actually in just how to get comfortable with the normal with stillness with just being ourselves with our feelings in the moment.

**[00:41:59] AS:** I love that you that, is getting comfortable with stillness, because I think so much of like wellness advertising. I always talk about this with clients [inaudible 00:42:06], but it's like all of the wellness advertising is very “clean and minimal”. I'm like what they want you to do is think that you're going to have like internal space, right? It looks like it's this external environment of like [inaudible 00:42:21] sipping tea, the mountains, right? But it's like even if you were to go up and do that, if you don't resolve inner trauma or even get your blood sugar right, you can be in that mountain sipping tea and you're still going to be like flipping through your phone, right? Worried about things, but it's like, “Oh my God!” People are doing wellness, hardcore wellness marketing know what they're doing, right?

**[00:42:43] EV:** I love that. I never thought about like the way that that's part of what they're trying to convey with that imaging, and I think you're exactly right. In a way, part of what the wellness industry is telling us is to actually like clutter and crap. So it's like not only do we not live on the mountaintop, we live in our tiny studio apartments, but now it's got like a pile in the corner of like various [inaudible 00:43:03]. It's like a supplement wasteland over here and then like that weird – Don't get me wrong. I own a lot of this crap. I have an infrared sauna sleeping bag and now I even an Irving sheet on my bed. I do buy in to the crap, but I think that so much

of the time, what we just need is less, and like I think that you just always have to look like is someone selling you something? The wellness industry is absolutely selling something and self-care is not buying something and it's just like doing less, saying no, putting things out of your calendar and just showing up to yourself with like giving yourself rest and space and getting really acquainted with what it means to be in stillness and in silence with ourselves.

**[00:43:51] AS:** Yeah, I love that you brought up at earthing thing. We were walking through the park the other day and it was just rained. We all got muddy and I'm like, "We're earthing!"

**[00:44:04] EV:** There's this [inaudible 00:44:05] of mud on your calf.

**[00:44:08] AS:** Yeah. Yeah, [inaudible 00:44:11] in space is so challenging. Again, even if you haven't had past trauma, just to your point, like the productivity that gets rewarded and like the honor of being so busy, right? Or not the honor, but like it's – I'm so busy because it's like – We think that that means someone's hard-working and all those things that go along with that.

How do you suggest people get off caffeine? Because one of the things that I – Look, I love coffee, but I can't tolerate it, and sometimes like I made it six weeks postpartum and then I started drinking it again. I recently tapered down the black tea and now I'm going to one that there's no longer black tea. I'm going to switch to green tea. But one thing that was really fascinating to me is like you were so tired in the morning. People think they need caffeine because they're tired, but I've read that it's actually the withdrawal from the caffeine. I was like, "Oh! Motherfucker!"

**[00:45:02] EV:** [inaudible 00:45:02].

**[00:45:03] AS:** Yeah.

**[00:45:04] EV:** Every successful industry ever like creates something that has a withdrawal. Whether it's alcohol, or Starbucks, or video games, or sugar industry, it's like that's how they hook us in, is that you go into a withdrawal. It's like, "Okay. I will go back to that product," and you don't even think to blame the product. You just think, "Ah! Coffee, you're my best friend. You just made my headache go away." It's like actually you made my headache and then you made my headache go away. But yeah, I think that –

**[00:45:31] AS:** There's a logical term for that, when like you like praise your captor. Is that like –

**[00:45:37] EV:** Well, yeah, there is – What do you call that? Whoa! None of us can think of that right now.

**[00:45:43] AS:** Oh well.

**[00:45:43] EV:** Da-da syndrome. It's like a German term. Anyway.

**[00:45:49] AS:** You get the point.

**[00:45:50] EV:** We need our assistant to Google that for us. Stockholm syndrome. Okay. I tasked my four-year-old. No. I didn't. Yeah, I think that in a way I actually don't even it is Stockholm syndrome, although maybe that's what Stockholm syndrome, is actually just that captor like feeds and is like be helping you with all your various withdrawals. But I think that like getting off of coffee, getting off of caffeine in general, the key is just gradual and don't make any making calls on like how did this go until you're really fully off and you have a little off.

I think that I go extremely gradually, like I went back on coffee when I was – I spent seven months traveling around the world, and the coffee is just better and my body tolerates it better in other parts the world. Go figure. Whole other conversation.



I was drinking my cappuccinos in Italy, and even in New Zealand, it was good. Then I would get back to American soil and suddenly coffee would again make me feel like I was on cocaine. I took about two months to go from a cup of day of coffee down to nothing. I go, it's like a taper. I go from if say you're someone who's drinking a couple cups of coffee a day, then you might make the latest one in the day your half calf and then you just keep chipping away at it till you're down to one. Then that's half calf. Then once you're down, like half calf, you can tolerate that, then you go to black tea and maybe have a couple black teas as an equivalent for a cup of coffee and then you would just keep weaning off the black tea, get down to green tea. Then even a cup of green tea, like I was weaning off of that gradually, because otherwise I was irritable. I had a headache. I was not a happy camper. I go really, really, gradually.

At the end when you're finally off, it's lousy for a little while and you have to do this kind of be okay with that and do it over a weekend, kind of upfront communicate with the people around you that you're going to be a little bit sukcy for a few days and get through it. Maybe CBD oil to help the headache, and then once you're off, like fully off and a few days had passed, you actually really re-center back to who you were, but your energy is more even and your sleep is better and you no longer interrupt people in the same annoying way.

It's like really kind of nice, and I think it's important to trust that like you can function without caffeine. It just is a process getting there, and that's just it. When you wake up and you think all that can get me out of bed and all that could feel good in the world right now is coffee. It's just that you are in massive caffeine withdrawal. The perfect, the best feeling in the world is the antidote to withdrawal.

**[00:48:19] AS:** Oh! Yeah, I love that. That's so helpful. Because, again, I think sometimes when we are feeling anxious, our blood sugar is all crazy. We just think in all or nothing, right? It's like stress response or nothing to have like a moderate middle of how to get off of it. I am curious though, what do you think is added to American coffee that makes it harder for you and probably a lot of us?

**[00:48:39] EV:** I guess to me, where my thinking has arrived at with this is that roundup is a big factor. Maybe it's not even just roundup. Like I don't know if they spray roundup on coffee beans, but I think at this point, our tap, like our municipal water for the most part has a round residue in it. The coffee has roundup one way or another. I don't know. I think that like for me I have done this experiment around gluten so much. I think I have this in common with like a family history of celiac and I was never diagnosed with celiac, but like I was well on my way to getting celiac. I'm convinced. But I just got off gluten and felt a lot better.

For me, I eat gluten when I'm international. If I'm in Italy or if I'm in Asia, I tolerate the gluten. Absolutely no problem, and it's a lot of fun. Then as soon as I touch down on American soil, I don't tolerate it again, and I've kind of done the experimentation around. Is it just the vacation mindset because you're relaxed? But I was in Hawaii and that was vacation mindset and I was relaxed. It was paradise, but the gluten affected me badly. The coffee affected me badly. There's something in American soil, American municipal water. There's some probably some synergistic effect of various chemicals in our agriculture that for me makes me not tolerate all these wonderful delights of life.

**[00:49:54] AS:** I think you're right. Oh! It's kind of scary if you think too hard about it.

**[00:49:59] EV:** It's not great, but I think that to me it's not an accident to just sort of like be living here in this moment, in this twisted world. I think it's for a purpose.

**[00:50:10] AS:** Oh! I love that. We can choose to make it for one, right?

**[00:50:13] EV:** Yeah. Yeah exactly.

**[00:50:16] AS:** One last question. I can't thank enough for breaking all of these down, but I had talked about in the intro here, sometimes a lot of people who listen to this podcast are also

practicing intuitive eating and trying to arrive at that, and there's a lot I love about intuitive eating and I often don't think it goes far enough. When we talk about processed foods and anxiety, again, often what I've seen with clients when they're eating processed foods and trying to follow the intuitive eating advice is they're anxious because they're not eating the right goods for themselves. Then they choose something and then they're like, "I'm still not satisfied," and the intuitive eating advice is like, "Well, eat it." Then I find that for at least my clients, maybe they're more sensitive. I don't know. That deregulates them further.

Can you talk a little bit about how this start to – Again, we've talked about adding fats and starches [inaudible 00:51:04] people need to, but how that philosophical, how you've navigated? How you navigate that with your clients and patients I guess I should say about the disordered eating? Honestly, I think most of America has a disordered eating. I don't think it's just people individually. I think it's collectively we learn. What is your thought on that as we start to try to eliminate these processed sugary carbs, including pretzels and crackers to get nutrient-dense foods in?

**[00:51:34] EV:** Yeah. I mean, I think it's in certain ways I had a lot of experience working on this with patients, but I think what's the truth is probably just to say my own experience with this, which is that when I was in med school, I got really out of balance in my eating and I remember I went to like a CBT therapist and she was like, "Okay, three square meals, two snacks. Nothing is off-limits. Eat everything," and that helped me to extend get back into a balanced pattern of eating, but nothing off-limits was actually wrong for me. That's certainly the eating disorder orthodoxy, but I think people who have gut dysfunction and maybe err on the side of autoimmune proneness and basically don't tolerate certain food, I think that in a way, those foods were behaving like drugs for me. The drug-like culprit food are things like dinner, for some people gluten, for some people dairy, for some people sugar, and then sometimes just these like flavor crystals that are added to processed foods.

For me, like that was why my eating was getting disorderly was that food was behaving like a drug in my body and it created a deprivation binge cycle. It created like this out-of-control feeling, because I really couldn't stop, like the Pringle slogan, "You can't eat just one." It's like I can't. I couldn't. It's not fair.

**[00:52:45] AS:** They're telling you what to do.

**[00:52:49] EV:** They're like, "Listen, we put in plain sight that we made this shit addictive." It's a drug in my body, and like the idea that nothing was off-limits and just to eat it in moderation was driving me completely out of my mind. What I learned inefficiently eventually was that what I had to do this actually abstain from the drug-like foods. I basically took a page out of like alcohol sobriety. It's like abstinence. Like you can't have just one glass of wine if this is going to send you off to the races. I couldn't have one Milano cookie or whatever it was. I couldn't have one bite of a sandwich honestly, even the gluten was triggering me. I had to abstain from the foods that were really behaving like drugs in my body not forever, but for a while so that I really reset my relationship to those foods and also healed my gut. Then I got to go place in life where just I was so much more fulfilled than general and not like having a hole that I need to fill with drugs, but also got to a place where I had just like reset these food relationships so I could come back to a Milano cookie and be like, "Hey, that tastes good, but I'm not going to go on a binge." I think for my patients, but certainly for myself, like a period of abstinence is sometimes been important from the drug-like foods. Then what you do is what you eat instead are the real foods.

Intuitive eating I think to me is my favorite compass with eating and it's basically what is your body saying it wants right now? Okay, can we discern whether it's telling us a need that it has or a drug craving? If your body is like, "Okay. What I feel like right now is a juicy, dripping steak, or what I need right now is a piece of salmon and some greens, or what I need right now is a vat of plantains." To me, those are all your body communicating what you actually need. If your body is like, "Yes, my wisdom tells me I need a pizza." I think that that's a drug-like craving, and I

think that the discernment is really just is this a drug craving or is this a need? If it's in need, you honor it. I think that it with all these things, you can't make an early call because there's sometimes a lot of nutritional debt to repay and you kind of have to like build for a while until you're really repleted and only then can you say like, "Okay, like this is really working. When I eat what my body tells me it needs, my body functions well and I feel good." Once you've gotten into that peaceful relationship with your body and with your yearnings, like it's also just like you've gone through a couples therapy with your body at that point, like it's a peaceful, harmonious relationship.

**[00:55:18] AS:** I love that, and that your word discernment. I was talking with a client last week and she's like, "Why isn't everybody talking about discernment?" I'm like, "Because it's not a sexy word." I mean, that's what I do with clients. It's like, to your point, is it like a need, like a nutritional need? That's where – I mean, I work on the story level of like when people are turning to that thing, the food when it's a drug-like craving. I love your framing of that. It's like, "Okay, it's probably not about the food," and I think that's sometimes where intuitive eating things that not that they'll be like, "Well, if you're lonely, call someone." But I'm looking at like what's the story and the patterns and behaviors of how you're actually isolating yourself, because calling your friend, that's not why you're turning to this. Not because you haven't called your friend. You know what I mean? Like it's not really the root cause, it's a pattern of isolation and loneliness and whatnot, but I think that word discernment is so important and really kind of doing a diagnostic check of like, "Okay, what is this really about?" Sometimes it is. That's what's so tricky. Sometimes it is really about lacking nutrition, like nutrient density. To your point, you have to like feed yourself nutrient rich foods for a while to almost un-normalize the normal feelings of anxiety and cravings. Last season, I just said to people, I'm all about intuitive eating and why can't we hear our intuition? I think processed foods are designed to interfere with that.

**[00:56:39] EV:** I even think, like I love the name of this podcast, like Insatiable, because I mean I love that on so many levels. Just like an insatiable lust for life and learning and everything. But I

also think that, for me, what was the greatest feeling was to learn satiety, because I felt like what I really struggled was overeating. I was like, “I see other people getting full and stopping. I cannot. I will keep eating forever,” and I think that with nutrient density, like I think when the body knows it doesn't have the nutrition it needs, there's a little bit of a signal that's just like just keep eating. Maybe at some point this like tasty delight bucket will get us what we need, and it won't. But it kind of just thinks like keep going until you get what you need.

I think once you start actually repleting nutrition and giving your body what it really needs to function, and it doesn't mean to like escaped into a drug like binge. That's not meeting the need. It needs nutrition, but all it knows to do is tell you to eat and all you know to do is feed it the foods around you. I think that once you actually feed it the good food, it starts to think, “Ah! I have enough. Okay, you can feel full.”

For me, I never really felt that until I got off the drugs of food and got on to food that was actually nourishing my body. Then I experience satiety, and that was like such a freeing feeling. I to this day, as like as someone who is so chronically overeating and so chronically constipated, I'm like, now, like any poop and any experience of satiety, I'm just like, “Hallelujah!” It's not a good thing. I think that that's it, is that like satiety is also the freedom on the other side of the coin of like you know when you're hungry and when you're like getting to really enjoy that food and delicious food and sharing a meal with someone. These are the joys of being alive in a body, and I enjoy all the more also knowing that my body will tell me when I've had enough.

**[00:58:28] AS:** Yeah, I love that word, and I think that satiety is almost the anecdote of anxiety both physiologically and psychologically, right?

**[00:58:37] EV:** Ooh!

**[00:58:37] AS:** That's the level I operate on. Let's look at the metaphor here, and that's what in our stories we cut ourselves off from emotional satiety, which is part of that binge restrict cycle,

which is why I love working on that level because people start to discover, “Oh, I don't love food as much as I think I do.” It's meeting some sort of unmet needs on an emotional level, but I love that. I think that's just such a nugget get people can take away of satiety with food will help reduce anxiety physiologically, because it isn't all in your head. It's in your in your body too, right?

**[00:59:11] EV:** God! I love that so much. Emotional satiety, I just think about like these two major phases of life and how we need it. It's like in infancy and in childhood, we need this kind of like caretaker, safety, feeling loved and feeling in a good enough way, just feeling seen and delighted in, and like that is emotional satiety in early life.

Then as adults, and I think so many problems happen when we don't really get that needs met in childhood. As adults, I think like we're really misfiring and like missing the ways we need emotional satiety, which is like I think kind of where I put this well. Like we need meaningful work, we do need meaningful relationships. Actually I think we need meaning. I think most of us do well when we have some degree of the special connection, which can be very broad. It doesn't have to be like God. It can be anything. But it can mean I believe in like how fucking awesome nature is. But I think that it's like those kinds of meanings I think what help us feel fulfilled and okay and safe as adults.

**[01:00:11] AS:** 100%. Going back, we'll kind of conclude with when you talked about at the kickoff of false and real anxiety. I find that bridge of healing trauma often creates meaning. We have the power to choose the meaning when we own story, and that is like medicine that you don't need, like you never know what was missing or that you need it until you have it. Yeah, I love the concept of meaning. It just makes us feel safer, right? Whether the world is safe or not, it makes us feel safe. Who's to say if the world is safe or not? Now we're getting trippy, but – I mean, it certainly is dangerous at times and it's also safe, right? It's holding for all of it.

**[01:00:53] EV:** Well, I think like even when we're not okay, there is a place to like – There's an intact okayness that we can access. I think like the world, like shit does happen, but that's not a reason to live in fear, is that is to recognize how empowered we are to nimbly creatively adjust to when shit happens and just to recognize like we are strong and write this story.

**[01:01:13] AS:** Yeah. Yeah. Totally. Dr. Vora, thank you so much for being here. Is there anything that you want to add that I didn't ask you?

**[01:01:20] EV:** I think we covered a lot of ground and we have 10 more podcasts in us.

**[01:01:26] AS:** Yeah, totally. Thank you so much. Where could people find more of you? We'll link into you in the show notes, but where could people find you online?

**[01:01:35] EV:** Yeah. I'm most active on Instagram. I'm @EllenVoraMD, and then I have a website, ellenvora.com, which sort of have everything there in one place. Yeah, Ali, thank you so much.

**[01:01:45] AS:** Thank you. I so enjoyed this.

**[01:01:48] EV:** Me too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[01:01:52] AS:** Thank you, health rebels, for tuning in today. Have a reaction, question or want the transcript from today's episode, find me at alishapiro.com. I'd love if you leave a review on Apple Podcast and tell your friends and family about Insatiable. It helps us grow our community and share a new way of approaching health in our bodies. Thanks for engaging in a different kind of conversation. Remember, always, your body truths are unique, profound, real and liberating.



[END]

