

## How to Stop “I Deserve This” Eating with Ali Shapiro – Insatiable Season 11, Episode 4

[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 addiction, if sugar is really addictive and can we eat it moderately and how we can move forward with sugar and its proper pace in our life and what does that look like for you?

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

[EPISODE]

**[00:04:52] AS:** Hello, welcome everyone. Today will be a solo episode on the "I deserve this" emotional reason we turn to sugar. In the emotional eating world, we often hear we use food to numb our feelings. This is true. My entire Season 10 of Insatiable is about how sugar and really all foods become a way to create a safety refuge from unresolved trauma and how to turn this pain and discomfort from food into post-traumatic growth.

And, there's also a need for pleasure in our lives. Today, I'm going to focus on the pleasure of feeling like what we are doing is rewarding instead of just stressful.



When we don't feel we are being rewarded or rewarded enough with our daily and life choices, we turn elsewhere reward ourselves, for some this is alcohol, drugs, shopping, or gambling... and for many it's food.

Today, we are going to get to the root cause of this and ideas to practice and experiment with to end "I deserve this eating".

To do this, I'm going to bring in adult development theory, which is critical to ending the root emotional reasons we battle with sugar and I'll walk you through why and how.

Now, you might be thinking adult development theory and sugar? You crazy Ali! And you might be right...who is to say anymore. However, today I will illustrate why integrating adult development theory into our disordered eating - with sugar being the pain point we will focus on today - is truly integrative medicine and what is actually crazy is that this understanding of how adults change is not integrated into most health and wellness behavior or habit change.

The adult development theory I'll walk you through on a high level today is Immunity to Change. It was created by Dr. Robert Keagan and Dr. Lisa Leahy out of Harvard's School of Adult Education. It's a brilliant, elegant theory that shows how adults can develop, with meaningful challenges.

Side note: a lot of you have asked me for book recommendations. A lot of adult development theory is very academic and inaccessible and isn't applied to health and wellness as much as it needs to be. So, I'm going to be doing some very accessible virtual workshops on the stories and beliefs we have that make us turn to food this summer and fall, applying adult development theory.

If you're interested, get on my list at [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com).



Ok, now back to Immunity to Change adult development theory. In this framework, there are three adult development plateaus: the socialized mind, the self-authoring mind and the self-transforming mind.

The socialized mind is where we start as adults. Now all of us, regardless of our phase of development, need belonging. Being with other humans is not only fun and makes us feel part of something larger than ourselves, we also know it supports a healthy microbiome, boosts our immunity, etc.

However, when we are in a socialized mindset, we are seeking belonging based on how we've been socialized to believe we need to be to maintain that belonging. This socialization occurs from family norms, church norms, media norms, and medical norms and popular culture which includes diet culture. I think of the backlash people I know have gotten for no longer being vegan. Or for speaking out on the nuances of vaccines. Food and health is as tribal and polarized these days as political parties because of the general adult development stage most of us are in.

Even if you identify as a rebel, at this stage of adult development, your rebelliousness is often defined against the mainstream, so it's still controlling and shaping how we identify as a rebel in the socialized mind. You can see this in splinters of the body acceptance movement where there seems to be antagonism against any form of weight loss as part of the patriarchy. Like people are mad at Adele for losing weight. So we are still commenting on women's bodies and choices when we do this! And this is why no matter how rebellious you feel, weight loss can still feel so important because we've been conditioned to believe so many stories about what will happen when we are thin even if we are reacting against it.

Now applying the socialized mind to sugar and processed foods, even the idea that processed foods are relatively safe is part of the socialization right? As I talked about with Charles Eisenstein in Episode 1 of this season, there is this story of assumed progress and "trust



authority”. Trusting that ingesting copious amounts of sugar was safe in the first place wasn’t a big deal legitimized by their place on the shelf, slick advertising and an assumption that someone would have stopped their sale if this was unsafe.

If you get my Well-Rounded newsletter, I’ve talked a lot about the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on marketing Pop-Tarts or Pepsi alone to make us feel they are safe. It’s also why no one bats an eyelash at giving pregnant women basically a 24 ounce soda while they are pregnant to test if they have gestational diabetes.

And then these bigger cultural stories get filtered into our individual families and communities. For example in my life, sugar was used as a reward by my family, school and my community at large. When I was afraid to jump off the diving board, my Dad told me we’d stop at Dunkin’ Donuts if I jumped. I ran and cannon balled so fast. This was one example of probably thousands where I was taught to be rewarded for doing something hard.

Our school district participated in Book It, which if we read five books, we would get a free personal pan Pizza. Again, rewarded for doing something rather than hey, how do we cultivate a love of reading?

Or I played softball and after each game, someone would bring a snack and soda. So we were rewarded for playing the game we loved. I was socialized into food = reward for being active (even though let’s be real...softball is not that active of a sport).

So in a death by a thousand paper cuts kind of way, sugar came to be associated with reward which is why when I was bingeing and emotionally eating, I would tell myself “I deserve this”.

The next adult development plateau is the self-authoring mind. 33% of college educated American adults will arrive here and about 40% of entrepreneurs. This is where from a health, wellness and body perspective, you learn your body and how to choose what works for you.



In my work with clients, they learn how to choose what works for you by becoming aware of the choices we are making that we don't know we're making. We are often making choices we don't know we are making because we don't know the stories that we've been socialized into and so there are blind spots to what we can choose.

In the case of processed foods or sugar, maybe we never thought to question that a grocery store mostly doesn't even contain real food anymore. Or we never thought to question that there's a story of sacrifice = reward we are following which shows up as staying in jobs we don't love for a great retirement or for men, having to be a good provider even if they don't want to be so career focused or women, believing we will get celebrated for sacrificing our lives for our families.

Becoming self-authoring is not about how smart you are: it's about how curious and willing to become self-aware of the stories controlling you and working to rewrite the story you want to live. This is where you really have to question the authorities in your life - whether they are the nutrition expert, doctor or family of origin patterns and decide - does this work for me? Is this my truth? What are my other choices?

So when it comes to sugar or processed foods, self-authoring looks like:

“How does what I'm eating affect my blood sugar and that connection to my anxiety?” versus “I'm being good, ordering the egg whites”.

In this example, many of us have been socialized to believe doctor's and a standardized approach to medicine, which comes out of a story of Capitalism and scale. Even though high cholesterol doesn't come from healthy fats, if you don't know Big Pharma's influence on educating the medical community and how they targeted cholesterol as a problem (here in the US, other countries don't track it) and lobbying to have the definition of high cholesterol



lowered from 220 to 200 and so even though we are told we are pre-diabetic, we are terrified of fat and have no idea that healthy fats are healthy for you and so people continue to eat egg whites which drive up sugar cravings and high insulin, which is what happens with metabolic syndrome, is way more dangerous than cholesterol.

This is one example of a thousand.

Or here's another shift the more we become self-authoring:

“What’s happening emotionally when I overeat pizza?” versus “I deserve pizza tonight. As we become self-authoring and discover what’s true for us food wise, you will come to look at your own body and food more holistically and understand how your stories and patterns come to affect “I deserve this”.

As you become more self-authoring, you get information and results you wouldn't otherwise have access too.

For example, some of my clients discovered their birth control was making them more insulin resistant and thus, crave sugar more yet they were put on it from doctors who were socialized into Western Medicine that the pill can be used for unexplained period problems.

For others it was realizing their PMS cravings were from deregulated blood-sugar, not something that was normal. And others have realized that when they partake in sugary holiday traditions that connect them with their family, they digest them better and can be moderate.

Becoming self-authoring is learning to discern what works for you and trusting your body's feedback and real, lived experience versus what you've been told by outside authority.





Becoming self-authoring is challenging. It takes a couple of years. Although it can take anywhere from 6 months - 12 months to stop turning to food once you decide to self-author how you react to stress, including the “I deserve this” pattern being one of these patterns.

I was telling a couple of clients about this episode. They are rebels, very accomplished, and have felt different. And, they all said “I would’ve thought I was self-authoring before working with you. But I wasn’t.”

For example, I used to think my choices were which antidepressant do I want to choose? Versus: wow, maybe I don’t have a genetic destiny of depression or a serotonin deficiency. I have a choice to heal my depression through food and owning the story that made me so depressed in the first place?

This is one example of hundreds in my own life - because remember I’ve been working on being self-authoring with my body for about 12 years now - that I’ve been able to make radically different choices simply by knowing what choices are available to me.

Overcoming my infertility diagnosis might be the crown jewel of self-authoring health experiences although it wouldn’t have been possible without the previous ones, including ending my bingeing. Working on the story that caused my bingeing enabled me to get off so many meds and heal my body. The Naturopath and Acupuncturist who helped me get pregnant were really tweaking the foundation I built by recognizing, owning, and healing the body story that was causing my bingeing.

Each self-authoring win sets you up for more self-trust and success as you tune in more acutely to what’s true for your body. This doesn’t mean things get easier...but as my friend Laura McKowen says, you get better.



I want to emphasize that what's worked for me is not what will work for others. In my work with clients, I'm always guiding clients to what is true for them. I also want to be clear: becoming self-authoring doesn't mean natural medicine or no medicine is the answer or you can control the outcomes (I didn't know if natural medicine would work for my fertility and I still think there's some element of the great mystery that I'll never know regarding how I did get pregnant).

It means you are aware of the full range of your choices and how to be discerning to navigate those choices. That might mean natural medicine is a choice. But so is Western medicine and you may need a combination of both. This is why self-authoring is so powerful and challenging: you will have to open yourself up to the stories that you've been living by aren't always true and to deal with more complexity than simple black and white, all or nothing ways of being.

I share this because this whole COVID situation has made me see how critical it is to be self-authoring in your health going forward. It's what I'm most passionate about. And I know we can get many more of us to be self-authoring...if we can increase that 33%, that means we also have many more people who know their own power.

Finally, the last adult development plateau is Self-transforming. It is worth noting but it's kind of a 1% thing, although a different 1% than we are used to thinking about in terms of wealth and power. Only about 1% of the population arrives here. In a nutshell, this is where you allow yourself to be transformed by the very views and ideas that probably repulse you or that you judge very much after you become self-authoring. So say this would be me really being open to Bill Gates GMO-vaccine-geo-engineering (chem trails) agenda for building health even though it rests on controlling and ignoring nature's wisdom, which in my self-authoring journey feels like blasphemy.

After this overview of the steps, let's go back in detail to the socialized mind and some beginning self-authoring steps out of this with the "I deserve this" reasons we turn to sugar.



One of the root causes of this pattern is the story we've been socialized into of sacrifice equals reward.

Here in America, we've been socialized into the Puritan Work Ethic: sacrifice and you'll be rewarded in heaven was the original idea. Discipline leads to the good things, right? This is why we assume thin people are disciplined and a thread in fat-phobia: that heavier people are lazy and self-indulgent.

Outside of food, this story often translates into feeling guilty if we aren't productive, feeling a badge of honor for being busy and exhausted. This story - whether we are conscious of it or not - is what creates a lot of how we feel about ourselves.

And around much of the Western world, we've been influenced by Christianity, even if you aren't Christian. There's a story that America is about separation of church and state—but our legal system does not reflect this.

But I don't want to focus just on Christianity. Most religions are patriarchal - and throw women under the bus. And so as women, we've been socialized into believing that how we get recognition is being a martyr. The more we sacrifice, the more recognition. Watching Mother's Day posts...see some "she sacrifices so much for our family". I don't think Carlos will ever say that about me. And I'm OK with that. And even if it's not about for our families, who isn't afraid of being called "high-maintenance" or "difficult"? Sometimes even having basic needs as a woman can be viewed as these labels and yet when we become self-authoring, we get to decide what having needs means about us.

And then if we filter this Puritanical-Partriarchal Religion story through Capitalism, men are pressured to think they are only worthwhile based on being a provider and to "man up" when they have feelings and that leads to deserving their unhealthy food or alcohol.



Capitalism also means based on if you grew up economically lower or middle class, there was this story -that has been particularly disproven by economists and sociologists in a post-Reagan economic era - of upward mobility.

And so if you worked hard and sacrificed, you'd be rewarded with more money (and the accompanying social services security like better schools, better clothes, etc that comes with that).

This is also why diet culture can convince us that the more we restrict ourselves, the more weight loss we should have. The harder the work-out, the bigger the calorie burn (and thus weight loss reward, right?)

These are just a few translations of the sacrifice-reward story.

So to start to become self-authoring, we need to ask ourselves: could there be other ways to live? Is this the story I want to live? Is this working for me?

What I've found for myself and my clients, that the more we feel rewarded about what we are doing during our day, the less we turn to food. When we are consciously choosing how to respond to an email or move our bodies or considering our own needs in what's on our schedule that day, we start to enjoy the day or the process of our goals and the end results more.

**To stop "I deserve this eating", we probably need to shift from a sacrifice - reward story to how do I make the process rewarding, not just the end result?**



Also, side note: this does not mean life is easy. We often project life being easier onto weight loss. I'm talking more about having more ease if we define ease as choosing more of what we find meaningful.

For example, when it comes to my career, my Corporate job was so much easier than running my own company (granted I left 13 years ago and wasn't in a high pressure leadership role). I worked a lot less hours in Corporate, I had the security of a paycheck at the time, benefits, and had much more vacation than I do now. But I felt "busy bored" as one of my clients just described her own feelings about her job (thank you for that,J!)

And yet, there is more ease in my life because in becoming self-authoring with my career, what I identified as rewarding to me is making an impact in women's health, being intellectually challenged, having flexibility and the freedom to call the creative shots. So even though there are many days where I'm more exhausted from working for myself, I don't turn to food because it's a good kind of exhaustion. I have less vacation and yet I don't need vacations the way I needed them in the Corporate life because what I find fun and interesting I get to experience on most days. So the stress from being my own boss, even with COVID, feels like it's worth it. So the more we have choices that feel worth it than BLAH, the less we will have "I deserve this eating".

Now, I want you to notice any irritation, judgement or "BUTs" that comes up when I suggest you could be making more rewarding choices.

In TWF and WAIETN, we say the quote that Gloria Steinem and Erin Brokovich made famous, "The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off."

If I would've heard someone say this to me years ago, I would've rolled my eyes and found all the reasons it was easier for someone else to have more rewarding choices in areas of food, exercise and even building a business. And quite frankly there are many people facing more



challenges than me because of the white, heterosexual and middle-class privilege I was born into and thus where achieving certain things are impossible or at extreme personal costs because of race, sexuality or socioeconomic status. For me, where I was, it was “their metabolism is faster” or “but those people have family money and so they can slow down and not be burned out”. All these things are true AND yet I can see how I was making food, exercise and building a business a lot harder and exhausting than it had to be. I was not at all rewarding for myself because I believed you needed to sacrifice - push through cravings, work-out hard, even when you don’t want to, keep your nose to the grindstone and isolate yourself while building a business.

The irritation, judgement or BUTS that come from the idea that sugar or any life area could be more rewarding is most likely your protective resistance. For those of us who have been rewarded for working hard and sacrificing a lot, whether through gold stars or rescuing or fixing other people, we judge others or ideas of more rewarding choices because we’ve disowned the parts in ourselves that are allowed to rest, say “no” or ask for what we need even if it might rock the boat.

So how do we make life more rewarding? First of all, this is a practice. It’s not something you do and are done! Plus there’s always more layers. I recently found a new story in my own life that is making my work harder than it needs to be!

To begin, think of an area of your life - whether it be exercise, work, parenting, or a specific relationship you’d like to be more rewarding. I will use exercise as an example here because it’s a big reason we think we deserve food especially because research shows when we view exercise as a sacrifice or punishment, we overestimate how many calories we burn exercising and underestimate how much we eat for our sacrificial exercise.

So to begin self-authoring ourselves out of this story: we first have to define what is rewarding for us. Our socialized story tells us the reward is recognition based on the sacrificial identity



we've been recognized for whether it's: "hard-working", "Puts her family first", "great at handling stress". It will all depend not only on the bigger cultural myths but how the way these cultural myths did or did not get filtered into your family of origin.

**So I want you to start thinking about the area of your life you chose and maybe the next choice you have in that area. So for example, with exercise, think about the next time you plan to exercise.**

**You want to reflect on: what would make this choice feel rewarding or worthwhile to me?  
What would enable me to enjoy the process of X rather than just the end result?**

And it's OK if you don't know. Self-authoring is a process of self-discovery recognizing there is so much more to us than we knew, our power included.

Once you identify what is meaningful to you, you should identify the stress response that makes you see this choice as stressful, not rewarding. Our stress response usually makes us defensive and generates reasons the new choice can't be rewarding. This is known as "protective resistance".

We generate protective resistance because we are afraid of judgement, criticism, conflict, rejection and/or failure to uphold the identities we like about ourselves like "good Mom" or "hard-working" or "not difficult".

This protective resistance is generated based on our stress responses of compete, avoid or accommodate. And if you aren't familiar with these responses, take my quiz at [alishapiro.com/comfort-eating-style-quiz/](http://alishapiro.com/comfort-eating-style-quiz/) to learn your predominant one and more about each response as we all use all three.



So for example, if you find yourself in the Competitor mode, what often makes us unable to view or see rewarding choices is the timeline that we've given ourselves. When we go into compete mode, our big fear is we will miss out on what the success or winning will bring. And we need to get there fast because there is a scarcity of success and winning.

The big fear is it's never going to happen and getting there as fast as possible lessens the anxiety of the opportunity drying up and/or not happening.

For example, many of us go into compete mode if we have a wedding or high school reunion coming up. This gives an insane deadline to lose 20 pounds, we cut out a bunch of foods, sacrifice any pleasure in the process because we feel "behind", which is how the competitor frames the process.

It's why we can be panicked around weight loss because "there's only so many romantic partners and I'm not getting any younger" or "this would be easier if I were thinner". When we are competing we've set such high standards for ourselves because we believe the sacrifice-reward story rather than that getting results can be a relaxing and creative challenge.

Applying this to an exercise example, we "deserve" these fries because of the punishment of the super hard work-out that we think will fast-track weight loss or body toning.

Many clients realize this sacrifice-reward story applied to exercise leads to sugar cravings because hard work-outs make them exhausted and their body more stressed. So not only is there an emotional need for reward, but a physiological need too.

When they tune into "what will replenish me", they get more tuned into their menstrual cycles or life phase and align with their body and moving their body becomes rewarding because of what ways it makes their life more rewarding, such as having more energy, feeling more creative, etc.





So if you find that part of your “I deserve this food” is from the competitor's view of the situation and you’d like to experiment with new choices, I invite you to journal on this question: What would shift in how I approach X if I chose what would replenish me to generate those new choices?

We can still have standards and learn to enjoy the process—providing rewards along the way supporting us in going the distance to our bigger goals.

Our next stress response is avoid. Do you find you’re making life harder by avoiding (and eating to procrastinate). And your reaction to avoiding is doing everything at the last minute totally stressed and then needing sugar because you deserve it after the extreme effort expended? Understand that this stress is usually a result of the idea that there is a perfect choice, a definitive right or wrong—and the stress to execute or choose perfectly.

We often avoid because the stakes feel so “make or break”, right or wrong...often what we feel is overwhelm or not wanting to get started as a result of such high, stressful stakes.

We often avoid because we have the idea that there will be dramatic failure or instant success which adds the pressure that makes us avoid. In reality, we need to go from super-sizing our expectations and effort to right-sizing our expectations and choices.

For example, I was working with a client who was going to see a new endocrinologist. She had avoid tendencies. In our session, I asked her what she wanted to get out of this appointment with the doctor. She was avoiding figuring it out because she felt overwhelmed. When I helped her see that this endocrinologist appointment wasn’t going to magically give her a solution but rather more data for her to make the right choices for her, it reduced the pressure of the appointment. She could approach it more as an interview to see if this doctor was the right fit not that the doctor had some magical powers to have all the answers and then it became easier



to get organized for the appointment because the pressure of this being her “one shot” wasn’t there.

If we apply the sacrifice-reward story to exercise with the avoid response, we often avoid because we aren’t enjoying what we are doing because we believe we need to “gear up” to do exercise plans, make it a “thing” by going to a gym or a boutique work-out place with the right clothes and spending all the money and driving there. That’s a lot of work just to work-out. If that’s enjoyable, great. If not, you don’t need to sacrifice or do all that work to move your body.

With quarantine, many of us find our work-out places have closed and many are discovering WOW, I can work-out from home. That makes it easier. Or walking in nature is so easy. The more you “right-size” exercise or integrate it into your life versus it being “a thing” requiring so much gearing up or work, the more rewarding it becomes simply because it’s easier at the very least, At best, you will find your own inspiration for moving your body as you do it more consistently and understand the immediate rewards of it like more energy, better sleep, rather than what you’ve been socialized to measure which is calories or how hard or how much you sweated or lately, or how expensive it was!

So if you find that part of your “I deserve this food” is from the avoid view of the world being so much sacrificial work, I invite you to journal on this question:

How can I right-size my expectations of what I have to do/what’s coming up and the next step?

Even in creating this podcast episode, I right sized it from all the stories I know cause us to turn to sugar to one, the I deserve this story! This is better for you as a listener so you don’t get overwhelmed and better for me, who is struggling with sleep these past couple of weeks.

I can teach you the others in my upcoming workshops or another podcast season! It’s not going to make or break the value of this episode, right? If anything, it will be less to take in and thus, easier to integrate. More rewarding for all!



And finally we have the Accommodator response. Accommodators are people pleasing and/or in fix it mode at the expense of our own needs. Here we don't even consider our needs, putting everyone and everything first to protect that identity that requires us to sacrifice getting our needs met. It might be how we view a "good Mom", "low-maintenance friend" or "not difficult coworker".

Being a new Mom, I think about how this accommodator and sacrificial story come together in heterosexual parenting: good parents sacrifice for their children, right? Men sacrifice with the pressure to provide and make their wives happy and many modern Dads want to be very involved in childrearing too...and these pressures come together. The modern phenomenon of the Dad bod is a result of using sugar (often in the form of alcohol) when the pressure feels too much or they can't fix their wives happiness because that is an inside job for all of us.

Perhaps a relic from earlier cultures but carried over, women feel like they need to sacrifice to make their children happy and hence why I often see Moms struggling to feel like they are failing at both work and childcare. Even in progressive households, this sacrifice-reward story goes deep and women tend to do more even if they are also working. Women are also set up for and expected to do the emotional labor by society too. This isn't to say this can easily be changed, it's just more reason why it's important to find more rewarding choices where we can. And remember: many choices feel sacrificial when it isn't our choice and thus, doesn't feel rewarding. There are so many "sacrifices" in raising a child - like on sleep - but at least for me, I consciously choose to become a parent and so knowing I chose this and being present with Eca all comes together to make it more rewarding. Remember, creating a new story doesn't mean everything is easy, it means what we are doing is worth it.

Having said that, there are other choices out there aside from sacrificing everything for your child. Another view that resonates with me, today, is Jung said the most important thing you can do as a parent is live out your dreams so your child doesn't live them out for you. What Jung is challenging in our culture today is the sacrifice-reward story for parenting!

The more we put others needs first out of obligation or as a way to not potentially disappoint people or because we are told this is what a good parent or partner does, the more often we



will feel like we deserve food because of the emotional deprivation from not having our own needs and wants met.

If we apply this accommodator world view to our exercise example, I can't think of a better accommodator pattern that leads to "I deserve this" eating than doing cardio exercise because Richard Simmons (who I love) or Jillian Michaels told us to and we want to accommodate them and we think this exercise counts more because we hate it so much. LOL. Ok, obviously this is a personal story I had to unlearn.

But I used to do really intense cardio exercise because growing up in the 80s and 90s, that was really our only choice. Oh and the Nordic Trak! Let's not forget those or step aerobics.

When I started real life, after college, all that cardio made me so tired afterwards but I thought that's how I knew it was working, because it was such a sacrifice and the reward was so many calories I burned. Even though I would then eat sugar at night because I was so exhausted and drained in part from my work-out!

So if you find yourself in the accommodator pattern, the question to ask yourself is "What do I need here?" and then quote "indulge" yourself.

So to recap:

We have an "I deserve this" reaction with food because we've been socialized into believing "sacrifice-reward" not necessarily in heaven, but in recognition as a "good" person, with varying identities that we believe make us good whether it's self-sacrificing Mom, low-maintenance friend, never difficult, etc.

These are ways we've been socialized to belong or have an important role with our families, friends and communities. They are one way of living and we have other stories we can choose and still belong to these places, because we need to belong and yet we most fully feel we belong when we are most truly ourselves.

To become self-authoring, we need to decide if we want to choose the sacrifice-reward story or if we want to choose a story where we can make the process rewarding so we stop "I deserve this" eating.

To start this self-authoring process, next time you make a choice that feels sacrificial, ask yourself, what would make this more rewarding?



To actually follow through and help you choose something more rewarding, ask yourself

If you find yourself in competitor mode, you can ask yourself what would shift in how I approach X if I chose what would replenish me?

If you find yourself in avoid mode, how can I right size my expectations of what I have to do/what's coming up and next step?

If you find yourself in the accommodator pattern, ask yourself "What do I need here?" and then quote "indulge" yourself.

And if you need more help in recognizing these patterns, take my quiz at [alishapiro.com/comfort-eating-style-quiz/](http://alishapiro.com/comfort-eating-style-quiz/)

And if you want to do more coaching work this summer and fall on the stories we've been socialized into that cause what mainstream pop-psychology calls "self-sabotage" and "falling off track" but is really self-protection, get on my list at [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com). I'll be offering very accessible coaching workshops. I'm excited to experiment with this!

[END]

