

EPISODE 100

[INTRO]

[0:00:03.7] AS: You know battling food in your body doesn't work. You want to love and accept yourself, and because you're insatiable, you want results too. You bring the same intensity to your life, wanting to maximize your time, potential, and experiences you have here on our beautiful and wondrous planet Earth. Fair warning, it will be a rollercoaster. But for those insatiable, this is your primetime to thrive. Here is just saying yes to the hunger of wanting it all.

I'm your host, Ali Shapiro, who is dedicated to pioneering a saner and more empowering approach to health and weight loss.

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:44.7] AS: Welcome to our 100 Insatiable episode. Oh my Goddess! In place of our normal intro, I want to thank our insatiable community for such an epic start to the podcast. Yes, at 100, we are just getting started. I love the thinking in conversations insatiable has sparked as debating ideas is one of my favorite things in the entire world, especially around our health and bodies, which is one of the greatest mysteries among the grandest mystery of life.

Thank you for inviting me into your lives, thank you for your questions, your feedback and sharing it with the people in your lives, and special thank you to those of you who have left reviews. I also want to say a special thank you to Juliet, one of the original hosts for starting Insatiable with me and being such a standout human being. I was just at her wedding last month and was reminded of how powerful that girl is. Thank you Juliet for your gifts and spark to get Insatiable rolling.

I also want to thank all the incredible guests we've had on the podcast. I have learned so much, so much. One reason I love the health field is you have some of the most amazing giving altruistic people. You don't get into health if you don't care about humanity, so thank you to all of our guests, my clients included. I am so grateful for all of you sharing your stories, sharing your work, sharing the talents and gifts you've spent time cultivating. We are all better for it.

With that, let's get to episode 100, where my client, Liza, turns the tables and interviews me. Yup, we get into the influences of my work, the important healing reasons I designed Truce with Food the way it is and what I'm working on in my own health and with my work to support people becoming more liberated in their bodies and lives. I hope you enjoy this turning of the tables, and I will see you on the flip side.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:46.2] AS: Welcome Insatiable listeners to episode 100. I cannot believe it. The time has flown. I'm so excited for today's episode. We have my client, Liza, here, and Liza is actually going to interview me. Liza, do you want to tell people why we're flipping the script and why I'm going to be the one interviewed for our hundredth episode?

[0:03:12.1] L: Okay. I am a recent graduate of Truce with Food and have been listening to Ali's podcast since last November and just found that her work to be really inspiring and I admire both her personal journey through food and the work that she's doing, and so I thought it would be cool — For me to listen to Ali triggers a lot of questions in terms of who is this human being? How does she do what she does? What keeps her motivated? I just wanted to know the ins and outs of her thinking patterns or her story and so I thought it would be a really cool idea to interview her.

[0:03:52.8] AS: Yeah, and I will say I think what surprises me as someone who doesn't like to have her whole life out on the internet. You know I'm an open book. I share openly in Truce with Food and a lot here, but I always get the most listener respondents when I share more of my story, and so I think everyone can kind of see. I hope the value that people see is that there is a lot of possibility be on just accepting that you have to fight food for the rest of your life, because, for me, my battle with food was what transformed everything for me. It was the invitation, the birth canal into where I am today. Yeah, let's get started.

I have no idea what Liza is going to ask me. But like I said, I'm pretty much an open book and I will tell just kind of one preface and then we'll get started. One of the things that we really work on in Truce with Food is the lens that we bring to the world and how we tend to bring a battle

lines to life in addition to food. You start to realize that what you're always seeing isn't always accurate. I'm an unreliable narrator just like everybody else. As we say, the best stories are unreliable narratives, but I'm going to answer this to the most honest of my ability. Go ahead.

[0:05:09.1] L: Alright. I guess we can start off with some questions about your grandmother, if you don't mind sharing, because you did mention her in your email this morning and I know that since you've mentioned her in other podcasts, how much of an influence she's had on your life. I was wondering if you could share a little bit more about how she's influenced your life and what characteristics you see in yourself that you see in her and how you feel like you're carrying on something that your grandmother's generation started.

[0:05:40.3] AS: Are you trying to get me to cry right off — I love that you picked up on that. My grandma side of the family, I think this is important, given that you're asking about lineage and whatnot. My grandma came from Slovenia. Her family were immigrants here. They didn't speak English, but that side of the family fought the Nazis in the Hungarian mountains, and actually one of our late relatives, he knew he was going to be executed. They blew up the Nazis artillery and then the Nazis just executed all of them.

My grandma was very progressive, very much justice oriented, I think. I think if she were alive today, her life would've been very different. My grandma was born an atheist, but she always said that when she was younger, like three or four, she had said, "I have lived before." She had this very philosophical curiosity as well, like how do I say that when I'm born and atheist?

She met my grandfather when she was 19, and actually before that she lived and grew up in Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh actually came out to her house and wanted her to go to college. They were so poor they couldn't afford it and girls didn't go to school back then, so she missed that opportunity and became a maid. Her father always said — Her father was very emotionally abusive, said she would never like really like amount to much. Not necessarily amount to much, but like, "Oh —" I don't know. Just was very emotionally abusive.

[0:07:16.3] L: Like dismissive of her as a human being and her potential, because she's a woman probably. Yeah.

[0:07:21.3] AS: Yeah, and he had his own issues. Immigrants coming in this country, it's not as easy as just picking up and you're starting over. My great-grandmother was depressed. I think she was taken from her family and her community. My grandmother was raised in that environment, and so she met my grandfather when she was 19. He was Catholic. He likes swept her off her feet and she converted to Catholicism, had nine kids, and when she was — It was the 1940s, so she would've been like 35, 37, 38, she met a priest who told her, "Hey, we have control over our health, and Jesus — We need to protect our environment, our earth," and so she got these books on nutrition, because she was just curious and progressive and moved her entire family, all nine kids, my mom included, to an organic farm, which wasn't called organic at the time, but it was. They were sprouting wheatgrass. They had their own cow. They bought grass fed animals. I think they even slaughtered some of their own. I'm a little iffy on the details, but I know this was the big part.

Then my grandfather got sick with multiple myeloma in his early 50s, and they didn't tell people back then when they were diagnosed with cancer. Yeah, you just —

[0:08:42.5] L: That's bizarre.

[0:08:43.5] AS: Isn't it — I always think, like what's normal now that we're going to look back and think of, "Why didn't they do that?" Like things happening today. My grandma fell out of her Catholic faith then and yet she was still seeking and searching, always clung, and they did do wheatgrass shots and tried to marry nutrition with conventional treatments and was just always curious and pass that on to my mom. My mom, when she was in college, moved to the Ann Wigmore house, which Ann Wigmore was a bit raw foodist. There is rumor that she was curing people with HIV, and then she died in a fire, and some people think it was set on fire, but my mom lived in that house and she was sprouting things, she was learning raw foods. The funny thing about this was my mom was living there. She came home for Thanksgiving and had a burger, because she just wasn't feeling good and she ate meat when she came home, and when she went back to the Ann Wigmore house, which was raw vegan, everyone's like, "You look amazing. What did you do?" She was like, "I had a burger."

I think in terms of my grandma, I think her — My grandma believed in second chances and she had a lot of compassion and empathy, but she also held this line of — We jokingly called her the diplomat, because she wasn't diplomatic. She kind of also said exactly how she felt as well, but remained curious. She was like my second mom. My parents both were public school teachers, and in the mornings and the afternoons — My grandma lived 2 miles up the road, very old school Pittsburgh family at least, or old school I would say how families were set up. She would watch us in the mornings and in the evenings, because she would get scared of thunderstorms. She would come down during thunderstorms. She came on to us on all our vacations. I would come home and she would make like peppers and cucumbers, and I didn't like them. I was like, "Ugh!" She was the one who made sure I practiced my piano, and she would always like move back the timer, because she's like, "Your parents work so hard. You got to practice harder."

We had a real bond over these philosophical questions, like what happens after you die, and she believed in this universal mind. She really was accepting of all people, and I think — My cousin just got married to his partner and my uncle was giving the speech and talking about how my grandma was progressive with LGBTQ rights and minorities. One of our cousins, the second cousin is biracial and my grandma is like, "I am so proud to put his picture on my mantle." Just a real spitfire, but my uncle was giving this speech that my one uncle who is more conservative used to get so frustrated with my grandma and he called her a socialist, because when she watched Wheel of Fortune she wanted everyone to get some. That was like a good Wheel of Fortune to her. Not if she got the puzzles, but everyone got some. That's kind of a long-winded way, but I just think that she introduced us to the value of nutrition. I don't think I understood the degree or importance of it, but her curiosity and empathy and philosophy and progressive spirit I hope is what I bring to the table.

[0:12:10.2] L: Definitely. I could totally see that. She probably also ignited a lot of your interest in philosophy as well.

[0:12:19.6] AS: Yeah. As people get older, I think sometimes people cling more to certainty, especially I probably will at the end as well, and I remember coming home in college — And my grandma love to read, and she was reading this book on the Catholic Church and what a business it is. She's in her 80s at this point, and I come home from break and I'm like, "Oh! What are you reading grandma?" She tells me the name of the book. I think it was Captains and

Kings, but she's like, "Can you believe? I thought the whole thing, hook, line and sinker," meaning Catholicism, and that's just like — She was willing to look at her own beliefs, I think, and challenge them. I think hopefully that's what I had to do, I think, to feel free from my own battle with food, but in a compassionate way. She didn't do it in the like, "You should be ashamed, and there's rules that are right and wrong." It was more exploratory.

[0:13:14.6] L: That's really interesting. Yeah, I'm really curious about who influences you and what influenced you, and like obviously this relationship with your grandmother is a big one and to carry on that natural curiosity is so important to the work that you do, because there is some interview you are doing where you said that that's part of almost like your value system, it's to break molds. Where does that come from? That's an intense things to wake up every day and say, "I'm consciously doing this. I am consciously breaking molds."

[0:13:52.3] AS: Thank you for appreciating that, because it's a very humbling experience to have to — And it's very threatening. I was talking with Carlos about the political climate and I've just recently had this break where I think if you've experienced trauma in your past, any time there is massive uncertainty again, you kind of get retriggered in a way. I was listening to the news and obsessively, up until a couple weeks ago, it's taken me 10 months to — Okay. I've been in action. I'm still in action. I'm still engaged, but it I'm at the point now where I am tired of the sound bites on both sides, and that was really hard for me because I'm someone who does lean left to is progressive, but also tries to be independent, but it's only been recently that I'm like, "Okay." Even this we're talking a week, a couple of days after this Las Vegas shooting, and I see everyone talking about gun control, gun control, and that is true, and my friend and Insatiable Podcast guest, Dr. Kelly Brogan, has done extensive research on how antidepressants make a lot of people violent and they just are speculating this is — I don't want to report it as guaranteed, but that this shooter was put on antianxiety meds this summer, and a lot of the mass shooters have been.

People want to say, "Oh! It's mental illness, like people who are bipolar or who are schizophrenic," because people don't want to look at the fact that a lot of us — And I was on antidepressants. Those antidepressants that many of us are on are part of the problem. But I see both camps just going into — It's either gun-control or it's mental illness. It's like it's all of it. It's challenging, because it's multifactorial and it's humbling.

Yeah. I do want to say though. I think my dad is — My sister jokes, my mom is super free-spirit and compassionate, and my sister jokes that if it weren't for me, her and my dad my mom would've floated away, like all of the time. She's into the reincarnation and oils and just really compassionate, and I think my dad grew up in the Health District in Pittsburgh. His dad died when he was five, and so he grew up in a very violent poor neighborhood. As much as I'm like, "Oh! Let's be curious and let's explore." I'm also like, "What are you talking about, Willis?" because of my dad's side.

My dad taught us about systems and structured and to look at the mold that — Like the news that's popping up is the symptom. What we're hearing is just one piece of the story, and my dad has taught us to look at where is this coming from. Who are these people that are saying things when they've also done X, Y, and Z, and this is the system that they set up? Kind of like the war on drugs in the 80s, we learned growing up at the at the table, which we always talked about politics, like, "Okay. This is a part of mass incarceration, private funding of prisons." I've always been curious about the systems and structures that are just as important as the what.

[0:17:03.3] L: Okay. That's also really important thing to add, is that your dad kind of instilled this objective. I don't know how you do you say it. Like your dad instilled and objected — Like to remain objective in your viewpoints, and so to question the things that are being told to you. Okay. That's cool. That's a really cool — Those aren't common like dinner table beings on the average American household.

[0:17:30.5] AS: I think that's part of also what really influenced me, and I think you and a lot of clients can often feel like they're an outsider or that they're different, and growing up in suburban Pittsburgh, which is generally very conservative area. We were the only family where my mom worked. We were the only family that didn't go to church on Sunday. My last name is Jewish. People thought I was Italian, because everyone is Catholic and Italian in Pittsburgh. Then we have this kind of conversations, and so I think I always — As much as I was white and played softball and did these All-American things, and I'm definitely American. I also have always felt outside of American culture and that there was something missing and I couldn't really put my finger on it. I think it's just our amnesia of history, of systems, of structures.

When everyone else was celebrating Columbus Day, my dad was like, “He was a rapist and a murderer.” You learn these things in your life, “Why are we celebrating this?” and so think I developed a contrarian viewpoint in part because of that. I know also from myself that when I'm looking at something, even if I agree with someone, I'm going to provide a contrarian viewpoint, because I just want us to look at all angles so I can really understand, because I think ultimately my drive for understanding is a drive for safety so that I can process and feel in control of the world. I don't know if it's as noble as I want it to believe.

[0:19:01.1] L: That's awesome. So like changing directions a little bit, and making it a little lighter. A lot of topics that you pick are really intense and they always seem to have a very nuanced perspective, and so I wanted to ask what keeps you motivated in fighting in the midst of so much injustice and turmoil, and like what are the things that also inspire you when you feel stuck? I guess these are two questions.

[0:19:37.5] AS: Yeah. I think the first thing is that I don't think that — I forget that I'm intense.

[0:19:44.9] L: It's great.

[0:19:48.1] AS: Carlos reminds me in the most loving way possible. I think I've just always felt that the truth is in the depth of things and it's always nuance, it's always complicated. Again, truth and curiosity and justice are values of mine, and I think part of what keeps me motivated is I have this belief, and it's part of what this election, and I did an episode on your Green Juice Doesn't Make You Worthy and this idea of meritocracy that America gifted to me and made me believe that we're all created equal, and if given the opportunity, we can all share our gifts and we need those gifts.

I think what motivates me is keeping up that belief. I want to believe in that, because it, again, aligns with a bigger philosophical belief of — My dad always taught us that everyone puts their pants on one leg at a time, and I know people can have fancy titles or whatnot, and people accomplish great things. However, I think it's my belief, and this is why I believe in coaching and adult development, is that we're not all going to have the same gifts. It's not all about intelligence. I think that's one thing our culture really gets wrong, is we say we value intelligence, but then we elect someone we want to have a beer with. I didn't elect those people.

We have this like real big contrast, but — I think gives meaning, movement and dance and how people use their body, I mean artistic, I mean empathy, often more of the feminine qualities that our culture doesn't value. I think what keeps me motivated is I want to believe that. I want to believe that we're all equal and that there can be justice in the end no matter how long that takes.

[0:21:35.1] L: That's one thing to keep somebody motivated, right? Like the vision, that's a really powerful vision and it's something I believe too that is attainable. Yeah. Let's see. It seems like you don't ever get stuck on something to talk about, but if that ever does happen, how do you find something to inspire you? Where do you go for inspiration?

[0:21:59.7] AS: Yeah. I think there's two parts to this. Carlos and I always joke, because sometimes he thinks that I get frustrated when people don't want to go deep with these things. He like, "You're getting frustrated because you think most of the world doesn't want to deep with things." That's kind of what he says, and he says, "You're getting frustrated." Because not everyone wants to be very deep, and that's okay. I mean we don't need everyone to be in the depth. My God! You know what I mean? That's exhausting.

I think, again, it's this desire that if I can just explain something to someone, I feel like they might be open and open to change, and that's another thing Carlos, it's like, "Not everyone's open. Not everybody wants to change their minds."

I have this, like my dad used to call me the jackhammer. He was like, "Ali, when you want something, you just —" He goes, "You pound and pound and pound and pound away." He would be so exhausted. He was a health and physical teacher. He taught these city kids that had all these energy in middle school, and they are loud and then all day I come home and I'm just like, "Dad! Dad! Dad!" I joke with him today, I'm like, "Being a jackhammer at steady pressure, it's called persistence," and it's a stubbornness.

Part of what keeps me going in and motivated is that. However, what keeps me really inspired is connecting things in different ways. I always look for it. So because truth is such a value of mine, I believe that for something to be true, that pattern has to show up everywhere. It starts out, you can see the nature. It has to be in people. It has to be in our institutions. It has to be the

truth. If I can see one pattern and then see how it relates to something else, I find that really — That's like my creativity. I can't really draw, I am a horrible singer, and all these kind of conventional creative things I'm not good at, but I think I'm good at abstraction and kind of mixing up how can I explain this in a way that maybe someone hasn't thought of before and can open them up.

I think trying to pull together the complete picture of something. Kind of like we're talking about gun violence, like, "Oh my God! It can be gun-control, but it's also this. Have you not thought of this?" And I think the other big thing that inspires me is I find that what we don't know — Like the stories we don't hear, influence us as much as the ones that we do. In *Truce with Food*, we talk about changing the narrative and controlling the narrative, but part of doing that, controlling our own narrative or writing our own narrative is learning what we don't know were our blind spots.

A very easy example of this is women in history. We've been left out, yet we've been huge contributors to it, right?

[0:24:45.3] L: Right.

[0:24:46.3] AS: It wasn't just Betsy Ross and Harriet Tubman. Although, Harriet Tubman, I think her story needs to be celebrated a lot more. We hear about Betsy Ross that she was a great sewer, and that's wonderful. I think sowing in these domestic things are so important and there are parts of what our soul likes is these routines.

[0:25:04.5] L: The creative component. Yeah.

[0:25:06.5] AS: Yeah, but you don't hear about all the women that contributed to science. You don't hear — And so as a result, the stories that we see today is, "Oh! My goal is wanting to be wanted. I need to look a certain way. I need to be desired," because we haven't heard of how important our contributions have been.

I think I'm inspired by saying, "Hey! Have you heard of this or have you thought of this this way to get people to say, "Oh! That kind of shifts something," even if it's just a little bit, because I'm not so — I don't think I can shift everything all the time, but most of us is just these small

incremental, “Huh. Huh.” and then we’re open a little bit more, and then we’re open to different information and data and then we start seeking it out rather than just trying to remain in our existing paradigms.

[0:25:53.0] L: That’s awesome. Okay. Outside of the family group, who are some other people that might have influenced your work?

[0:26:02.5] AS: Yeah. Dr. Kelly Brogan is definitely someone. I know that she can be very controversial and some of what she says. However, she is fiercely independent in her thinking, and that is often what I look for people. Not just if they say they’re independent, but I’m always looking for people that I admire. It’s not where people end up. It’s how far they’ve traveled and what have they had to go through. That’s always what I’m interested in. It’s like who are the people who have traveled the furthest in life, because they usually have the best perspectives.

I find people, like Krista Tippett, who is the host of On Being, the podcast. She was a writer, a journalist actually, actually in Germany when the wall fell, and is just very into wisdom, and wisdom to me is the pattern of things. Again, it’s those universal truths that we see throughout history.

I look for people who can be objective and aren’t — I know sound bites get all of the press these days and these sensational headlines, but the people that I most admire and influence me are the people who are willing to look at their own biases. I’ll take Kelly Brogan as an example. I mean she was conventionally trained, and then when she had Hashimoto’s she was like, “Wait a second. How did I not learn about food and all these kind of stuff?” I’m really interested in people who are willing to look at, “Hey! I thought it was this, and here’s also what I know now.”

Also, I think Dr. Robert Keegan and Dr. Lisa Leahy who are at Harvard School of Adult Education. They have really influenced my thinking. Dr. Robert Keegan has this book called — I think it’s called the Evolving Self, that talks about the life curriculum that we all are experiencing right now, we aren’t trained for, we aren’t educated for. Education was set up traditionally for public education, where I was educated, was for good factory workers so that we would be good yes people and we would take orders, and now we’re in a period of time of great transition and

this skillset that we learned in school; how to be good, how to check off the boxes, how to have someone else set some sort of goal or achievement for us —

[0:28:19.6] L: And standards.

[0:28:20.5] AS: And standards, yeah. It's like those standards are clearly insufficient. They were never working, but now we can ignore that they aren't working. I think, in general, I really admire people who are masterful at what they do and have put the time in and have checked their own biases and aren't just — Dose that answer your question?

[0:28:43.3] L: That makes total sense, absolutely. Yeah, you brought up adult education, and that's your master's. I wanted to ask you some questions about your master's thesis. I know you have a background in functional medicine and some other things, like naturopathic medicine, but how did you come to the decision that you wanted to do what — What was it? Adult education is your master's, right?

[0:29:12.1] AS: Yeah. It's officially called organizational dynamics, but no one knows what that means. The metaphor is it's kind of like an MBA in human behavior. The master's degree was at University of Pennsylvania. One of the best educational experiences I've ever had. Most of the people in my group were executives, CEOs, team leaders who needed to get more out of their people. As you know, companies are laying people off, but they're expecting more from people.

In OD, we have this saying that says, "Culture each strategy for lunches." Companies have all these strategies and these goal, but the corporate culture, if it doesn't foster a certain environment, you're never going to achieve that. I kind of the same, as people have all these goals, but you bring this culture, your own culture to your goals and stuff. That's kind of the parallel.

How I came to that was — So I went to the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, where you're currently studying, and it was wonderful starting point in foundation, and there's some personal development that was worked into that. In the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, there is this concept called primary foods. Primary foods are fitness, spirituality, careers, relationships. I think those are the four, right?

[0:30:29.1] L: Those are the main four, yeah.

[0:30:30.2] AS: Yeah. The idea that we learned there was that, “Okay. Yes, it matters what you eat, but equally important is the relationships,” and I think a lot of coaches who, once they work for their food issues don't find food exciting will say, “Okay. You can eat all the cow you want, but if you hate your job, what are you going to do if you can't be healthy?”

I would say to that, because I had so much transformational experience and it opened me up to the primary foods through my own health journey of reversing my depression, my IBS, all that stuff, I was like, “It has to be both.” The food matters. The food matters a lot. I knew the food mattered, but when I started my health counseling practice, which we are called health counselors back there, which was 10 years ago, on October 15, those of you who are my list, got my little note yesterday. Well, not yesterday.

When I started my health counseling practice, I started it on the side. I was still working a corporate job, and I thought maybe I'm like what they would say, I guess, like in medicine, end of one. I reversed all these stuff, but like maybe that was just me, right? I think all of us who struggle in life was something that we feel like we should be able to do. We tend to think of ourselves as abnormal or defective in a bad way.

As I started to work with clients, after about the fourth session, we stopped talking about food. It was fascinating to me, because I found that the more — Like going IIN was one of the first decisions — I should say it was one of the third decisions where I just did exactly what I wanted. I didn't worry about what looked good or whatnot. I had to sell my car to go, because I couldn't afford to pay for it. I was like, “I want to do this for me,” and my whole life was for me, so I don't want to say that, but I was like, “This feels like — I don't know if it's going to be productive. I don't know if going to lead anywhere,” but it was the first decision that was really felt aligned with who I was becoming.

As I did that, my eating got better. I was like, “What's up with that? What is that metaphor? What is that parallel?” I saw the same thing with my clients as they would do really well for the first couple of months, which we all do when we start anything, and then they would hit this wall

where they'er feeling really good, but like why did they fall off track? As we started to explore, I realized that there was something much deeper going on and that they were having some the same emotional issues that I thought only I had. I really thought it was only me. That's amazing what shame can do to you.

I was like, "Okay. This is fascinating," as we started to work through those, and it was very surface level. It's not what Truce with Food is today, but it was like, "Okay, if we get them to —" I remember one client, she used to sin and love it, and she had two kids and she was a teacher and we just had her start doing singing lessons. It was like when she started doing that, she stopped using food to reward herself, because the singing lessons were her reward. My clients would stop like running on the treadmill, what they hated, and they would start getting into like Bikram yoga, which they loved, and then they were eating at night. I was like, "What is happening? This is fascinating to me." Like, "Okay. It makes sense. They're enjoying life more." But I knew there was something more going on and I wanted to know what was working and what wasn't working.

I had a hunch that — To me, the only language I had at the time was coaching, and that's the program offered a coaching track and it helped people with the change process. I was like, "If I really want to make this a legit career, I need more training, and this is the area that fascinates me." I think for everyone listening, following your fascination can never lead you down a wrong path. For me, it's just the pure learning of it.

That's how I ended up thinking, trying to figure out what was happening, and that's what led me to grad school and I'm so glad I went when I was older, because I had questions I really cared about, and then I was really obsessed with figuring out.

[0:34:38.7] L: Right, and you had evidence on top of all these things that were happening and you're like, "I want to know why that's happening."

[0:34:45.4] AS: Yeah. I think, again, getting back to what people — The stories we don't hear. So much of the weight loss research or the food research is like only focused on the food and exercising, yet we know — I mean you start to realize science isn't as organized as possible, but when we look at the ACE scores, the trauma scores, ACE is that adverse childhood

experiences, that whole gauge of childhood trauma came out of an obesity clinic. People in San Diego, people thought they were studying obesity, and then as people started to lose weight they were afraid of being visible. It's like, "Okay. No one is connecting that science to that," and it just send me down a rabbit hole, because as much as we talk about stories, the world is not as organized as everyone thinks it is. It really is a wild. Everyone is winging it as they go along.

[0:35:39.2] L: Comforting and disturbing at the same time.

[0:35:42.0] AS: Truth. Paradox is truth.

[0:35:45.5] L: It's like me, I'm 26, so I feel like my whole life I've thought that all the adults had it together, but the more adult I become, the more I realized like everybody has no idea and they are just in the same places I am and it's amazingly liberating, but also terrifying.

[0:36:03.4] AS: What we talk about in Truce with Food is like everyone is wounded, and so you think you're an adult, but everyone is really like — When they're threatened, is operating at like a six or seven year old level, but they're dressed up in these adult bodies with adult clothes and adult accomplishments that you're like, "You know what I mean?"

I remember one of my clients, she was one of my first clients. She's like, "I'm so disappointed with adulthood." She's like, "I thought people would have thrown up by now." I'm like, "You know."

[0:36:31.6] L: And it doesn't help that like in a system where emotional intelligence of self-awareness is not — It's not taught, and so you do get a bunch of seven-year-olds in 40-year-old bodies wearing suits, and the four-year-old is running the show the entire time and the 40-year-old has no idea. They just think, "That's the way that I am," and it's incredible.

[0:36:55.4] AS: Right, exactly. Because we don't learn about emotional intelligence in this emotional side, we start to think this is who I am and that it can't be changed and then we don't change, versus if we have that skillset, we can change a lot, and that's where it gets fun and exciting. I think that's how why I'm so passionate about starting in our bodies, because they are our homes. We live there. We have to feel safe there, and our bodies, the earth body and the

political body are all the same and they've never been separate. We try to separate them, but what we do on an individual level ultimately ripples out.

[0:37:31.0] L: Definitely. If you could talk a little bit more about your thesis, because I think that's really interesting. Did Truce with Food come out of your work as a graduate, and is it a part of your thesis in anyway, or is it your thesis?

[0:37:46.0] AS: Great question. I think it was a template. I think — It was the hardest thing, but it also benefited a lot, is that I want to graduate school part time. I had clients while I was trying to bridge this theory, because part of the blind spot of academia is not only do you — My course, my graduate work doesn't do this, but in general is like you look at this one little piece of something, like one little piece of the puzzle, versus everything is multifactorial, everything is systems-based.

I have this advantage of seeing people in real life and then kind of bridging theory with real life. When I wrote my thesis, I realized that what we do is we put health and weight loss into the hero's journey, and I think everyone's heard of the hero's journey. For people listening, the episode with Justine Musk, we talked about the hero and heroine's journey. The hero's journeys is basically every movie you've seen where the bad guy wins and — I mean the good guy wins, or the good girl, where we basically have to go on this journey to discover ourselves.

That hero's journey is very masculine based. It's very much about going out into the world, conquering, doing male super things, and what we do in the health system and with weight is we put everything into this battle metaphor, like, "I've got a gear up. I have to go to boot camp. The war on cancer, the war on heart disease." What I discovered is these words that we use. They're not just words. They actually give us an orientation towards how we approach things.

The norm for us is to go into battle mode and to do the hero's journey with our bodies and our health, and what I was discovering with my clients is it was actually a heroine's journey that people had to go on, men and women, and heroine being the archetypal yin. For those of you who do yoga, it's the yin archetype. We call it the feminine, but I don't like using feminine, because people bring too much meaning to that in terms of good or bad, and masculine, and they think it's man or woman, but it's the two energies of the world. There's probably multiple

energies, but it's two of the archetypes that we know about and have been defined; the Chinese and that the Tae Te Ching. Lao Tzu, I think, is how you pronounce his name, wrote a whole book about it.

My master's thesis gave me the template of what people need to do is kind of this spiral process of actually going down inward to themselves, not going out into the world, but going down and into their bodies and figuring out how did I disassociate from that? How did I leave that? How am I not in there at all? Most of us are in our heads, like our entire society.

It gave me the framework, the philosophical framework of what I was actually doing, and my thesis filled in a lot of kind of the lessons that we do in Truce with Food, but I had actually a really good friend; Molly Morrissey, who was on this Insatiable Podcast, and she is a traditional astrologer and she got her master's degree, and she talked about how often, like the year after your master's degree, is like after you write your thesis, because you write your thesis and you change from writing it. That year afterwards really shifts and changes things as much is the whole graduate degree, because you have these tons of information.

My master's thesis on the heroine's journey and how we use this language was the beginning, but then, really, a year after it, and then once I could really see what was happening these past couple of years I've been able to find tune it into a teaching level, teaching and coaching, because coaching in general is you don't bring any — I mean you have tools or whatnot, but coaching is very much — It's like consulting. Everyone is different and you just kind of ask questions in the moment and you help, and I wanted a process that was repeatable and met people exactly where they were.

The thesis got me started. It told me what to look for, because the more and more you work on yourself, the more and more you realize there is no order, and what frame do you want to put to something? By frames, I mean we can look at our astrology side and say, "Oh! I could see myself in there." We can know our Myers-Briggs types and we can say, "Oh! I see myself in there."

My thesis gave me the framework to see what was happening, but then I've fine-tuned it from people like you who are willing to take the chance at something different and new, and that's

why I feel like this is all of our work. It's not, "Yes, I'm kind of leading it I understand it," but your experiences and your healing is something that's never happened in terms of modern medicine. I think indigenous cultures were very great at this from an emotional standpoint, yet the kind of outcomes that people are getting in this work, I don't know — I'm sure they've done before. I don't want to say I'm like repeating, but I'm not like — I don't know how to describe it. I just think there hasn't been a repeatable way to kind of systematize emotions, which is a complicated process. Again, it works for this issue. I don't know if it would work for other things, but I've found it to be very fascinating from a body and food fighting, because food is only half the issue.

[0:43:01.3] L: Right. Okay. Kind of what you're saying is that like you've unearthed this process, that like you didn't event it, but like you're helping to lead the way and like help people remember that this process exists and how to apply it into their lives.

[0:43:16.3] AS: And in Western terms, because we are westerners, people living the Western world. I think coming back, I unearthed it and I think the value that I added was I've combined different theories together, the same way that I like to pull different pieces together for arguments or from point of views. I bring a little bit of adult theory. I bring a little bit of coaching in. I also bring people's real-world experience. I often say that I think that women are putting together things back together that should've never been separated in the first place.

[0:43:47.1] L: Totally, and that makes sense with the more like feminine archetype. It's more of like a weaver and it sees everything as connected. Whereas like the masculine archetype sees everything it boxes. Yeah.

[0:43:57.7] AS: Yes, exactly, and you need both, right? You need structure so you have something to hold on to, but then you need to know what the whole picture is, because it's not just holding on to the one thing. You need to do it all, right?

[0:44:12.4] L: If you can make this process repeatable, then that's the structure part. I think there's so much value out there for this system. I'd be really curious to see how, if you adapted the system to work with like drug addicts, I'd be really interested to see how that would play out,

because I mean there's not a lot of answers in that department either, the whole addiction, and food is kind of an addiction.

[0:44:40.3] AS: It's an acceptable one.

[0:44:41.9] L: Exactly. I know when I came to you, I had surrendered to the fact that I was addicted, was numbing out with food in the same way that I had numbed out with drugs in the past. Yeah, to me that's just something I'm curious about.

[0:44:59.1] AS: I am too. Portugal is one of the countries. It's funny that Carlos is from there, but they're getting a lot of attention, because their addiction model is very different than anything, and they were considered, you know, "What are you doing?" But basically they give out free needles and clean needles to prevent future issues, but would they do is bring people back into the community. That belonging piece is very important. They, by no means, have figured it all out. However, I wonder if you've paired the nutrition piece, because there are theories that a lot of addicts, like some of them are malnourished and the alcohol gives them energy and all that kind of stuff. I wonder if you did a comprehensive approach. Maybe it doesn't get people all the way batterer. However, that doesn't mean we dismiss the progress that they can make.

[0:45:47.4] L: Absolutely.

[0:45:49.1] AS: Yeah, Portugal has an amazing model that by bringing people in and helping them getting connected again is so important.

[0:45:57.0] L: Yeah. I don't even know.

[0:46:00.4] AS: It's a lot. I know.

[0:46:01.4] L: It's a lot. No. It's amazing. I love it. I know that like —

[0:46:06.1] AS: The first night Carlos and I met, like we met in a bar and he came up to me and was like, "Do you know anywhere I can dance?" I'm like, "Are you going by yourself?" Basically,

we started chatting and I was in PR at the time and he was an editor, and he was like, “I was attracted to you, but I found you aggressively curious.”

[0:46:27.0] L: Aggressively curious.

[0:46:29.6] AS: He’s like, “Now, I just know that’s how your brain works.” I know that it can be exhausting, so if you need to take a breath I can ask you a question if you want.

[0:46:37.8] L: Well, yeah. Yeah, because there’s so much amazing stuff that you say. I want to go off on like — We could go off in so many different direction. Maybe we can go into some of like the mechanics of Truce with Food, because this is an incredible program where the participants get real lasting changes around food, which translate into a better understanding of their needs and honoring them. I was wondering if you could explain some of the mechanics behind Truce with Food and maybe like how the layout of the program helps create that transformation without giving away anything about — You know what I mean? Without giving away anything, I guess?

[0:47:21.5] AS: Yeah. I give away actually a lot of the information. I think the challenge is people seeing how it relates to them, and then really wanting to be ready to do it. I think you mean the mechanics, you mean the design event.

[0:47:34.4] L: Yeah, the design of it. Yeah.

[0:47:37.0] AS: Yeah. I love this question, because to really get transformation, you have to look at how you learn as much as what you learn. You have to look at the process that arrives you there. One of the core root issues of battling food, of stubborn weight loss, of food addiction, whatever you want to call, is a lack of self-trust and it’s a lack of sense of safety. If you don’t feel like you can even trust yourself, you feel chronically unsafe.

Why diets are so attractive is because experts or a plan are saying, “Here, here’s a Band-Aid of safety. Just follow this. There’s no uncertainty here, just do this.” Until there’s not, right? Truce with Food is all experimental, and yes you get some theory behind it. First, I’ll go with the lessons. There’s definite lessons and it’s very intentional and it’s very controlled experiments.

However, I need you to see that your body is not broken, that you can trust your own experience. If I were to give people plans, I wouldn't be doing that. I would be saying unintentionally, unconsciously whatnot, you can't be trusted, you can't figure this out. Listen to what I say.

The truth of the matter is when you learn about health enough and you learn about the body and you really unlearn kind of the standard bell curve that we're taught to believe, no one has a standard bell curve health experience. That's really maddening for scientists and I consider myself like a scientist, but also a philosophy, so like both. You split the difference with, "Alright. Let's let other people figure this out, because food actually isn't that complicated," and maybe you can even speak to that, that you've found that it's probably the easier part of this equation, or maybe you —

[0:49:25.2] L: Absolutely. Oh, no. I don't suffer so much with the food aspects of things anymore. It's so much more emotional. It's way more emotional than I had ever thought it was, and what's hard is when you see your story — For me anyway, it's hard when I see my story, but then learning to like put the brakes on to change my perspective on the story or to change my inner protector's way of trying to close the story loop. It's like those little things, and it's like you don't have the answers. Only I have the answers for that. I don't even know what those answers are until I trial and error and trial and error and eventually get it.

[0:50:10.1] AS: I love that use that example too, because our lives are very dynamic. If I were to give you an answer in one situation, it's not going to apply to the other one. If I can give you a mindset that is resilient and makes you aware of your choices, you can keep going. The design of the program is so that you do not need me anymore, and it takes a while to get there. I always say, it takes about a solid year of really seeing the filter you bring, being with your emotions. It's very like earthquakey, I guess is the best way to — It kind of shakes the ground that you're under, but my goal is, because there's so much potential once you master this and you learn how to learn about yourself, that the sky the limit. That's part of the design of, if you can learn to experiment and trust yourself, especially I feel like when people come to me, it's — I mean they have some self-trust. It's not like people come with zero self-trust, but there's not enough there yet. If I can fill in a big chunk of that hole for you — I mean help you fill that in for

yourself, then you can go the rest of the way on your own. I don't have to be there for you. That's part of it.

The second piece of it, and this is something that I think as someone who jokes that they're a bad joiner, who was bullied in fifth grade, and it made me very suspect of women. I didn't know that that was part of my story and made me often feel in competition with women, first about in terms of how am I going to meet someone when I'm overweight and all these women are beautiful. In my business sometimes, I've gotten so much better, but you know sometimes you're like, "How is this person doing that?"

I have found that a lot of my clients struggle with being in groups of women, because of their past experiences and because the patriarchy has made us in competition with each other, right? Thinking back to my grandma, this is the first generation of us who actually have our own resources that can make our own money and aren't controlled by our husband, like our resources aren't controlled by men. There is a real cultural history there.

I think also the group, people constantly remembering that they're not alone and that there's other people who totally have their shit together and are still struggling with that is a revelation for people. I think it's so important, and I think being able to be seen, being imperfect in a group accelerates the progress, because otherwise you're just kind of thinking that you're the only one. Even though I tell you I have other clients it's like no, but this is unique to me. That's part of our inner protector.

[0:52:40.8] L: Right. It's the support system. It's really helpful to log on to the discussion boards and to see, "Oh, okay. This persons relating to what I said and I relate to what they said even though we have two totally different backgrounds and or two different age groups, but were suffering from the same issue at its core." It's super helpful to have the group there, for sure.

[0:53:08.1] AS: And the group ask questions that I wouldn't know to ask and you learn faster that way. It's very intentionally designed and it's also designed so that you guys experiment and then reflect, which is another important piece for people listening, is adults learn through trying things out and then having questions about it. I think when we're locked in this like safety filter of, "I have to get it right or wrong," we aren't curious. We don't learn as a result.

In Truce with Food, you get a lesson on a day of the week, like for Tapas, it's on Monday. In Truce with Food, it's Friday, because we do recipes and we have to go to the grocery store. You have to experiment and try with it, and then we have a Q&A call to be like, "Where are you stuck?" "Where are you frustrated?" "Where did you have a win?"

Really, being okay with being in process for all of you listening, and that's part of the design of the program, is something that makes you realize you're never going to arrive. It takes a long time to really believe that. That's part of the mechanics of it and the design of it. It's very intentional to facilitate self-trust and progress be on when — The program is actually where you're probably — Like there's progress, but it's probably the least progress. I don't know if it's the least progress. Here's how I would say it for people listening. It's the most eye-opening and it's the most mindset shifting, and then you make these big swings and these big changes. , after those big initial changes, it's no longer that you're getting these huge, like aha moments. It's like, "Oh! That's interesting," and then you pivot and change and you get more and more relief from smaller and smaller pivots.

Isaac Asimov is — I think I pronounced his name right. One of favorite quotes is he says, "The best sound and science is, "Huh! Isn't that interesting?" It isn't Eureka. It's, "Huh! That's interesting." That's where the most progress is made and these, "Huh! That's fascinating." That's my hope. I mean I hope that's how it — Yeah.

[0:55:17.3] L: I mean I think it definitely works that way, because like some of those exercises that you took us through in the first couple weeks, it's like every time it was like, "Oh my God! This thing about me and this thing about me," and then I started to connect the dots ferociously. It's almost like I couldn't turn it off. I'm grateful for that, and like those couple of weeks though set me up for my next couple of months where it's like, "If I hadn't gone through those exercises and had come to the awareness, then I wouldn't be able to have done the work I did in therapy, and then I wouldn't have been able to — Just today, for example, there was an incident at my house with my boyfriend and it triggered so much of my uncertainty, and I had to go to 7-11, and the old me would've just like reach right in to the cooler and grabbed an ice cream and eaten the point and it would've been, "Whatever. I'm moving on with my day."

The person that I am now has all these awareness of all the emotional components behind what's happening and the fact that I even know that it's uncertainty that is being triggered. That I was able to feel, "Oh my God! I want to go get an ice cream right now," but have the background to understand that that's not what I need in this moment and to actually like walk right past the candy and the cookies and the ice cream and be like, "Okay. It's going to be fine. Situation is totally under control," like I am not in danger. My life isn't in danger. I'm not being chased by a lion. I'm okay.

[0:57:00.0] AS: Props to you, because that's really hard, because as —

[0:57:03.4] L: So hard.

[0:57:03.9] AS: As we talk about in Truce with Food, is we're often reacting to the past of what uncertainty meant so that every time you stay with that, you're building more resilience and you're saying, "Okay. The bottom isn't going to fall out."

I think my hope is with Truce with Food is that it's a toolbox. I think a lot of people get various tools, and I think Truce with Food hopefully offers a toolbox so that you then know — And some tools to get you started, but then offers a framework and ways of thinking so you know what tools to bring in, then which ones to discard, which ones to bring back in on your path. I think that's why it's very different than what people used to do, is it's the toolbox and not just individual tools.

[0:57:47.9] L: A lot of the work that you do is intense and it can get really intense with clients in Truce with Food, and I wonder how do you unwind. How do you turn all of these off and how has that process like — What does that look like for you over time? Because I'm sure at one point it was, "Oh my God! I can't turn this off," in then now you have a much better way of managing it, but I could be wrong.

[0:58:14.7] AS: No. It's a great question. In the beginning, when people — I think, first of all too, it's intense and I think part of why people feel really bad ass after is they're like, "I did that." We can do hard things. I think we forget that.

In the beginning, when I was first starting out and such a newbie, when people would tear up, it made me so uncomfortable. I would like, “Here’s a tissue. It’s going to be okay.” But what I realized was I hadn’t fully — When I started out, I was not as healthy as I am now and I realized that my own reaction to their discomfort was that I couldn’t stay with my own discomfort. As I have gotten better with my own discomfort, my own uncertainty, my own and uncomfortability, I can stay with other people a lot longer, I think, and I think that’s part of — Probably the most important thing a teacher or a coach can develop is their capacity, and I’m not saying I’m there all the way. I still have my own issues, which I’m happy to disclose here a little.

Part of it was seeing the results of letting people cry, or letting people laugh, because they were uncomfortable and not just like laughing it off with them. This isn’t all fears, and sometimes it’s just quiet. I used to think like I have to have an answer for them. As I’ve seen the value of people feeling their feelings and whatnot, it means something different to me now than it used to. I think how I deal with it, how I manage it the best now is I realize that people struggling isn’t a bad thing. That they are actually get to be stronger for it and that I think — Again, I always look to nature for truth, but like when you’re sending something down or you’re firing away — There’s fire, like people rise from the ashes and you’re left with what’s more true. I see that. When someone’s really struggling, I definitely reach out more, because I have great empathy for people’s challenges. Life is it was never meant to be easy, and I think given the culture that we’re in these days without the emotional support, without the emotional — People looking you as a whole person, you get abused again and again in the healthcare system, I think, by being dismissed.

I still have this great amount of empathy and I also know that people can do it, so I’m betting on them to be able to work through it, because I know they can and I know that what they’re feeling now is temporary. They’re not in real immediate danger. It’s that kind of stuff. It’s betting on them and it’s giving them the tools so that they can believe that, that not just I see that. Having said that, I also — When I first started out, I was seeing like 20, 25 clients and that’s just too much. I can’t do that. Part of why I had to raise my rates was so that I could be present and fully present and able to handle the clients and the groups that I’m working with, because it is a lot of emotion. That’s it.

But then I also — I do have to like move my body, and sometimes I'm better at that than others, but it just helps me get the charge out, but that really helps.

[1:01:24.4] L: Yeah. Do you ever find that you have issues with like leaving the baggage at the door kind of, or no with your clients? I know that I'm empathic, and before I had done a lot of my work, I would find that every time I try to help people, sometimes I would take on their stuff unknowingly. I don't know if you relate to being empathic and how — Are you able to just leave all of the stuff at the door or to you find yourself taking it with you sometimes or how does that work?

[1:02:03.5] AS: Yeah, great question. I definitely am empathic, but what I have found is that and — This is something I'd be curious about, is I think sometimes people who are HSPs or empathic, their nervous systems might be wired differently, but I also think their own emotional stuff hasn't been healed, and so they get hooked easier in a way that is not healthy. I've noticed the more that I become resilient and everything, the less I'm trying to rescue everyone. The more I'm like, "Okay. They can do this." I'm not always.

However, I think the way that I often think about my clients is, "Can I ask them a different question? Is there something we're not thinking about?" I'm definitely like trying to, with them and with the group, making sure that I follow-up if I have a different thought or whatnot, but I think the biggest thing that helped me is healing my own stuff so that I can really not get hooked into and taking on their stuff, because it doesn't help either of us.

[1:03:01.2] L: Yeah. I think that's super important for people of the empathic type, because that does make sense, because when I had less awareness of what my issues are, I was always trying to project my want to heal on to my need to heal others, and so that makes a lot of sense you framing it in that way.

[1:03:21.8] AS: I've seen a couple people who prize themselves on this empath HSP label, and I'm not saying it's not real. If I go to a Target or a Walmart, like I'm exhausted, because there's so much stimulus. There so much sense, and it's like I can't handle that kind of stuff, but I've seen a couple of people really fly this HSP empath flag and what I see is them happening is actually they're getting more and more fragile. Their life is becoming more and more cushy and

they never really had a lot of — Not a lot of challenges, but like their story of their challenges — And this is where kind of I'm like, "Really?" It wasn't all that extreme. It was a very privileged upbringing, and that can be its own challenge because you're trying to please your parents. I'm not just going to say —

[1:04:13.0] L: It's a different struggle.

[1:04:15.7] AS: But it's a struggle, and all pain is the same, but I find some people, when they get too comfy, and I put myself in this category. I wake up when I want to wake up. I don't send an alarm. I have great clients. My life is really great, granted I'm challenged in my social justice work and all that kind of stuff. I can see myself getting really soft where I'm like, "I don't have to do that." No one tells what to do. I am not not in this category.

[1:04:43.5] L: Right.

[1:04:44.8] AS: But I think we just need to — I think this is the paradox. All of these frames are really helpful until they start to become who you are, not something that you can change.

[1:04:56.5] L: You mentioned in one of your previous answers that you're still going through stuff and are open to sharing. What are some things that you're working on right now since you have had your Truce with Food? What are some challenges you face and what is the future of Truce with Food look like in the face of these changes?

[1:05:17.6] AS: I think, personally, with me, I think from a health perspective I'm trying to figure out kind of thyroid fertility stuff right now. My thyroid has always been a little hypo. My traditional doctor here — Pittsburgh doesn't have a whole lot of functional medicine type of people and I don't have really any other issues other than my thyroid. My doctor tells me that I am within normal range, but from a functional medicine lens and framework, I'm very hypo. I am always trying to figure out my energy levels. I'm very energetic when I talk with people and all that stuff, but that in my sleep — Since the election, my sleep has been very haphazard and it's affected my hormones and stuff like that. I'm 39, and Carlos and I, we are open to having a child, so working on that. I know I kind of waited a little bit.

[1:06:15.1] L: That's okay. Whatever.

[1:06:16.3] AS: My grandma had twins at 40, so I'm like — I think it was 40 or 30. I don't know. She had like her kid at 40. I'm like, "Oh my God! I hope I inherited her fertility." Number 9.

That is personally what I'm working on. Also, just recently, how do I unhook from this new cycle. How do I be in a world where I am incredibly privileged doing healing work that is helping the world. Also, what's my role in contributing and am I doing enough? That's kind of personally what I'm balancing, and it may sound trivial, but it really like — I think I've been enraged for 10 months. Not enraged all the time, but like when I have free space and I was turning on the news and just angry all the time, and how do I enjoy all that I do have with that? That's what I'm working on personally. Does that answer your question?

[1:07:05.9] L: That totally answers the question. Yeah, absolutely.

[1:07:08.3] AS: Okay. Yeah, because I've developed so much resilience from having my own Truce with Food and know a lot of my choices, I'm pretty even healed now. I used to think of myself as so emotional and so up and down, but that was because I had no emotional awareness, and my blood sugar was all over the place. It wasn't who I was.

I am pretty grateful and happy, and I think also personally just finding more of my people here in Pittsburgh. I'm very social. I had a tight of group of friends in high school. In college I had like random friends here and there, not so much the group. In Philly, I had a great group of friends, and so now I'm still trying to find my great friends here, I think, and that when you're 39, it's harder to find friends. Most people of kids, or it's like — I don't know. You find out — I don't know. Because not everyone wants to talk so deep about this stuff, and that's what I like. My favorite in a cocktail party is like, "What do you think happens when we die?"

[1:08:03.5] L: No. I get it. I am like that, and my best friend and I, we always will sit on the phone and speak like this for hours and hours and hours and that's our biggest struggle, is like we don't want a group of friends or we're just going to go to the bar and get silly drunk and — I don't know, act stupid. We want a group of people where we can sit and ask those deep questions that don't have answers and like just delved into our own minds and self-actualize,

and that's what we value. I think no matter what age group you're in, that's really hard to find, because most people are just struggling to find balance in their emotional. If you think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, like a lot of people don't have the food and shelter, bills, needs met, and then the people that do can barely get a grasp on their emotion. It's like — Yeah.

[1:08:55.8] AS: I'm going to have someone on, but what's interesting about Maslow's hierarchy of needs — And I think I talked about this briefly in one podcast episode. Maslow had these theories and he was looking for a frame to hang them on, like a framework to hang them on, and he met the these people. I think they were called — Oh! I'm forgetting. Black Rock Tribe. It was a tribe of people and they had a tipi that represented similar, like hierarchy of needs, and at the bottom was actually self-actualization, because — There was no pyramid. It was a tipe that opened up to the heavens, and it was this idea that you cannot have a functioning society if people aren't self-actualized.

I think a lot of people — Granted, this is different if you're born into poverty, and this does not apply there. I think a lot of us who are middle-class and above, because we aren't self-actualized, we're spending money on things we don't care about. We're focused on things we really don't care about. We're trying to keep up in ways that really aren't fulfilling, and if we could start with — Or at least be run parallel processes of self-actualization, it might change — I think it would very much change things.

Yeah. My friend, Amie Valpone, she was on I think episode 10. She's the healthy apple. She has a pretty big following online, but I was telling — The other day we were like talking about fascia, which is like kind of — For those of you listening, it's kind of the like Saran wrap that keeps your muscles together. If you think of a chicken breast and there's that white filling over it, that's what fascia is in our bodies. I was like, “Ammie, someone told me they think the soul is in our fascia.” She was like, “Really? Oh my God!” We were like laughing. I'm like, “You're the only person I think that want to talk about this.” Do you see the metaphor there? They think the fascia connects everything. It's kind of invisible. It has all these qualities of the soul, and we're just like cracking up. We're like, “If someone heard this conversation, they'd think we were crazy.”

[1:10:50.1] L: It's amazing.

[1:10:50.4] AS: Yeah. In terms of business, the big thing now is I'm working on a rebrand, because I feel like my current website, it's fantastic, it's great, I like it. However, it doesn't reflect all of the things that I've been marinating and I've learned over the past couple of years, and so I'm going to my clients to tend to be the archetype of like the sage rebels, I call them. Super into wisdom, want to think things through, wise people, yet rebel almost in an intellectual way. They're not out riding Harley-Davidson's or punk rock, although maybe some of them are, but they see the society and the systems that we're in and they're like, "This is F!@#%\$d up." They tend to be the helpers. They're trying to create these this new world, whether they're in healthcare or educators or nurses, whatever it is.

I'm rebranding my site and I'm going to be working on a book to bring this big idea of — I think Dr. Brené Brown got a great start on vulnerability and the importance of that, and I hope that my book gives a lens on that through food and also some really concrete tools from being a practitioner. Dr. Brené Brown is a researcher. I think I'm kind of like more practitioner probably that's guided by research.

I want to do a book around that in a big idea book, and then licensing Truce with Food, because this fighting our bodies is epidemic. It's so epidemic we've normalized it. It breaks my heart when little girls are like six and seven and feel like they're not pretty enough already. What the fuck is up with that? I want to get these tools into more people and to have people like you and other people who want to help people, you make it your own. Like this is my spin. However, you guys are all gifted in your own ways and if I can give you a framework to then expand upon and run with. It's kind of like nature. I think of like when the petals fall off the flower, like different stuff. Some blow into the desert and produce something else and some of it goes to the mountains and grow something else. Let's see how much beauty we can create from liberating people. That's my vision.

[1:13:07.2] L: Oh my gosh! That makes me want to cry. That's like so beautiful, because I mean it's like that's the whole point of being like a healer soul kind of I feel like, is that you come here to heal and to help others and like you're not using this incredible system that you've unearthed to like say that you're better than or I know more than, like you're willing to share it so that it can continue to change people's lives. That makes me want to cry. I love that. It's so beautiful.

[1:13:41.6] AS: Thank you. I appreciate that. Yeah, I think part of — I think me of five years ago would've felt more protective of it. I think one of the things we talk about in Truce with Food is how the patriarchal setup makes us think that there's scarcity, that there isn't enough to go around, and yet when you actually look at nature, the things that matter the most to us, there's plenty. It doesn't mean that I'm not going to license it. It doesn't mean that I'm just going to give it away, right?

[1:14:07.6] L: No.

[1:14:08.2] AS: Right, because what I've learned in the insight I've gained isn't just for me. I think that's the biggest fallacy. None of us do anything on our own. My work is in conversation with fantastic researchers and practitioners who came before me. My clients have contributed to it. Even this idea of ownership, that's so patriarchal. A couple of years ago, I was like, "Where did this idea of owning real estate even come from?" You can own the earth. I get that, but that's like a made up thing. You know what I mean?

[1:14:37.7] L: Totally.

[1:14:39.2] AS: No one owns the earth.

[1:14:41.2] L: No.

[1:14:41.3] AS: That's a whole tangent.

[1:14:42.8] L: No. I get into that all time, because here in Florida, which is where I'm living, you have all these beachfront condos and the people in the condos who barely go on to the beach, mind you, half of them aren't here for half the year. They get upset when common people who don't have condos or aren't a part of their building go and lay out chairs in front of their beach. Which it's not your beach, this is public property. This is not your ocean. I'm allowed to surf here. Yeah. It's just an incredible concept and it feels like it's a part of an old paradigm, but at the same time I understand partially why it's there, because everything is dualistic in nature, so there is a reason for it. I don't know. I haven't figured out why yet.

[1:15:32.2] AS: I am at the point where I pretty much think like 80% of people's reaction is about them, and that you start to realize that the people who often have the most are the most worried about losing it. I think it drives this need to hoard and to like, "It's mine." Versus when you know that you can be resourceful and resilient and regenerative and creative, yeah, you still want to protect your stuff and you're like, "You know? What though, if something happen, I could do it again." I'll be resourceful.

[1:16:02.0] L: Do you see any of the — Because I know you're trying to a lot more work in your community and taking a leadership stance in social justice even though you don't know what that looks like. Do you see it somehow tying it into Truce with Food or maybe creating another program out of that?

[1:16:20.3] AS: Great question. In this round of Truce with Food: Tapas, 10% of the proceeds is going to Black Lives Matter and the Southern Poverty Law Center. I've started to donate to — The Southern Poverty Law Center fights hate. It does like fights hate crimes and stuff that have spiked since November. I'm putting more of my money and I'm in a place now where I can donate, because when you're going to grad school and building a business, you're hoping you can pay your mortgage every month. Now I'm in that position. That's what I did this round.

I think what I find too is my clients tend to be the helpers. They tend to be working in healthcare. They tend to be working with underserved populations, and I think I'm trying to think that my role, from a career standpoint, is to help the helpers in a way. I think I have the capabilities and the capacity to do that. In terms of if a social justice organization was interested in this or what not, I mean I would be thrilled to work with them, but I think, for me, I found my role to be like there are certain organizations that I signed up to help with. Gerrymandering I think is a really — It's a huge problem here in Pennsylvania, and gerrymandering is basically like when Republicans and Democrats have both done it and independence. I consider myself an independent politically, a feminist independent, is that independence lose the most, because you can basically gerrymander your district so that you only have to appease the Republicans or only have to appease the Democrats. The best ideas don't get talked about, because everyone is just stuck in their own entrenched ideas, and I think Republican and Democrat — I think these ideas that they had, they're all outdated. The world does not look like it used to, and we need

the best ideas and the best discussion and conflict with these discussions. Conflict isn't bad. It can be really productive.

I'm working on that. I work on some stuff with Gun Sense, Moms Demand Action and calling my senators and stuff like that. I did a ton of stuff with the Affordable Care Act, so I'm donating money. I hope that my work can help social justice organization. I think I could probably learn a lot more from them than they could probably learn from me, but that's kind of where I am with involvement and realizing that I think part of the way we traumatize ourselves, and we've all had traumatic experiences, is trying to take on too much and then failing and then feeling like we can't make a difference. I'm trying to also be good to my family and not be enraged all the time and supporting them. That's where I am right now.

Like I said, a social justice organization would benefit from this, because the tool, like you said, aren't really about food. Some of them are, but yeah, I would totally be open. I think that would feel super meaningful.

[1:19:09.8] L: Very cool. Yeah, I don't know. I think that's all that I have for now, unless there's something you specifically want your audience to know or to share.

[1:19:21.3] AS: No. I mean if anyone has any questions, I think I'm pretty much an open book. I don't think I held back.

[1:19:28.5] L: No.

[1:19:30.4] AS: Yeah. I think I just want everyone to know that a lot — I want them to know lots of things, but I hope it was helpful learning more about my story. I think one of the things, having celebrated 10 years of being in business on October 15th, for people listening, and one of things we talked about a little bit before we got on the call is that like the most meaningful things in life are going to kick your ass. They're going to be hard. It was not easy. Yes, I feel like I'm rocking and rolling. I feel masterful at what I do, but there were years where I only could see right in front of me. I always say in Truce with Food in the beginning, as long as you have your headlights on and you can see a little bit further in the fog, you just got to stay with that for a while. That was me for a really long time. Now that I've been able to see my own blind spots,

and I still have blind spots, but I've seen enough of them that I know I have them and I'm okay with them. I think it's this paradox of being humble but confident, which is what I'm always trying to kind of walk that line.

If you're challenged with things or you want to become more emotionally intelligent or change or stop battling your body, you can do it. It's a process and I just want everyone to realize that I am so proud of the body of work I've put together and it's kicked my ass.

[1:20:51.6] L: Yeah, and it's glorious too. It's glorious, and we see the polished version of it today. Like you're saying, you've put in a lot of time and a lot of effort and I think everybody that listens to this podcast every week really appreciates the body of work that you've collected and we all admire you, mostly — I could definitely speak for myself.

[1:21:13.8] AS: Cool. I have to thank all of you guys, because we talk about this in Truce with Food, that belonging really matters, and I really held myself back a lot because I was like, "Do people want to talk about this stuff that's so deep?" Because we have this community and people like you, you guys have been equally as part of me continuing to talk about this stuff. I wouldn't have done it if I didn't feel it was safe. So I have to thank you guys as well. It really is a community effort, and I think that's what I want everyone to realize is that none of us do anything alone. None of us do anything alone.

[1:21:47.1] L: Yeah.

[1:21:47.9] AS: Thanks, Liza.

[1:21:49.1] L: Thank you, Ali. This is awesome.

[1:21:52.6] AS: How fun is it to talk about yourself? We always joke. Carlos and Julie and I say we need to get a show that's like analyze me, love me. It's fun to be on the other side.

[1:22:04.9] L: For sure.

[1:22:07.0] AS: Thank you so much, everyone Insatiable listeners. I hope you guys learned a little bit more about me and my process, and I want to thank Liza for her time. If you guys know of someone who would benefit from this episode, please pass it along. If you have a chance to do a review, it would really help out the shows so that more people find out about it. I just want to thank all of you guys. Like I just said the Liza, would not have gotten to episode 100 without your own curiosity, enthusiasm and conversations that sparked. For Liza and I both, like, “What do you think about this?” That just keeps me going, because I am insatiably curious. Thank you all for tuning in and I look forward to many more episodes.

Thanks, Liza.

[1:22:52.3] L: Thank you, Ali.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:22:57.8] AS: Have questions or reactions about the episode? Reach out to me on Instagram and Twitter @alimshapiro, or Facebook at facebook.com/alimarieshapiro. If you love this show, please leave an iTunes review and tell one friend this week about how to get the Insatiable Podcast on their phone.

See you on social media.

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