

EPISODE 79

“AS: Now no one rationally believes in a silver bullet at this point, maybe we all did in the 80s and 90s but we’re like, “Hmm.” Those silver bullets dress up very differently today. We may not rationally believe in a silver bullet with weight loss, but you get sucked in because it's part of this invisible yet narrative out culture offers.

The fairytale used to be the prince would save you, right? But the 21st century “liberated” version of rescued means the right weight, wardrobe, and exercise leads you to happily ever after. Cinderella has been replaced with the biggest loser. It's the same story, it looks different, involves a lot of drama and being stimulated and swept up and away. Now, instead of rescuing you, weight loss or the perfect diet to ward of cancer, Alzheimer's and any health scare will.”

[INTRO]

[0:01:01.4] 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.

[EPISODE]

[0:01:40.4] AS: Welcome to episode 79 of the Insatiable Podcast, *Are You Addicted to the Drama of Dieting?* Does the idea of dieting frustrate you yet you continue to pursue weight loss? You feel like you have no other choice but to be all or nothing, on or off? Would you like to find a way to get results without all the striving in diet and lifestyle plans? If so, today's episode is for you. I'll share why we pursue dramatic diet and weight loss efforts even though they rarely. The key concept to replace discipline and gearing up to so you can relax into your health efforts and

results and why it's critical to stop thinking of your weight loss as a journey. I'll share a better metaphor that will help you pace and sustain yourself with whatever approach you choose.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:23.4] AS: Hey everybody, Ali here. I got so much great feedback on episode 75 about meritocracy and how it influences our health and the move more eat less narrative or the “do everything right and you will never get sick again and so therefore if you do get sick, it's your fault” narrative. That is really surfacing right now actually in our healthcare conversation.

So many of you enjoyed it and I appreciate the feedback because I was a little nervous as I've told you after Juliette left the podcast, she didn't want to get into politics and I get it. It's a dicey topic or area, but by politics I mean the narratives and issues that really shape each person's idea of common sense and social norm. I want to go in that direction because it's really important that we understand what's working and what's not working in our culture and why there's so — We put all this effort into our health and weight loss and why we're getting diminishing returns.

This, also, given that I mostly work with women, and I do work with men, and they're awesome, is that much of the cultural narratives around weight loss and health are really detrimental to women especially. That was a little nervous for me to do but you guys gave me great feedback, or at least the people I heard from. Maybe we've lost some listeners. That's okay. There's plenty of health and wellness podcast out there for you to get what you need.

What I'm going to do once a month is do an episode, like today, and like that the meritocracy episode, where I basically deconstruct one of the cultural narratives that is really harming us more than helping us, and so that can really refocus your efforts in a more productive, enjoyable, and ultimately life-force giving way. We're going to do that today around the drama of sugar and dieting, and it's really funny that we're doing that because for those of you who have been listening, you know I went sugar-free in January, and I was doing great with it.

To make a long story short, a couple weeks ago, I started having some hypoglycemia symptoms and I was like, “What's going on?” When you stop eating sugar, you just don't get as hungry,

and then I don't really measure — I don't measure grams, calories, macros anymore, I just do everything intuitively. I do the work to make sure I knew what was right intuitively. Basically, I started to realize that my hypoglycemia was probably induced more by stress than anything. It's funny, because I really love what I do and I am happy to take on a lot.

I started to realize part of why being sugar-free was so easy was because I know for myself that when I stop getting interested in food at all it means in burnout. I used to eat then, but because I've totally transformed my relationship with food. Now the opposite happens where I just find it like annoying and something else to do.

It was really interesting a couple weeks ago, I started craving cheese and crackers and I was actually really excited because it because cheese is not something that I should really eat, but to me it meant that, "Oh, I've made my work week a little later. I had done a lot of fun stuff on the weekend," and I realized I was kind of refilling my tank and as a result I started to look forward to eating again, which was a good sign for me.

I just share this because there is such this idea that if you're eating "badly" that you are bad, or that it's unhealthy. Actually that night for dinner I had cheese and crackers. Carlos was visiting his cousin and I was on my own and I was like, "I just want some free and crackers," and it was delicious and it was a sign to me that I was kind of coming back to life after a pretty hectic start to the year.

Then the following week, I think it was the following week after that, the Affordable Care Act, for those of you who are outside of the U.S., we have plenty of you, that is a healthcare universe — No, it's not universal healthcare. It's where Americans can now — Especially those of us who are self-employed or those who weren't able to get insurance before can now go to these exchanges and get affordable health care coverage.

We've been weeping using that since 2011 or 10 and it definitely had some issues. Nothing is perfect out of the gate especially when you're changing something so complex and nuanced as healthcare. It's something that I use even though I "have a pre-existing condition" which what does that even mean. I think it basically means anyone with the health history. It was really hard for me to get insurance and at reasonable rates before that. My husband Carlos is also a

contractor, so we used that. The current, Reuters is covering the current administration like a regime. We want to be accurate with our terms here, has been hell-bent on repealing this for the past six years at this point. They were very much against something, but they had no solutions to offer.

Two weeks ago, the House of Representatives put together a bill in three weeks — Healthcare is like one of the most complicated things, and in three weeks they put together a plan that would in essence really affects my healthcare and 24 million other people. I think I seriously ate a chocolate bar that day. I was like, “I guess I'm on sugar,” and the drama that has ensued since then with the bill and people being angry and enraged. Once people have something, you take it away from them, it produces a lot more frustration and anger than if you had never had something.

It's really interesting that we're going to be talking about sugar and drama and all that because I haven't been eating sugar every day but I definitely — The stress of that and what it could mean for Carlos and I. We're both considered to have pre-existing condition. Basically, the bill has determined that anyone who has had a health episode, has a pre-existing condition, our rates will be a lot higher despite the spin.

It's been pretty stressful in terms of just not knowing how to prepare and whatnot. I'm kind of back on sugar, and then you stay glued to the TV with everything that's unfolding right now in terms of our political scene here in America. It's just amazing how now I'm back on social media, I'm eating sugar, I'm worried about our healthcare. It's like this whole drama, and I'm trying to get unstuck from it. I'm going to talk about today why that's so hard.

First, I just want for those of you guys who are listening and care about health and health care for everyone, and kind of want to X-ray just for a couple minutes of what's really going on — And I've been involved in speaking at my rep's meeting, my House of Representatives' Townhall about how wonderful it's been for me. I'm actually — I hate to talk about these things before they happen, but it looks like I'll be going to D.C. in two weeks to also share my story as part of a rally to really build upon the Affordable Care Act and fix what isn't working because a lot of great things have worked from it.

It's really important as the more that I dive into it the more it's really important for those of you listening to realize that what is being proposed now, which is the American — It's called the ACHA is how it's abbreviated, is not a healthcare plan. It is a giant tax cut for the rich and it will — As usual, what we do in America is we make the middle class and poor people pay more. I know this is controversial, but again this ties into this an American narrative that if you are wealthier you work harder or that you're more worthy in some way. I really want to dispel that myth because, I'll tell you what, I can work anyone under the table and it's something I'm actually trying to work on, but I think as we continue these narratives that we don't question. They trickle down so much into weight loss and health, and in I'll be getting more into that.

This is really important for those of you listening to realize that that's really what this is, it's a tax cut for the wealthiest 1%. Look, a lot of wealthy people work really hard and a lot of middle class and poor people work really hard, and so I think this is kind of a cultural conversation of how do we want to take care of each other. What is healthcare, right? To me, we need to stop — If we're going to tell people, as some of those senators or House of Representatives have told people is that, "Oh, you should be taking better care of yourself," or basically saying that people who are sick, it's all their fault, which is part of this meritocracy narrative.

We really need to shift. If we're going to do that, we need to stop subsidizing the most unhealthy crops; like corn, soy and sugar, which get on a subsidies. A ton of farmers in the Midwest get paid not to produce food. We got a look at that. We also have to look at peace part, consumer environmental protection that we have. We know that pesticides and the air pollution contribute to cancers and autoimmune issues.

If we're really going to talk about reforming healthcare and that people have to be responsible for their own health. Those of you who listen, you know my entire process is based on agency and us taking as much control as we can and yet life doesn't wrap up in that neat little bow and have the happy ending all the time which is talk about today and which is why I'm diving into this.

I wanted to talk about that. Then, also, for people listening, what I find really fascinating about why I have — If this is basically just about a giant tax cut not a healthcare plan, is the bones of the Affordable Care Act was created by a conservative think tank called the Heritage Foundation

and they are the ones who do the architect of Romney Care, which was Mitt Romney put together for the State of Massachusetts, something similar to the ACA, the Affordable Care Act, but in Massachusetts.

The Affordable Care Act is actually a conservative idea. We think because the Democrats implemented it and a lot of people lost their seats for it, that this is some sort of liberal progressive idea. Yet the actual structure of it is a conservative idea. You have conservative people in congress repealing their own idea, which is very curious. It is not so much curious when you understand what's really going on, and America has a narrative of the erasing black people from history, and a lot of this is racism and not wanting Barack Obama to have the accomplishments that he's had.

I will be the first person to tell you I have a lot of qualms with some of the things he did and yet you're never know agree with everyone, but let's get real about what this really is, erasing a black man's accomplishments from history. I know that's kind of — Race is a really dicey thing. It's something I'm learning about on a learning curve. It's messy, but we got to call it for what it is when a Republican conservative Congress is turning on Republican — Or conservative ideas, or at least an architectural of a plan that was crafted by one of their own. We got to call it for what it really is.

This is just really important for all of you guys. I'm not sure if you care so much about what's happening with healthcare, although the current bill will affect you even if you have an employer-sponsored plan. Just so you know, this is going to affect everyone not just those of us who get our own care or who already “have pre-existing conditions”, but this can be much more — I's going to be much more affecting everyone.

This is really important, when you're starting to understand your cravings and your weight and why you turned to bad food, to be able to have x-ray vision and get clear on what's really going on, learning how to learn, is super important in the health conversation especially if you're looking at it holistically. Which is why I want to do these type of episodes where we look at the cultural structures that are creating blind spots, and rather than blame yourself, let's look at the approach that you're taking.

That's what's going on with me. I'll let you know how D.C. goes if it happens. If you are working on healthcare out there and those of you in healthcare, a lot of my clients are doing amazing work in healthcare and I just want to thank all of you guys. I know it's a messy system and it needs a lot of improvement. Also, there's really amazing wonderful people really helping a lot of people and love the Affordable Care Act because they were able to provide better care. I want to thank you guys for weathering the storm with us as well as "consumers of healthcare". Everyone is a consumer. That's what we make in America. We're not citizens. Okay, yeah. Let me know you think. In a respectful way.

Here is what we're going to talk about today. This episode was inspired by — I was in a session with a client and she finally is starting to figure out what foods work best for her, what diet, as in a noun, not a verb works best for her, and she's feeling really calm talking about this normalization that we that we have to get out from under. She's feeling really calm.

I said, "That's great." She said, "Yeah." She said, "But I miss the drama of sugar. Is that a thing?" I love that she brought this up. My clients are so truthful. They're so — Here is where I am. I'm not going to put airs for you, which is why we get a lot of stuff accomplished because they can show up very real, and it was so perceptive of her. I was so impressed that she could notice this because it's sometimes hard to see. I said, "Yes, it's totally a thing to miss the drama of sugar."

By part of missing the drama sugar is missing the drama of a weight loss journey. It's often unconscious and we can't see that it's driving our sugar cravings in weight loss efforts. I want to break that down today. This is one of the most secret cravings in ways we sabotage weight loss is missing the drama of it.

Again, American culture gets exported and obviously most of my clients are American even though we have people — I have clients across the pond and everywhere, but America does drama so well. America lives on a diet of drama. Even as I have been now eating sugar and paying attention to the political scene more, I'm amazed at how much of our news is dramatic, its drama, its entertainment. If you want to get a sense of how dramatic our news has become, take a watch of an episode of Democracy Now with Amy Goodman, and she is very much dives deeper into the facts, gives more context, and is not dramatic about what's happening. You will

see such a stark difference. In general, America loves drama and we have built our culture around it.

One of America's favorite narratives is the hero's journey story, and the hero's journey was coined by Joseph Campbell, and if you want more reference for what the hero's journey actually is, it's not a specific story but it's a type of narrative that we have. I'm going to give you some examples. If you really want to understand the hero's journey and the heroine's journey, which is what my master's thesis was about and my Truce with Food model is based on, listen to episode 63 with Justine Musk. We talk about in that episode that hallmarks of the hero and heroine's journey and also the different milestones on those different journeys.

In essence, if we translate the hero's journey into today's culture, the ordinary person becomes extraordinary and famous for their talents. I think of it as the rags to riches story but it's not just like the Steve Jobs given up at birth and becomes American entrepreneur icon. It's the same story arc of all these romantic comedies, where also the woman is the damsel in distress or she's a fuddle, or something, and that she gets chosen by a man. This is Bridget Jones. Those are also the hero's journey. Women and men can obviously both be on the hero's journey.

It's why we have shows like American Idol, The Voice, and they're so popular and people keep making that. You can be a small time someone, and just like magic, be plucked from obscurity and be known for your talent everywhere. It's why those shows also give you background of these contestants and include all their struggles, not only so you empathize with them but it activates this hero's journey so you will tune in how will it end.

Of course, which I'm going to get to in a minute here, that's with The Biggest Loser, Extreme Weight Loss, all of these are the same archetype of a story that pulls us in, especially because in America there's always a happy ending. We'll get more into that.

Implied in this narrative, in this story, is an upward linear trajectory accelerated by being chosen or recognized for who you are by a partner, a judge, or a record label. This is not really how deeper transformation happens in the hero's journey, this is how gets translated into today's American culture, instant immediate gratification. Especially women [inaudible 0:19:41.5] this; find the perfect guy, get the perfect wardrobe/makeover, have your health, be the best

decorated, and you too have won. Your powers is in wanting to be wanted, to be chosen, not doing your own choosing, because those women are bitches, or aggressive. In research, that backs this up. Obviously not everyone thinks that, but a lot them.

One of the things that I thought was really interesting in people analyzing the election is that they found that Hillary Clinton, whether you like her not — Hillary Clinton, when she was in different positions and people polled, she had super high approval ratings. People like in New York really like the job that she was doing, Secretary of State. She got really high approval ratings. Anytime she went for more power, her approval ratings dropped. I think that's just a great example of how — Okay. We can love Kim Kardashian and her makeup line, yet if a woman is actually going for more power, she is going to be subjected to the gauntlet.

Because America does drama so well, so much of this story is about a drive towards the end. It's not about how we get there, it's about the end, the finish lines that I often talk about here. I was talking to some insatiable listeners at one of the workshops that I did when I was out meeting all of you guys, about dating, when you still have weight to lose. That's a big thing that comes up with clients, like, "I know I should put this off, but I don't want to be out there dating right now, because dating is vulnerable and messy as it is, and then if you feel like you have 30 or 40 or 50 pounds."

A couple of them said like, "Oh, you just met Carlos when you were 30 pounds heavier, and so was super easy for you." I was like, "Wait a second. We think relationships are done just for when we meet or marry someone?" That's just the beginning, right? The hero's journey tells us why happily ever after happens.

Carlos and I, we have a great relationship, but it's because we have open communication, because we challenge each other. He tells me things I don't want to hear. I tell him things he doesn't want to hear, and we also support each other during really challenging times and we have to own our own stuff then. That's an example. Just because you meet someone, it doesn't mean it's [inaudible 0:21:51.5].

You mix the American hero's journey, the American idea of the hero's journey with diet culture and you get the Biggest Loser, Extremely Weight Loss, and a lot of other shows that I think are still popping up. I don't have cable, so I'm not quite sure. I think Chloe Kardashian did one. I forget. But they all follow the same narrative. Looks different on the surface, same idea.

Again, what underlies this is this idea of a linear dramatic turn of events building to a pinnacle. In America, it's this happy ending; the bad guy gets captured, Bridget Jones gets her man. The weight is off and you will never struggle again because all your problems are solved. In other words, the silver bullet, right?

No one rationally believes in a silver bullet at this point, maybe we all didn't like the 80s and 90s but were like, "Hmm." Those silver bullets dress-up very differently today, and so we may not rationally believe in a silver bullet, but with weight loss, you get sucked in because it's part of this invisible yet potent narrative our culture offers. We rarely make rational decisions. This is why branding is so big. It's an emotional idea that we're buying. All cars get us to the same place, but some of us want to be a Subaru type of person. Some of us want to be a Mercedes type of person. It gives us a feeling that we are someone different. It affirms an identity we want about ourselves.

We like to believe we're really rational and logical, but most decisions are emotional. Whether it's a Shakeology formula, Weight Watchers, a casting agent for the Biggest Loser, a romantic partner, or investors love your idea on sharp dang, you assume that's going to be an upward trajectory leading to this glorious finish line.

Back to sugar, or lots of sugar. What's underneath that is the stimulation and feeling up a lot. Again, I'm telling you, this week, as I've been watching the news in my Facebook feed, I'm so much more likely to turn into that drama because I'm eating sugar. I can see the direct correlation. I feel less calm. I feel more scattered, and so it's like I'm looking into this drama like I need to know every single unfolding of what's happening with the FBI. I can really make a difference, because I call people.

We believe feeling up. Again, that upward trajectory, it leads to the promise land. It got to be dramatic. On a daily smaller basis, this fractals into life feeling momentarily more comfortable on the up, we like being up. Social media gives us dopamine hits, insane coffee drinks within insane amounts of caffeine and sugar stimulate us. Coffee alone does this to make.

Carlos and I jokingly call coffee big plans drink for me. Regular coffee makes me feel like I'm flying so high, I get all these ideas. They're going to be awesome. I can do all of them because they're going to be instant. Then four hours later, I have crashed and I have this big, long to do list that feels overwhelming. We also have constant advertisers who make us want to buy, consuming something, buying something gives us this up feeling. Being busy, being productive, gives us this up thing.

We've been joking in my Truce with Food group this week that some of us have mastered the busy. Here's the thing, what comes up must come down. If we circle back to social media and we compare ourselves, or the sugar we crash. This consuming, we've got debt.

In a true hero's journey, there are really low points, but American media often manufactures these low points and makes us think that they can be solved just like that. If there is a dramatic upward trajectory, there's an equally dramatic downward spiral. Again, this is not to say that progress in of itself doesn't make us feel good, but it's the rate or the degree of the slope which is the problem. A lot of clients feel like unless they're gearing up, they're not going to make progress. I'm going to get more into that. That's how that translates into your everyday efforts and frame of reference for what's going to work. These make the low points or downward spiral seem like they can be solved in an hour show. Again, silver bullet solutions that are nice neat.

I remember way back in the day, there was a Biggest Loser contestant named Craig and he revealed that he lost his dad when he was 10 years old and now was on the show because he was motivated to be around for his children. In a really tender moment he shared with Jillian how his dad passed. They were playing around when his dad stop moving. H was like horse-playing with his dad, and his dad just stops moving. Craig jumped on top of him and tried to rough them up because he thought he was pretending. He eventually realized he was dead and he thought it was his fault. He thought it was his fault from roughhousing him. There was clearly grief and guilt that had to be worked through.

Jillian's response, whether this was for TV or not, the message was — She said, it was along the line — What she said was, and don't quote me verbatim, but it was long lines of, "Are you going to obsess about a dead man, or are you going to worry about your children?" Are you fucking kidding me? That's how you respond to someone? Then the show cuts back to him being on the treadmill. That's how you approach someone's pain? You think that you can run a treadmill on and the grief will still not be there, or the guilt? Have them deny it all over again? And chastise them for feeling grief over the death of a parent? Talk about not feeling safe to be who you are and the emotions you have.

I just want to point out that these silver bullet solutions are tucked everywhere into our culture and they reinforce this bigger narrative that weight loss is a hero's journey, an American heroes journey where we gloss over the hard parts. How does this hero's journey or need for stimulation translate into the drama of sugar or everyday weight loss efforts? I will say a lot of people say Jillian has a ton of compassion, and that's great, yet that's not what they were showing on the show, and then people watch the media and that's the story they have to compare themselves to. Then you go eat because you're like, "What?"

This translates every day, and that first we believe gearing up or drama is necessary. If we're not holding our breath, fighting our cravings and doing boot camps, we won't get results. If we don't feel guilty for bad choices, we don't want to bad enough food. Food has to be bland and boring because this is the drama necessary for success. Everything, all the efforts have to be dramatic. This also makes one bad meal or unhealthy choices feel more dramatic than it is right. What goes up must come down. We feel like we've fallen down much further than reality because we also believe one week of good eating will produce all these amazing results, or one cleanse, right? When that doesn't happen, we think it's our fault.

Again, it's the rate of trajectory of success that is the implied problem, not the idea of forward progress. It's the equivalent of thinking getting chosen by the biggest loser or the voice, will be your ticket versus one stop on the road. The fairytale used to be the prince would save you, but the 21st century quote "liberated" version of rescued means the right weight, wardrobe, and exercise leads you to happily ever after.

Cinderella has been replaced with the Biggest Loser. It's the same story. It looks different. It involves a lot of drama and being stimulated and swept up in a way. Now, instead of a prince rescuing you, weight loss is the perfect diet to ward off cancer, Alzheimer, and any health scare will. It will lead to confidence and all that comes with that, the dream relationship with the dream partner, the dream job and ease.

I remember when I was being good when I was dieting and trying to lose weight, and I remember losing weight and being thin and almost felt euphoric about it. Especially when I was consistent for month, there were stretches there, especially when I was younger and didn't have anything else to juggle and I could just only diet. I felt euphoric being thin, but that was the meeting I was giving to my weight loss weight. Life actually wasn't really that different until I lost the emotional weight I was carrying around, but I almost felt like a high when I was really thin and I realized part of why life did feel better was because I was taking chances. It wasn't the thinness itself. It was the meeting I gave to, "Now, I can take these risks."

Looking back, it was also partly adrenaline was the high because I was stressed and terrified of gaining weight back constantly. I digressed, but I'm just saying I've been there. I get that it feels like this drama is so fun because we think there's going to be this amazing happy ending.

A brief recap here; we miss the drama of sugar weight loss plans because it also implies we will miss out on this big life-changing victory too. We think big things are done in a few big ways rather than consistent efforts. How does this believing health and weight loss need to be dramatic gearing up and trickling down into everyday life? How does that look?

First, if a plan or an exercise doesn't require punishment or constantly monitoring your food, constantly monitoring your food and tracking it is dramatic. It may not seem that because we've normalized it, but that's a lot of work, or if you hate it so much, we think it's not working, "I have to be vigilant. It's perfection or bust," or thinking we have to workout six days a week rather than tuning into where your body is with energy, your period, where you are in your menstrual cycle. It's only an upward trajectory and if you slip to four or three days one week, you will never succeed. The fall is so dramatic. This is also part of thinking in a linear fashion; two steps forward one step back right.

If the stakes feel small or moderate, we think we won't get results. We think striving — We don't feel like we're striving, not to get the victory, so people cut out all the sugar. They cut out gluten overnight. They do the whole 30. People even say, "I'm gearing up to do the whole 30," or "I'm never going to — This also translates to feeling like you should never have a bad eating day or it's all ruined, "Tomorrow, we will get to it and it's going to be dramatic just like my eating today." We get addicted to the drama of the patterns too.

No one is saying or thinking these things. I would've denied I was doing any of these when I was emotionally eating. I don't know if I would've denied it. I just wouldn't have been able to see the pattern. I did hit how each day was a tight rope, yet I love the fantasy of what would happen once I completed my journey. My entire life would be different, "Dating would be easy." "I'd find my dream career," all these answers, which instantly happen. If you're dependent on a story in a rescue me way, you're codependent in a sabotaging way.

Now, all of these ideas like being sugar-free or staying away from food allergies and eating like the whole 30, if it works for you, they are things to work towards. I love how these types of plans often normalize how bad people feel and they realize, "Hey, nutrition affects how I feel." I had a client just this week tell me that she had to eat — It a long story, but basically forgot her food and had to make some choices of the best of what was available for something and she felt so crappy afterwards. She was like, "I can't believe I used to feel like this every day and think it was normal." I was like, "Exactly. It takes some time to un-normalize."

I digressed. This awareness piece cannot be underestimated, but I find rarely do these all or nothing approaches help with the degree of change required to really have a truce with food, and that's also because there's emotional work not included, so they aren't designed for that. Another way the hero's journey drama trickles into everyday life, people think fighting their cravings is winning, whereas actually creates internal chaos and your blood sugar plummets which can either feel like really low energy or moods are overly high and on. What I call the juice cleanse high hunger. When you're actually eating for your body, you feel healthy hunger, which is a calm mood like my client was experiencing. It's basically the opposite of how you feel after a big dose of caffeine, but not also as feeling depleted and exhausted at the end of the day.

I also want to say my client wasn't missing the drama of sugar. That's what it felt like on the surface. I'll explain her deeper craving in a moment. From a workout standpoint, the idea of putting so much effort and sacrifice into working out is encourage. Enjoying exercise or moving your body is very foreign to many. Although I do think this idea is changing as we have new workouts that people look forward to like so SoulCycle, or Juliet's Gum Unite, or Yoga Studios. This is definitely shifting.

I just remember when I was changing my own relationship to working out about 10 years ago, it took me to realize that exercise counts even if I don't hate. That a product of thinking enjoying yourself instead of striving can also be dramatic works.

The scale is another source of drama. First, the rate that people think they should lose weight is dramatic. People think it's great when they lose more than 2 pounds a week, and I think about the long-term effects of such rapid weight loss. Sometimes we lose more water weight, but I'm talking about thinking about losing more than 2 pound of fat a week is even thinking we should shoot for that is dramatic and setting us up to fail. Of course, this depends on your size, but also if you lost weight you feel dramatically better about yourself versus if you gain a couple pounds. When, really, up and down a few pounds in either direction isn't a big deal. It's usually water weight, etc.

Then there's the drama of, "Will I keep it off?" If the design of how we lose weight is dramatic then you're also going to feel the drama of; can you keep it? Emotionally, it's feeling like you have to be on in your life. You have to strive in relationships at work. This constant need to be on or wear different masks with different people eventually makes us be off. "Off," or cheat days, are code for freedom, which is what we often believe weight loss will bring us; free from the insecurity, and so freedom to make the choices we want to make in life. In a nutshell, if it's not hard, we don't feel like we're striving and holding our breath. We don't think we will get our fantasy ending.

Our culture really is hard on women and it pushes us into this murder archetype too that's also going on here, and I can do that better than no one. Woe is me, I'm great at that. It leaves us in a victim the state. I also want us to have some compassion that we didn't just come up with this idea of striving and being hard on ourselves. We were born into these very very murky waters.

Those are some of the daily ways of our sense of things, but over time it builds up patterns we can't see because they become normalized. So we feel like we need to get more more extreme or spend more and more time on food because why can't I figure this out? What am I missing? You go into hypervigilance mode. What is brought up must come down.

This brings me to we only love the drama when it's an escape from thinking where we are is uncomfortable. When we're in the reality where we really are, whether with food, our body, finances work, it can be painful. Results can feel impossible or way off, but oddly if we sit with that, like we talked about with L'Erin Alta on episode 76 ,things start to shift and change. It's subtle, yet profound, and much more effective than drama. Paradoxically, the drama becomes how profound subtle shifts and changes are. What I mean is like people were surprised at how subtle things can make such a big difference.

We're at the halfway point in Truce with Food and clients are doing an amazing job of sitting with their discomfort and really learning to transform it into what they want. They will tell you, it feels empowering. It's challenging, but the more we do it feels really empowering and sustainable. Food gets really easier as the stronger we get emotionally, and it's in these everyday ways, small ways that are really big waves subtle is profound. We can love the idea of an aha, but that has to be integrated and translated into how we show up in our life.

You can say "Oh my God! That's what I'm doing, "or "I just got that." Guess what? There's residue of that lack of aha in your life if that makes sense, or if I'm clear. In other words, you can have a mental aha but then you have to change the behavior.

I suggested to my client who was asking me of the drama of sugar is a thing which it totally is, and now you're benefiting from learning about it, is that I like to suggest a better path than drama, and that is devotion. Devotion is about love, loyalty, and enthusiasm. Love and enthusiasm requires frequent watering. It involves things that are meaningful to you. Not putting yourself in a position of lack or striving or that you're not enough, which when we're striving or gearing up, we're basically coming from that place is not enough, which is really — Like you're already behind before you even start.

Devotion doesn't feel like drama. It doesn't even feel like the fleetingness of inspiration, although you will stay engaged but it will feel different. It feels more like relief and an exhale at first, then it feels more like consistency with eating is happening on its own. It's start to feel magical. Eventually, with food especially, it moves to the background of your life.

Here's an example from my own life of devotion that doesn't involve food but I always tell my clients that starting my own business was really integral in helping me read out the last bit of my emotional eating, because it help me transfer my story. When I started my business, I swear to God my business plan was to help people. In other words, I had no plan. This was 10 years ago when nutrition and coaching were very very new. I also wanted to do media and have my ideas know, but I was hooked into this hero's journey idea myself although I couldn't see it at the time.

Over the years, I've come to realize the milestones I've reached weren't what I thought they'd be. I had a regular gig on NBC in Philadelphia and I loved it, but I have this idea that, "Oh my God! If I do this local TV, then I'll automatically move up the national TV." Then I realize after doing it, I really enjoyed it, but I really actually like the long format of interviews, and so I wanted to do a podcast instead. I thought that this would be a steppingstone to just magically getting seen for national TV, or I love doing the podcast, and it's been wonderful, and yet I still need to put the effort into getting it go more far and wide.

We have incredible downloads for little over then — I guess I've been doing it in total, I guess, for almost a year and for five months, but the dramatic ending, it hasn't happened. I still need to get better at promoting it and I'm going to hire someone to help me. I'm just sharing this to show you that all these points that I thought were kind of endings were really milestones and then in and of themselves would never be enough to have me continue to sustain running my practice. I love what I do, but if it was only for these finish lines, I wouldn't still be in the game especially because, again, things have shifted in the last 10 years. When I first started, I was giving talks about why nutrition was even important in companies. This idea that nutrition mattered was foreign.

It's been a lot of changing mindset shifts to understand for people to see the value of what we're doing here, what I'm doing. Just like you can lose a couple of pounds and feel safe from gaining weight and say, "I can have ice cream today." In other words, you adapt to your success.

What's kept me devoted to growing my health coaching business was — That was rooted in coaching and not selling other things like supplements or some these other multilevel marketing things. Again, there's no problems if you do that, it's just not my thing. I just don't want to be spending time meeting people and networking. I really want to spend time coaching. Again, I'm not judging those sources of income or those outlets. Just the day-to-day work that I wanted to be doing was coaching.

I had to root in to self-actualization which was actually important to me versus what I thought looked important to me. In other words, I had to self-actualize, and this is a journey I'm clearly not self-actualized, versus a shiny finish line. This gave me not drama but a sense of fulfillment that replenishes me and pulls me along to continue forward.

I had to think about what values were rewarding to me personally and build my business around that. On the hard days, I felt devoted to something larger than myself. The great days feel amazing because what I care about so much in the world is alive for another day. In other words, I'm enjoying the trip not to end destination. For me, I am devoted to the truth including my own potential and that of my clients. I believe when people are true to who they are, they are the most generous powerful and creative. If we have more people living and creating from that place our world will become more equal, just, and fun.

I value health, including redefining help from just a lack of disease to a more holistic definition. That got me through graduate school. I value women and what we associate with the feminine archetype, the yin architect for my yogis out there. I designed a process integrating these qualities of empathy, compassion of cycles, and strength that come from vulnerability not dominance. I need to see offerings in the world that take us beyond our current ideas of health because they're so narrow and constricting. I love freedom. If you're into truth you're also often into freedom.

None of these feels dramatic and like I'm straining your striving like I used to feel about how I had to eat for results, or when I first started my health coaching practice I remember being so excited I got some really great PR right off the bat in what was called daily candy. It's not even

around anymore, but I was like, “Oh my God! This is can be amazing. Everything is going to take off,” and the follow-up was it wasn't. It was a great press , but what I learned is that PR just builds trust with your audience. It doesn't really do much beyond that. Don't get me wrong. I still love doing PR and contributing to articles and stuff like that, but my expectations are so different of what it really is going to do.

I was laughing because I had someone tell me that some of the TV stuff that I've done that's on my website doesn't even like link to the episodes that I did anymore. Talk about a lesson in humbleness and impermanence. Yeah, it's a slower pace yet the greatest paradox is to go fast. We must go slow. We need to make our health and weight loss about devotion. If you make it a roller coaster, you will get off, we're going to be nauseous and frustrated at the really low hills. If you can make it what I call a spiral staircase, when you're engaged with the process and it goes deeper and you're enjoying it and you're making incremental progress, you'll want to get back on track after the hard days fester and your good days will be even better.

To make this a reality you really have to focus on the emotional side of the equation. As I explained to my client, all of us human beings have a creative life force that is vitality. That's how I judge if someone is healthy, not if they have a diagnosis or on a medication or even eat right 80% of the time and do the 80/20 rule. I want to know are they alive? Are they taking risks? Are they feeling the full range of human experience? Are they blooming where they've been planted?

We have a desire for the process of creation which involves chaos and possibility which is the unpredictability of what will happen on the other end. Look at nature, it's always creating and the wildest things. We are wired for this vitality, but when we put that vitality on steroids and mix it with America's need for dramatic stimulation, it's like tossing roundup pesticides and GMOs with polluted water and a lack of quality soil from industrial agriculture and poor environmental protections, we get these meek results from what feels like heroic efforts. The more we do that, the more diminishing returns we get, kind of like what we're seeing is happening with our soil and the quality of nutrition in our food.

If you ever wonder why you're so tired or what feels like not enough willpower or discipline to be consistent with healthy living, it's because shame, which is usually what motivates dramatic efforts is sourced from adrenaline. The design of dramatic approach is setting you up for failure. Adrenaline is not sustainable energy source and it actually makes you crave more sugar. To make a self-fulfilling prophecy of how dramatic sugar and dieting are.

We need pursuits, but they need to be aligned organically to who you are. What do you value and have you bring and express those values into the world? Yes, take risks and be creative. This is a natural life force that wants to be expressed. Because of the very up culture that we live in, we channel that into weight loss because we think that's when we'll bloom where we're planted, when really you need to create the conditions for blooming to happen.

Devotion is not adrenaline and shame source, it's soul-sourced. It also loses this mental construct of a journey. This again implies a linear path so you're either forward progress or behind. The reality is effort, success, and life happens in cycles. Think of the seasons of nature as an example; there's time for planting, growing, harvesting and enjoying, but you can't enjoy growing and enjoying all the time.

I've had a lot of clients and we've been talking about their careers lately. A lot of that I'm talking about this with are mid-40s and they've had huge careers for the first part of their life and they want to do something different and they're not sure. Often it feels like failure because they having continued on this upward trajectory, some sort of imagine finish line. Really, I see it they're nurturing their soil. They're like, "Wait, I did that. What did I love? What didn't I love?" and they're regenerating themselves right now, so we don't have to be at jobs that are so meaningful all the time. We can take some time.

I tell my clients as working on transforming their story to think of it more as outer space, so they can get this idea of if they're behind or lost into proper context. They can travel between clarity, planet clarity, agency, and power in minutes sometimes. Sometimes it takes days. When they make choices unaligned with their goals, they aren't falling off a path. I provide the tools to travel to planet clarity to figure out what happened. With those tools, they can make the most of their experience by learning so much. We get out of this like on-off mental construct.

When you can except devotion is the path over discipline and drama, you start sourcing your efforts more more from a calm place. You experience pleasant surprises and a deepening of self-compassion and self-trust when you are in a winter season or “fall off”, right? What are you composting in the soil when it looks like nothing is happening on the surface but snow? Oh, lots of stuff is happening.

This provides the stamina, not fleeting motivation, to stick with nutrition and emotional healing to get you the results in life you want. As my clients discover, the food is pretty simple once you figure out what works for you. It's the emotional healing that we need to give ourselves patients with and compassion. What creates power and agency isn't being perfect, it's learning how to enjoy the pursuit of living a courageous risk-taking life, and risk-taking doesn't have to be this extreme dramatic idea. It often involves being more of who you really are, not the perfect work on version of yourself.

I explained my client that as we transform her story, she will not get drama from sugar but the sense of possibility in creation she is rightfully craving. This will come from transforming her story which expands her comfort zone in life. With a bigger and bigger comfort zone, the edge of possibility gets bigger and bigger. We think it's our bodies are our weight that's holding us back or the insanity of our food habits which a lot of people have but I think there alone, but it's really our story that's holding us back making our conference on smaller and smaller.

A quote I like Thomas Carlyle was, “Go as far as you can see. When you get there, you'll be able to see farther.” When you hook into sustainable, meaningful, and rewarding approach to health and weight loss, if you're of backsliding or always having to be on guard around food disappears over time. When you get slow and steady results you learn to trust that they won't go away from the bad eating day or week. If they happened over time, they can be reversed over time, versus a bad eating day or week. The need for drama is reduced to a healthy need to live creatively, not just with art but in taking emotional risks.

An action item from this podcast, I really want to encourage you to push back against the unsustainability of making your food, health, and weight loss a made-for-TV drama, that your whole life has to revolve around this pursuit because there's going to be some sort of fantasy happy ending. Instead of dramatic efforts, start with where you are and take some time to sit

with this for a bit. I always say, to remain optimistic, we need to be realistic. What changes would you like to make even if you never got on another scale in your life? What do you need to do to show yourself self-respect and care now, not want someone else's told you the happy ending is happening?

For example, if you would like to get off sugar, what would be 10 steps to be completely sugar-free? How can you challenge yourself with step one and how will you know what it feels like a win to you in your life not just because you're being good but will be better in your life? Like, "I'm going to probably get back off sugar again because I want to stop getting sucked into this sugar social media anxiety vortex. I'm doing what I can about the Affordable Care Act and then I'm going to have to wrestle with where the chips fall where they may, and I'm focusing on that issue and not other things." For example, [inaudible 0:52:39.6], I have this group that tells me the action items to do every week, but I am not going to be hooked into the drama anymore, just too exhausting.

That's what I'm saying. What will be better in your life immediately? Don't forget the emotional steps in there. How are you going to take risks in your life so you have an outlet in your life for this creative life force that is in all of us? Think outside of food. The emotional work is as important as the food. How can you infuse your values more into everyday life so you stay devoted to your story? Not the exhaustive and sabotaging one our current culture has offered. Often this means being more true to your truth, with people at work, with your limits, and it feels really good.

If you feel really stuck emotionally, I do want people to know — I've had a couple of people contact me privately about working with me privately and I do have a couple openings and it starts with the truth serum process. In that process we will figure out what diet works best for you now, not a verb. Basically, are you going to do better on vegetarian, Mediterranean, or Paleo? Then we diagnose the story that's holding you back from the possibility and creativity you're craving it life that is getting misdirected into weight loss. You can have a much richer and more fulfilling ending than what you believe right now. Again, go as far as you can see and you'll see even further. You can find that alishapiro.com/truthserum or you can email me at ali@alishapiro.com. It can be really hard to even know where to start because our story is

usually in so many places in our life beyond our plates that we've lost touch with what that would even look like, and that's okay.

In a nutshell, you don't need to incorporate drama into your health goals rather think that we can be devoted to creating and experiencing in your life based on your values. I'm going to leave you with a great quote that is also a tool to start recalibrate how you approach food, exercise, and your health. It's from the incredible activist writer and rabble-rouser, Eve Ensler. She created the vagina monologues. I remember first hearing about it in college and I'm like, "Someone said vagina." Shows you how much we need to learn about our lady parts, and maybe that's the wrong word to use them, but she gave an incredible speech at a conference I was at a couple years ago and the line struck me. She said, "I was always reaching for love but it turns out love doesn't involve reaching. How can you start reaching and start being true to you?"

Hope you like the episode. If you can remember that iTunes review, I'd really appreciate it, and hit me up on social media to let me know what you thought of this episode.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:55:21.6] 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.

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