

How to Manage Stress to Uplevel Your Nutrition Goals– Insatiable Season 8, Episode 7

[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]

[0:00:47.7] AS: Welcome, Insatiable listeners to Season 8 Episode 7; how to manage stress to up-level your nutrition goals. This season's theme is consistency. It's no secret that consistency is the key to success for whatever goal we have. 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. Here we fall off track, lose motivation and get discouraged.

Convention tells us consistency is about willpower, discipline and hard work, but research in adult development theory points elsewhere. 15 years ago, I had 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, instead of calories and felt amazing when I really understood how to put food to work for me.



Even all these great results couldn't stop my bingeing and overeating. My quest became to discover why can't I stick with this feeling of amazement. It led me to grad school to study adult development and how we really change ingrained patterns and behaviors. 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 an invitation into deeper healing and radical results, I found that when it comes to consistency, a lot of the common beliefs we have around being consistent are what actually cause 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" has worn off and why real-life trips us up so much. What are the various root causes of why we lose motivation, want to be bad with our food and tell ourselves diet starts tomorrow, or more profanely, chuck it, F it.

Today, our episode is we often fall off track with our healthy eating and self-care when we think to ourselves, "Once work gets less crazy, or once I get through this, then I'll get back on track with my eating and health." Clients use the term stress, otherwise known as real-life, to describe why they fall off track. It doesn't have to make us fall off track with our food goals.

In this episode, I'm going to discuss the root cause of stress, overwhelm and under fulfillment, because sometimes we're stressed because we're unfulfilled, especially in our work. We're going to talk about today how to simplify your eating and stress with less rules to get life-changing results and I'm going to talk to you about the concept of optimal conflict, the sweet spot where you don't stress less, but live more by levelling up your results.

Before I get to today's episode, just one fun update is that what I'm now doing for those of you on my e-mail list and those who want to get on is every other week, I'm sending out something called well-rounded. Basically, it gives you a summary of some of all the health information that I think is pertinent to how I think of things in terms of root-cause resolution, etc., in a really easy to digest e-mail format.



You also get a really simple recipe, some time we mentioned some podcast episodes and I've often done some posts. I shared two posts for the month of June about how I overcame my infertility diagnosis, specifically the mindset piece and then how to optimize your body for fertility.

I just want to if you are a podcast listener and want someone who's going to help curate and discern and help you break through all the overwhelm, all the health information out there, definitely sign up at alishapiro.com. I've gotten so many e-mails of people who love it. One woman wrote, and I share this on Instagram, this is the best thing to hit my inbox in months, because she's so overwhelmed with how much information comes at you. If you want someone to help you sift through that. That's my big announcement.

We've had a really powerful season on consistency, these first six episodes. Today's episode is really about integrating all the episode lessons; making them practical and getting started, so you can be more consistent with your eating, self-care and any goal that's really important to you. This episode is also a preview of my Why Am I Eating This Now program, which will be open for registration the first week in August.

This will be the last time to work with me until March 2020, because I am taking maternity leave. My private practice is full for about a year at this point. Also, just want to let you know that if you really want to start taking action, if I'm honest, I always don't know how to balance with encouraging you guys to take action, right? Don't sit on your butts if you're ready for a change with also balancing, that it's not always the right time. If you love the podcast, you've been listening for a while and you're really ready to do more than just learn more, right? You really want to change I'm learning how to integrate a lot of what we talk about on the podcast and really get to the root of why are you eating this now and inconsistent, I hope you'll join us.

I'm giving you a free sneak peek at the first few lessons in a webinar series. If you want to join



that so you have more information so you can make the right decision for you, you can sign up for the webinar series. Again, it's completely free. It'll be a preview of some of the free lessons – some of the lessons in Why Am I Eating This Now. You can sign up at alishapiro.com/webinar, so you can help decide if it's time to go from listening to the podcast to integrating everything we talk about here.

All right, so onto today's episode. I first want to talk about what is the root cause of stress. What are we really saying when we say that we're stressed out? When I ask people this when I'm doing workshops or keynotes, a lot of the answers that I get from people is, "I feel like I'm spiraling. I feel anxious. I feel out of control." What I think is interesting about how people experience stress is these are all actually what's happening underneath of our stress, the various components of what I call the stress-eating cycle.

What this cycle is and on the webinars, especially if you're a visual learner, you'll see this visually. What happens is we have an event, right? We get an e-mail that makes us uncomfortable. When it comes to food, maybe we're at a social event and we don't feel eating healthy. I mean, we feel eating healthy, but everyone around us isn't, right? Or we're traveling, right? I get a lot of questions about traveling, social situations.

Rather than looking at the event itself, we have to think about what does that make me feel inside, right? What does travel do to me? What does this social situation, how does this make me feel? How is this e-mail making me feel? We get a trigger. Often, what people can identify as the emotion is anxious, right? That emotion in and of itself isn't dangerous or unsafe, but we have been conditioned based on our past to believe it's unsafe.

What happens is we go into a stress response, right? The same way that animals will go into fight, flight or freeze, we go into an emotional safety response, because we don't want to feel unsafe. Unsafe psychologically can mean rejected, can mean failure, can mean feeling not enough, or feeling bad. The stress responses are compete, avoid or accommodate. This is



where the spiraling and over-analyzing that a lot of people voiced concerns about stresses, right?

Part of the over-analyzing the spiraling is because of the stress response, it puts us in this all-or-nothing, black or white thinking, right? I say, “Yes. I’m going to feel so guilty. Either I eat this. If I say no to not eating what everyone else is eating, I may look like the healthy nut and my weight, it looks like I’m trying to lose weight and it’s clear that I’m failing at that, so I don’t want people to ask me about it, or I just don’t want to feel already different,” right? Then we start over-analyzing and all this stuff.

If you aren’t familiar with the compete, avoid or accommodate responses, I encourage you to take my comfort eating quiz, alishapiro.com/comforteatingquiz, so you can learn more about those responses. Then what happens is those responses because they put us in all-or-nothing thinking, make us feel out of control. What we’re really saying here is I am out of choice. I don’t feel I have any good choices beyond damned if I do, damned if I don’t, right? Either I work really late, or I’m going to fail at this presentation, right? It puts us in this very binary thinking.

Again, there’s that eating example I used with my infertility diagnosis, which I’ll use as an example throughout today’s episode. Western medicine told me based on being in early menopause and the numbers that they ran that my only choice was IVF, plus a donor egg. A donor egg is where you buy another woman’s egg. I didn’t really know what that was when I started this, so just want to define that for people.

I felt really out of control, right? Because I didn’t want that choice and I wanted to be a mother, right? It’s like, “Wow, I feel I’ve done so much to bring my body back from chemo treatments, in cancer, and it just was like, it’s not enough.” Frankly, I cried for three weeks, because I know how important it is to be with our feelings and just how totally out of control.

However, when we just use the word stress or overwhelm and we’re not getting clear on the stress-eating cycle underneath, this really sets up a cycle when we don’t understand, or unclear



of what's happening. Then what happens is we just feel life is happening to us and that we have no voice, no choice in the matter. That's really when we start to feel out of control.

Then what also happens is when we feel out of control, we start to most people eat, that listen to this podcast or don't. I know a lot of healthcare professionals listen to this to help their clients. Some of us drink, some of us Netflix. I used to eat and watch TV. There wasn't Netflix when I was binging. That's how I guess old I am, or how long I've been – I've been had my own Truce with Food. We can look at it both ways.

Anyways, what happens is when we turn to then eat, or drink, or Netflix, or do any choice that is out of alignment with our goals, we lose self-trust. We say, "I can't trust myself. I had a plan not to eat at night. I had a plan not to drink less," right? We lose self-trust when we go do this, because we're not doing what we want to be doing. Then not only do we lose self-trust, but in that process, our trigger, the original anxious feeling becomes even more threatening. Food feels even more stressful, because now I'm confused, angry, or in my case, infertile and I don't know what to do, right? We become less resilient and more stressed.

What's interesting from an emotional level, again, this really piles on a really – it's out of the scope of this podcast, but it really starts to not only erode our self-trust, but see the world – we start to see the world that we're more and more a victim of it and it's harder to dig ourselves out of that hole.

On a physiological level, the more stress we feel and we talked about this in episode one around willpower, is we become more desensitized to the foods we're binging on and to the alcohol. Because our system becomes desensitized because it's stressed, we need more and more of the same junk food, or alcohol to stimulate the same response that we were getting from it before, the dopamine reward, right? We do get a dopamine reward when we overeat, over-drink or numb out.



You can go on social media, right? It's the same gambling, that's really helped me change my social media patterns. It's basically social media is built on the gambling model of intermittent rewards. We get a dopamine hit and we get more dopamine. What happens is when your body is under chronic low-grade fight-or-flight, it takes more and more of that same stimulus, whether it's food, alcohol, social media and Netflix, to get up to the same numbing out sensation.

It really sets us on this digging ourselves into a hole of the stress cycle. I want to mention here too that stress can be unfulfillment too. We're not getting energy, or meaning back from whatever we're doing in life, whether it's our relationships, it's our work, it's our exercise, it's how we're eating, all of that stuff. I know in the work that I do, a lot of my clients want to shift their careers and their lack of fulfillment is which their entire life, our entire lives are designed around our careers here in the west, at least here in America, I think largely in Canada as well.

That really takes a toll. That lack of fulfillment can also mean you love what you do, but it's too much, right? Because when it becomes too much, you don't have the same spaciousness, the same creativity, it just starts to feel like a grind.

What happens here is when we're in this spiral, we feel totally out of control, even though we're really out of choice. Then we look for a diet, or even something like intuitive eating; both of which have different rules, except this is how it is. We never question if it could be better or different, or we look for productivity hacks for more time, rather than seeing procrastination as part of the avoid pattern and brilliant self-protection. Or we read another self-help book about how to have boundaries.

A lot of my clients come to me when they're done with self-help. They're like, "I'm reading other everyone else's recommendations and I'm ready to figure it out for myself and what works for me." Again, all of these choices can help us. I don't want to say that they're bad, or not, or ineffective or not. That's too black and white. However, often these choices are giving us



more rules to follow based on an authority outside of ourselves.

Guess what? Adults don't like more rules. We know this with food, right? We create some food rule, right? I used to do this like, no eating after 8 p.m., or no eating sweets until after dinner, right? Eventually, we rebel against that rule and that voice was me of I used to be so earnest and really believe, like so studious, this is what I'm going to do, get my gold star. Then when we rebel against it, we feel out of control while we are eating. We initially rebelled, because we had no choice in the matter, right? We were trying to follow some rules, even if they were something as noble as intuitive eating, right? They have a lot of good things. I did a whole episode, season seven, episode seven if you're interested on pros and cons of intuitive eating, but it's still someone else's rules. We're also going to get later in this episode how sometimes those rules backfire.

This is the same protocol with what we say stresses ourselves out. It's not the event itself, it's the lack of choice or say in the matter. We feel stress, dread, or any uncomfortable emotion and then we hear, "I should, I shouldn't, I have to, I'll feel guilty if I don't." There's no choice in that self-talk, and so we eat to have a choice in something, right? "Well, I have to do this for so-and-so. I'm going to eat to reward myself." This is a choice, right?

Or we eat, or drink at night, or scroll to unwind from all the tension and drain we feel from just going with the flow all day. We can often realize that we're often making choices throughout the day that we don't realize they're actually choices, and we call this a death by a thousand paper cuts in Why Am I Eating This Now. It's that constant, just ignoring the choices that we have, that we don't know we have because of this cycle. By the end of the day, we're wound up and we need these things to unwind, right? Because we've been "going with the flow," which aren't the choices that we would have preferred, and our eating is pointing us to that. Our eating never lies. It's a truth teller, just like our body.

The key is to figure out what it's saying, and just for some incentive to look at this, one of my favorite Swedish proverbs is 'Only dead fish go with the flow', right? Often, we think as part of



that avoid pattern, we hear some of that, “Oh, just be easygoing. Go with the flow.” That could be protective thinking that won't rock the boat, but also isn't going to get you to your goals.

I'm sharing all these because I really want to emphasize we don't need control. I think all of us logically know we can't control life, right? We do need choices. Not just any choices, but satisfying choices. I just want to say something about choices here. This is really challenging at first to see other choices, because when we turn to our families, or to our culture, or to the medical system, or the mainstream media, everyone is caught in really all-or-nothing binary thinking. I think especially if you're living in the US right now, you know how polarized our politics are, right? That's how everyone's been thinking gradually for the past 40 years and is just hitting this apex right now.

We can't have nuanced discussions. I mean, God in the health field. You challenge birth control, or it's like, “That's a privileged conversation.” It's like, “Yes, and there are those of us who don't have health privilege that have to be concerned with the effects of birth control.” That's just one example. My point is that it's really hard to see your choices, because everyone else is going to offer you often just a very all-or-nothing, black or white view of things as well.

We need experts on how to guide us, how to become our own experts, because this is really challenging. I think one of the biggest things that I'm taking away as part of my own optimal conflict learning and I'll get to that in a minute about what optimal conflict is, from my own infertility diagnosis is I'm refining – and to clarify my points, we don't need people to tell us what to do, but we do need experts and authorities to help us understand our body and get it back into balance.

I used to be like, “You need to be the expert on you and you need someone that is going to help you guide that, guide you to that.” It's been my biggest lesson of just stop trying to do everything alone, Ali. You work so much better when you have the right support. Again, this can be very challenging to see our choices. You're a fish trying to see the water you're swimming in.



Again, to just reiterate my other point, we're living in a surround-sound culture that has oversimplified food exercise and personal development, right?

People give you advice if you over eat. Ask yourself if it was worth it in the moment. Actually, with the more holistic understanding, you can see that yes, it was worth it in the moment. Or self-help gurus will tell you you just have to put yourself first and say no, without recognizing that saying no makes you feel unsafe, at risk for rejection and threatens an entire identity that you also love about yourself. It's like pulling for Jenga pieces out of the bottom of Jenga psychologically, which is why we don't do often "what we know we should."

I'm sharing all that, because it is important to make sure that you have compassion for yourself for how hard this is and finding the right people who can help you guide you to more nuance and discernment. In my work with clients, including in *Why Am I Eating This Now*, I am all about supporting clients to see more choices, the ones in their blind spots. That requires truly understanding why we react the way we do.

To do this, to start to see more choices using adult development theory, I'm supporting clients to move from what they call in developmental psychology, the princess archetype to the CEO of their food, exercise and life, and so they can see how stress and overwhelm can be an invitation into more radical healing. Not get them in the vicious cycle of falling off-track and losing self-trust.

This invitation is called academically, optimal conflict; it's what the academics would call it. Spiritual people would probably call it manifesting. Witches would probably call it co-creation. I'm trying to think of another spiritual word, surrender. You don't want to just surrender. You want to be an active surrender.

We are going to take a break right now to hear a word from our sponsor, but I'll be back to explain optimal conflict and how it can up-level your stress around food and life, now that we



know the cycle of what's happening. I'll be right back.

[BREAK]

[0:22:18.4] 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. 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 Lourdes Brolly 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 still 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 programs plans do. As a result, I stopped slipping with my healthy eating and falling into old thought patterns. I got unstuck and have the tools to keep going. One year 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 I 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. I am much bolder in my life. Yes. Win-win."



If you're ready to work smarter, not harder, to be consistent and reach your nutrition and wellness goals, join us. Full details are at alishapiro.com Why Am I Eating This Now live program. 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?

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:24:34.1] AS: Okay, so we have just left off about optimal conflict, right? Rather than doing a downward spiral of eating, or drinking, or Netflixing, we can use these frustrating patterns and frustrating habits to up-level our life.

Optimal conflict is this concept that when you have a chronic pain in your life, right? Something that bothers you so much that you're willing to actually seek help about it, right? Because as I said at the top of this episode, there's a big difference between learning and changing. Learning is okay, okay, okay, warming you up about your awareness. Change is completely different. Change is where you start taking action. You start, I don't know. It's wild. It's awesome.

Optimal conflict is when you have some chronic pain. For my clients, it's fighting food. For me, it was this infertility diagnosis, that you're willing and it's something that you care about enough, right? People don't want to spend their lives fighting food. It's really painful. I was there for almost two decades. It's a waste of time. Infertility is a really painful place to be. I had miscarried two years before this and then to find out that I'm in early menopause from a childhood cancer diagnosis. Sometimes life just feels really unfair.

If something that we have a chronic issue with that we're willing to do the work to expose ourselves to information that will challenge ourselves and get us outside our comfort zone. This requires the roadless travel, right? Takes a little rebellion, right? In the case of my clients, it's all



right, I'm not just going to go down the path of diet culture and I'm also not going to go down the path of body positivity, intuitive eating. I'm going to choose option C, which is to really figure out what works for me in my own rules, right?

I often say that options A and B are often both rooted in patriarchal inefficiency and oppression. We know diet culture is as well. I also know the body positivity movement has a lot of pluses and it's been co-opted. I'm talking about the commercial version of it, not the grassroots, how wellness, right? The grassroots wellness, those of us in this very different than the co-opted version, the capitalistic version of wellness.

I would argue that even something like intuitive eating has a little bit of inefficiency and oppression in it, because of the telling, giving us a framework, rather than us coming to these rules in ourselves. If it's worked for you, fantastic, right? Everyone has to figure out what works for them. Although, most of my clients find intuitive eating really difficult and also hasn't given them the full range of results that they want.

Again, optimal conflict, we can get, it can help up-level our lives, but we have to be willing to expose ourselves to new ways of thinking and tools. I want to emphasize that this is not an invitation for everything to go our way, right? With my clients, yes, they do end up fighting food with me. I did end up getting pregnant. With my clients, once they get to their stress eating cycle, many of the things do go their way. They start to realize how much harder they were making life in 80% of the cases.

That's not always the case. Rather, you have to view optimal conflict as an opportunity to get better results than if you didn't open yourself up to understanding new things. You're going to get further along than if you had done nothing and often in a really, really meaningful place. Like I said, it's moving from a princess archetype to CEO. The princess archetype says, show me the rules of the kingdom and I will obey. In obeying, I will be saved. The kingdom rules are that of our family, the medical system, diet culture, personal development gurus who tend to be



men, who haven't examined their own privilege often as we've seen with many of – from Bikram to Tony Robbins comes out about these people.

The prince or princess archetype sees things as the authorities claim they are, lacks nuance and is very black and white. Again, it gets to the rules from others, believing if we are good enough, we will be saved. By saved, often it means chosen, right? That's often what we want in weight loss, to be chosen. Say we want more confidence, but we believe that it's going to make it easier to be the real us. In that real us, we will be chosen rather than doing the choosing.

An example of I want to show you some of these rules to the kingdom that when we're in the princess archetype, this is just one example. We may not realize this, but we're operating under the belief that the body is a machine, right? The science and weight-loss industry operate under this cultural story, which then our families adopt even if they aren't aware of it, right? Because part of this belief then is weight loss is diet and exercise, calories in, calories out, we then believe weight loss happens on a linear timeframe. I remember learning it should be about a half a pound, 2 pounds a week. Of course, the more you diet, the less fast the rate, because your body is feeling less and less safe.

If it's not dieting, it's something like intuitive eating, right? Follow these rules and frameworks and it'll get you where you want to go. Again, I want to emphasize, I think intimidating has many selling points, but there are many results beyond, possible beyond what intuitive eating offers. It's also okay if it doesn't work for you, because I'm a rebel and people telling me what to do, even if it's to deep-breathe and to slow down while I eat, it's just not going to work for me. For some people it does.

All of us have areas in our lives where we are in that prince or princess archetype. It's not all or nothing, but I really see this mindset rampant in nutrition, fitness and health care and wellness, even with highly trained professionals, because often, they found a diet like paleo or vegan that really works for them, or a fitness workout they love, and so they don't necessarily have the



challenges like bingeing or a health crisis that requires them to come up against the limits of only looking at food and exercise.

In other words, they might not have to look at food beyond macros, or ever wonder, or they never feel motivated to not work out. They're like, "This is a great solution." It doesn't mean that these people don't have challenges in other areas of their life, right? No one rides for free. It's just probably not in these arenas. They are great subject matter experts in motivating, but not necessarily experts in all the pieces and levers necessary to look at when people are still stuck, right? They might have a fully-integrated lens around health and wellness. They might get the diet and exercise piece, but not experts in emotional intelligence, or developmental psychology.

That's fine if you needed someone who can teach you more about nutrition or motivate you to work out, right? I pay for workouts all the time, because I want someone to tell me what to do. How I decide who is telling me what to do is based on me knowing what I need from my body that day, because I've stepped into the CEO role of my body. I share that because often, clients after they work with me, we had Tina on the pros and cons of Weight Watchers, she was able to use the Weight Watchers tools exactly how she needed them. She actually ignores the health – the nutrition information, which is a lot of why people turn to it, but she uses it for the travel tips, the community, the in-person community and some of the self-care and motivation that they offer, right? She knows what to use and what not to use.

Or some people will find that they practice mindful eating, but as I'm going to share in an example here in a second, they realize that some of these tips don't work for them. It's knowing again, that discernment what works, what doesn't. In the CEO role where like, "I'm the one in charge and I need to understand the interlocking parts of my business." In this case instead of a business, it's our body, right? What works for the vision of my body in life? As we move to the CEO role, once we get and we move getting out of this stress cycle using – well, we move if you're doing – using the process that I developed. Of course, you could get to it in other ways



for sure. I'm sure there's other stuff out there.

In this case of food, to move to this, what we're doing in the case of food, exercise, health is we're being able to handle increasing complexity and a more true version of how our bodies, humans and life work. We only usually get there if we come up against an optimal crisis, that optimal conflict crisis. It could be tired of fighting food. Again, we don't think we can do another plan. It could be burnout, it could be infertility.

It's in the CEO role where we start to understand how much weight the emotional piece influences our food and weight. You might know in theory, yes, it's not about the food, but it's an understanding how much it's not about the food that we devote ourselves to understanding our emotional health, instead of trying another diet, or just focusing on the food. You don't need this understanding in the beginning, but you grow into it. You just need to trust your poll to explore the emotional side with trusted support.

As we move to that CEO role and can handle more complexity, right? Because when we believe the body is a machine, most people believe that health is weight and weight is diet and exercise, right? You may know that you have more cravings when you don't sleep well, or you may know that your doctor told you to stress less, but are you really devoting energy to that? Instead, are you really devoting your energy in your plans and your willpower onto food and exercise, right?

As we move to that CEO role of our health, we really learn how to connect why we're eating at night, or on the weekends to say what actually happened earlier in the day, or clients think something wasn't bothering them, but then all week, but then they actually are, because their food, when they eat out of alignment, again, food habits reveal the truth. Or they start to understand the other pieces of weight gain, right?

A lot of my clients come to me simply because they can't diet anymore, or they've been trying



mindful eating and that's not getting them very far. Part of their weight gain is that they did some restriction, right? A cleanse, a diet. They tried to be good for a really long time and now they're gaining weight back, or they have been bingeing and purging and they finally stop. What happens that is usually the body will either stay the same weight, or gain some weight in reaction to that, right? When we look at their food, we can see that their food is getting so much better. Often their exercise, how they relate to exercise is shifting. What they can now connect is that the weight gain, or if their way has fluctuated, the weight is going to stay on until the body heals from all the deprivation and the lack of safety it felt, right?

We talk a lot of on this podcast about psychological safety, right? Feeling like we belong, feeling like we're accepted, that we're not failing, that we're succeeding, but the body also has physical safety. When it's not getting enough calories or enough of the macronutrients or nutrition that it needs, it goes into starvation mode, right? It keeps weight on.

The research shows that dieting is the biggest cause of weight gain. Again, it doesn't have to be forever this weight gain, but the lever they need to pull on is patience and continuing to make their body in mind feel safer and safer and fine-tuning that, instead of thinking that their food is off, right? Or sometimes clients start to piece together how some of their weight is psychosomatic. Meaning, they started to gain weight around the time that they were targeted in some way. The visibility felt unsafe, right?

We know this is often the case in sexual abuse, right? On my clients, it may not have been sexual abuse in their recent past, it could have been an abusive boss, or even an abandonment of a family member when they stuck up for themselves. They start to see how much – they start to see weight gain started to creep up around then. Yes, maybe they fell off track with their eating, but the weight gain is really protective, right, of that visibility.

They start to see how much more complex something like weight is beyond diet and exercise. One client, this is a really recent case, realized that she started to feel a lot of puffiness and



bloating and some weight gain. Because she was working with a naturopath, she was able to connect it to environmental toxins, right?

This opened up for her, wow, this really is more complex than diet and exercise. Because again, it's one thing to know it in theory and then it's another thing to support your body towards detox, rather than being good and calorie restriction, right? Or it's one thing to say, okay, then I'm – if it's about emotional health, I've got to work on that and not just jump to another diet.

Also in the CEO role, you might see how certain mindfulness eating, or intuitive eating tenants work for you but some don't. I talked about that earlier. Again, it's not all or nothing. It's just I always explain it as usually, clients come in and they have a tool box that only has room for diet and exercise, right, and shame, and it's cloaked, it's covered in shame.

Then as they move to that CEO role in our work together, all of a sudden, diet and exercise are still tools, but they're actually de-emphasized. The toolbox is they build the toolbox themselves and there's some classic emotional self-awareness tools that they can use that they get through Why Am I Eating This Now or Truce With Food. These are tools they'll use for life, because you're going to have stress for life, you're going to have overwhelm for life, but you can break it down and get clear and learn how to choose.

Diet and exercise, food becomes about medicine in that toolbox and exercise usually becomes a lot more gentle, compassionate and dynamic, because once you stop overeating, you don't feel you have to exercise to make up for everything. As you become the CEO, you just start to realize how powerful compassion and gentleness is versus just “killing it” at the gym all the time.

You've developed a toolbox that's customized for you and it's actually simplified. Because even though I said in our toolbox when we're in the princess archetype is usually diet and exercise, there's a lot of shame there. There's often all these tools thrown without a space in the junk



part of the toolbox that are all these tools we feel we should be doing, right? Deep breathing, make your meals enjoyable, feel your feelings, all these things that we've been taught like, I never could stick with long enough, because they weren't – they were only helpful once I got to the root issues. That's a lot with my clients.

We develop a much more elegant, simplified toolbox when we go to the CEO role of our health and wellness and body, because we get discernment, rather than just not just thinking everything we need to do everything. Optimal conflict, like fighting food, infertility or burnout, with the right support can help us make the leap to connect what's really going on with us at a root level and then expand our toolbox beyond diet and exercise, which is really exciting, because then you spend less time on food and exercise. How do we start seeing our choices in our blind spot, or the sweet spot of being in choice more and more with their food and stress and life? What you do.

Again, I'm going to give you these three steps, but they're more like labyrinth. You walk them each time and you learn more about yourself, more about the world, more about your body and you just get freer and freer and you get calmer and calmer and you return to your center, which feels being on track with your eating, but that track becomes about alignment. Because once you start to realize this, you start to realize you can have “treats.” It won't necessarily knock you off track completely. It's not one brownie, or one drink. It's the repetition of that, right? Of too much and going overboard.

These three steps; well, they're actually four. The first is to identify your stress pattern, right? Am I competing, avoiding or accommodating? Because this helps you see the binary way you're framing the situation. Again, if you want more information on that, alishapiro.com/comforteatingquiz. You take the quiz and then you get more information on each style.

Once you can identify the stress pattern and this is 50% of it, because people won't really even



realize they're competing, or avoiding, or accommodating, because you're like a fish trying to see you're in water. The second question is what will I need? Or that's the first question after you identify the stress pattern. Then you want to find out what does the situation or person need, right?

Because we often perceive we know what other people want, right, with the food example, we perceive that other people are going to ask us about our food choices, that we need them to eat similarly to us, right? Or in this case of my infertility, I had to figure out what does my body need to get the best shot of fertility outside of those choices, right? Sometimes that takes exploration.

Then the last question is where's the win-win, right? Rather than competing, avoiding or accommodating, we get into collaboration. We get into creativity, co-creation, manifesting, whatever you want to call it. We're starting to work with what is and our choices that we probably couldn't see at the beginning. There's often a win-win situation. Again, this can be challenging in the beginning. I can't emphasize enough how awesome the tools and the practice we do in Why Am I Eating This Now are, so that you can really soar on your own.

This is not about working harder, it's about working smarter. That's the exponential nature of our nature and our bodies. They aren't linear. The more you do this work, the more exponential the results because you simplify so much of what you thought you had to do and you thought you needed all these rules, when really you just wanted to live more freely and flexibly and intuitively. You get to the point where you're not just – you go to the root of your stress and you're not just stressing less, but you're living more.

I want to give you three examples of how this whole podcast episode comes together and what I told you. The first one is a recent Truce with Food client and she gave me permission to share this example, is she had been making so much progress in Truce with Food. We're almost at the end been doing really well.



She found that eating in the morning was still – she was eating healthy, but she's just rushing through and it wasn't pleasant. She had tried the mindful eating tips of what she was given. She went into competitor mode. She was trying to do the mindful eating techniques the best. She was breathing deeper. She was taking more time with her food. She was chewing more. She was trying to get more pleasure out of food, like they tell you, right? She wanted to be the best at the mindful eating rules.

She needed to understand what she needed actually in these times. Through using the tools that you would get in *Why Am I Eating This Now*, but they're also part – some of them are in *Truce with Food*, she came to realize and with the help of my coaching as well, which you get in all the programs, is that she realized that eating alone made her feel she was pathetic, right? The trigger was actually feeling pathetic. It was that feeling, and feeling really isolated.

It wasn't about the food, which is why the mindful eating tips weren't working. What she really needed was to learn how to enjoy the time alone that she was there, so that it wasn't a pathetic experience, right? We also had to do some unpacking of hey, just because you're eating alone doesn't mean you're pathetic, right? I know plenty of people who feel very coupled, partnered, full of community in their life and they eat alone and it doesn't feel that way, right?

It was about, we through the tools and some coaching, she realized that she needed to enjoy the alone time with herself. Whether that was listening to podcasts, or reading a book, the opposite of what mindfulness eating teaches. I asked her. I followed up. I'm like, "So what did you need? What did your soul need? What did the situation need and where was the win-win?"

Again, because she had been through *Truce with Food*, her awareness and her resilience and ability to own and voice and be clear about what was really happening was really quick, right? That's part of how we measure progress is being able to identify and pivot faster and faster,



because it's just you don't make things about yourself so much anymore. It's just like, "Oh, this is behavior I'm doing. I can change."

Basically, she realized that just recognizing that her meal, that she was making her meal mean this and that she didn't need to build up the food, because that's what she was doing, she made quantum progress. It went away. Again, I want to emphasize that's to her credit because she's been doing five months' worth of self-discovery, challenging her story, challenging her patterns. That's how it gets better and better, because at first it's like, "Oh, this is hard." Then you're months into the process and you're like, "Oh, I can look at that. Pivot. Done." Right? That's a perfect example of how competing made her feel it was mindful eating, or she was either winning a mindful eating, or the worst at it, the best or the worst, winning or losing at it, when really, that tool for her wasn't working. She needed to figure out what she needed, which was to understand what she was making eating alone mean.

With the situation needed, she needed to enjoy that time alone and make meals more enjoyable, which might have included listening to podcasts and things that might have been a distraction, but it wasn't a distraction of eating, it was just enjoying the situation, which again, this brings a nuance and that was the win-win for her. Her eating alone, now when she's been alone at home, has been so much better and more enjoyable. It's a great example.

Okay, when it comes to the avoid pattern, I will use – I've hinted it here, but I really avoided my infertility. I couldn't really say I avoided it starting at 23 when doctors told me I shouldn't get my egg count done, because of chemotherapy. I mean, I was depressed. I mean, there was just no way I was going to focus on my fertility at 23, because as I shared in my post, I never knew if I really wanted to be a parent anyways.

Anyways, I got pregnant in 2016 and then I miscarried and had this false sense of fertility, but then didn't really want to deal with it. I didn't want to get sucked into the Western medicine thing. I didn't know what I would need naturally. I didn't even know if I'd have problems. As a



result, I really built it up in my mind, like it to be this big thing. Then because I waited two more years, at 39 it became a bigger thing, right? It's the same way if we don't focus on our food habits becomes a lot bigger. My fertility became a lot bigger.

What I needed was momentum around the situation. I got referrals of an acupuncturist and naturopath of other people, who they help them with fertility. I got clear on did I want to be a parent and what were my other choices? Because when I really sat down, I realized that okay, if I want to be a parent, or I'm sure in the next generation, there's many more choices than just me being pregnant. There is adoption, there's acting as a foster parent, there's also other outlets for contributing to bringing up the next generation, like mentoring and etc.

Once I started to realize that if it was really about parenting that can look differently, then maybe I expected it took some of the pressure off. All of this helped me get momentum, so I could get more information, that helped me weed through this grey area of infertility, versus not infertility. I've talked about this with some of you on Instagram and also took upon. I just talked about this in season 2, or episode 2 of the season that we often put health and wellness on this binary. I'm either sick or I'm healthy, or I'm infertile or I'm not. When the reality is if you can hold more complexity, we're always both, right? There's ways that I had fertility, ways I didn't have infertility.

By really focusing on momentum and not avoiding and using my fertility as an optimal conflict to learn more about God, I learned so much about menopause. You can get pregnant in menopause. You can go in and out of menopause, right? I didn't know this stuff. I also learned that I could – that the line bacteria and heavy metals from my vaccines and my mercury fillings, or what made my thyroid sluggish all these years, I thought it was the radiation, right? I had my own story about what was causing the thyroid and working with a naturopath who was trained. Now my thyroid, knock on wood, last blood test was 1.7. It's never been that healthy in my life and I'm 40-years-old, almost 41.



Not only am I yes, almost seven months pregnant heading into my third trimester while I record this, but I have learned so much more how powerful my body is and how much more root causes there are and how we can get to root causes for the rest of our life, but it just keeps getting easier and better.

Then lastly, just when I give an example of a former Why Am I Eating This Now client, whom also gave me permission and runs her own business, and she's great at what she does. Where she starts to get stressed out and then need to eat not only for energy, but as a reward is when her clients start asking for things that aren't in the contract. Or like, "Oh, well we need this and this," right? She is a big-time accommodator.

What she was afraid of was she said yes, because she doesn't want to lose the client, right? Or feel guilty, or feel she's high-maintenance. She started to realize that her anxiety was really about, "Okay, I'm already have so much to do and then clients ask for this," and you start to get resentful, right? She didn't bill for that. She's got other projects to do. She needed to say, and normally, people would say, "Oh, you just have to say no and be okay," right?

Rather for her, she realized that the request actually weren't the problem. It was the timeline. She realized that she could say, "Well, I'm going to need three extra days and I will be billing you this. This will also be extra, because it wasn't in the contract." One of the things she found was that she tried this, right? Because part of what we do in the program is actually get you to take different action. She said to the client, "I'd be happy to do this, but it'll be an extra three days." Her first time trying this, she couldn't talk about extra money. We take baby steps there.

What was interesting is after her week-long contract, they realized they got everything that they need, the original contract. They were like, "Actually, we don't need that those extra things anymore, but thank you." That was her option C, right? It wasn't just no. It was like, "Do I really want to do this? Oh, I actually don't mind if I have extra time." What does the client need? If the client needs it, but they weren't prepared, here's the three days. They were fine



with that. Then in the end, the client didn't even need them. That's something that's tricky was that often, other people don't know what they need, or how to articulate what they need. Often, you can just ask them which will help them figure it out.

That was a total win-win, right? That was an option C that isn't often out there. The more you do this work, the more you get clear on what you need and that we need support to get outside of our comfort zone. Sometimes we need it and we need support to get there and often, we don't know what other people need. We can assume we judge, but we rarely get clear. As part of that second question of what does the other person need, the situation need, always get more information. That will help soften your stress response so quick.

In each of these examples with my two clients and myself, we were able to choose an option C and it simplified life, not made it more complicated, right? This is about reducing things to do, so you have more energy to live more while you're living more. Again, not only is it liberating in the moment, but your life just keeps getting bigger and more expansive, the more complexity and the more you can handle and also the more, because you're learning how to learn better and you're also getting more and more clear on what you need and want.

I will again use my example, because I work this process when I was first fighting with food, right? I had a Truce with Food. I used these same tools when building my business on my terms. Truce with work. Now my fertility feels probably my biggest risk yet. My truce with fertility, especially because of how much it's challenge me to trust myself as I'm sure, parenthood will as well. I just keep being more in awe of how many choices I have, not control but choices, that I continue to bring out of the shadows and out of my blind spots.

Life starts becoming more and more free, not more and more stressed. It's super fun and I hope today's episode helped you understand the cycle. I'll also put this stress-eating psychovisual on the show notes here. Remember, we have transcripts. I always forget to plug the transcripts. If you're more a visual person, check that out.



If you really want to explore Why Am I Eating This Now longer, remember that why am I eating this now – Why Am I Eating This program, remember you can get a free sneak peek at the first few lessons and any questions you have about this episode, I can also answer them on the webinar, because some of the material will be the same, some of it will be different. The webinars are totally free, alishapiro.com/webinar. Again, so many people are in that avoid response, avoid stress response by listening and just consuming information and not actually integrating it to change.

If you feel the call to really get the tools for more clarity and how to identify your needs and get them met, I hope you'll join us at the webinar series, which is alishapiro.com/webinar. Then if that feels you get that information and it feels more of a right fit, I would love to have you in Why Am I Eating This Now.

This now this is the last time to work with me until March 2020. Again, registration opens August 5th for that, but the webinars will be the week before. Again, kick this off at the beginning of the episode. I want to reiterate it here, because it has just astounded me how much further you can go with the right support. I know that I've often said, "Oh, we don't need experts." I totally want to refine.

Refine based on my new discernment is that of course, we need experts, but we need experts who are willing to help us guide our own truth and believe that we are capable of self-actualizing that truth. That's very different than people who are going to tell us what to do. You'll get that support in Why Am I Eating This Now.

If you're someone who doesn't like rules, has a little rebellious streak, or would like to improve your rebellion streak and make it more part of your life, this program and process would be awesome for you.



All right, everyone. Thanks for listening and I hope you enjoyed season seven of consistency. Feedback has been amazing and I'm glad it's been so helpful. Thanks for tuning in today.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:56:00.5] AS: Thank you, health rebels for tuning in today. Have a reaction, question, or want the transcript from today's episode? Find me at alishapiro.com. I'd love if you leave a review on Apple Podcast and tell your friends and family about Insatiable. It helps us grow our community and share a new way of approaching health and 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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