

## Rewriting Low Expectations for our Bodies with Sas Petherick – Insatiable Season 8, Episode 5

[INTRO]

**[0:00:08.9] 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 we explore the hidden aspects of fighting our food, our weight and our bodies and dive deep into efficient science and true whole health.

Fair warning, this is not your parents' healthcare. This is a big rebel yo to those who crave meaning, hunger for truth and whose lust for life is truly insatiable. Believe me, freedom awaits.

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:47] AS:** Welcome everybody to season 8, episode 5 of Insatiable. This season's theme is consistency. It's no secret that consistency is a key to success. Many of us have so much health knowledge and are aware of the latest and greatest food research and have the best of intentions and then real-life happens. We fall off track. We lose motivation and we get discouraged. Convention tells us consistency is about will power, discipline and hard work, but research and adult development theory points elsewhere.

15 years ago I discovered functional medicine and reversed my irritable bowel syndrome, depression and a host of issues. I was amazed at the power of food as medicine and felt amazing. But even all these great results couldn't stop my bingeing and overeating. My quest to discover became why can't I stick with this? Which led me to grad school to study adult development and how we change ingrained patterns and behaviors for good.



I came to realize inconsistency is a symptom just like depression and bingeing. It's not the problem but has various root causes depending on the individual. Not only is falling off track and invitation into deeper healing and radical results, but I found that when it comes to consistency, a lot of the common beliefs we have around being consistent are what actually causes us to fall off track.

In this Insatiable season, we will look at inconsistency as a symptom, not a problem. We'll explore what happens after the novelty of some new plan or book that we have read has worn off and why real life trips us up. What are we really talking about with real-life? What are the various root causes of why we lose motivation, want to be "bad" with our food and self-care and tell ourselves, "Chuck it. F it.

So, today, we are going to be talking about how low expectations actually cause us to fall off track, and we have the brilliant, Sas Patherick, who is a self-doubt researcher, coach and host of the Courage & Spice Podcast and also a previous Insatiable guest and one of my dear friends who I admire immensely. She also mentors coaches and other brave-hearted business owners.

Sas helps you move from understanding the root causes of your self-doubt to cultivating tangible, sustainable self-belief, and she walks her talk and she's rooted in research, which is the best combination to me, the practical and the academic.

Sas, thanks so much for being here.

**[00:03:19] SP:** What a total pleasure, Ali. I could talk to you all day as you know. So this is a total labor of love for me to be here.

**[00:03:27] AS:** Oh, good! Good. Well, I know everyone's going to get so much out of this today. So, I want to start with what kind of gave me the idea for this and especially to have you on was



you had a near death experience just a couple of months ago, and it revealed – After the experience revealed some stories that were causing low expectations for you. But I would like you to first tell us about that near death experience and how you came out of it.

**[00:03:56] SP:** Yeah, I did. I almost died twice in the same 24-hour period. I've had a heart condition my whole life, which I inherited from my mother's side of the family and there is a number of women in our family who have variance on this condition. But it basically means that I have a dicky ticker, or I have a heart that doesn't quite function as normal.

What happened just before Christmas last year was that my heart stopped. So it had slowed down so much to the point that it wasn't able to keep going without assistance. What happened for me, what I experienced was that I passed out and having felt quite unwell and fatigued for a number of weeks. I got to the point where I couldn't actually remain conscious.

I was very lucky, a very close friend who lives five minutes away called an ambulance immediately, kind of just had that feeling that something was really wrong. In the U.K., where I live, there is a thing called the National Health Service, which means that all healthcare is free at the point of need. So, I was whisked off to a specialist heart institute with leading researchers and geneticists and [inaudible 00:05:24] guys and everything you could ever want.

So, the stress of any kind of health incident I know is compounded so much in different parts of the world when there are these added components of how will I afford this? Am I insured? Am I covered? In the U.K. we are so lucky that it's not the case. We have a socialist health system, where everyone who needs help gets it.

So, I was really lucky. I had heart surgery pretty much 24 hours after I first collapsed and I know have a little robot that is attached to my heart and it monitors my heart rate, my heart rhythm and it keeps me at a regular heart beat and it means that if I go through what's called a kind of tachycardic response where my heart rate gets really, really fast, it will kick in and defibrillate



me without me having to wait for an ambulance. So it's this kind of really quite crazy and amazing advanced piece of technology that was given to me by my surgeon, and a pretty kind of like also a pretty dramatic piece of surgery. I was awake for it, which got very dramatic. But the process itself is quite standard. It's quite kind of known and very well established solution to the kind of heart problems I have.

So, I now have this robot. Yeah, I had two instances in that period where my heart stopped and I lost consciousness. I had defibrillated, pads were out and I sort of was brought back to life. It's quite an odd experience. It taught me a lot about fear and about how when we are actually in the context of a very real and present fear, that I didn't actually feel any fear. I wasn't really that fearful when things were going on. I was just in it. I was noticing what was happening. I felt really, really present for it when I was conscious, and it was only in the kind of moments afterwards and the hours afterwards when I started to think about what almost had happened, what may still happen, that I actually experienced fear.

So, I was kind of lift with the sense, "Gosh! Fears always mess time, doesn't it?" It's never really present when you would expect it to be, and I guess that's because our bodies have this immense intelligence and are able to – When we're actually in an experience of true threat, there is all of these other stuff that's going on to kind of keep us alive and thriving, that it's almost like we're flooded with probably all kinds of hormones and chemicals and what have you that we don't get feel any fear, because our body is just kind of can't handle those two things at once.

So, yeah. It was a really interesting experience. I did kind of die I guess is the phrase, but feels kind of odd to say that. But I did stop breathing. My heart stopped. Everything kind of stopped. I had some quite odd experiences when that took place. Just felt myself dissolving is the word that keeps coming to me. I'm still kind of processing it, it's about six months since it all happened, but it was this very kind of clear sense for me of, yeah, of dissolving, of the sense that, "Oh, it's just retreating," that there was something, some essential part of me that was

going somewhere. I never found out where. There was no kind of beardy reckoning, there was no white light, there was no tunnel. There's nothing like that. But there was this sense that something was shifting, and then I was kind of brought back and it stopped. So, it was a very odd, odd sensation. I wouldn't recommend it. Yeah.

**[00:09:41] AS:** Well, I think what's important for the audience to understand is your mother actually died from this heart condition.

**[00:09:47] SP:** She did. Yeah, she died 17 years ago. She was 53, and I am turning 46 in a few short months. I think it's so interesting that we're talking about this idea of stories and kind of how stories sort of limit us and perhaps we end up believing that the story is more powerful than our lived experience.

Often I think, and you and I have talked about this sense, but I think one of the things that I learned was that our stories are sometimes in the shadow. The stories are kind of unconscious. We've not even really sure sometimes what the story is that we are actually living. So we won't have these kind of surface stories around like, "Oh, this is the story I'm living today, or this is what I'm making up about this circumstance." But I think sometimes there are these deeper undercurrents, unconscious stories, unconscious beliefs, things that we have kind of buried deeply and they don't really surface often until perhaps we're ready to look at them or something happens where they come up.

I think that was my experience was ever since my mom died, and she died very suddenly. There was no warning to it at all. I've had this sense that I will only probably live to her age when she died, which was 53. So I've kind of had this ticking clock running in the back of my life as I've been going through things. One of the things that I realized when I was in recovery, when I was kind of heavily dependent on my partner and my friends that are around me where I really wasn't able to do very much, was just how foreign it was to me to be relying on other people. That I had spent most of my adult life trying to kind of outrun this ticking clock and packer shit

I'm in. Can I swear on this podcast?

**[00:11:53] AS:** Of course!

**[00:11:55] SP:** Yes. I had packed like a shit ton of stuff into my life and I've always kind of run at quite a fast pace. I liked to think quickly and speak quickly and get shit done and I'm very kind of action oriented. I'm quite a productive person and I've always sort of won it as a bit of a badge of honor.

I realized in the moments where those actually there was nothing required of me that one of the stories I had been perhaps unconsciously living was that I had to pack all of these stuff, and because I didn't expect to live very long. So, there's this like very odd, quiet, but very tangible and quite profound relation that now that I had this robot heart, the words my surgeon used, where you get a different story to your mom. I mean, for a surgeon, and he was a posh British surgeon, so kind of cut off the emotions one would assume, but for him to use that phrase, it really touched me. There's something very poetic about that. You get a different story to your mom.

Just the recognition from him and from the surgical team that I was carrying that story into the surgery that I needed to be awake for, that they really understood that it was something that was both physically quite challenging and it was not a pain free experience. But I'll say that there was a lot of stuff that was coming into that operating theater. It wasn't just me. But I definitely felt this deep empathy for that. It was like knowledge several times by different people in a way that it was clear to me that they really understood that I was a whole person coming into that theater, not just a case.

Yeah, just to recognize that oh and part of what was left on the operating table was that story that I had been loving. So I'm now expected to live a long life. There is no reason why I shouldn't live to be a cranky old lady, which I'm quite happy about. I mean, I have some

medication and some other kind of just care things to take into account, but really, my heart is kind of restored to that of a normal 46-year-old woman.

So, it was this very odd experience of having a story that has been playing out to sort of get a brief understanding, “Oh! That’s what that was all about,” and then, “Oh, but it doesn’t matter anymore.” So it’s been interesting. The last six months have been very much about, “So, who am I now? What’s my story now? Now that the kind of need for me to operate at that level of being quite fast paced and things, what does that mean for me? Now that the reason for that is no longer present?” So, it’s been an interesting old time.

**[00:15:18] AS:** There’s so much that I think is – I mean, I love because you do story revision work similar – I mean, we love the same theories and you’re someone who’s worked through so many stories of your own and has come out. I love that you’re – This is part of what we want to talk about, is these unconscious stories.

I think what’s fascinating and for people specially listening is who would have connected? You would think that this heart condition that your mom passed from and that you have struggled with on and off, you would think this story might be something about your body or what not, yet it was driving so many of your day-to-day behaviors or packing things in that people wouldn’t necessarily correlate. I think that’s what’s so challenging about these unconscious stories, is they create these identities that we’re like, “Well, this is just how I am.”

**[00:16:12] SP:** Yeah.

**[00:16:12] AS:** And it’s like, “No. I’ve learned to be this way for some reason.”

**[00:16:17] SP:** It’s such an interesting point that you’re raising, because I think that’s the realization I’ve come to as well, that sometimes I think identity is just such a bloody lie and fascinating concept, right? The idea of who we are, because it’s always changing, and I’m

always stuck by – I remember listening to an interview that a poet, David Whyte, did with Krista Tippett on the On Being Podcast a few years ago now. But he said that one of the ways that he had maintained or was learning to kind of maintain and to nourish the relationship that he had with his teenage daughter was whenever he was about to go into the room that she was in to maintain the level of curiosity about, “Well, who is she now?” Even though he’d seen her the night before or they’ve had a conversation earlier. Maybe it’s only poets that can remain that conscious of things like that.

But, that idea of being curious about, “Well, who is this person now,” because she was changing so much. I kind of really appreciate that idea, that often we think we are these constant things, these constant beings that we sort of go, “This is the person I am,” or kind of, “This is me. This is what I do.”

When actually what I’m finding and perhaps this is partly the work I do, partly age and experience as well, I’m realizing just how malleable our idea to the markers can be and how they can be reinforced and enhanced depending on the kind of culture that we are in.

So, if the culture we spend our time in, and by culture, I don’t necessarily mean society. It can be like a familial culture, the culture in your marriage. What is valued by a group that you’re spending time with? When those things match, when your identity kind of matches the people you’re spending time with, I think there is a reluctance to ever change that, right? It’s almost like I get reinforced. I get my sense of belonging and of acceptance from staying this way, from staying in this identity.

**[00:18:31] AS:** That’s so true, because I’m thinking about a story that has recently been revealed for me, is when I was first told I’m pregnant and I was told that it’s probably from menopause, from the chemo, and it was kind of like in – Western medicine is the default culture here, right? I’ve done so much work around stories, and obviously I’ve defied Western medicine’s expectations from my body before in terms of reversing a lot of the issues that I had





from chemo therapy, including the trauma from it. But I was kind of – To even pursue a natural route even though I believe in natural medicine, felt so counter-culture and part of me was like, “Who do you think you are that you can defy this?”

Even when I did get pregnant, I was like – I had this hesitation of, “I don’t want to become this poster child for natural medicine.” That was kind of my – I never set out to do that, and I also think pregnancy is ultimately a mystery. There’s also privilege there that I was able to access resources. But I tend to – I’m finding with myself dismiss the work that I’ve done as a way to kind of stay invisible around some of the success that I’ve had, and it’s revealed not only – I think getting pregnant has revealed to me in a way how powerful I am and it’s trickled into how safe I can feel with my own visibility, if that makes sense.

It’s been really fascinating to me. I’m like, “Oh my God! All these stuff comes up.” My body, I thought I had done all these work, but I still had this very much piece of, “Oh, you don’t have the resilience. You don’t have the capabilities of stepping forward and making a statement in a way.” I don’t think most people who listen to this podcast or my friends or anyone would ever think that of me, because I am pretty out there with my beliefs, but I’m also – You and I are both very nuanced, diplomatic thinkers I would say. I don’t think there’s one answer for everyone, but I’m also learning to own what worked for me rather than just dismiss it as a way to not be so visible.

**[00:20:34] SP:** I wonder as well, Ali, if you’re finding that you can kind of – It sound to me anyway, like there’s this emerging deeper trust in your body.

**[00:20:43] AS:** Yes.

**[00:20:44] SP:** Right?

**[00:20:45] AS:** Yeah, and I thought I had trusted in a lot.



**[00:20:48] SP:** Yeah. Yeah.

**[00:20:50] AS:** Yeah, and I love that you say that, because that's such a clear way of saying it. It's also a trust and my vision for what I want to do with my work moving forward and the statements I want to make, right? It's like I think sometimes I'm always like, "Well, this isn't true for everyone," and I use that noble resistance of not being that person that's like, "Go vegan!" I mean, I would never do that personally. But I think taking a stand. Yeah, it's also a trust and, hey, in the work and the vision that I see. Thanks for giving me language for that. It's amazing to me how that trust in ourselves translates so far out into the world.

**[00:21:31] SP:** I guess I recognize that in myself as well. I think I've always [inaudible 00:21:37]. I mean, I've always been a heavier person. I just live in a bigger body. For years and years and years, I just believe that there's something wrong with it. About 8, 9 years ago, I just said, "Oh, fuck this." Now, I just – I don't know. There's a lot of like – I totally respect anyone's experience of their own body and how they've come to accept and have a relationship with it.

For me, what has been kind of – Has brought the most piece is the sense of neutrality towards my body. So, I sort of felt like I had reached the level of kind of benign trust with my body. I kind of trust it to tell me when something is not right. I'm interested in what's going on for my body. I'm interested in the intelligence of it, but I probably never – It felt like a real stretch to go to that place of self-love and all of that.

Also, I just sort of – It never really landed for me that it was somewhere that I was particularly interested in achieving that kind of relationships. But now that I have been through this experience, and I as a kind of conscious thinking being and my intelligence has always been my sort of super power, my ability to understand concepts and make sense of the world has always been the kind of thing that I really identified with partly because I guess my body doesn't look like the body that the world tells me as worthy, right? But my intelligence was always kind of I



got the positive validation for me.

But when I was lying in the hospital bed and it was all about my body and it was absolutely nothing I could know, there was no concept that was going to save me. There was no way to think my way through this particular health challenge. What I actually had to was surrender to the intelligence of my body and to the expertise and the knowledge around me to know that that would also be imperfect and incomplete, but to kind of, I guess, trust fate. There's something about that for me as well. That it was probably going to be okay.

Even though I had already been through one kind of state of dying and there was another to come. I do remember a very distinct moment where I just thought, "Okay, I kind of get that there is nothing for me to do here. So I'm just going to try and be as loving and compassionate to myself as I can." It was like, "Shit! There's nothing for me to do." There's literally nothing. I can't even get out of this bed. I can't even pee without assistance.

So, the only thing I can do is kind of give myself some compassion and just trust. I think that has led me into that place that you're describing too of even with all of the kind of stats and the reality of the world that we live in and the fact that I'm a white woman and that there would be unconscious bias playing out and the relationships with the staff that I had some level of cognizance around. At the same time, there was the sense that I could sort of trust that my body knew what she was doing, right? It was the kind of level of trust that I hadn't ever got to before. I suspect for me, because I live in my head so much, I kind of needed to have an experience where there was literally nothing I can do for a decent period of time for me to really get it, because I'm quite a slow learner.

**[00:25:30] AS:** I always say, I'm stubborn as fuck, that's why I teach people how to change. I'm like – I had to learn this from the inside out, because –

**[00:25:42] SP:** Yeah.



**[00:25:43] AS:** Well, I love that point you're making, because I think that trust in our bodies, it gets so buried. We have such low expectations for our bodies because of the cultural noise of what a good body is, a worthy body. It's thin, it's white, it's blonde, it's wealthy.

**[00:26:03] SP:** Yeah, it's young and it's wrinkle and cellulite-free and it has no scars or bruises or freckles or moles and it's [inaudible 00:26:13]. There's something kind of almost a natural. So most like a denial of who we actually are.

**[00:26:21] AS:** Yeah. Yeah. So we're going to take a break to hear from our sponsor, but when we come back, I want to pick this up and how this affects our low expectations for ourselves.

**[00:26:31] SP:** Oh, can't wait.

**[00:26:33] AS:** Yeah. All right. Here we are with the word from our sponsor.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[00:26:42] AS:** It's that time of year again. The live version of my annual group program, *Why Am I Eating This Now*, opens for registration August 5th and begins August 13th. This program will help you unlock your keys to consistency. With your nutrition goals and with a small group of 15 people, we will get to the root causes of why you fall off track. Together we'll transform those patterns and behaviors. No willpower required.

To learn more, check out episode 6, season 5, where why am I eating this now participants, Dr. Tina Boogren and [inaudible 00:27:21] discuss how using adult development theory, which is not therapy or coaching, made the program so challenging, life-changing and different from anything they've done before.



A year later, they're seeing results, impact and feeling further transformed. Here's what they shared. Dr. Boogren said, "Why Am I Eating This Now is about getting to the root of things, not hovering on the surface as too many other program's plans do. As a result, I stop slipping with my healthy eating and falling into old thought patterns. I got unstuck and have the tools to keep going. When you're out of the why am I eating this now process and using the tools, I've lost 20 pounds and kept them off."

Lourdes shared, "I joined Why Am I Eating This Now because I wanted to move forward in my own self-development. I was able to discover the deeper conflict around my food battle, including how it protects me and how to move forward. I exceeded my own expectations from my progress, was challenged and will continue to make these changes in my life. I have been binge-free for over a year post-why am I eating this now. I truly thought I'd never break free from emotional eating, but I have, and I am much bolder in my life. Yes, win-win."

If you're ready to work smarter, not harder, to be consistent in reaching nutrition and wellness goals, join us. Full details are at [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com) Why Am I Eating This Now Life Program, and make sure you sign up on my list so that you can get the early bird discount. If you don't want to wait, you can get started today with the self-study program now. What you pay for this will be credited towards the cost of the live program. So why not get started today and start getting relief and clarity?

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[00:28:58] AS:** Okay, and we're back. So right before the break, Sas and I were talking about the lack of trust we have in our body because of the buried low expectations that we have for it because of what we've been told as a good body.

Sas, I'm just thinking about all, I mean, we can basically like go in so many different directions, right? But I think for women especially, if our bodies are our home base, and we've both been



talking about how this deeper layer of trust has emerged, it affects our self-doubt. It affects what we think we're capable of, and the body is almost – The stories of our bodies and then cutting ourselves off from the wisdom of there is we're so much of our lack of – I don't know. It's then how we show up in the world, and it just has this ripple effect that I don't think people would connect certain things, like procrastination, or always going and always over-packing my schedule or whatnot.

What we're also talking about that I kind of want to circle back to is these layers of stories. So let's define stories for people, because there's a lot of talk now. It's becoming very trendy to talk about – Brené Brown's new book, Dare to Lead. I love her work, and it's this story I'm making up here or there, and that's kind of the surface level stories that are happening. But there're layers to them.

So, can you talk a little bit about that? Because I think the deeper layers are what create these low expectations like, for example, in my field, you're always going to have to struggle with your body image, right? The best you can get is feeling neutral and having these flare ups or you're going to always have to pay attention to your food rather than getting to the source of why you're struggling with it.

In your field of self-doubt, there's hacks for procrastination when you're saying, "You're procrastinating because you're having doubt," not because you don't know how to manage your time.

**[00:31:02] SP:** Exactly. Exactly. Well, I think this is the thing, is that our experience of the world and our experience of ourselves is always in context. So, it's always in the context of who we spend time with, of the people we surround ourselves with. Sometimes the people we voluntarily surround ourselves with. Other times, we just find ourselves in the mix with them, our work colleagues, for example.



As well, there is a kind of why the context about the stories that our culture gives us, that there are these kind of entrenched cultural narratives that often are seeking to exploit out insecurities for profit, right? So, the way I see it is that self-doubt had these kind of layers and it's a bit like kind of concentric circles, or if you look at a tree stomp, you see these sort of rings.

If we're in the middle, there is a familial ring, right? There's a circle around us that what did we learn about our own self-worth from our families? What were the beliefs that sit around us? What did we inherit from our parents, from their parents, around how the world works?

Then from our teachers, from our friends at school, from our experiences as a growing human, how did we figure out what was true and good and right for us and how did we get our needs met? These circles just keep growing as we do and they extend into the workplace, the educational settings, to deeper romantic relationships and long-standing friendships.

I think what happens is that we mess the intelligence of self-doubt, because it feels like damn uncomfortable. Most of us just want to get away from it as quickly as possible, but actually there is this very important aspect of self-doubt that I think people miss, which I know you and I totally are in sync with here, that self-doubt has this quite profound role in protecting us from psychological risk.

So, the very unique and subjective root causes of our self-doubt kind of provide the precise ingredients for our healing. So, for me, I grew up in a home where there was this hereditary heart condition where I was the oldest child of two, very young immigrants, from the U.K. to New Zealand. So I grew up with all of their expectations about who I would be and what would matter. So, education was kind of the holy grail in my house. That meant that any sign that I didn't understand things or that something was beyond me or at my kind of age of knowing, I didn't feel safe to share.

So, I've kind of grown up with the surface story of the thing that I'm making up right now and

Brené Brown's language, is that it's not safe for me to be stupid or to say that I don't understand. It's not safe for me to say I don't know. But there is a deeper kind of inter-generational story that I'm also loving and continue to love, and I can shine some light on that. Then I get to change it and make conscious around it.

I think that's the thing, is if we don't go into the layers of it, we can stay at that sort of surface level and feel like, "Yeah, no. So, now I'm doing this other thing." I guess that's where these sort of will power hacks, the kind of get the right mindset, or here's [inaudible 00:34:49] to start procrastinating can help for a little while, but they won't even help us to really make sense of, to understand and to heal those deeper entrenched stories that my actually be the root cause of what's driving that behavior in the first place.

**[00:35:09] AS:** I love that. It speaks to because we've been talking about cultural beliefs, which you call them – I love that you use the tree metaphor. I often think of them as rushing nesting dolls, right? Keep popping out. I think about the healthcare system especially here in the U.S. I mean, it's based on more metaphors, and so many of my clients, their family members have struggled with food or health. It's this thing that's passed down. Part of the work that both you and I do is we get people from the socialized mind, which is these norms and choices that come from stories of our family, of our culture, of our medical system, education system, even what kind of intelligence is valued, right? All of these systems have their own metrics for "success", right?

But if you don't do those deeper layers, you don't get to jump to the self-authoring, which is the next stage of development, where you're consciously choosing not because – Because I found that people often don't know what their choices are because they're in this surround sound of their family, of their culture, of what's "normal". Because belonging is so important to us now, we don't need to be accepted by everyone, but we do need support.

It's so hard to get out of that surround sound and, "What do I want to choose for myself?" I



think about your heart condition, right? This is what you're going through on one level of the story right now, like, "If I don't have to worry about dying at 53, how am I going to choose to show up now?" All these other choices are open to me that I couldn't even fathom before and it reorients you to all different types of information and possibilities. I think when we stay in that just kind of surface level, we're still going to choose something that is socially acceptable in a way, not always, but we don't know our full range of options. If we want freedom, we need to know all our options. I love options though, that's –

**[00:37:14] SP:** Exactly. I think that the thing that no one really tells us, or certainly a huge bloody surprise to me, but maybe I just missed the day that we talked about that, was how much we can lose when we are in that place of growing developmentally and how sort of scary it can be to stick into a new place of being curious about who we are now when we are liberated from the stories that might not have been ours, but we have believed they were.

So one of the things that happened to me as I've been kind of moving through this place of sort of healing physically, but also trying to heal the story, is that I was shocked by how frightened I was that I suddenly had all of these life in front of me. It just felt incredibly acrophobic almost. I didn't just have five years left on the planet. I have potentially 50, and what the hell am I going to do for that time?

It was really fascinating to me that actually what was in every kind of way of looking at this, a massive gift and a huge relief and opportunity that actually my response was some fear and some shame at how that felt quite terrifying to me. Not only just feeling the fear of, "What am I going to do?" but also in the shame, having the fear, but also the kind of recognition that I was almost grieving for my former self, because even though I wasn't wholly conscious of that story, I kind of knew who I was in that. I know how to get stuff done. I have a very – You and I have talked about this a lot in our personal conversations that have a really strong kind of archetypal masculine way of being in the world, like I'm pretty productive. I'm action-oriented. So, this has been a real invitation to go into something that is about not moving, not



acting, but being and really exploring what might be present right now. Yeah, it's layers, right? It's not just a very straightforward process when we change our story.

**[00:39:39] AS:** I'm thinking about what is also probably part of that equality, and I think it's even kind of emerging for me as this new trust and ease. Not easy. That to me brings up all kinds of, well, you're privileged. What is this ease? Because people who say things are easy, I'm like – I give them the side eye, right? I'm like, "Okay, have you had –" Maybe you just a trust fund your whole life, right?

Often, I think when we're integrating and rewriting new stories, some of the things that we use to judge, which was our shadow side, we have to start to play with. I'm curious about, because I've seen this with a lot of my clients right now. This is coming up a lot in their work lives, because when people think they have to grip so tightly, then they're eating for energy. They're unwinding with alcohol at the end of the day and they're not necessarily – Their work which they once loved has lost its luster, and these are people that are very much you and I, like strong, masculine energy, great at being productive, know to get shit done, and then to trust that ease, not only do you have to be okay with having the level of these, but then you're even like, "You have to trust it." There's like two stage of that.

**[00:41:01] SP:** Well, I think that something that is happening in our culture more broadly certainly in recent culture more broadly right now is that I think – This is just my experience. So this may not be true for everyone listening, but I'm seeing as part of things like Black Lives Matter and Me Too and this truth serum that we are all suddenly taking is that we are starting to see that what was once a story of women needing to feel like impostors or somehow they weren't capable or they wouldn't be promoted or noticed unless they worked twice as hard as me. Where people of color have felt like there is a story that I'm living out, which is I have to be twice as good to belong, to be noticed. I think there is absolutely legitimacy in that.

I think what we're also seeing is that these were stories that were given to us that were neither

true. They were just bullshit lies that were propagated by the people who held the power. So you get someone like Michelle Obama who says, “Well, hey. We’re often told that we need to be better. We need to really earn our place at the table.” She’s saying, Well, actually, I’ve sat at the table and there isn’t a ton of original thinking going on. We need more people at the table.”

**[00:42:28] AS:** When she said that, I felt like all of my corporate days were validated.

**[00:42:34] SP:** Well, exactly. I think this is the thing that I feel incredibly despairing at the state of some of our leadership, but also incredibly hopeful, because I’m from New Zealand and although I live in the U.K. and have been for many years, but I see leadership that’s being done differently by just under a hoon and I just think, “Oh, this is what it can look like.”

**[00:42:58] AS:** I think that’s the challenge, right? Is, to your point, yeah – I’m thinking years back, we had Sheryl Sandberg come in and tell us all to lean in. So we thought our choices were we lean out or lean in, and actually this is going out in my upcoming newsletter about McKinsey did a study and basically women leaned in, and I’m over simplifying the results. But they worked twice as hard and didn’t get –

**[00:43:21] SP:** It didn’t make a damn bit of difference, right?

**[00:43:22] AS:** Right, exactly.

**[00:43:24] SP:** Yeah.

**[00:43:25] AS:** What they got was fatigue.

**[00:43:28] SP:** I remember reading the introduction to Sheryl Sandberg’s book and just basically swearing quite loudly and throwing it on the floor, because I was someone who was in a really senior corporate job, and I leaned the hell in and made a ton of sacrifices and it didn’t make a

damn bit of difference.

**[00:43:47] AS:** Yeah. So, I love your point about there's new emerging stories, because it's kind of hard to say like what will that really actually look like unless you have someone there to say, "Oh, I want that." Oh my God! These other two options are insane and they're not working. I mean, I know in my field I think of like the two extremes of like diet culture or just like – I mean, there's body positivity movement has been cooped a little bit. But the people were coopting and it's like still kind of the same thing of like not the original one, but what's it become, because we're still filtering it through that capitalistic, white-sist gender, able-bodied lens.

So, the new story of like, "Wait, you don't have to be all natural or all medicated and you don't have to be in a paleo camp or a vegan camp, and you can pay attention to your emotional health because that's what's really connected to our well-being as much as nutrition and –" That's slowly emerging. I think of my clients as like offering that new story.

But until you see it, you kind of thing, "Oh, it's always going to be hard, always going to have to deal with this on some level," and the possibilities that we're talking about and what the – Is it the prime – Is she called the prime minister of New Zealand?

**[00:45:07] SP:** She is, yeah. The prime minster, yeah.

**[00:45:09] AS:** You just see that and you're like, "Oh, I don't have to choose. I want it all," right?

**[00:45:15] SP:** Just how you get someone from – This is what I think I love and wholeheartedly respect and recommend [inaudible 00:45:24] for just understanding what the difference is between diversity and inclusion, and I love the way that she phrases inclusion as not so much that you're welcome here, but we designed this for you.

**[00:45:40] AS:** I love that line.

**[00:45:41] SP:** Yeah, it's just like – This is what I think about what Jacinda Ardern is doing, is saying, “We’re designing a government for you. We are recognizing that we have an enormous mental health issue in New Zealand. We recognize that we need more money for housing, that New Zealand has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the known universe.” We really have a high rate of domestic violence.

So, that means that the government that is designing the country for everyone to feel safe in must address those issues. That means that we don’t put something like economic growth at the top of the agenda. We actually say mental health peer is much more important right now. It doesn’t mean that the economic growth isn’t important. It’s just that right now it’s not the priority. We’re doing okay. So we have to prioritize these other things. That then lifts everybody, right?

So we take care of the folks who are struggling the most and that lifts everybody. For me, that is a framework of leadership that is so damn real. It feels like a different language when we hear it. But actually we just lean into and we think, “Oh! That’s how we run our families.” The person with the greatest need gets the most love and attention for the period of time they need it.

I think we just – It’s the way we reframe our stories about what’s okay, what’s not okay, our expectations for ourselves. They can shift on a dime. It just takes someone I think to mentor that for us, to demonstrate what’s possible.

**[00:47:25] AS:** I love that question, because when I think of how America was designed, you’ve got patriarchy first, then you have racism, which without racism you can’t have capitalism. When you look at that, I think the history of the healthcare system. I mean, it is all capitalism. Racism, I mean, who they’d experimented on, who they not. Then just patriarchy, I mean, women’s bodies have barely been studied and everything is about – I’m thinking they tried



male birth control pill and men were starting to feel a little bit of pain and so they stopped it immediately.

**[00:48:02] SP:** Women in the U.K., Caroline – I think it's Criado Perez, and she's written this book Invisible Woman that's just been published in the U.K. and it's all about how women have been made invisible in all kinds of data, in all kind of datasets, which sounds perhaps benign, but we just have to think about what do we use datasets for? It's for healthcare decisions, for pharmaceutical choices. It's for policy decisions and who gets impacted.

From these quite sort of seemingly innocuous things like what's the standard temperate of an office, because women tend to run a little taller than men. Then women have to sit in cold offices. We just think about what does that do to a human body over 20 years, right?

**[00:48:59] AS:** There's an article I'm actually including in my newsletter, how it decreases women's productivity actually.

**[00:49:04] SP:** Yeah, exactly! Exactly. Then there are these other things about what does that mean for the health policy. You start to see because we have taken men as the absolute and women as the joiner. Sort of like for the add-on. Literally, Adam and Eve.

**[00:49:27] AS:** I know. Adam's rib, right?

**[00:49:29] SP:** Yeah. Actually, that is so how we are kind of running our world, how we're making decisions. It just takes someone to point this out to us and then we get, "Oh, hang on a second. That doesn't feel right to me."

**[00:49:41] AS:** Yeah. This is so tangential, but we were at Carlos' best friend's wedding 10 years ago. He's in Costa Rica, and the priest for some reason had to fly out, and so Carlos had to translate the mass because the English speaking priest had left. Even though Carlos is

Portuguese, he can speak Spanish, and he was doing that line that they had included the reading of like the rib. I'm rolling my eyes and he's like, "I was thinking about not even translating it, because I knew you were in the audience," but he's like, "It wasn't our ceremony." I was like, "Yeah." But I was like, "Oh! It just makes me so angry."

But I think that's so important in tying these low expectations, is we want to put it – Especially in America, we think everything is so individualistic. We want to put all of that on you. The culture it's all you as an individual, versus I know with my clients they start to realize, "Wow! That was these low expectations and my distrust in my body or hating myself for this or doubting myself for this." As they start to change your story, they're like, "That was given to me. I didn't know it was given to me. I thought it was my own, and now I'm giving it back."

**[00:50:50] SP:** And it's an insidious story, right? It's like from childhood, we are taught to look to others to tell us what to do, to never trust ourselves, to never trust our bodies. If we're feeling any kind of emotion that is uncomfortable, that isn't heaviness at all times, then we should seek to find something that will appease or alleviate that emotion. We should not trust ourselves to be with it and we shouldn't trust the innate intelligence of it.

So, buy this thing, eat this food. These are the things that will help you to feel better, not you can help yourself to feel better. From this very, very young age, we are told time and time again, "Do not trust yourself. But the solution, seek expertise from someone else. You cannot know yourself as well as we do." It's this kind of insidious story that, of course, we don't trust ourselves. How can you go through your life hearing that day-in, day-out and know that there is another story you could believe? I think that's where the power of development psychology really sits is that the level of emotional maturity, the range that we have, the complexity that we can hold when we start to challenge these stories and see them for what they are is that we by proxy of just questioning the truth of that. Questioning the motivation and the intention behind the stories we're subjected to and seeing them for what they are, which is often an outcome and sometimes unintended and sometimes incredibly overt response to the fact that

we live in these systemic oppressive systems of what you just described, the patriarchy, racism, the capitalist consumer-based culture.

We forget that we can trust the earth. The earth has an innate intelligence. We have seasons. We have tides. We have all of these natural resources that are near to sustain us. We can trust our bodies as well, because we're creatures. We are part of nature, and it feels to me like until we start really challenging this kind of narrative that says, "You cannot trust yourself. You cannot trust your body, and by proxy, you must trust us, corporate America." Then we will be this kind of unwitting handmaidens, I hesitate to use the word, to these systems. We're kind of participating without realizing that we even have a choice.

I mean, this is one of the reasons why I think your work is just so important, because what you're saying is don't believe the noise. Don't believe it. The emperor has no clothes.

**[00:53:50] AS:** None.

**[00:53:52] SP:** Not a stitch.

**[00:53:54] AS:** I feel like I've been living in that parable since 2016, November 2016.

**[00:53:58] SP:** Yeah.

**[00:53:59] AS:** Yeah, and I think one of the things that you just said that I think is so important for people to realize, even if you don't think you are making a choice, you are, and that's one of the things that I think I'm sure, Sas, your clients come to realize like, "Oh, I thought it was just kind of happening, but I was actually choosing this story that came from maybe my family, which also came from the culture and all these ripple effects."

I think that's important for people to realize as you start to examine low expectations, and your



own story is when you don't feel like you have a choice, what choice are you making in that moment? It could be to put up with this. It could be to go with the flow. It could be to avoid a –

**[00:54:42] SP:** And I think that's the thing. We don't have to challenge every damn story [inaudible 00:54:46].

**[00:54:46] AS:** Oh no! Oh, God! No. That's the capitalistic, you got to be super productive or –

**[00:54:51] SP:** Yeah. But I think there's something about just recognizing that you can reflect, you can kind of pause and just ask yourself. What choice do I want to make? Something will bubble up. Something will come to you. It may or may not be your inner voice, your intuition, your soul, your innate intelligence. Something will bubble up. Who knows what that is? But you can trust that. You can just be open to it. Curious about it, and that will overtime become a louder voice that will allow you to really question and take action that is based on what your innate intelligence is telling you, rather than the world is instructing you to do. I think just living a life that is based on that is so much more just fulfilling, right?

**[00:55:46] AS:** Oh, and powerful, and impactful. Yeah. Oh my God! I love this. Sas, one more question before we wrap up. What are you integrating? I know we've talked a little bit about you having this, "Wow! I'm going to have a lot more time," but specifically about your body, because your creativity has been on fire and it's been shifting and changing. So I'm wondering what you're integrating about your body as you work through this I've got time story basically and then I can trust my body.

**[00:56:17] SP:** That's such a great question. I think one of the impacts that I'm experiencing and kind of living through and trying to integrate right now is this realization that not only can I trust my body, but I can trust myself. So, years and years ago, I trained in complex resolution, because I am recovering people pleaser and I needed some skills to deal with conflict. That has been super helpful. No doubt about it.

But I always had this undercurrent story that year, but that's just kind of following a skirt that's not really being okay with conflict. It's just given me something else to do with it. I've realized that having dieting from back a couple of times that I'm sort of no longer afraid of conflict or I'm not longer afraid of being judged. So it's not that I don't care what people think, because I do, and there are obviously layers to that and there are some people who I really do care what they think. But I'm no longer afraid of being criticized or being judged or being rejected or abandoned by people, because I kind of feel like I've got me in a newer, deeper way.

What that is meaning I think is that I am feeling much more creative. There are just things that I want to do and say and make and write. One of the really interesting things that came to me very quickly after I came back from surgery was this desire to kind of get to – and I love the kind of irony of this or perhaps not the irony, but just the theme of this, of wanting to get to the heart of matters.

So, things like poetry has been something that I've dabbled with over the years, but it's become a kind of practice for me now, where if I'm sitting with something that is confusing or brings up a lot of emotion for me. One of the things that I'm doing to integrate each thing is try and write something that is poetry. Something like poetry. I have no idea if it's any good. I have no idea.

But I'm okay with sharing it and letting it stand and not really caring how that's perceived, because it's just sort of coming through me, if you like. So there this is sort of – Yeah, this kind of layers to that integration. But, ultimately, it comes back to this idea that, "Okay. I can trust myself." Whatever happens, if I have been someone unintentionally, I can repair that. It's okay.

Actually, it's really about like just telling the truth and saying, "I really didn't mean that and I'm so sorry I hurt your feelings, and here's what I intended and can we talk about it?" Or equally from a kind of boundary setting perspective, like someone who just wants to have their opinion taken into account and actually that is a medicine much to me. It's like, "Yeah, I get that you



want to be included in this, but I just want to run this myself. It's okay. It's okay for you to not be included in this and I hope you understand why."

So, there is this kind of freedom to play with what trust and trusting myself looks like in public and looks like as a lived experience rather than just a theory. I'm trusting my body's intelligence to kind of give me a sense of when that feels good and when that feels slightly uncomfortable, but it's still the right thing for me, versus, "Oh no! I think something is off here and there's something unfinished here. We need to talk more."

Yeah. I don't know if that makes sense, Ali, but –

**[01:00:02] AS:** Totally.

**[01:00:03] SP:** Yeah, that's kind of where I'm at right now. It's a bit messy, but it feels clean is what it feels. It feels like I'm just feeling stuff and acknowledging it and sometimes it means communicating it and sometimes it just means moving on. But, yeah, it feels good.

**[01:00:20] AS:** I love that, because part of why we fear conflict is because of patriarchy and white supremacy, right? That's an internalized conflict is bad versus can be very constructive.

**[01:00:31] SP:** And someone has to win in the patriarchy conflict. Somebody has to be the winner.

**[01:00:36] AP:** Yeah. Instead of, "Wait a second. What if we can both come out of this better than before?"

**[01:00:42] SP:** Yeah.

**[01:00:43] AP:** I love that. I love that. Oh! So much rich wisdom. Sas, where can people find



more of you? We will obviously have all the links to your podcast and website and to follow you on Insta. But where can people, if they're dying to do it right now, can find you?

**[01:00:57] SP:** Yeah. Well, my website is [saspetherick.com](http://saspetherick.com), and I guess the cool thing that I would say, if you're interested in exploring your self-doubt, is that I have this quiz that allows you to kind of open up to what kind of patterns, archetypal patterns, you might be experiencing just in terms of how you experience and respond to self-doubt. So as part a grounded theory research study that I did last year, and I think it's about 5,000 people have taken the quiz now. It's really cool.

So, it will give you an archetype for your self-doubt and some hot tips for experiments you can try out in the world to just interrupting those patterns. So, yeah. If it's okay for me to share that

—

**[01:01:41] AS:** Of course! Because one people start getting those first results of like this is better than I could have expected, then they keep going and you keep raising your expectations. When we have really big meaningful goals is I think when we continue to show up for them rather than let me just get out of pain. It's like, "No. Let's get some freedom here."

**[01:02:01] SP:** Yeah.

**[01:02:02] AS:** Freedom!

**[01:02:02] SP:** That's cool. That's the thing I think self-doubt is always going to tell us that there's something we have to protect ourselves from. So we better not do it. So if you're holding yourself back from those goals or holding yourself back, having those low expectations, then really looking at why that's there and just questioning if that is just outdated, inherited or just something that isn't working for you and you want to try a new way. Then that can just really help.

**[01:02:28] AS:** I love that. Those are some powerful questions to end on. Thank you so much for being here, Sas.

**[01:02:33] SP:** Total pleasure. Thanks, Ali.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[01:02:38] AS:** Thank you, health rebels, for tuning in today. Have a reaction, question or want the transcript from today's episode, find me at [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com). I'd love if you'll leave a review on Apple Podcast and tell your friends and family about Insatiable. It helps us grow our community and share a new way of approaching health in our bodies. Thanks for engaging in a different kind of conversation. Remember, always, your body truths are unique, profound, real and liberating.

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