

EPISODE 85

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[INTRO]

[0:00:30.9] 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]

[0:01:11.9] AS: Welcome to episode 85 of the Insatiable Podcast. Is caffeine good or bad for me? A lot of people are feeling anxious today or tired but wired, or having intense cravings. Could caffeine be the cause or can we blame it all on Trump?

In today's episode, I'll share the symptoms that indicate you may need to modify or change your caffeine habits. We'll go into healthy guidelines for caffeine use. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. Lastly, how to work through the hurdles of going off caffeine.

[EPISODE]

[0:01:44.9] AS: Hey, Insatiable listeners. We’ve had a pretty intense past couple of interviews. Wouldn’t you say? It's been a great month with really information dense podcast, so I thought

today we're going to take it light and easy about is caffeine good or bad for me, or at least as light and easy as I can do.

Before we get to that, just a couple of things that are really exciting. I will be coming to New York live, September 16th. Melanie Wilding, who we had on the podcast, about turning your emotions into power, which got such an amazing response. Melody and I are going to be teaming up together to do a live in-person workshop on Saturday, September 16th from 10 to 3 PM on No Bullshit Self-Care. I'm super excited about that. You'll be getting more details, but if you're on my list, which you can sign up at alishapiro.com. You can be the first to know. We're keeping a really small and intimate because we like deep transformation, and that's usually what that requires. It will most likely sell out pretty quickly between the two of us.

Also this fall, I — At the end of September, I'm going to be doing freedom from nighttime overeating coaching course. Six weeks, a little bit of the truce with food methodology baked into that. Truce is Food is sold out the last couple of rounds. This probably will to. Definitely get on my list if you want to be the first to find out about that.

Those are kind of some exciting upcoming things. There's also a lot of other stuff in the hopper here that I can't talk about yet, but as soon as I can, I'll let you know. Also, if you guys have been loving the podcast, I would love if you could leave a review. It really helps the show discovered, and we need new listeners to keep it going. You guys are so great about sharing it. I really appreciate how many of you have shared it.

Also, make sure people know how to listen to podcasts. As I'm meeting more and more people, many people are like, "Oh, I heard about podcast, but I don't actually know how to get it on my phone." Me, the person who is the least technologically advanced person maybe on the planet — No. Okay, that's extreme, but one of them. Is showing people how to download podcast. If I can do it, you can do it. I'd really appreciate if you guys share.

I just want to read a recent review from Stephanie Cahill who we had on the episode about why isn't anyone talking about overeating and agency? Which was another huge popular episode. Stephanie gave the Insatiable Podcast five stars and said, "I'm so grateful I came upon this podcast where I found Ali's Truce with Food program. I love the dynamics between Juliet and Ali

and binged, no pun intended, a ton of episodes at first, as I found their honesty and realness refreshing and engaging. I actually feel like I'm hanging out with a girlfriend. I've learned wound about so many different topics and perspectives that furthered fostered personal growth within myself and encourage me to dig deeper in this rabbit hole of health and wellness. I participated in Ali's A Cookie Isn't Just a Cookie Workshop, which again prompted me to be more reflective and self-aware than I've been in a long time."

"I started uncovering truths and uncovering my story and how it relates myself and my story and relationship with food. I'm loving Ali's new format, solo, no holds barred approach. Her warm and genuine personality shines. I find myself at times laughing, cheering up, and also furiously writing down a quote on a post-it note or something that really resonated with me. This is in my weekly queue of must listen to podcasts."

Thank you Stephanie for leaving one, and if you benefit from the show, I would really appreciate that.

All right, so on to is caffeine good or bad. Okay, first off, you have to understand I am totally biased and that I love coffee. It's was more like a love-hate relationship with it. I love it when it's good, kind of like any food that makes us eventually feel bad, and it's bad when I'm crashing and all the cravings it causes me.

I actually was off of it, went back on it, and now I'm off of it again and I'm on day four. The worst is over, the withdrawal, but I'm committing to trying to this over the summer. Now that I know how the change process works, I used to do all these kind of challenges when I was struggling with food before, like wholefoody or 90 days of exercise or whatever, and I don't approach like that anymore because it doesn't work for me or for most people.

Why I'm committing to really reducing my caffeine in the form of coffee, and I'll explain why tea is okay for some of us. While I love it, it really makes me anxious. What I've discovered is there's a side of me that loves being anxious. I love hooking — I like hate it, but I love hooking into the new cycle, the what will happen, or if I'm drinking coffee, this sense of immense possibility and creativity with my work when my caffeine supply is entering my veins.

I have this kind of come to Jesus moment, or come to Mary Magdalene moment. The other day when the news was enraging me — If you're new to this podcast, I'm not very secret that that this current regime in the United States is infuriating and raging to me on many different levels. More the symbolism of it and how clear it's been much power corruption has been going on albeit this time in a land where we promote fairness and equality.

It was another news cycle where I was just infuriated over the Affordable Care Act which again I know is not perfect. It needs a lot of improvement, and I wish we were talking about that rather than should people even have healthcare. Carlos said to me, he said, "Are you going to be this enraged for the next four years?" I was like, "Oh my God! This is unsustainable."

I have this deep why, I guess, of why I really want to go off coffee. It really is affecting my life. That's why I'm committing to going off over the summer, but I'm sharing that I'm very biased is because I still love it, but I crash in the afternoon. There's a lot of cost to it. I can't think as deeply and I can't make as good of decisions because I physically feel like I don't have the space to let things settle. In my skin, it's like I'm crawling, not out of my skin, but I'm crawling in my skin and I react more quickly to things. I don't let them settle. I wake up so tired from the caffeine withdrawal.

Part of why I'm getting out of it for the summer isn't to just not be anxious, but it's to experiment with feeling more calm as my default. That's what I want. That's the relief I want. A lot of times when people try to make health changes, they just know what they don't want, but you have to think about what do you want.

I'm also meditating in the morning and doing some stretches because I have back and neck issues rather than checking my phone. This caffeine challenge I'm giving myself which I can keep you updated on is more of a — It's not even a challenge. It's just an attempt to becoming a different type of person, a calmer person.

Going off coffee, but I'm going to be still sticking with tea is meaningful to me because I want to do my best work. I enjoy doing it versus being anxious. I also wanted to understand more deeply why I enjoy being anxious. I have some ideas and I want to get more clear so I can really transform that. When we have this clarity and this truth of what's really going on, we say, "Oh,

that's the reason," versus what we think it is and it's so much easier to change when you're really clear. Creating the conditions for a baseline of calm will help me see why this is uncomfortable for me, because I have my ideas but I need to get a little bit more precision.

Okay, now that you know that I love caffeine and I also hate it, you know that the advice I'm going to give you is filtered through that lens. No, I joke. Now, I say that because part of what I want you guys to realize is that there is no absolute answer. Let's first define caffeine, because we're not talking about just coffee. I'm talking about coffee, espresso, black tea, green tea, white tea, chocolate and kombucha. Those are the main sources of caffeine.

In general, that's the level of caffeine from most to least, coffee as most, espresso has a little bit less. It also has some oils in it which slows the effect of blood sugar which means it's a little healthier. Then you've got your black tea, your green tea, your white tea, and then chocolate and Kombucha.

Is it good or bad for you? The answer is it depends. Everyone metabolizes caffeine differently. If anyone ever gives you a black-and-white health answer, whether it's about weight loss, nutrition, maybe anything in life. This is usually a sign that they're in the one size fits all model of medicine, which means they're usually focused on sick care, or the old research that we have about not dying, which is really a great, amazing place to be.

Again, every day, I am so grateful to be cancer free. However, a lot of us are asking the questions how do we thrive? When we start to ask how we thrive, we're sent in a very different direction and you start to become aware of different personalized research coming out about nutrition. The answer is it always depends, and this is why it's so important to learn your own body as a baseline and work with people who will help you with that because it creates a sense of how empowerment, confidence, and you get unhooked from these extremes.

I was just talking about the Truce With Food client and she was saying how liberating. We're in the third month now, so things are really starting to integrate and how liberating it is to really be able to take a moderate approach. The other day, it came out that coconut oil isn't great for your heart, whatever. That was one study. The reality is it depends, and she was just like, "It was so great to see that and see how that information filters into my life and rather than saying, "Oh my

God! I have to go back to olive oil. I'm doing everything wrong." She knows how to be moderate with coconut oil, so it works for her.

Back to caffeine, but that's just — Caffeine is in the same boat as everything else. If you've done 23andMe, which I got as a Christmas gift this year, it will let you know how likely you are to drink more caffeine than others. Now, I don't know what that means genetically. It says I'm more likely. Does that mean I can tolerate it more, so I'll drink it more? I definitely can't tolerate more than the average person I guess. I'm not even sure what that means.

I know you did the old 23andMe when it first came out, it would tell you how well you metabolize caffeine. There are certain genes that they're starting to look at that let us know. Genetics are only one part of the equation. You also have to overlap your nature with your nurture. How is the health of your gut and blood sugar? This will also determine if you do well with caffeine at this point in time. As you get both of these functions healthier, you may be able to tolerate caffeine differently. The best way to figure this out is to see for yourself in your life. Your body is this amazing dynamic entity that gives really clear feedback if you know how to listen to it.

I'm going to give you some symptoms that you might not do well with even healthy caffeine amounts. I'm going to give you my guidelines for healthy caffeine and then hurdles workarounds, because it's just not so easy to get off caffeine, right?

Some potential symptoms that your over caffeinated, and this isn't going to sound like a drug commercial. We're not at that point yet. I also want to put an asterisk here that this might — Some of these symptoms might be caused by other things and also too much caffeine can also exasperate these existing symptoms. Everything, when we're talking about thriving, there's no magic bullet. Everything is multifactorial. You have to do a lot of things right, which is why understanding how people change is so important, which is why I'm going to give you some workarounds for the hurdles.

Here are some symptoms that you're probably over caffeinated; anxiety, yeah, and I'm going to be doing a physical roots of anxiety podcast coming up because there's a lot you can do to control anxiety through food. If you experience anxiety, if you have carb cravings, especially in the afternoon in that time before work and dinner, you feel wired but tired. It's usually a sign of

some adrenal issues that caffeine really exasperates. Caffeine can be like a sucker punch to your adrenals if they're already kind of weak. If you have trouble focusing, dizziness, heart palpitations, if you feel jittery, if you feel like you're not crawling out of your skin, like you're crawling in your skin. As I was describing why I'm getting off of it. Nervousness, just in general — It may not be quite anxiety, but it's generally nervousness. You're quick to anger and react. You feel a low-grade anxiousness during the day. You have trouble falling asleep and you feel exhausted when you get out of bed in the morning.

While our body does give us clear signals, it's also incredible at adapting. Many people have normalized a very low level of vitality and we are just now understanding how we thrive, which is a different question.

Sometimes, you may not even realize that you have this low grade level of nervousness. This is one of the things I love the most about working with clients is when they're like, "Ah! I didn't even realize I felt so shitty. I just tolerated this." I love when they say that they don't have to tolerate, not just a low-level of vitality, but a lot of the other BS going on out here. We're a little [inaudible 0:14:52.6] rebels here.

If you have any of those symptoms or if you just feel lethargic, if you feel like life might be out of you or even if you feel like you too know that you enjoy being anxious. It may be a time to reconsider your caffeine intake.

If that is you and you want to have healthier caffeine use, here's some guidelines that I recommend. First of all, one cup a day, which is about 8 ounces, 23andMe recommended 3 cups for health. I was like, "Three 12-ounce cups." Remember, most medical information is around how not to die, okay? We have higher expectations here. Again, it's a great privileged place to be alive and we want to thrive.

I really think 8 ounces a day. If you need more than that, there are some other imbalances going around. You don't want to eat it on an empty stomach. Blood sugar is intimately tied to caffeine, so always make sure you're having it with food, especially breakfast in the morning, not after 12 PM, ideally. It will interfere with sleep.

Now, because everyone metabolizes caffeine differently, some people can get away with 1 or 2 o'clock, but if you're really trying to work on this, I would try to end it 12 PM. Ideally, caffeine, whether it's tea or coffee or espresso, you want organic. A lot of these plants and coffee can be heavily sprayed, so that's what you want to shoot for. If you do decaf, you ideally want Swiss press to avoid the chemicals in the decaf process.

I was pleasantly surprised when I was doing the decaf version of butter tea. I was doing the coffee version. Wholefoods has a lot of Swiss press coffees, which is great. I think Starbucks does. I don't know. They seem to be changing all the time. If you are going to do decaf, which has a slight hints of caffeine in it, Swiss pressed, you want to avoid those dessert drinks. They are not coffee drinks. They are dessert drinks, and the combination of the sugar with the coffee is a sucker punch to your blood sugar and adrenals. You will fly so high. You will get the most amazing plans. You will feel so optimistic and then you're going to feel really bad a couple of hours later.

Then if you are going to use caffeine or a coffee or a tea, you want to use full fat dairy if you can tolerate dairy, and you want to do it organically, organic dairy. Organic dairy is so important. If you can get grass fed, oh my God, it's so good.

Full fat dairy, if you can tolerate dairy. Farmers Markets hopefully around you are easily accessible these days, so that would be a great place to find some full fat dairy for your caffeine. If you can't do dairy, make sure you look for the unsweetened nondairy milk. I cannot believe how much sugar is in the cashew milks, the hemp milks, the almond milks. Now, they're starting to say unsweetened, which is good, yet some of the unsweetened still has a little bit of sugar in it. Really make sure you're getting unsweetened. Look at the side of the label.

This means no artificial sweeteners either. I'm going to give you some tips to taper off in a bit here, but artificial sweeteners at, if you guys are using those, I beg you, please switch over to sugar. We know artificial sweeteners, people actually way more, they gain more weight and interferes with your gut biome and it actually makes you hungrier. More studies came out about — They've always been there, of connecting this to leukemia and the blood cancers. A lot of the blood cancers are environmentally driven and artificial sweeteners are one of them. Switch over to sugar. I promise you're not going to gain a ton of weight, if any.

Okay. That's your kind of gold standard that you want to work up to, but slow and steady wins the race. To go fast, we need to go slow. Here are some tips for tapering off. Say you're doing 24 ounces. Ask for 12 ounces of regular, 12 ounces of decaf with the goal to eventually get to 8 ounces or the amount of caffeine that isn't robbing you of energy later on, okay?

If you are doing coffee and you want to say, "Hey, I want to titrate down to tea," switch to black tea or green tea. The cool thing about tea is it activates different enzymes in your body so it won't affect your blood sugar the same way that coffee will if you're really sensitive to caffeine. I can do green tea and not experience any of the negative side effects of coffee, which is awesome. I still get a little bit of lift in the morning and I really like, especially in the winter, that warmth and the ritual of it which will get you in the hurdles.

If you are doing coffee, try switching to black or green tea to titrate down. If you are using sweeteners, gradually reduce the amount of sugar. Your taste buds will adapt. People are so surprised. If you're using two packets of Splenda, switch to one packet of Splenda. Then once you're at one for a while and you're used to that, switch over to sugar. If you're at a packet of sugar, go to half a packet. If you up the quality of fat in the milk, it will taste so much better anyways. There's a lot of ways to taper off here or to get to a healthier version of caffeine.

Some of the hurdles, right? It's not actually the change. It's the transition. You're going to be tired. I had a lighter week this week, so I plan to do this now, to go down on my caffeine so that I wasn't like, "God! I keep pressing on so many deadlines." You want to start to get more sleep so you don't crash in the afternoon. 7 to 9 hours, you cannot skip sleep. The body does so much while it's sleeping, it detoxes, it emotionally rinses you out. Again, get more sleep.

Another big thing, make sure your blood sugar is balanced as it creates more energy for you. So many of my clients are surprised that once they figure out what foods are right for them, they don't need coffee at all. I'm telling you, this is shocking to them, and because they're not getting the huge high in the morning, they're not crashing in the afternoon, which then makes cravings go down, sets up your evening better. It's this beautiful upward spiral staircase.

If you're struggling with that, my Curb Your Afternoon Cravings program will help you figure out what foods work best for you, what diet is best for you in terms of vegan and vegetarian or Mediterranean or paleo keto. Again, with caffeine, you want have it with breakfast, not after 12 PM, and at the latest, 2 PM. If you switch that, you're going to be a lot less tired and you will need a lot less to keep you going.

Another hurdle of this is the ritual of it. A lot of this is about starting the day calm. It's the one thing I could control, and then the nighttime eating is the book and ritual. It's the one thing that's kind of mine and the outside world isn't intruding on. If you have that ritual, great, do it with decaf or do it with less caffeine or do it with an herbal tea. You can still have the ritual. In fact, it may be even more coming of a ritual because you're really able to come down.

If you find yourself — Everyone likes to meet for coffee or tea these days, get an herbal tea, or get a decaf. It's often about those beautiful flower that these hipster baristas are making, right? I mean, I'm just in awe of how you can make milk look like a flower. Who knew? Seriously, you can adapt. Don't have to just accommodate the situation. You can find a way, or go to an expensive smoothie bar, overpriced smoothie bar. Just kidding. I love smoothies. I just like making them at home because they're cheaper.

The last hurdle is really being comfortable. Again, these might not all apply to you, but some of them may, is being comfortable with being calm. I think that something that the Americana — Here in America, and we have tons of people listening abroad, so I think this is the idea of America that we're exporting as well. You don't have to be in a state of anxiety, the United States of anxiety. Shit is really bad here. I'm not sugarcoating that right now. If you're paying attention and if you're really digging deeper into these issues, it's awful. Here's the thing, it's been awful for a while, we just didn't know.

Yes, take some action, which is a great anecdote of anxiety and also realize we're in a marathon here, okay? But we're in our personal lives, we can start with being comfortable, with being calm. Because, let me tell you, if we can — Is it a tornado, right? The eye of the tornado is a very eerily calm place, and bigger that eye is, the bigger the damage. But we can channel our calm and be really really powerful in a great great kind of way. That's both politically, and also in our own day-to-day lives, in our relationships, in our work. This is why I'm doing it. I have so

many exciting things coming up. I want to begin with the top of my game. I want to be clear. Yes, as much as I want to be able to be more civically engaged for four years, it's also for the benefit of my day-to-day life. That's okay. It can be both.

If you like to be anxious, I think a great question to adjourn on is, "What do I love about being anxious?" Own it. What do I love about it? I'm going to be doing this for myself, and as I start to get calm and want to hook into social media or hook into some sort of stimulant, like sugar or caffeine, I'm going to be asking myself that as well, I'm excited to find out. Curiosity killed the cat though, right? Just kidding.

All right everyone, I hope you enjoyed this breather of an episode. We have some really great stuff coming up in the next couple of weeks and interviews, but enjoy this one, work on your caffeine if it's going to help you. Please leave a review on iTunes if this show has helped you. It really helps us out. It really helps me out, I'm solo now. I like Stephanie's review, because Juliet did such an amazing contribution to the podcast and those past episodes with her are a really wonderful.

Yeah, remember, if you're interested in any of the fall programs that I have coming up, alishapiro.com to get on my list. If you are on social media, I'm taking a personal Facebook hiatus, but I will be there on my business page, Ali Marie Shapiro on Facebook, and on Instagram, [alimshapiro](https://www.instagram.com/alimshapiro). Again, that's S-H-A-P-I-R-O.

All right, see you here next time Insatiable listeners.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:25:16.6] AS: Have questions or reactions about the episode? Reach out to me on Instagram and Twitter @alimshapiro, or Facebook at [facebook.com/alimarieshapiro](https://www.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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