

Creating Safety for Sustainable Eating and Exercise Results

– Insatiable Season 13, Episode 7

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:05] AS: You went vegetarian, then paleo. You stopped restricting. You're trying to love yourself more, but nothing seems to be working fully, and you might feel hopeless about ever feeling good in your body. And every time you fail, you trust yourself less.

As the larger world feels increasingly in peril, caring about how you feel in your body may feel frivolous and even more hopeless. We are at a time when our individual and collective stories about what to do for our bodies, health and the world are crumbling. Because these stories we have, they aren't working for how our bodies or our world actually works. And I believe centering our bodies, all bodies, not just thin, white or "good" bodies and what all of our bodies need to thrive will help orient us in a better direction.

There's no one-size-fits-all diet, exercise or way to bio hack. Good health is much less about willpower or discipline and more a complex inter-web of our societal structures, food choices, emotional history, environmental exposures and privilege. There is a great loss of certainty in safety when we initially have to face what is real versus the half-truths we've been fed. But the loss of these stories creates an opening. If this opening is pursued with curiosity and discernment, we can discover our awe-inspiring ability to create and embody a new body story for our physical and political bodies and the earth.

I'm Ali Shapiro, and I host the Insatiable podcast, so we engage in the type of conversations that will lead us to radically new body stories for ourselves, each other, and the earth. To do that, we discuss a more truthful approach to freedom from cravings, emotional eating, binging and



being all or nothing. We explore the hidden aspects of fighting our food, our weight, and our bodies and dive deep into nutrition and behavioral change science and true whole health.

But fair warning, this is not your parents' health care or the conspiratorial crazy of the wellness world. This is a big rebel gathering to those who want to hold nuance, context and complexity in order to lead the way to a healthier future for all, because our lust for life is truly insatiable.

Hello, everybody. We have arrived at our last Insatiable season 13 Food is Safety episode. And if you're listening to this right when it drops or around the time it does, you know it's also the beginning of 2023. Happy New Year to those of you who celebrate the new year.

Before I move on today, there's a workshop I want to tell you about, and it kind of hits on the themes we're talking about today. But I'm hosting a workshop free on January 11th called Smart Girls. How they sabotage eating and exercise goals and what to do instead. It'll be at 12 PM. You can also sign up in the show notes. If you've been attending the Food is Safety series, you're already in. It's going to be a bonus as part of that series. You can sign up at alishapiro.com/smart-goals-alternative.

And in this workshop, we're going to talk about how sustainable behavior change with eating and exercise is not a product of rule following, right? If you're trying to do a plan perfectly and just focus on executing the plan, you're actually not learning the skills you need to learn your body. Definitely, most plans do not include story work or safety work. But trying to find the perfect planner or be good will not equip you with the skills and the body intelligence you need to learn to actually reach your goal.

The research has emerged around this. And, I mean, this is what I've observed for the past 15 years in my own practice. Dr. Michelle Seeger, who will talk about her research more in today's episode, says many people try to make their choices via automatic habit formation. Only to see these habits crash. And this is specifically related to eating and exercise.

The truth is that habits depend on predictable circumstances. The new thinking is that habit formation for complex behaviors, like healthy eating and exercise, generally can't work for the majority of people who have many roles in multi-dimensional lives. In other words, your life is changing all the time. Growing research shows that being flexible and willing to modify your eating or exercise plan as needed better predict success with sustainable change than trying to stick to the plan.

In my Smart Goals Workshop, we're going to get much more into this, including why flexibility, which often feels like being imperfect, going off track, and there's all this guilt and shame. It is so challenging. Yet, it's the key to reaching your goals.

Again, come check out the workshop. Again, it's also going to be part of my Truce with Food 2023 launch, which opens her registration January 9th through the 20th, or the early bird special where you can save \$500. You'll get more information on that if you're on my list or at the workshop. But it's my once a year signature program.

If this is the year you really want to approach changing, like transformationally changing your relationship to food, your body and your life, I hope you'll join us. But you can sign up for the workshop at alishapiro.com/smart-goals-alternatives. And, again, that's 12 PM, Wednesday, January 11th. And if you can't attend live, you'll get a limited replay recording.

Now moving on to today's episode. We are tackling the last Truce with Food foundation, which is how to continue the march to cultivate safety so we don't turn to food. In the first four episodes we discussed how food equals safety. What stress makes us turn to food? How are stories formed and our protection strategies?

And, again, just having language to see this help you begin to cultivate safety as when you deeply get this. And there's layers to it. The scale – if we think of a scale, more like a Libra balance scale. Not the scale we get on. But it's an important metaphor. The scale balance of

shame melts and self-compassion that works, not the resignation type that we often are afraid of, gets more weight. And we really need more self-compassion so that we can also take an honest look at ourselves and what we need to do to change.

And anyone who has had a fight with their partner, husband, wife – I feel super defensive. And doesn't want to change. I'm raising my hand. You know that self-compassion is really important to be able to really look at what's ours to do, right? And our responsibility. But we can't do that if we're in shame or we don't have a lot of self-compassion. Because then we're just defensive. Ask me how I know.

All right. Then in episode five with Stacey Ramsower, who is going to be a guest teacher this year in Truce with Food when we get to lesson six, which in Truce with Food we call the pause. And in that episode five, I'm saying it's module six in Truce with Food, we talked about how to support our physiology with an emphasis on the nervous system so we can begin to interrupt how reactive we are to our sorry stress and open up capacity and to see things differently.

Remember, most of the time, because our body love shortcuts, our brain loves efficiency, we're always reacting to the past and the present. And that works well enough, right? It's gotten us here. But if you want to change your relationship to food and exercise, you got to stop reacting to the past. Our body and brain are in an infinity feedback loop to create our mind. So, you need to tend to both for genuine change. And we talked about that in that episode.

Then in episode six, Charlotta, Mags and I, my clients, discussed finding what we call in Truce with Food Option C, which is the creative choice outside the box of good and bad and how we want to respond today and our story stress, and also with our hunger and cravings. Again, our stories often are playing out in how we eat and how we exercise, but they're also playing out in our stress. This is why I love this process. It's elegant and efficient.

These choices are rooted in sorting out the values that are truly ours versus what we've been told to value. I loved, as Mags said in that episode, "Do I really hate my body all because of land rights?" If you listened to that episode, you get it. And #prettymuch, right? I mean, obviously, it's much more complicated. But that was a lot of the origins of all of this.

Once we're able to pause and tune into our Option C, we don't put pressure on Option C to be right. Otherwise, we're just recreating the right/wrong binary and false sense of safety that there is a right and wrong. That we are right or wrong. That's actually a big piece of the story we're trying to reduce and work through, is that somehow we are defective because we haven't been able to figure out this food exercise and body thing.

90% of the time, there isn't a right or wrong. And what might have worked or been good and right in your 20s isn't what is going to work post-pregnancy. Or if it never worked long-term before, it probably was never really working. Or maybe aspects of things were working, but it's not the whole solution.

Today's episode is about how to have the courage to experiment with new choices in our stories, our lives. And in this new year, how we relate to our goals? What's the great fulfilling choice for today with how your life and your body are unfolding? For example, do you have your period, so your energy is low and yoga is better than sticking to some couch to 5K plan? Or you didn't sleep well last night, so you need to adjust your work expectations and rest more today so you don't turn to food to try and power through.

When we learn how to effectively experiment, which requires tuning into our bodies and getting intuition around that, and we talked about that with Charlotta in episode six, the difference between instincts and intuition, you will learn what actually works for you today, food and exercise wise and your story. Not what worked again when you were a teenager with no stress, or before pregnancy, or menopause, or before chronic health conditions. But what actually works for you today in your body and in your life.

I brought on two more of my clients, Whitnee and Erin, to share their real-life examples and inspiration to really give you food for thought on how to approach your eating and exercise goals differently. Whitnee will share how she stopped going to all the professionals to simplify her quest for well-being when she could hear herself and finally learn how to manage her dairy intolerance. And Erin, a trainer and someone who's been certified in the truce coach certification process, opting out of what the fitness industry says is good to do and her ideas of what was good to eat.

I also want to mention, in today's episode, you're going to hear a lot of talk about experimenting. And I want to point out that this emphasizes process, which again we talked about in episode 4 with Sil Reynolds. Because how you do something determines where you will end up. How you treat yourself? How you relate to your body? How you relate to your cravings? Your hunger? Your Story?

For example, you can't hate yourself into a loving relationship with yourself. And if you put as much emphasis on process or how you work towards your goal is the outcome, you'll often end up somewhere surprising in a magical way. And we talk about that today. Because if you focus on the how, especially taking an experimental attitude of, "Let me discover what actually works for me instead of what I've been told is good to do," you will learn a lot of surprising things about what works and what doesn't actually work for you and what you need to include to reach your goals.

And most importantly, during this process, you will build a flexible mindset. Not a rigid all or nothing, black or white. As we often say to ourselves, "I'm being good." Or "I'm being bad." And this is what is actually needed for consistency and results.

Okay, enough for me. I really hope you guys enjoyed this season. I love the feedback. This has been definitely one of my favorite seasons. So, just thanks for listening, thanks for engaging. Enjoy today's episode about the power of experimentation and unlearning what you thought

was good so you can come home to your whole self, which is what I think we really want with all of our goals.

And don't forget about the Smart Goals Workshop on January 11th at 12 PM Eastern Standard Time. Again, you can sign up for that at alishapiro.com/smart-goals-alternative. And I will be discussing – this is part of my Truce with Food 2023 registration, which opens up January 9th and goes to the 20th. An early bird registration. If you sign up by January 16th, you save \$500 bucks. And you'll get all of that info at the workshop. And if you want to schedule a call with me, hop on the phone or Zoom. Oh, my God, #so90s, hop on a phone.

All right. Enough for me. Enjoy today's episode.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:13:37] AS: So, welcome to the show, Erin and Whitnee. How are you guys feeling?

[00:13:42] W: Feeling pretty good, yeah.

[00:13:44] E: Feeling awesome. Feeling excited.

[00:13:45] AS: Good. Good. Yeah, I think this is going to help so many people. Because when this airs, it's going to be January 4th. And I know that we're going to talk about traditional resolutions aren't all or cracked up to be. But there is something about the solstice and this time of year about evaluating, and reflecting and kind of seeing what we want to do differently. So, we're going to tap into that energy. Not the new you, new you energy, for today.

[00:14:12] E: Awesome. So stoked.

[00:14:15] AS: You both know that the theme of this season is food is a safety. And Whitnee, we'll start with you. How did you understand that pre-Truce with Food? And how do you understand food is safety now post-Truce with Food?

[00:14:28] W: Yeah, that's a great question. I think pre-Truce with Food, I thought of safety with food being kind of like you hear a lot about comfort eating. And, yeah, more so that it was like I knew that it was some sort of coping strategy, to I thought it was maybe help with stress that I had going on and things like that. But I didn't really understand what that meant or how I could change it. I had all this information about it being like a coping thing, but nothing that I could actually action.

[00:15:00] AS: Yeah. And how do you understand it now?

[00:15:02] W: After Truce with Food now, I've noticed I'm beginning to understand my story more of why and when I began turning to food for comfort. So, understanding my story shed some light on choices I made throughout my life. And I'm starting to see how complex food is and how really the eating and the choices that I make don't actually have anything to do with food at all, but more to do with my story. And I don't know if you want me to like give a little context for what I've discovered about my story here or –

[00:15:32] AS: Yeah, yeah, go ahead. It's natural. So, we'll just go –

[00:15:34] W: Yeah. Yeah. So, what I've kind of come to realize is that I think my story comes back to when I was in elementary school. And I went to a Catholic school. And my family was not religious or Catholic. And so, I really had a lot of feeling like I didn't fit in. And it wasn't okay to be me and to believe the things that I believe. Really, a lot of my story I would have come to realize is about feeling kind of rejected and feeling like I'm not good enough for me and my values. Yeah, that's kind of the – Yeah, yeah. And I'm just starting to really unwrap that and understand it, but that's my starting point, which I think is pretty, pretty big.

[00:16:18] AS: Yeah. Well, especially because I think of episode three and how it feels like, "Oh! Well, okay. But you had your family. And people might think that it." And however, those Catholic values, which are kind of a subdivision of Protestantism, I still can't say it, and puritism, it is reflected in the bigger society, right? You're getting it really acutely at school. But then it's like kind of the water you're swimming in and the culture at large. And that can really make you feel othered when you're experiencing that day-in, day-out, day-in, day-out. And so, that's safety to be yourself is what felt compromised.

[00:16:54] W: Yeah, 100%. Yeah, you nailed. Yeah, just not feeling it's okay to be me. And so, then, I've made a lot of choices like rebelling and trying not to fit in and like pushing against it. Because then it's like, "Well, if I know that I don't fit in, then it's okay. I've chosen it." But it's like, "Well, there's some things I want to choose because I want to. Not because I'm trying to avoid not fitting in." It's been really interesting. It's kind of like a spiral.

[00:17:19] AS: Ah! I love that you say that, because episode seven – or I'm sorry. Episode six was all about Option C and our values. And we'll get more into that. But, okay. And sometimes it looks like, "Okay, I'm going to be me." But it's in rebellion to the choice. So, you're still limited to the either/or, the black and white choices, right? And that's kind of I think how people feel with food, right? They can sense that rebellion on the food level even though it's deeper. It's like, "I'm not going to die. I'm eating whatever I want." And it's like, "But is that also what I really want?" is kind of a concrete example of that. It's like maybe I want a middle pack called moderation. But what does that even mean?

Whitnee, do you have anything else to say to that before –

[00:17:59] W: No. No. That's good.

[00:18:01] AS: So, Erin, what about you? You're also certified in the truce coaching certification. I'm curious about your own personal journey. But then also, why you felt your clients – like how your clients understand safety perhaps?

[00:18:16] E: Well, they don't. Yeah, it's hard. It's hard to understand it. And I guess, for me – Well, first off, Whitnee, I just want to say samesies. I grew up in a Christian home. And that kind of, I believe, led to me not really being able to believe what I believe to be true. I was always just kind of using the bigger system, so to speak, around me of the good thing to do or the bad thing to do to measure that sense of safety.

And I guess pre-Truce with Food, pre why am I eating this now, pre freedom from cravings, right? Like, I've been doing this for a bit, which I just love it. But I guess safety, to me. And maybe to some of my clients as well might have meant something like I don't want to feel safe. Why the heck do I want to feel safe? Because maybe safe is like a stagnant way to be.

I'm coming here to stop on my overeating. I want to feel free and alive. I don't want to feel safe and maybe stagnant or stuck or – It was a total 180, 360 for me to understand so much more about safety and like kind of safety is meaning belonging to ourselves first. I think, for me, in understanding that I'm a very much of a go-getter because of where I kind of grew up. And the good thing to do was to achieve, and was to kind of get ahead, and to get recognition and also being like musical and singing my whole life, I really took a lot of regard in that being good and feeling recognized from that, right?

And so, I think understanding safety for me was in almost that recognition and what others did think about me, and if they did think I was good. But it was a trippy thing because I was relating what was good based off of what they thought. I don't know if that makes sense. Does that make sense?

[00:20:08] AS: Yeah, yeah. Well, I love this because – Well, there's two things. Is that the safety we're talking about in Truce with Food and the truce coaching certification is a paradox, right? Is that the more you feel safe within yourself, the more risks you can take. And so, if we apply that to – Okay. Originally, I thought safety was this is how you get recognition and this is how you belong. And then it's like, "Hmm. But is this the only way? And do I want to keep this?"

Margaret talked about in episode six the perfectionism. The story, right? It's like, "Oh, now I got to keep this up." Right? To me, it's kind of like what you're saying is like, "Oh, people are giving me recognition for this because I'm doing this. Not necessarily who I am." And again, it's a mixture. But now I have to keep this up. And that there's a lack of safety in that. And is this the only avenue I have to recognition?

[00:21:00] E: Yeah, that's so true. And like the keeping this up thing, I think. And you talk about this in Truth with Food, but safety is that kind of exhale for ourselves. Like, being able to be ourselves. Putting our clothes on or taking our bra off, like you had mentioned before, right?

[00:21:15] AS: At the end of the night. I mean, [inaudible 00:21:17].

[00:21:21] E: No. No shame here at all. But it's just that idea. And like shifting away from, "Okay, if I'm going to make choices that serve me. Or if I'm going to stop –" Because for me it was a lot of like being really good. Being really clean. Being a personal trainer and being in the industry of like being what other people perceive of me is good, is healthy, right? And so, being really restrictive during the week. Achieving. Working out really intense. Da-da-da. Right? Because that's what the right thing to do was, especially in my profession and whatnot, right?

And so, it was just interesting to notice that on the weekends I would just like overeat constantly. It would just be like this whole cycle. And I was like, "This doesn't make sense." I don't feel – even though I have such a strong goal of being healthy and like doing the thing to

be healthy, I'm still caught in this, yeah, all or nothing kind of whatever binary we want to kind of talk about. I was very much stuck in that, right?

I think understanding that like my story, similar to Whitnee, was like, "Well, how I'm feeling safe is based off of everyone else around me here, sister." I'm like, "Okay, Erin." I said, "Erin." I said, "There's more to this, I think." And I saw it in clients that it was like checking in with them, right? Providing that accountability. Trying to show them. Excite them. Educate them. All this stuff, right? And it is still didn't land sometimes, right? And so, it's like, "Oh, there's something more to this."

And so, now having that lens of like safety, being more like physical safety. Like, we talk about blood sugar. Emotional and soul safety of belonging to myself. First, I started to shift away from those metrics of scales, numbers, success with weight loss at all costs. And I lost 100 pounds. I'm getting recognition the whole time here, right? This is like a hard binary that I'm stuck in. To a more bigger picture, which made me realize that I needed to have a different lens to how I was choosing, right? What filter am I choosing from? And before, it was just based on fitness culture, and diet culture and just what I've grown into, right? It's no big deal. It's just that's what I knew. Anyways, that's all.

[00:23:25] AS: Yeah, I love this. Because for both of you talking about the religion influence, right? And again, I'm someone who, I think, like Whitnee, my family wasn't religious. I remember, we were kind of the only people who didn't go to church. And I was like embarrassed by that at the time. And even my dad was Jewish. And I grew up in a very Evangelical suburb, Catholic Evangelical suburb. And it's funny. Like, no one said anything, but you just pick up on that, right? Like, "Oh, my God, you're the only person not at church."

What this kind of trickles into in terms of how we actually go about meaningful change is whether it's religion, whether it's – Erin, I love you said fitness culture, right? We all have this

idea of we're going to do the right thing. And what we never question is that the how matters. But is what we think the right thing actually what works?

And so, when I think about New Year's right now and I think about how people traditionally set goals, is they have a plan, right? I'm going to do the whole 30. I'm going to do a couch to 5K, right? And again, all of these things can be tools. But when we think they're the answer, we think they're the answer. Not a tool on the path.

And a big thing that we actually – so what I want to ask is how did you, before Truce with Food, set goals for yourself? And now that you've been through the process of what actually helps you change, what's your approach for your own what you're setting kind of goals for in the new year? Or maybe you're not. I'm just curious how your approach to goal setting has changed now that you've actually reckoned with no one has the complete solution for you of what's going to work for you at different times of your life, to eat, move? And also, the reasons you're turning to food, which we could put under the consistency bucket, I guess? But how do you go about reaching goals? Did you before? And now, after? And Erin, we'll start with you. And you can talk about your own experience and with clients and then we'll move over to Whitnee.

[00:25:25] E: Okay. Yeah, I think before I really did understand goal setting as always achieving, first off. Always moving forward. Always, like, if one thing's not working, it's like, "Okay, let's set a new goal." But I guess the influence or the lens that I was goal setting through or from, like I said, was kind of like am I being good, right? Am I eating the right amount of calories? Am I having the right amount of exercise?

Okay. I even remember saying to myself okay. When I was in my weight loss journey and at the beginning, it's like, "Okay, I've worked out today. Now all I need to do for the rest of the day is be good and – or be good and perfect and eat healthy." But the thing is I feel like, because I grew up in that Christian kind of home, is that health and like the way that food was handled in my home as well was very much around reward in and of itself.

Like, Ali, you talk about book it. And like that personal pan pizza that you get from. And that was similar to me. And like, I remember my parents, if I did do well in school, it would be like a food reward. And I just remember this correlation so clearly. And so, I guess when I was trying to make changes, being healthy was not about rewarding myself. It was very much like I can't reward myself. Because every time I reward myself, it's bad, and I fall off track, and I can't seem to get my shit together here, you know?

I think it was very interesting to realize that the way I was setting goals was to be good. Was to be strict. Was to be clean. And then maybe if I was that way, I could get, or deserve, or earn a little bit of the ice cream. Or for me, it was more like salty things, like pizza, and chips and all that kind of stuff.

And I think this restriction in my younger years, this like lens that I had for being healthy restricting and then rewarding, really did trickle down into when I was in university I would just kind of go all out and not be able to because of that restriction that I've just learned, right? So, it's the way we're orienting.

And so, when I think of the way we're orienting, the way I was orienting was just towards not what was working for me. Like you say, Ali, it's like there is – okay, there is a certain type of programming that might be a tool. But I was thinking that that it was the answer for me to follow this routine to a tee. And if I missed a day, the wheels would fall off, right?

And so, I think how we're relating is everything. And the how, like you talk about, and the now is the process and is what helped me shift. I think getting clients on board with this can sometimes be challenging. And like I said in the fitness industry, because of all the market employees and exploitation we have on body sizes and what it means to be healthy. And I think these things can be a goal and totally fine, like you said, or a tool if you want them to be. But I also think it's about how we're relating to these goals.

For me, I love movement. But I used to love it because of the results. And now, I love it because of how far I've come and how empowered it makes me feel and others feel. And like the look that I get on other people's faces or in my own face of like "Huh!" And my back pain. We can talk about this later, too. And how I related to movement and how I needed to shift everything from like what I was doing to more of, yeah, a trainable movement menu, as Tony Gentilcore says.

I think it goes for both, yeah, this curiosity. This how we're relating to our goals? What they mean to us? And how we can – yeah, if we can come from it from a place of always being able to pivot. Not making it mean so much about us as a person. That's a huge one for me at least. I think it just helps me and it helps clients start to see what's happening as data, and tools and like sciency. And it helps take out the emotional pain that it can bring up for us and our stories.

[00:29:23] AS: There's so much that you said there that I just want to kind of call out for people. I love that you talked about how we're relating and your example. Because it's just really interesting raising a toddler right now. Because I see why we all need coaching and therapy based on how parenting was traditionally done. Because you were talking about be good and then you'll get the reward, right?

And one of the kind of parenting philosophies that I loosely follow is called unconditional parenting. And it says that punishment, it's not the same. But rewarding your child is not great either, right? Because what you start doing is getting them out of step with their natural instincts and what they love about the process.

For example, when Essa brings artwork home. I mean, he's three years old. I put artwork, I hold that very loosely. But originally, I was like, "Oh, my God! I love it. You're so good." And now I'm like, "What did you love about it?"

And it's amazing how like even at three years old he can tell me like, "Well, I did this and then I did that." And it's just like he just understands that I'm interested in his own experience about it. And it makes me think about how all of us, most of us, were brought up in like kind of rewards-punishment model because of how institution – and this is in episode six what you guys haven't heard. But we're actually in a culture of control overall. And so, that's how you control people, right? Is like reward, punish them.

But when we do that with food, with everything, with grades, with being good, this is good, this is bad, we really lose touch with our natural instincts and how we can naturally enjoy the process.

And so, I love how you said I actually love movement now. And there's a couple different reasons there that I want to pull out. But it's like you had to unlearn and relearn how to enjoy the process versus someone saying, "Oh, you're losing weight from that. Keep going." And that may seem like, "Well, what am I going to be motivated by?" Right? But you do get in touch with these natural instincts of what's really important to you about something when that happens.

The other thing I wanted to say is you said it's really also – it's about the how, which is that relating, right? And so, then our values start to emerge of like what is really important to us? And I thought one thing that was interesting that I'd love for you to talk about – Or maybe I'm just going to bring this up and I don't know. But you said it's also about the now. The way that I heard that and the way I think about how people actually change is you have these more immediate rewards, right? Or immediate benefits. We want rewards to be confusing if you're talking about rewards-punishment. But your back pain.

I want to talk a little bit about that because that was I think a great example of pivoting. Because part of why we can't pivot is because we're stuck in the binary and we think we're exceeding failures or whatnot. But I think your back pain is a great example of not knowing

what the solution was ahead of time, but learning to really listen to your body and fall in love with that process of becoming your own healer.

And again, we heal it within community. I don't want to feed the independent value that a lot of people listen to those through. But I'm just going to stop talking. Do you want to comment?

[00:32:36] E: Yes. No. Yes. No, don't stop talking. But yes, I'll chime in on the process and how what I needed to do was to really not let those metrics of what I've been socialized kind of into kind of run the show and keep me in that binary of like, "If I don't stick to this workout protocol honestly," the binary that I was in. And I'm sure a lot of people can relate and a lot of clients can, too. But I'm going to gain weight. Right? Or I can't trust myself if I have to make a pivot.

And so, it's funny because the obstacle is the path. What I actually needed to do, which was really hard, was to like, yeah, settle in and just like get this data around my body. What really caused more pain? Just following more strategic programming and being intentional with that was like, "Okay, great." "Okay, I need to add positional breathing to my end of my workout because of the way my nervous system gets when I am in pain." Right? And just down regulating and being okay with that. Versus, "Oh, I need to add 10 more minutes of some intervals at the end as a finisher." And just get it going, right? Because I really am in that competitor mode when it comes to feeling unsafe. I go into this competitor and I'll show them.

And that's from being bullied, I feel, like when I was younger and being in a heavier body and stuff like that. But, yeah, this general curiosity and orienting from, "Okay, I need to settle into my body. I need to stay curious." And honestly, the only way that helped me – not the only way. But one of the best ways was Truce with Food.

Obviously, my husband and I, we have a gym together. So, it was great to kind of check in with him and get ideas and not close the story loop as we talk about in Truce with Food and stuff, right? I think once I started to relate to my back pain differently and I was able to and build

capacity towards that I was able to heal it a bit, which is weird to say that like I have almost no back pain now just because of that process. And I'm back to doing what I would like to do because I gave myself that little bit of space.

And Matt says this, and it's from his favorite fantasy book. But, no. He says, "The journey –" And he wrote this on our bathroom. We wrote this in our bathroom at Rebel, our gym. But the journey is the destination.

[00:34:50] AS: Yeah, I know. It's like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." And then when you're living it, you're like, "Oh, man." In the beginning. But then eventually, to your point, I actually healed most of my back pain. Then if you can stay with it – I love how you say settle into it. And this is what Dr. Carol Dweck found with growth mindset, which is what you were doing, by staying curious and learning, is like you can actually often over-achieve what you thought was possible, right? And it doesn't mean you're going to achieve the way that you achieved [inaudible 00:35:18] but you can get these kind of results.

Me working through my infertility to me was 1,000% the product of growth mindset. I actually didn't know that I could do that. But that's just like one example, your back pain and all that kind of stuff.

[00:35:31] E: And like you say, we're worth more than easy. Or we're worth more than, whatever. Sadly, it's hard. But it's worth it. There can be more options. And I think when we think about that, like we talk about in Truce with Food and stuff, this Option C of, "I'm not settling for that. I'm going to look at more options." But what I needed to do was settle in a way, you know?

[00:35:52] AS: A different kind of settle. How are you defining that?

[00:35:55] E: Yes. Yes. And I think Whitnee has a similar story around movement that way. I think I remember her saying that too. So, I hope that she can [inaudible 00:36:03].

[00:36:03] AS: Yeah, Whitnee. Yeah, yeah. Whitnee, how about you with goals? And also, if you want to also use your dairy example here is a concrete example. Once you get into big picture, before and now that you understand how change actually works. A different kind of before and after.

[00:36:21] W: Yeah, so good. Yes. Yeah. Coming in to Truce with Food, kind of similar to what Erin said. I was measuring goals on metrics that were very different. It was like I was measuring numbers, like weight and the number of minutes I was doing things. And again, how many calories that was? And what I read about was the right thing to do and helps other people. And then I thought I could fit into like this box that is just this generalization. And I don't know who it works for.

But actually, goals were like also with the intention of losing weight and fitting in. I guess, receive and be loved because of it. And before Truce with Food, if I think back to when I was younger, like in my teenage years, I remember going to the gym. I remember going all the time and just as many calories, as hard as I could go. And like it felt so good. And then there were other periods in my life where, again, like I could stick to like a regimented plan really well. And I had these results, which were weight loss and fitting into different clothes and things like that. But not really ever feeling at home in myself.

And then coming closer to the time of Truce with Food, I had gone through four years of nursing school. And there was a pandemic. And a new career. And I had gained a bunch of weight and had a lot of kind of – I don't know if dissonance is the right word. There's a lot of – I had a lot of confusion with my values and with the path I was on, and still do a bit.

I was trying to – my goals of losing weight at this point before Truce with Food were I was still trying to do the things that had worked before, like earlier in my life. And so, I was really competing with myself. But it wasn't working anymore. It wasn't happening. And so, it's like I was trying to fix myself. And I was also seeking out other people to try to help me. I was going to naturopaths, and acupuncture, and chiro and all of these different things hoping somebody could like give me the answer of what would work. And none of it did. It just felt so crappy trying all these things and feeling like I was putting work in and I wasn't getting anywhere. That really was kind of pre-Truce with Food.

And then that brings me to going through the framework and doing the work. And now, I – The two areas I'll speak to here have been experimenting around my goals with exercise. And so, when we started Truce with Food, I was having a lot of issues with my knee. I had like a – it was dislocating. And I had maybe like a partial tear. And it was really challenging because I couldn't do any of the things I wanted to do.

And then, so I ended up switching and going to a different physiotherapist just because it was more convenient to where I lived. And it was really interesting because I had been avoiding doing all these things that I read or thought were like bad for my knee, namely running. And then she did some IMS and some other things, which is a type of physio treatment.

But then I told her one day, like, "Oh, I actually really would like one day to be able to run." And she just was like, "Well, you can do that right now. There's no reason you can't just start now and do that." And it really just shifted for me a lot because I just thought that I couldn't do it because I thought I had to be in some magical place with my weight, with my knee. That down there, down the line, I would be able to start running.

And so, when she just said, "No. Go for it. Give it a try." It was really nice. And I started running. And it was really, really good. And then I had Covid and that got side railed. And it goes back and forth. But yeah, it's changed a lot how I look at both now with exercise. Because before I

was trying to follow something strict. And now I play around with it a lot more. I was running for a while. And then once I got Covid, I kind of had to slow back down and build up from the beginning again. And then, yeah, it's just been really fascinating.

And even like a few weeks ago, I had a really bad cold. I was side railed again and couldn't do the things that I was doing, like running. But then when I was sick, I ended up finding some Qigong videos on YouTube. And I've been doing Qigong like every day since. And I never even knew, but I love it. And it feels so good in my body. And it's something that I just – something new that I discovered. I guess kind of what I'm getting at is that before I thought I had to follow some sort of strict plan. And now I just adapt as different things come my way in life.

[00:41:03] AS: I love that. That speaks to Erin's like pivoting, right? And I think you're also speaking about, with the adaptability, is what the research shows about complexity, right? And I mean, the Truce with Food model is all about enabling us to be with more complexity.

And so, I love that the way that we can be more with that is in the experimentation. And so, you're like, "Okay, I've got this new thing." And you go to someone who's like, "I'm going to help you with this," and gives you permission. And then I heard you say, "All right, I'm going to experiment with that." And then you were able to say like, "Oh, this works for me for right now." But if you were to do that during Covid, that's not going to work for you at that time.

And so, I just love, I guess, your ability to be adaptable. And I think people hearing this will be like, "Well, I want to be able to do that." But how did you manage kind of the fears around, "Is this going to work?" Or was it just like, "I know the other things aren't working anymore." But how did you manage kind of managing the complexity and the not knowing. I always tell people with Truce with Food, as long as you can see like the fog headlights distance in front of you, you're good. But that can be really unnerving if you're not used to being so adaptable and being able to adapt and pivot. So, what's [inaudible 00:42:18]?

[00:42:20] W: Yeah, it's really good you bring up. I was in this like really good running routine and then I got Covid in the summer, and I couldn't run. And I hit this total fear where I was like, "Oh, no! What does this mean about me that I'm going to like fall off track with my running and I'm not going to keep up doing what I was doing that was working so well?"

And so, it was actually really scary. And it was like an old story again where it was like, "What does this mean about me?" And then after I got better from Covid, it took some time to be able to get back into running again. And so, really, the thing that's different with the Truce with Food is I just kept trying different things and knowing that it wasn't like if something didn't work, I failed. It had nothing to do with failure. It was like, "No. This just isn't the right thing for me right now."

And so, it's taken me some time to slowly build back up into running. Because then after Covid, I started running right how I was before and then I got plantar fasciitis. Then I had to scale it back again. But before that would have like totally derailed me and I would have just been sort of [inaudible 00:43:21] about it. But it's like no. I was like, "Okay. Well, what can I do? What's available? What other things can help with the plantar fasciitis and I can still feel good?"

I was riding like the spin bike a little bit and doing some just some videos at home with some weights. And then I did get to the point again where I have been able to slowly start running again just a little bit different than I was before. Now I'm just doing like short intervals with walking in between and knowing that like it doesn't – So what I can't run for 30 minutes straight? It doesn't mean anything about me. Like, "No. I'm running because it feels good and I enjoy it." It's just trying and trying again and finding the ways that do feel good in my body, and are sustainable and also knowing and being gentle with myself, it might change. And I might have to reorient again, and again and again. And like, that's okay. I can do that. I have the capacity for that now.

[00:44:19] AS: I mean, this just speaks to – the research talks about one of the reason that smart goals and habit stacking, habit hacking doesn't work with eating and exercise goals is because they're so emotionally loaded. And I think you illustrated that when you're like, "But it doesn't say anything about me. It doesn't say that I'm a –" You mentioned the word failure. And I think so many people, and I hope they'll start to question this, is like if something happens that's out of your control but then you make it about you, it's like then you end up really beating yourself up. And then you turn to food for safety of why you're in comfort of why you're beating yourself up, right?

And I think you just illustrate so wonderfully that the power of experimentation, when you can separate from, "I'm a failure. This is my fault. This means nothing about me." It just becomes like, "Okay. So then, what am I going to experiment with what works right now?" Versus, "I can't change. I'm all or nothing." Right? So, "I'm nothing," right?

We have these beliefs about ourselves that then – I mean, we can use belief in story interchangeably here. But then it becomes this self-fulfilling prophecy if we don't start to really think about, I love how you said, it feels good. I enjoy it. Again, it's more of that how am I benefiting more immediately than only focusing on the long-term?

[00:45:34] E: Yeah. And I love that. Can I just chime in, too? I love this so much. But I was just going to say that I tell clients all the time, like it's not like you're not not ever going to be in pain again or you're not, not, not ever going to not be able to train like this. It's like you're working that muscle. You're building that being able to pivot, being able to change things. Like, trusting. And we talk a lot about this in Truce with Food. But trusting that we can be there for ourselves, and do what feels right and centering safety over everything else is great. Anyways, that's awesome.

[00:46:04] W: Yeah, good point Erin. Yeah.

[00:46:06] AS: Well, this makes me want to – and Whitnee, maybe we can use the dairy example here. But this is a nice dovetail into Dr. Michelle Seeger, who I think has just been really great PR agent for the research that talks about our ability to be flexible. And she also talks about identity being really important in habit formation for sustainable health promotion.

And in the American Journal of Health Promotion she wrote, "Research suggesting that identity and values might be a strategic potent motivators of consistent healthy choices, humans are motivated to make choices that align with their sense of identity and values." She talks about how rewarding it is to make choices aligned with our identities and values and how we almost get that hit of good, right? That when we're talking about, "I'm good." Right? Like, "It feels so good," when we're in alignment with our values.

Now the challenge is that – and again, we talked a lot about this. And you guys haven't heard the episode of changing our values to, again, not just be good. I love, Erin, how you said that. But we often see ourselves as all or nothing, right? That can be really hard to then do something that doesn't jive with that, right? We're not going to get that immediate hit as we're shifting value.

Whitnee, do you think you're going dairy-free example and doing it gradually is a good example to share of value of health that you clearly have, but how you were growing into a new identity to realize that you could be moderate and that moderation actually got your results?

[00:47:37] W: Oh, yes. Yeah. No. For sure. Pre-Truce with Food, or for a long time, when I was a kid I knew that I was lactose intolerant. And so, there's a whole story there. But coming into Truce with Food, I also knew that I really – I have a dairy sensitivity. And it causes for me a plethora of different things. Not GI. Like, just feeling like crap, and fatigue, and brain fog and all these things. I just know I feel better when I don't eat it. I empirically know that.

And yet, it's so hard for me to stop eating it or to just take it out of the equation. And so, what I was experimenting with in Truce with Food is that it doesn't have to be black or white. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. And I was getting into this really good groove where it was like started just eating a little bit less dairy, a little bit less. And then I got to a point where I was eating – I was allowing myself once or twice. Like, one to two meals a week where I would have some dairy. No problem. And then I wouldn't for the rest of the week.

And it was actually like amazing. Because in doing that, I felt really good. It was the first time that I felt clear-headed. I wasn't craving and wanting dairy all the time because I was restricting it. It's like, no, I allowed myself those opportunities to have it.

And so, yeah, it was definitely like a shift from thinking it had to be all or nothing. I either had to eat dairy and feel like crap all the time. Or I had to cut it out and just want it all the time. To being like, "No. I can and have moderation. I can find something in between the two." Yeah. So, that's kind of the shift that I've been playing with.

And I will say, it's been a challenging one because this is like the same thing. I was in a good rhythm and then the Covid happened and then I kind of got out of the rhythm. And I'm still working on this again and still experimenting with it and trying to get back or find something new that's working. But I do know from experience that it actually doesn't have to be all or nothing to feel good.

[00:49:33] AS: Oh, just love that example. Because, again, it speaks to the complexity of our bodies, right? We think we're taught that our bodies are a machine. It's like, "Oh!" And you mentioned this before. What used to work is always going to work, right? Or how you're feeling right now in this moment. And the important learning is not kind of what pivot that you need to make next. Because no one knows that. I mean, you're going to figure it out. You know how to figure it out. But it's that I know that moderation works, right? And that's kind of the trust that's

there that almost puts the – I think that's almost provides some of the capacity to like, you said, play with it. Versus thinking, "I got to find the answer and –" You know what I mean?

I don't know if I'm going to explain this well. But, again, part of why we want to be all is we think we're going to get these amazing results if we're all, right? Maybe it's going to be the reward, the recognition. But what really comes with it is the stress to keep it up. Kind of like Margaret said. Call back from the last episode.

When we start to realize that there's no magic bullet, part of the – that can be like a, "Wa-wa-wa-wa." But then it's also like, "Oh, there's all these other inputs here that matter." And so, there's not as much pressure on this one thing. I don't know. Am I going off on a tangent? But I think that's –

[00:50:47] W: No. It's true.

[00:50:48] AS: Yeah, but that's kind of what happens in these situations where you're like, "Okay, I have to get back to that. And it's the holiday season. Maybe I'm going to go overboard with dairy. And I know that I can get back to that." Right? I guess that's the –

[00:50:59] W: No. There's more trust now. Because it's not like this is scary like I have to do this. It's like, "No. It's okay." It's more fun almost. You're just like, "Okay, I'll get to it. I got this. I have the tools."

[00:51:10] AS: Yeah. And the knowing, right? That's part of the safety of, "I've done this before. I know that it's possible again," I think.

[00:51:17] E: And I'm like feeling differently. Like you say, Ali. And in the immunity to change framework, too. But it's like we have to feel our ways into new different types of knowing. Is that the way you say it?

[00:51:28] AS: Yeah. Well, Dr. Robert Keegan says we feel our way into new thinking and think our way into new feelings. [inaudible 00:51:35].

[00:51:36] E: Yeah, getting that. Even in my example of I was eating a – When I was trying to be healthy. Do the right thing. Be healthy. I was trying to have smoothies every morning. And I didn't really like the way – like, Whitnee, I do have a little lactose sensitivity. Anyways, I was getting the vegan proteins. And I'm putting peanut butter, banana. I'm getting like spinach up in there. I'm doing the scoop of protein. I'm huffing her back in the morning. And then I was hungry two hours later. And I was like, "What the hell? I'm like eating healthy." Right? I'm eating clean. I'm getting a smoothie going and I'm still hungry. What's wrong with me?

Then it was like, "Oh." After I experimented in this whole process of orienting differently to goals and stuff and like how we know our bodies, I was like, "Oh, I need animal protein. Holy crap." So, anyways, it's just cool to feel that in your body of like, "I got this. I know myself." It's a really cool feeling.

[00:52:32] AS: Well, and Erin, why don't you talk about what value do you think you're hitting on there? And I'm curious what identity shift – I mean, there's probably been a couple for you from like, you said, I always forget that you've lost 100 pounds. Because you don't mention that a lot. But I think that's a big for anyone who's ever lost weight and – Right?

I think about what value shifts have happened from really listening to your body versus trying to be good? And like what value shifts and identity shifts have happened as you kind of dive – I don't know if the words divest from the traditional fitness industry. Because like you said, it is really – Yeah, we have more nutrition and fitness information than ever and people continue to have worse results, right? Something is not happening.

I'm curious how you've had both – what value shift? And what kind of – because I think it's brave to have to like fit out of the fitness industry to tell people, "Look, I trust you to be able to hear the truth."

[00:53:30] W: I know. It's hard. Yeah, I'd like to say to clients, "I want to make myself obsolete." Like, "What the hell?" And I'm like, "It's just because then you know." You know you, right? And then the more you know you, the more you're able to show up even for that community support in a way that is sustainable and like gives you something back. I think just like centering that and just focusing on that.

But, yeah, I think for me unlearning a lot about being healthy. What it means to be healthy? And like what a good thing to do is? Especially losing weight having that pressure, right? Of like kind of keeping it off. And especially as a trainer and looking a certain way. And like, yeah, there's a lot of pressure. I think like really orienting and relating to, "Okay, what's important to me?" We talked about stepping out of that socialized lens, which is hard to do. Because that's how we feel. Like, perceive safety a lot of the time, too, is how we feel and how we belong.

Being like, "Okay. No. It's okay for me to feel like I can choose differently here and I could not risk things falling apart and me gaining a bunch of weight." I think going slowly, like Whitnee was saying. Really taking time with the dairy and being able to go back and forth and like, "Okay. Yeah, did I over-exercise certain weeks in the process of getting to know what was the right amount for me in my back pain?" "Yes, I still went overboard. I still went underboard. And I still do that." Right?

It's like really like understanding that, "Okay, if I'm leading from this place of what is meaningful to me about how I want to feel and like feeling worthy kind of thing of that. Okay, I want to feel satiated and show up for clients in a way that makes me feel engaged and like not mind-racing, and blood sugar crashing and stuff." The animal protein was just a game changer.

And then, also, having bread. Whoa! What? Bread for me was like, "You don't have bread." That's like a no-no. And I was like, "I actually need like some good sourdough up in here." It gets me a long time.

[00:55:30] AS: [inaudible 00:55:30] good sourdough up in these parts.

[00:55:34] E: It's like, "Well, if I could have –" And then I'm like, "Oh." And at night, I'm not having as many cravings. So, then it's like associating, "Oh, if I eat a little bit more earlier in the day. If I eat a little bit more in the day." All those things, right? I'm able to not be so extreme. That also helps, right? There's like that's that physical safety that you talk about in Truce with Food. And then having that emotional safety of, "What if it was okay?"

And Glennon just mentioned this on our podcast this week of the Perfection Holiday podcast. But what if it was just okay to be myself? Can I experiment with that? And so, I think really allowing myself to be myself was a big game changer in unlearning, I guess, and feeling like it's okay to step away from some of these values that have been ingrained in me and in my partner and in my society. And it's actually very empowering for a lot of people to hear about how we are so influenced and easily influenced. Because it's about safety, right? It's how we we find that safety.

I think stepping back and just like putting the power back in our own hands and in my own hands was huge developmentally. And just, yeah, not being good. It was like I still have power. I have choice here. I can forge my own path. And so, it's great. Yeah, it's great that way to like think about it from that lens. Thanks to you, obviously.

[00:57:03] AS: [inaudible 00:57:03]. It makes me think of the value of agency, which is really defined as like independent choice. And we have to know that we have choices. And I think about how when we've all talked about like – Well, me, not in this podcast. But throughout. But

you guys – Or you folks. You guys aren't guys. How we think we're in control when we're being "good". But actually, someone else is controlling us because it's their ideas of good.

No wonder, to Whitnee's point, I just like rebel. And we just need to learn how to channel that rebellion, which both of you are illustrating, right? I think to be moderate and to try to go your own way is quite rebellious in our culture.

[00:57:45] E: And it's like possible, too, which is cool to see, right? And my clients in the work of Truce with Food, it's like it's possible to go our own way.

[00:57:54] AS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I do think, again, you had mentioned this. But I think it's just important because I joke that this Truce was Food. And it doesn't have to be Truce with Food. It could be any community. But I joke we're like a community of bad joiners. Because I think community is a value that took me really long to understand like how much I've been missing and my own stories of being othered made me think I didn't like groups where it was like, "No. It has to be the right group." I'm still not super into groups. However, I can learn how to be connected and contribute and benefit from a group now that I've worked on my own bullying story. I understand everyone who's been bullied. But I think community is one of the most underrated values of how we achieve this. But it can't be a community of everyone has to do the same thing, right?

[00:58:43] W: You got to find your people, right?

[00:58:46] AS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. If we were to try to kind of – I don't want to bottom line it or whatnot. What you've both mentioned how you're relating to goals. I heard experimentation. I heard playing with, which is to me kind of experimentation. Slowing down. Also honoring your body, I heard, right? With Whitnee, Covid and plantar fasciitis. Erin, your back pain and also your focus with clients seem to be things you pay attention to. How would you kind of say how you relate to pursuing eating and exercise goals now? What is that

different relationship if you had to kind of sum it up in a couple of values or approaches? How do you relate to the goals now? Whitnee, you want to go?

[00:59:32] W: Yeah. [inaudible 00:59:34]. Yeah, that's kind of a big question, I guess. But I think the big thing that's shifted is – and I kind of mentioned or spoke to this before. But it no longer like what I do and what ways that I'm trying and experimenting with. It no longer means something directly about me and who I am.

Once again, before I would – if I tried something that didn't work, it meant that I wasn't good enough, or I failed, or whatever word insert there. But now, how I'm relating to it is I honestly find it kind of fun. Now, it's like, "Okay, I'm trying different things and finding out what I like." Actually, like it's cool because I'm rediscovering me and who I am, which has kind of gotten lost for the last several years in nursing school where you're not really allowed to be yourself.

Suddenly, I'm rediscovering and I'm like, "Okay, what things do I want to do? What things make me feel good? Make me feel alive? Make me feel embodied?" And it feels really like a deep breath. It's relieving to suddenly you just try different things. And it doesn't matter if they work for other people. And it doesn't matter if it used to work for you. What's good now? And how does that feel? And just going from there. Yeah, it's been a big shift.

[01:00:53] AS: I just want to call out that you said aliveness. Because to me, that is the capture of health and well-being, right? Am I alive? Am I present to what feels enlivening now? And so, I just love that that's one of the things of how you're orienting of like aliveness. Because I think often when we're following these prefab plans, I don't think anyone's like, "I'm so excited to go out and run 20 miles that I don't want to run." And maybe people don't run 20 miles. I'm projecting. I don't think – Or like I'm so excited to do – and I don't want to – I'm picking Whole30. I don't know if anyone really feels excited to do that, right? Or again, maybe I'm also projecting. It doesn't mean they aren't useful tools and they can be hugely learning.

And it doesn't – also, I think we should all say. And I think we know this. But I think a lot of people listening will be like, "Well, you need some discipline." And it's like, "Yeah, we're not saying." And as I talked about in last episode, discipline doesn't have to be defined by control. It can be defined as, "Okay. I can't control that I got Covid. What is my choice here?" And I always say it's like devotion to figuring out what works for now and what will work again. I just want to – for the people. If I was listening to this my own self, because I do think discipline's important. I just think we need to define it differently.

[01:02:12] W: Yeah. And I think like that just makes me think like discipline for me has like shifted to intention. Before, it was like I had to do a certain number, a certain minute of things. And now it's like my intention is to move my body in some way every day, whatever that looks like that day. It's like I'm not measuring calories or minutes. My intention is to do something that's movement that feels good. Yeah.

[01:02:35] AS: I love that. Because you also said embodied. I heard that value. And what do you think have been the benefits of being more embodied for you? Because we are not a very embodied culture. And so, what surprised you about the benefits of being embodied and being responsive to what your body needs? Like you just said, it's not like, "I'm going to do this. I'm going to be responsive to my body's needs." What surprised you?

[01:02:57] W: I guess like in this process of Truce of Food and experimenting and like starting to find things that work for me. Just what's really interesting – Like, what's continues to surprise me is how mostly experimenting with non-food things currently, like exercise and what type of work I'm doing in my career and things like that. And as I'm doing that, I noticed subtly that my relationship with food is starting to shift just like slowly in the background.

What surprises me is that by doing things for me and that make me feel good, it just starts to make my story and all these other things just gently fall away and make more space. And it just feels like, "Oh, my gosh! It just feels so good to be me," which I haven't felt in a long time.

[01:03:46] AS: Well, and that to me just feels like the sustainable source of motivation. I wrote down when Erin was talking about how a lot of her clients, right? Part of why they're afraid of experimenting and settling in is this, "Well, I'm going to gain weight," right? And that is I think of like shame-based motivation. And that works when you see a picture of yourself you don't like, right? That works for like a minute, right? And we all know that. But the sustainable source of motivation is what you're describing. I can hear it in your voice, "I get to be me." Right? Kind of what you and Erin both echoed.

But that, I think, to people just listening is think about, is this a sustainable source of motivation? Can you enjoy the process? Which is what I hear Whitnee and Erin talking about. I think is so important when we're tackling these kind of goals. Because here's the honest truth. To stay healthy, you got to put the work in day-in and day-out. It doesn't mean it has to be intense as we think. But you can't just run a marathon and then be like, "I'm good for the month." That's just not how the body works, right? It requires consistency. But then that also means it doesn't require the intensity I think many of us traditionally think we have to bring to our – especially eating and exercise goals.

[01:04:57] E: Yeah. And I think, too, that if we focus on our needs, I think that health can mean different things. Even just like I know in the last round of Truce with Food, like there are people on there talking about, "Oh! Like, nature." That's part of the health equation." Oh! Like, water." "Oh, like sleep." "Oh, like –" Right? It's like there's all these little elements, "Oh, community." "Oh, lifting a little heavier and seeing my potential." Like, that's a healthy pursuit.

It's like when that expands, I think it's like we want to want to be more disciplined or motivated. Like it just becomes this self-motivated loop. Versus, yeah, that self-defeating, self-fulfilling spiral of, yeah, what we were mentioning before. If that makes sense.

[01:05:43] AS: Yeah. And I think that's what – And Erin, I'm curious what surprised you. And I think, though, what Whitnee said. And Whitnee you can tell me if I'm wrong. But it's like when

you do this playful experimentation approach, you often end up in these surprising places and you don't realize what will actually make something sustainable until you live it.

And we could think of, Whitnee, your Qigong example. We could think of the chis. But it's like if we really just approach it more – I feel like I'm losing my train of thought. But like what I'm trying to say is like how we feel when we start is not going to always be how we feel, right? Like, when you're into it. Like, when I was trying to get back into the gym, it was like, "Okay, my focus is just showing up three days a week." I don't care what it is. But I'm so tired. I'm so sleep deprived. I'm in so much pain. I just have to show up and not hurt myself, right?

And it's like I had no idea that three months later I was going to be like, "Oh, maybe I like lifting heavy weights." I had no idea that six months later I was going to be taking CrossFit S classes. I had judged CrossFit. But I kept following, to use Whitnee's word, like aliveness. Like what feels interesting?

And I think the more embodied we become – and Erin, this also piggybacks off your curiosity, right? It's like the more we can be like, "Maybe I don't know. And let me see what feels curious and I'm actually drawn to." I almost feel like that's my plan. It's like my non-planned plan as I'm talking it out.

Erin, what about you? What has surprised you in terms of maybe values? Or what has worked for you? I just kind of wrote down. I thought it was fascinating how a perfect example of complexity you were saying was with your back pain, right? And you're able to see like, "Okay, my nervous system is part of this." When I want to push because I was bullied, right?

And you were kind of talking about it with the sleep, the nature. We tend to think like, "Oh, well, my back hurts because I weigh too much. Or I ate the wrong thing and now I'm inflamed." Versus it being like, "Whoa! There's a lot more inputs going on." What surprised you in your

own journey about what works? What doesn't work? And what values do you find really present and how you relate to your goals now?

[01:07:57] E: Yeah. I mean, this whole idea, this whole idea of – I always say this with clients, too. It's not did we eat the food or not? Did we exercise or not? It's like how are we relating to the exercise? How are we relating, like you say, Ali, to the food, right? It's like what is shifting there? And I think when I think about goals and like goal setting with clients and stuff, it's really helping this idea of like Whitnee mentioned, too, of not taking things. Like, helping ourselves to see why we've taken things personally. Why it makes total sense why we do take things personally?

And especially in the movement world, I see like so many inner protector moments, right? Whether you're learning new things or you're putting yourself out there. It's like these judgments are automatic and they'll send us back into what we think we know is what works for us.

For me even, I was doing way more interval high intensity training based off of the HIT kind of protocol because that's what worked for me in the past, to be honest. And that's also what people were saying was important. And now, the industry is changing and research is changing.

And even now, I think approaching this whole thing with curiosity versus making something mean something about me and taking – my husband always says, "You always take things so personally." And now it's like, "Okay, when I can understand why I'm doing that and how it makes total sense why I do take things personally." But then like I said, leading from that place of, "Okay, what's important to me? How can I be curious here?" That led me down the road of PRI, which is just like a postural restoration.

And now I'm even learning that like our freaking rib cage diameters influence how we manage pressure. And because we have our liver that sits on our right side and like a larger lobe of lung.

Like, we get pulled to the right and then our rib flares on the left. So, we become like these asymmetrical like humans, which we are.

But like I was thinking, "What the hell is wrong with me in my back here? I'm just pulled into my compensation more." That's it. You know? Like, that's all. That's all that was happening. It's like when I could restore rotation, kind of pain went away. But it's just so fascinating because if I would have come in with the blinders on into exercise or even just being healthy equals eating less, because that's what worked for me in the past. Quite honestly, it did. That's why I was doing all the things that I was doing that were getting in my own way.

Like you had mentioned, settling in. Really listening to my body. Really not taking things personally. Doing more things that make me feel like connected to myself and my soul. And like centering that as a decision. Versus am I burning enough calories? Or am I eating the littlest possible amount for breakfast so I can get my goals done or whatever? It's like, "No. Exercising for this reason." Restoring breathing at the end. That helps me not feel as much in pain. Okay, balancing my blood sugar throughout the day. Oh, that helps me not crave and go into these spirals and feel worse about myself. It's just like helping myself tune into those little ahas and those little, "Okay, this can be different. I don't have to be all or nothing with things," I think is being –

Well, we can go into this, too. But I don't think you want to. But being your own mom in a way and like really being able to tune into that is a difficult thing based, yeah, like what we brought from the past and stuff, right? I think for me, it was like, "Okay, how can I do that? How can I be real with myself here and really not try to cheat myself?" It's like, "I know what works. My body is wise." And I think now taking that approach with clients, too. It's like you know. I don't know. You know. There are tools we can explore. There're experimenting we can do. I mean, there are certain principles of health obviously, right?

But there's like, "Okay. This is your process and your —" And if we lead from that kind of, "What is working for you here?" I think there's a lot of potential to actually have our goals. Like you say, weight loss can be a byproduct of feeling safe and secure and just leading from our own process here. Versus thinking that we need to control things. Or like in my competitor pattern, try to fix and get on top of it and just get ahead so I don't feel behind and all this kind of stuff.

It's like, "No. There's value in many things." And I think the more I was able to slow down and the more I help clients, it bothers me to say it slow down. There's more insight and more wisdom. And so, yeah, it's been a life changer.

[01:12:31] AS: I think you're saying what's real just like really struck me. Because I think so much of what's out in the health and wellness world, I'm like, "Where are people coming up with this shit?" Like, do you know what I mean? But it sets a certain expectation, right?

And again, I think everyone's doing their best. And I'm not saying that like there's this collective — I don't believe in conspiracies. My sister is always like the world is not that competent. It's usually incompetence that causes things. But I think about behavior, change, research and all this stuff, and it's like all based on this — or a lot of health. Well, the body's a machine, right? It's like the basic premise is the problem. And it's not to say that, "Hey, calories don't have some sort of thing. But how you end up doing them.

And it changes. I was thinking about, Erin, how you were saying like I used to work to eat very little. And it's interesting, because now that I'm through menopause, I am trying to lose my post-pregnancy weight. And I gained weight in menopause because I wasn't sleeping and I was postpartum, whatever. It was complexity cluster fuck or whatever.

But when you're in menopause, you cannot cut calories too much because your body can't handle stress the same way because of the decrease in hormones. And it's wild that if I don't track and I don't eat enough, I wake up in the middle of the night. I still need like 2,000 calories

a day. I mean, I'm pretty active. But if I would have tried to do what I used to do, which was like, "Okay, I'm going to eat 1200 calories." When you're younger, you don't have as much stress. Your body can rebound from that. But it's like nowadays, when we're all carrying jobs, and kids, and climate collapse and threat of nuclear war it's just like the same – and different environmental exposures. That's part of that complexity of like how much stress can the body actually handle? And that's why I think just a great example of like what used to work doesn't – I don't know if I went off on a tangent. But I just –

And the other thing you were saying too about slowness. And I love that you said like – I hate saying it because I do want everyone to realize. And I won't speak for you guys. But I know for me, I have fully embodied the experimentation, the funness. And there are still times where I wish it would go faster. It's just that now I have more agency.

Again, my own post-pregnancy weight loss. I've lost 20 pounds of fat in about two years. But I'm like, "That is so slow."

[01:14:48] E: That's so good.

[01:14:49] AS: Yeah. [inaudible 01:14:49]. Yeah. And my one client was like, "But you're not gaining and losing." And I'm like, "Yeah, that's true, too." I mean you go up a little bit. But it's like I can still feel that, "Oh, this is taking so long." And I cannot react to it and not get sucked in. I also want people to be real. And you guys can share too. Maybe it doesn't mean that we still don't have those, "Oh, I wish this." Right? It's not this pure perfect state. It's just we had more agency in how we react or respond to what we know, "Okay, I used to do that, and it just doesn't work anymore." I think that's something I just – when you were saying the slowness piece, I was like, "Oh, my God, that's me too." I'm always encouraging my clients. And it's also the spiritual work of my life, you know?

[01:15:33] E: So hard. And I had a client, too, that didn't get any progress. Like, she hasn't lost you know weight in a while or whatnot, right? And her one friend is doing this challenge and losing a bit of weight or whatever. And the one client – Or one friend is like, "Oh, you're doing – What? You've been training for like a fair amount of time now and you're not really losing weight? Don't you think you should stop." And she's like, "What? No. I'm literally like gained so much strength. I feel better. Right? I can trust myself more. I'm not reacting to things as much. I'm able to –" all the stuff we've talked about a bit, too.

It's like we're just like cutting ourselves off from so much when we just focus on these right things versus experimenting. There are so many possibilities and so many different ways of getting to our goals, I guess, which is awesome.

[01:16:20] AS: Yeah, I feel like you got to play the long game. You got to play the long game. And as someone who's in their 40s now, I can tell you, the long game definitely pays off in all areas of life, right? I think it's important.

Is there anything that I did not ask either of you, and we'll start with Erin, that you wanted to share? Oh, the other thing I did want to say, though. Erin, just to kind of – I know because you are like a master trainer, you know so much about the body. And, like, yes. It's important that people have their process. And you want to work with someone like Erin who understands the complexity of something. I do want to give a shout out to domain knowledge, right? I even think of Whitnee's physiotherapist who was like, "You can do that. We're just –"

[01:17:05] E: That's awesome.

[01:17:07] AS: Yeah, we're going to do this or that to like work with you. And so, I just kind of also want to make sure that people realize like there is a process and you want to be with people who have domain expertise like you. Because when you are pivoting and researching, if you're trying to do it all alone, which I don't recommend. But if you are, you do need to have

people who know how to help you pivot and experiment with things, I guess. I just wanted to also –

[01:17:33] E: Yeah. Like, that's like what Whitnee said. I was trying on things. I was doing the things. Going to all the experts. Trying to let them tell me what to do. Get to the bottom of things here. And I think it's like there is some structure. But it's like relating that back to you. If you're listening to this and just being like, "Okay, I'm trying to get these answers. I don't feel good in my body. I feel kind of blah." It's like going towards someone like Ali or, yeah, like myself. But like it's like, "Okay, let's sus through all this noise here and really get clear on you." Yeah, bringing that in.

[01:18:06] AS: Well, and when you're saying that, I'm thinking – I mean, we're both on social media. But I feel like the people who have the loudest megaphones are the people who give these very black and white, "This is your solution." Right?

Because, again, when you're really struggling, and I think we've all been there, you really want someone who's going to – Because you don't have the safety within yourself, the trust within yourself. It's really tempting to be like, "This person knows. And I need to believe that they know because I'm overwhelmed." And if you're in that space and you're also feeling exhausted by it, I'd encourage you to go to the people who says, "It depends."

[01:18:46] E: No shit. No shit. Yeah, that's so great to hear. And it's like that's maybe not what you want to hear. But those are the type of people that will get you where you need to go or whatever. What the tool is next?

[01:18:57] AS: Yeah, yeah the next step. Erin, is there anything that I didn't ask you that you wanted to mention or you think it's important when you think of people setting goals and/or just how they're going to relate to their body, and food, and health and all the things to increase their sense of safety rather than decrease their sense of, "I can do this?"

[01:19:18] E: Yeah, I really do believe now in this power of safety as our main metric, right? Like, physical safety. How can I focus on that? And what is coming up for me? What movement works well for me and my nervous system? What's my pain threshold like? How can I work within those parameters for myself there? And emotional safety, like feeling we can show up as ourselves. And what's required to do that?

And for me, it was like Ali said like community and connection. Even though community is what initially made me feel othered from people was that outcasting, and the bullying and stuff. But what I actually needed to heal was the opposite of what I thought I needed. I think, yeah, focusing on these metrics over the right plan.

And I like how you said, too. Like, healthy and sustainable behavior change is not a product of rule following. It's really much a product of getting to know ourselves. And we're humans who make decisions based off of how we feel. I'm sorry. It sucks. But it's so true. And unfortunately, it's going to take some navigating through. Because what we feel can change. And how we feel about how we feel changes and stuff, right?

I think having, yeah, someone there that will help you to focus on more than just what is on the surface is a helpful pursuit. And I think when we think about goal setting, I think if we could think about not where we are in five years from now because I feel like that's unsustainable. But I think those quick fixes, like Ali hit on, of like, "Okay, what are my needs here? Am I getting those needs met throughout the day? What's important to me as I move throughout the day? Why do I want to exercise?"

I always say to clients after we leave, I'm like, "Okay, your only goal tonight – Don't tell me if you're sore or not. Just tell me how you feel tonight going home. How is your stress going into that transition time? How's your talking with your husband? It's like those are important things to you. We know those are important. So, how can we tie that back to what is important to you?"

I think, as humans, we feel things. So, things need to be important to us and relevant. Anyways, I am tangential at this point. But yeah, I think [inaudible 01:21:36]. I don't know. I just think shifting from this like outside-out approach to movement into health and more into this inside-out approach is really – I feel like it's the only way. But maybe that's my bias, too. Right? I don't know. We don't know what we don't know.

But I think – yeah, I just think this inside-out approach. Creating more expansiveness around why we exercise. And what are those metrics? And why – and Whitnee said this, too, "Oh, I'm running because it feels good." Right? I'm not running to chase some sort of expectation or goal for myself or my perceived self, which is a huge thing for clients. What do I look like? Right? Oh, I go to the gym. I go to that da-da-da. I always make the prep and stuff, right? It's like just all that stuff I think is important. And just expanding our definition of what it means to be healthy is the only way we're going to be healthy really and whole. And whole, I guess. Whole.

[01:22:33] AS: Yeah, yeah.

[01:22:34] W: That's all.

[01:22:36] AS: Wonderful. Whitnee, what about you?

[01:22:38] W: I love what you said Erin about from the inside-out. That is beautiful. And yeah, I think it's so true. I think the things kind of to take away are like trust yourself. Trust your instincts. Play around. Try some different things. See how they feel. And then listen. And like really just sit with it and be like, "Do I like this? Does it feel good?" And really, yeah, have that inner trust and know that you know. Like Erin said and Ali said, you know yourself. And so, it's just a kind of a process of rediscovering what you want.

And the other thing I'd say, find your people. Whether that's like working with someone like Ali, or Erin, or people that are local to you. But like find the people that inspire you and that make

you feel good and help you trust in the process. Because, yeah, it's big. It's big having people in your life that get it and that like also are okay with being in the kind of messiness of it. Because it is messy. It's really messy. And in the beginning it's scary that it's messy. But then you kind of like – you start to just appreciate it. And so, when you have other people to share it with, it helps tremendously. Yeah.

[01:23:47] AS: And I love that you said that, Whitnee. Because I think – I mean, from what I've heard from clients, sometimes people who think, "Oh, I'm working with someone who can trusts the process." But what it means is if you fall off track it's like, "How do you try harder tomorrow?" Versus maybe what can I learn from this? Maybe this isn't working. I'm glad you said that someone who can do with the mess versus they're going to double down on their own ideas of what works.

[01:24:11] W: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Help you find it. Find it together or whatever it is. But it's not like a box with a planet of – It's more finding yourself and discovering what you love.

[01:24:27] AS: Yeah, I love that. And Erin –

[01:24:30] E: Go take Truce with Food 2023.

[01:24:34] AS: I definitely recommend Truce the Food, or at least attend the Smart Goals Workshop that's happening on January 11th at 12 PM. You can sign up at alishapiro.com/smartgoalalternatives. It will also be in the show notes. And Erin, since you have been certified in Truce with Food and do personal training virtually, do you want to give your Instagram handle and where people can find you? And we'll also link in the show notes.

[01:25:00] E: Oh, thanks, girl. That's so nice. Yeah, it's @trainwithtusa. And I'm Canadian, but there's a USA in my name.

[01:25:09] AS: Team USA.

[01:25:11] E: Meant to be, Ali. It's meant to be. But I was just – yeah, I was just about to say, too, you as a final piece. If you're considering like I want to move my body, but I don't, A, know how. I don't know what. I've always done it very intensely. I've always kind of done it nonchalantly. And you want some support in the Truce with Food framework. I do offer like the Soul Hunger, which is funny because like the Soul Hunger is kind of what we're talking about in a way is like really getting to know your body and what works for you. And like how you love yourself? And how you can continue to show up for yourself in those ways and really care for yourself?

And so, with Soul Hunger, we really look at the movement like kind of side of things and we really start to unpack like, "Okay, how can we be more consistent with movement? What does that look like?" And I'm just so, so, so grateful and over the moon for Ali and meeting and still being connected with Ali and being able to offer such an amazing framework to the Canadians up here with respect to, yeah, movement and nervous system stuff. Thank you so much. Train with Tusa. Erintusa.com. Love it.

[01:26:15] AS: Yeah. And I think that's really important, is that when you work on one thing, even if you don't know how you're working on the whole thing. If movement, and pain and really want to shift exercise. That's the entry point for you. If it's food or if it's – I say this in the Truce Coaching Certification, too. 50% of the success is if you have a good relationship with the person. If you're driving with Erin's energy and you want someone who's extremely knowledgeable in movement and all the components of it, not just, "Dude, lift heavy set." Erin, you've heard of my dead left this morning. 150, baby.

[01:26:50] E: Oh, go friend. She's getting up there. I'm with the process. I love it.

[01:26:57] AS: I feel like I'm back in like elementary school and the teacher is like, "Good job." Except I'm the one who's like, "Yeah! I fucking did it."

[01:27:02] E: Yes! It's so empowering. It's just that it's like nothing else. And if we want to talk about that nervous system, like really getting that fight energy out, there's nothing like lifting and slamming down stuff. That's just going to just complete that cycle. Or running. Running, if you're worried or overthinking, like, "Oh, my gosh, it's a game changer." When we focus on different things, to tie it on full circle, and experiment with focusing on different things, I think, yeah, it's just endless the progress. How could it not be? It's so fun.

[01:27:34] AS: Well, and that just puts a nice cherry on top how you and Whitnee were saying you really have to tie something back to how it makes you feel. And so, it's like, "Whoa! Can I have movement that is actually going to improve my life and not just only count because of calories?" [inaudible 01:27:49]. It's actually the key to sustainability.

What works is often the short term, right? You want to ask what works in the long term? So, thank you both for your time. It has been such a joy chatting with you and obviously working with you. Thank you both for being here.

[01:28:06] W: Yeah, thanks so much for having me.

[01:28:06] E: Thanks, Ali. Awesome. Thanks, Ali.

[01:28:10] AS: Yeah, thank you.

[OUTRO]

[01:28:13] AS: Thank you, health rebels and visionary storytellers for tuning in today. If you know someone who would benefit from this episode, please share it with them. And

remember, we have transcripts of our episodes at Alishapiro.com/podcast for your non-audio friends and family. And if you can, I'd love it if you can leave a review on Apple Podcasts. It helps more people find the show. And both actions, reviewing and sharing with others, helps us change the cultural narrative around food, weight and our bodies.

Thanks for engaging in a different kind of conversation. And remember, always, your body truths are unique, discoverable, profound, and liberating.

[END]

