

**EPISODE 90**

*“ST: I truly thought when I started Truce With Food that I loved ordering pizza and that I was a special unique person who just had this penchant for junk food that other people couldn’t understand. Once I realized that, yeah, that meeting I had at work where I didn’t feel a sense of power over what I saying or agency or didn’t like the way it was going and didn’t feel that I had the ability to turn it around yeah, about four hours later when I got home, I just wanted to lie on the couch and order a pizza because that would either numb me out or sooth me and I didn’t even realize that’s what I was trying to do. But there was a wounded part of me that that food was brought in to sort of try to take care of a nurture, which is the backward sort of relationship.*

*Now, it’s about me figuring out coming at it from a point of “what I can do to empower my body and my mind is?” Is so different than putting myself in a passive position where I’m being told what to do and not to do.”*

[INTRO]

**[0:01:20.9] 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]

**[0:02:02.2] AS:** Welcome everybody to episode 90 of the Insatiable Podcast, *Food Freedom: Insider View*. Some of the most popular Insatiable episodes are the ones where I bring on clients and listeners who share their journey to the kind of food freedom you’re unlikely to hear about in women’s magazines and definitely not from your doctor, because it’s so rare.

I want to share with you the inspiring client stories I get to witness and learn from every day. What's truly possible when you're fed up with the fixing and fighting of your body, because radical food liberation, especially for women, isn't really a thing yet. No one in our maternal lineage since patriarchal religions have experienced agency over their bodies, but that's changing with my clients and our community of insatiable listeners, because here's the radical truth for everybody, which by the way is my new tagline.

You can have more freedom, agency and vitality than you can imagine right now, more than your mother, your grandmother, your great-grandmother in create even more for your sister, brother, friends and children than you believe it's possible right now. You don't have to believe only me. I want to bring you real clients in the trenches in their own words to show you that no matter how long you've battled with food, there's more relief than you can imagine. So sit tight, I have some wonderful clients are willing to share their wisdom they've learned from stepping out of their comfort zone to try my approach.

First up, Stephanie Truax, one of my recent Truce With Food clients. She's just completed the program, but this isn't a program as much of the birth canal to a completely new lease on food and life. Today, she'll share with you that it was desperation and not wanting to give up on herself that inspired her to give up not just diets, but diet culture and embark on her own Truce with Food.

Two life-changing steps to transform the emotions that drive, "I don't care, but I care eating," and the new metrics she uses for success including a brilliant approach to free you from the tyranny of the scale. If you're stuck with the scale, I think Stephanie is going to give you what you need to unhook.

Also, if doing this kind of emotional work and food freedom appeals to you, I will be doing a virtual six-week program this fall around freedom from emotional overeating. It will include some of the tools and intellectual property from Truce with Food. My fall program starts the end of September, so get on my list in [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com) to be the first to know when enrollment is open, which will be after Labor Day. That's [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com). As you'll hear Stephanie explained today,

this is different than anything else you've tried. Again, that's alishapiro.com and sign up for my list.

Now, sit back and be inspired from Stephanie's path.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:04:58.4] AS:** Hello insatiable listeners, I am already laughing. I have Stephanie Truax, and Stephanie is a client of mine in Truce With Food right now and she is graciously agreed to share a little bit about what she's learned and what you can learn from her experience. Thanks for being here, Stephanie.

**[0:05:16.9] ST:** Ali, thank you so much for having me. This is really a treat to be on the other end of your podcast, because that's really how I first unofficially met you was by being an insatiable listener. So happy to be part of the conversation today.

**[0:05:34.0] AS:** Wonderful. For everyone listening, I'm going to start bringing more of my clients on, more maybe of our listeners if you guys are up for it, because one of the things I really want us to do as I start to go even deeper into the cultural conditioning that surrounds our news, our ideas on weight loss and health, is to realize that there isn't hierarchy of expertise. Yes, there are people who have incredible domains of knowledge and acumen. Also, each of us are part of that domain of expertise and advocacy. We live our bodies 365 of the year. You're not machines. They're very dynamic.

Getting to know our body is an incredible expertise, and I want you to see how liberating that can be from people who are like you and like me who, I'm not a doctor. Yes, I have a lot of education and coaching in functional medicine, but in the traditional patriarchal medical system setup of doctors know all, specialists are the best, I'm a generalist without an official traditional medical background and yet I've been able to do incredible things for my health and help other people, and so I want you guys to learn from other people's story who are every day extraordinary people like us, like you listeners and like Stephanie.

Yeah, that's why Stephanie's coming on and to share some of her stories. That was a lot. I was joking with Stephanie before I got on that I contend to go on a tangent. That was one of them.

Stephanie, I want you to take listeners through — Oh! Also, just kind of like realistic down to earth reality check, these interviews are not going to be where everything is wrapped up in the tiny bow and Stephanie has risen off into the sunset, and we're going to get into why that is. I know sometimes that illusion of, "Oh! I can wrap this up in an hour podcast," can feel really inspiring like, "Oh! It's just that easy," but it's also relieving when you know that things can take time, which means not every meal counts. Not every decision counts. There's a lot more room for "error" than we think in traditional weight loss and health conversations.

This is a realistic look. Yet, also mind-blowing at the same time because it's very different. Stephanie, where were you before you decided to sign up for Truce With Food three and a half months ago?

**[0:07:54.5] ST:** Three and a half months ago, as I said, I was listening to the Insatiable Podcast and I was following you on social media which actually is just interesting and sort of underscores the longer timeline and sort of a curiosity about exploring our relationship to health and to our own bodies. I've seen you kind of interact with a friend on social media and got curious to see what you were saying and your work resonated.

At that point, I'd been a serial dieter, which I know other folks on your podcast had talked about. I tried several things without listing the specific friends or companies. There are companies efforts that were all familiar with, and I kept feeling like everything else in my life was something that I could tackle and excel at and meet my goals. This was the one area of my life that just was feeling off filter and I didn't feel that the approaches I was taking were working for me and I couldn't figure out why.

Actually, to be brutally honest, I felt a bit desperate because I thought I'm a really intelligent person and I should be able to hack this, and I couldn't. That was really what inspired me to take the leap and sign up for Truce With Food initially.

**[0:09:25.6] AS:** I love that you're brutally honest, because if I work with people privately, the first thing is that truce theorem process, or with Truce With Food and I ask people, "Why now?" Most people are saying, "Candidly, I wish it wasn't this way, but I'm desperate." I take that as a huge compliment, because — Not compliment, but a huge excitement because that's when we're most open to something very new, is when we're like, "I don't know what to do." We're actually open to maybe something different.

Was there something inside of you — Now, looking back that you've been through a good half of the program, is there something you can put language to though that you were still willing to give it a shot or that maybe you were curious about, because for other people listening, like, "What is my breaking point? I feel desperate, but I'm also still trying." I don't know if that —

**[0:10:18.6] ST:** I definitely wasn't ready to give up by myself. In fact, I had a moment where I actually visualized what that look like, where I thought maybe this is. Maybe I just need to be satisfied with my current state of affairs in terms of my body and my health and maybe this is just it for me, and how am I going to feel about that. It didn't feel great. It's not that it didn't feel great because I wasn't living up to sort of a societal ideal. It was just that it didn't feel like me. I knew that something was off and I still have the drive to want to fix it. I just needed a new approach, and that really was the motivation.

**[0:11:02.3] AS:** I think that's really important, because I think we've now come in this culture where we shame women for wanting to lose weight. Now, that's why everything is branded as a lifestyle, instead what's really a diet even though we were saying, "This is a lifestyle." It's like, now, we can even own that we want to lose weight. Again, even though it's not about the weight, it's okay if that idea, like you said, I didn't want to give up on myself. It's a very nuanced perspective.

**[0:11:30.1] ST:** Yes. One of the things, Ali, that spoke to me just through listening to the podcast is that you weren't selling a thing or a very prescriptive, like, "This will work for everyone." I know that that just wasn't a reality based on the myriad of programs that I tried, like, "Who said this will work for everyone?" I thought, "Okay. The next person who tells me that is going to be full of crap." When you didn't, I felt like, "Okay. This is someone who I kind of trust and I want to follow where this could lead me."

**[0:12:05.4] AS:** Now that you've been through about three and a half months of this total mindset shift, all these stuff, do you now — You said earlier when we talked before we were on camera, or we're on camera but on the podcast, that you finally realized that it wasn't you. It was the formula that you were trying to put yourself into. Can you talk about that a little bit for people who think they're trying something different, whether it's — But it's still this kind of pre-formulaic way of eating without ever addressing the emotional side. Tell me what that's been like to experience.

**[0:12:38.9] ST:** Yeah. This has been huge for me, and I will kind of tell you how I got to my current state of awareness with it. I think first is that through working with you and our group — Hi, everybody, if anyone is listening, in our Truce With Food group, a lot of the work did focus on our emotional stories and emotional well-being and getting to know that part of ourselves. Through that, I realized how relieving it was to address it and to incorporate it into my overall health.

As I started doing that and focusing on the emotional, I also became more aware that this diet culture, which is often so well-intentioned, and some of these health approaches as so well-intentioned, but it's still just a part of this financial, really part of capitalist society, this model that keeps you coming back for more and they're selling you something. That you're not good enough if you can't make it work really has been a part of why I haven't been successful, because part of my personal story is struggling with feeling inadequate at times, worrying about failing, worrying about being perfect, and the more I understood that, that's a story that I can heal within myself and that, really, this diet culture is just about perpetuating this myth that work harder, be more disciplined, where you're lazy and not a good person. That has been really freeing for me.

**[0:14:08.6] AS:** I love that you brought up that cultural conditioning because it is — Like you said, it's designed to keep us coming back for more and making it think it's us. That's like the epitome of a sick culture, like blaming the victim. America is great at that. Not that we're victims, but you can't come out of that place of disempowerment until you see that the system itself is disempowering.

Someone else saying, “I know what you need.” It’s like insane. We accept that, but it’s insane once you get out of that matrix.

**[0:14:44.5] ST:** It is, Ali. One of the things I so love about our work in Truce With Food is that you and my classmates helped me to identify what I need to do to work myself out of a situation or to handle it in a different way rather than telling me, “This is what you need to get better,” because that just hadn’t been working. I’ve seen whether it’s a medical practitioner, or a therapist, or someone who’s leading a diet program. That’s just — I need to have the tools to figure out what’s going to work with my very unique body and very unique mind and to have a confidence that no matter what happens in life down the road, this toolset is still going to help me solve for it.

**[0:15:37.1] AS:** I love that. Let’s move into kind of — I want to circle back first. You said finding out the emotional roots hugely relieving. I want to talk about that, because I always wanted people to understand that this is challenging. For those of you insatiable listeners in our community, often things need — If you’re attracted to this type of podcast, you need things to be challenging to stay engaged. That’s not a bad thing, because often times people don’t finish things because they’re bored. We don’t know that. You think it because you don’t have will power discipline, but it’s like, “Where is the challenge in this?” Which is why I think tougher matters and all these things are so popular, because they challenge us.

Also, because it is different, it is challenging, but I hear more and more from people, it’s relieving. It’s like, “We’re now going to talk about calories. Oh my God! You’re not going to give me a meal plan that I’m going to inevitably fall off of.”

Will you explain the real reality of kind of how it was to learn about your story, share as much as you care so people get what we mean about story and the cycle you’ve gone through with that of understanding the emotional piece.

**[0:16:43.1] ST:** Sure. Just before I do that, I think to underscore what you just said, entering something or beginning something from a position of there’s nothing wrong with you, let’s try to make you ever more well is vastly different from entering something from a position of a student efficiency. That’s how I had been entering any other sort of health program in the past, “There is

something wrong with me. I am broken. Let's heal," but not even heal, "let's just do the thing and you're magically going to be better."

Coming at this, just hearing you say initially when we all started, like, "All right. We're all at different points and we all have these things and it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you and we're not going to talk about calories." It caught my attention right away.

Yeah, the emotional work was interesting. It was unexpected for me, because I really had equated health solely with nutrition and food and exercise in the past. When I started, I believe you used an analogy for the group of a rusty hose and sometimes when you start doing some emotional work, the water might just gush out in kind of a crazy way and then it sort of clears then there's a more control flow. That's definitely the experience I had.

The minute that I was given the space to really think about my relationship with food even when it started, for me I found that was about age 9, which it just made me so sad, Ali, because I remember you did a little timeline and I was thinking about all the instance in my life where I felt inadequate or I felt uncomfortable, or pressured to be a certain way and it really broke my heart because I thought that young me was so much potential and promise, and what a tragic thing. I know so many other, it tends to be women, but I know it's men too, like have felt that way too and what more I could have been doing as a kid, like playing in the woods instead of worrying about how my thighs looked on the school bus.

Even going back that far, that seems like such a little thing, but it really helped me to recognize the importance of the emotional component of my personal story, which was necessary before I started to try to heal it.

**[0:19:19.7] AS:** What is it like to know that even though it was hard to look at that and sad, and it's interesting for you that it happened at nine, because research shows that girls' self-esteems peaks at nine, because then they start looking at the outside world to validate them. I'm oversimplifying this research, but what is it like to know that you could look at that, feel that, and then transform that into something useful?

**[0:19:44.5] ST:** I think the key part of what you just asked is also what was it like to feel that, and that's something that I've been trying not to do for a large proportion of my life. In my mind, I had "successfully", but moved beyond of that. That it felt silly to kind of dwell on something like that. I wasn't dealing with major tragedy. I'm just worried about whether I was fat or not.

To feel the permission, to feel my feelings was a huge part of that and to find ways to bring that out, because I still have a little resistance with feeling my feelings. It makes me feel very vulnerable and uncomfortable and I don't like to start crying. When I do it, it feels just so relieving. You used that word earlier and that's so accurate, and it also kind of clears that sort of clog and allows me to acknowledge it and then focus on the more fun things. Whether that's food and moving my body or being creative or just doing work at the office or whatever it is, spending time with my family. It's important for me to feel my feelings.

**[0:21:02.6] AS:** For people listening, I really want to — Stephanie brought up and framed it in such a great way of like health is not just diet and exercise and going to the doctor. It is this emotional component. I think the healthier you get, the more toxic you see our culture is in relation to emotions. If you're a man and if you're sensitive, you're a pussy. It's like the worst thing you could ever be called is something is something associated with the feminine, which the feminine archetype is associated with emotions. That's how we shame women, "You're being hysterical. You're overreacting." None of us come up with this idea that emotions that don't matter our own. It really is baked into our culture.

**[0:21:43.7] ST:** Ali, I realize that I've been almost tampering down both the emotions and my reactions to being told to sort of stifle them, because there had been moments even in my professional career when I had really demanding job and someone sort of said in a negative way, "You're being emotional about that," or "let's not get emotional about that."

Even just knowing that I needed to sort of soldier on with this calm, collected, perfectly polite approach at all times and then not ever dealing with those actual emotions, I realize how much that's taken its toll on my physical body too.

**[0:22:25.6] AS:** Is that not wild to realize that what you just described affects your food, because it could be like hours later, or just that cycle of fighting food. It's like invisible x-ray vision, once you start to understand your emotions.

**[0:22:40.7] ST:** It is mind-blowing, Ali. I truly thought when I started Truce with Food, that I loved ordering pizza and that I was like a special unique person who just have this penchant for junk food that other people couldn't understand. Once I realized that, Yeah, that meeting I had at work where I didn't feel a sense of power over what I saying or agency or didn't like the way it was going and didn't feel that I had the ability to turn it around. Yeah, about four hours later when I got home, I just wanted to lie on the couch and order a pizza because that would either numb me out or sooth me and I didn't even realize that's what I was trying to do, but there was a wounded part of me that that food was brought in to sort of try to take care of a nurture, which is the backward sort of relationship.

**[0:23:40.3] AS:** And you bring up a really good point, and for everyone listening, because this happened to me too. Diets and fighting food since Stephanie was nine, I was eight years old. When you've been doing that for so long it wears away the self-trust. You do start to feel wounded which — Very different. You feel very different in a way, but that difference also makes us think we're unique. In many ways, we are all unique in very great ways, but that perpetuates that, like, "No. I love food. You don't understand. It's just about me."

I think that's such an important point that you bring up, is like, "No. We all have the unique emotional reasons," but our bodies are wired for vitality. Can you explain a little bit about your surprise of the foods you like now and that it doesn't mean you're never going to not eat pizza, but what has been shifting as you remove the emotional weight? Was has happened with food?

**[0:24:38.5] ST:** Ali, a big part of my approach to food now is the concept of more and I feel like throughout Truce With Food I have been adding more "good things" in, and by good I just leave things that are nutritional and are what my body needs to thrive. As I've added those in, I find and I am truly craving them and this is something — I've heard other people say this and I thought, "That is such a load of BS. No one is actually craving a zucchini from a farmers market. Get over yourself." But I do.

I find on the days that I forget my lunch, I'm really bombed out because like, "Oh, man! I really wanted those veggies and that blood sugar balancing meal with all the chicken I cooked last night." I'm like, "I'm so bombed." Back in the day, I would have been almost secretly excited that I forgot my lunch because it was an opportunity to go out and eat something which at the time I thought was indulging that didn't support my health goals. It's been really fun.

This morning I made a smoothie and felt really creative about it and was like prancing around the kitchen doing it. I find that I love that now, to know more about where my food comes from. I really enjoy eating eggs that are from our local farmers market and I enjoy talking to the farmers at the farmers market, which is something I never would have done before, and actually finding out, not quite like an episode of Courtlandia, but like where does your food come from. It's been really exciting, and the more I add in the less I'm craving the "bad food" because I know that it's not going to make me feel good in the way that a healthier food does. I know that if I order the pizza, I can do that, but it might make me feel sluggish or it might make me have to run to the bathroom or something like that, so I don't do that as much.

**[0:26:37.4] AS:** You've un-normalized a lot of symptoms, like you discovered that loquat — I know everyone loves it, but that it makes you bloat and you were just permanently bloated and you didn't know you were bloated. Can you share that? You told me I could talk about it, so I'm not —

**[0:26:50.2] ST:** Ali, this is both a wonderful discovery and a tragedy for me, because —

**[0:26:58.2] AS:** I get it. I hear it.

**[0:27:01.2] ST:** Actually, during Truce With Food, I had some dental surgery and was just sort of like lying on the couch. Normally, I would have had several loquats in this recover period. I'm like, "Well, I'm not going to do that. It might not be the best thing for me right now. I'll just drink, still, water."

Over the course of a few days I realized, "Yup. That was bloating before." I had maybe three — This is embarrassing, but three or four loquats a day before and I just thought I was a gassy

bloated person sometimes, but it turns out that once I remove that from the equation then I was fine.

I wish I could say I've never bought it again, but at least now I know that it has that effect on my body and so if I do choose to have one, I know what I'm getting into and I'm making an informed choice. Yeah, I normalize those symptoms. I thought maybe just everyone felt this way and the better I started to feel, and this is continuing right now pretty dramatically. The better I start to feel, the more I'm able to identify parts of my health that aren't normal, that maybe deserve further exploration.

**[0:28:19.1] AS:** I love that. One of the things, to circle back, you talked about the concept of more. I think for people listening, they think that if they feel deprived and restricted, that equates to being good. I know I used to do that. It was like, "Oh my God! I'm good. I knew it was unsustainable but it was also like, "I must be doing something right if this is hard and difficult."

You said you've been adding more, and so can you explain how people should feel when they're embarking on any type of health efforts, somebody know it's sustainable.

**[0:28:49.5] ST:** Yeah. Again, and that's huge for me, because just so your listeners know, I've done the whole 30. I've done several of these things and I've done them properly, because part of my issue is that I wanted to do everything perfectly, and so it came as a great surprise to me when I've done something "perfectly" and then it was over and I sort of went back to my original habits. With this approach, it is sustainable because I've never told myself and you've never told us at any point absolutely do not eat this, or you must eat only a thousand calories a day or you can never have wine.

Now, it's about me figuring out, becoming at it from a point of what can I do to empower my body and my mind is so different than putting myself in a passive position where I'm being told what do to and not to do. That whole concept of more is like, "How far can I take this? How can I surprise myself? What activities can I add in that are more? Is it trying yoga? Is it going to an event that's happening locally that seems interesting and healthy? Is it being more creative? Is it eating the zucchini from the farmers market?" All of that, and in my life right now, it's that concept of more.

**[0:30:18.2] AS:** I love what you're describing, and I guess how I would frame is like you're on the offense. You're open rather than being on guard about, "What if I go off the plan? What if I —" You're kind of embracing the risk of possibility. We all love possibility and ahas but there's a risk inherent in all of that, and so you're taking that on now. Can you explain your relationship to risk?

**[0:30:43.6] ST:** Yes. Oh my gosh! Ali, this is a huge one for me, because I was adverse to risk before, which is interesting, because I wouldn't have said that about myself before I started Truce With Food. I would have thought I had moved to another country and I've done this and I've taken this job and I've tried this. When I really looked at it, I was scared of risk because it had the potential for a failure, and failure to me was really terrifying.

Now, this approach, and you've talked about it, fixed in a growth mindset on your podcast before, and I think that's so relevant, because I now feel that there's no right path or right outcome ever. It's really about making choices for yourself in each instance that lead you toward a better you or something that makes you feel good in the moment. I'm willing to try things now because I know I don't need to do them perfectly and there's no such thing as doing them perfectly.

If I can go to a yoga class for the first time and feel uncomfortable and feel vulnerable and know that that feeling doesn't feel run far away fast, that feeling means work through it and sit with it and allow yourself to be vulnerable, because it's scary to go to a new class when you're not an expert and you might also enjoy the class. That's been a huge shift.

**[0:32:12.3] AS:** What you just shared was gold for you guys listening. It's not the feelings themselves. It's what we make them mean. A lot of times when we're feeling vulnerable or taking your risk, we don't like, "Oh! I don't know how to do this." We shrink. We try to make ourselves small so that we aren't "exposed" and visible with that imperfection. What Stephanie said there is really important for everyone listening. If you're feeling uncomfortable, can you stay with that and work through it. What would you say are some of the tools that have helped you to stay with that that you can share with listeners?

**[0:32:46.4] ST:** Sure. The first for me is just knowing that that feeling is okay, that it doesn't mean something more than it is. I wanted it to make it mean something like this is my body looking out for itself. This means danger, run away. It doesn't actually mean that. It means I'm human and I'm having some doubt or I'm having some sadness or I'm having some anxiety and, okay, I've acknowledge it and therefore reduced its power and now let's continue on.

That's been huge for me, sort of just acknowledging those feelings and not giving them more power than they deserve. I think another one for me has been putting myself, giving myself the time and space just to feel this feeling. Whether it's listening to music that kind of evokes some of my deeper rooted emotions, like if I'm kind of feel — I've learned that when I'm feeling sad it can often show up as kind of testiness and snippiness with people I care about. For me, that's a sign that maybe there's something deeper there, just kind of go sit with that and let it out has been really helpful.

I also find, Ali, that at work even there are situations where, typically, I might be in a meeting and it's not going the way I thought or it's best — In the past I maybe would have just kind of checked out and not been a participant, and now I know it's okay to sort of, again, work through it. Voice whatever I have to say and if doesn't come up perfectly and I'm not lifted on the shoulders, the team, and told I'm the best employee ever, that's totally normal and okay. It can just be a so-so meeting and still be productive.

**[0:34:35.9] AS:** I love that. For everyone listening, what she's saying is stay with it to shrink it, because often times, like Stephanie was saying about that, when you turn on your emotions, they can feel really intense, but if you stay with them they shrink down to a size where you're not going to just go eat them away. You can kind of say, "Okay. What is this about?" I loved how Stephanie said, it doesn't mean I'm wrong. It means I'm human. At the heart of Truce With Food is like embracing the human experience of imperfection. Staying with them can be really powerful, because you also send the signal to your body that it's safe, that you can handle this. You've got this. Rather than running away from them, and then you can make better decisions and choices which is what agency is all about.

I also loved how you talked about you're realizing sadness comes off as a defensive snippiness, aggravation. Same with me — Or fear. For me, it's fear comes up as like a snippiness and

aggression towards others and it's like, "Ha!" Knowing that, you have more agency and choice. It's not about the other people. Often, when we're first, I think trying to deal with emotions, we project them on to other people because it feels so unsafe to own them ourselves.

For those of you listening, if you find that you're like, "I'm just angry or frustrated with this person," what am I feeling I think is a great question. It's like, "Why am I angry and frustrated," and just stay with it a little bit longer than you think you can. That's always how I think is the best place to start.

**[0:36:01.6] ST:** I think that's such great advice, Ali, and I had an example of that the other evening with my husband. We had a little of an argument in the kitchen and he said something that I became really defensive about and it sort of struck a nerve and I immediately felt very emotional and started crying and left the room. As I left the room — So that's typically where I would have left it. That would have been the end of it. We would have either — It would have resurfaced again the next day in a different form or we would have just never talked about it again.

After doing some of this work with you, I realized that that's not how I wanted to handle this situation. I let myself cry it out a little in the other room and then I went back in the kitchen and I was able to share with him, "You know, I don't think I handled that the way I wanted to," and I'm not apologetic for crying and feeling sad about it because that's something that I need to process, but I do wish that I hadn't shut down the conversation and shut you out. He said that's exactly how I feel when you kind of like leave the room crying. To me, you crying means you're shutting me out. This was just so nice to be able to talk with him about it in a way where I understood him better and he understood me better and we still were able to prioritize me feeling my feelings but in a constructive way. It's funny because I thought it was all about food, but now I'm seeing how this plays out in every aspect of my life.

**[0:37:34.3] AS:** I love that example because in a lot of self-help or what I see now pedaled to women is like, "Put yourself first," and it's like actually — This is kind of a hard truth. This is a radical truth people. Often, we are putting the identities that we want to protect first. In the past that would have made you feel really inadequate, which is part of your story. It's like, "I'm not going back there. You wouldn't have known any of these, but it's like, "I'm not going back there.

I'm putting myself first. I need to cry and vent." It's like you can prioritize yourself and your husband, because I bet your ultimate goal is for you guys to have as best of a relationship as possible.

**[0:38:12.7] ST:** Yes. Absolutely, because putting myself first doesn't mean it's exclusive of my relationship, that my relationship no longer is valued. I value my relationship and I value myself. When there's situations, like I even think about it the other night. I thought, "I feel like going for a jog." I told my husband I'd ran this other errand with him. Now, I'm approaching everything from the perspective of collaboration, like how can we do both. It's not in a sense of sacrifice, like, "Okay. Now, I can't go for a job because I told him I'll do this," or "I have to go for an hour-long job. Maybe I go for a 20-minute job and do some yoga later on and it still feels just as fulfilling." There's a creativity and a freedom that comes with this approach of making things work for you so that it's really a win-win in a lot of ways.

**[0:39:07.3] AS:** Didn't you — I think one of your letters, you said to me you realized how hard you were making life.

**[0:39:13.7] ST:** I was making life really hard, Ali, because things had to be done perfectly, again, or not at all to the point where if I've had friends coming over, I'd have to have prepared the perfect appetizers and have my house cleaned perfectly and be dressed up in a nice outfit, and it had to last so many hours. That meant we couldn't do anything else that day. How exhausting is that? If you take that and multiply it by every minute decision that needs to be made over the course of the day, I can totally understand why I'm depleted and, frankly, I'm shocked I wasn't ordering pizza every night because it's not sustainable.

**[0:39:57.1] AS:** I think that's like kind of the dark humor of this is like once you realize how depleted — Most people who are battling food. It's not just the food battle. It's that internal conflict, because ultimately what we're transforming in Truce With Food is the internal conflict between how we're feeling and what we think it meant, and the food. We're figuring out what works best for you.

It's like, "Oh my God! Considering how much I overthink and waste energy to not get the results that are possible, I'm doing amazing! The fact that I'm only bingeing at night and not throughout the entire day, I'm a rock star!"

**[0:40:35.1] ST:** Exactly.

**[0:40:39.0] AS:** I just have to give props to you and everyone in the group, because owning that truth — Again, this isn't about either or, but it's like what are — When I own emotions and I can be with them, there's all these possibilities and agency, because agency — Again, kind of the thumbnail sketch of that is that it's independent choice. When we view everything as a conflict, like, "I can either workout or run an errand with my husband," or "This is going to be so hard and I can't do X, Y and Z," we are missing out on all those collaborative possibilities that Stephanie is talking about. We can only get those if we own the situation and address it in a soft and vulnerable way like you did with your husband, like, "I didn't want to handle it that way.

**[0:41:25.2] ST:** Ali, the other fun part of that is that sometimes things don't work out — I'm not here to tell you and your listeners that now that I approach things from this collaborative win-win approach that every time I do it, everyone's so happy and it's great and I get everything I want, but I'm okay with that. The other night I decided to merge walking with the dog with going for a jog and I'll never do that again, because it stopped every five feet and I nearly tripped over and broke my arm. It was a disaster. It was like the worst jog I'd ever been in, but I kind of laughed it off and thought, "Okay. Next time I'm not going to bring the dog." At least she got out and I got out.

In the past, I would have thought, "Ugh! I'm a failure. I didn't workout today. I said I would. It went horribly. I'll never be athletic enough to do this," and I would have blamed myself.

**[0:42:24.1] AS:** I love that example, because it's showing that everything is data, right? "Oh, this is information. This is not that I'm a failure, it's that I can't run with the dog." Ultimately, that is what we're also doing in Truce With Food is so that we start to un-normalized these deficiencies that we think are inherent to us. Really, they're just behaviors that are driven by different emotional patterns and mindsets, mindsets more than anything.

I want everyone listening to start to think of this, “What does this tell me about the situation? Not myself.” How is this great data about what just happened versus about me as a person and my worth and all that stuff?

I’m so glad you said that this isn’t about everything going right, because I would have had to kick both of us off the podcast, because we got to keep it real. Yeah, this is not — I think it’s even better than riding off in the sunset, because at the same time, we want possibility in our lives. I said to someone the other day, “If someone told you how your whole life was going to end, would you want to know?” It’s like, “No!” It’s part of a game and a creative endeavor.

**[0:43:31.8] ST:** No. I don’t want someone telling me anything. I want to make it happen for myself.

**[0:43:37.8] AS:** Yes! I love that. I love that. Let’s switch over to kind of success. That’s kind of what you were grappling with in the program, is understanding your emotional patterns and these conflicts and how you’re making life harder for yourself. I love that you talked about you would have never thought of yourself as not a risk taker, because I think a lot of people listening to *Insatiable* and my clients are really kickass people. They’re out in the world. They’re kind. They’re considerate. They’re trying to do the right thing. They are thriving in their careers, and that’s all well and good, and there’s still part of all of us that are vulnerable and so I just kind of wanted to — That’s part of that middle discovery process in the program of people being like, “I would have never said that I felt inadequate,” or “I would have never thought that I try to accommodate other people.” I think it’s just important that people, if you’re listening, you can be all of these great things and still have sensitivities, and it’s okay. Being soft and vulnerable is the way we’re going to make it out of here alive if we do make it — Just keeping it real. It’s a tough news day for me people.

Let’s switch over — Before we move on to that, this is kind of backtracking. You had tried therapy before and you and I are both big proponents of therapy. It’s helped me before. It helped you, you said, stay with your emotions. How do you think this is different though from that deficiency, it’s okay to be vulnerable. Not that therapy encourages that as well, but what do you think — Let’s circle back to that, and I’ll let you take it from here, because you’re not in [inaudible 0:45:17.4].

**[0:45:17.1] ST:** Sure. Yeah. I think I am a big proponent of therapy and I'm a proponent of talking about it in a non-taboo way and I think it's great that so many people can take advantage of it and I know my mom's generation, that just wasn't an option, because it was so — It was a dramatic course of action. When my dad died, I went to therapy to deal with some of my grief, and then went back again more recently, just sort of revisit some of those feelings and just the general sense of malaise. It was an effective for me in providing a space to kind of process some of those emotions and cry and kind of get to the root of — I wouldn't even say get to the root of, but to process some of those emotions. Yet it also felt flat for me and I stopped getting value from it after that initial surge of the emotion was kind of out of me.

I think the reason that was is because it felt very prescriptive to me. There was someone in a bit of a hierarchy, in a bit of a position of power telling me that what I was feeling and the way I was, like putting a label on me. You are depressed right now. You have anxiety. Not even the right now. You are depressed. Period. That's not a great way for me to start a path of improvement, because it made me feel just empowered. It made me feel that I then just needed to sit back and listen to how I was supposed to react to situations or what I was supposed to say in a situation to counterbalance that.

This approach has been really different because you've post questions that I've been able to answer that give me that sense of agency that we've been talking about, and it's so different than someone saying, "The next time you feel sad, I want you to tell yourself all the thing you're grateful," or something like that. It's just like it doesn't work for me. I need to feel sad.

**[0:47:32.2] AS:** Yeah. That's a great example, and I also think that — All therapist are different. All lines of therapy are different. However baked in to our medical model is that emotions are a deficiency. It's like you shouldn't be sad. Tell yourself you're grateful. It's like you can be grateful and sad at the same time. I liked that you said it was a big of a hierarchy, because, no, I post questions because I know that you guys can handle it. You can work through it and I am trusting you in a way that I know — I've had good therapists and not so good therapists. Again, not putting all therapists in the same bucket, but for those of you listening, you want someone who's going to say, "I trust that you can do this, that you can find your way. Not that you can fit into my recommendations."

**[0:48:19.8] ST:** The other thing for me with that, Ali, is that I never felt like I was in on the conversation, that I felt like my therapist — And again, there's great ones and there's not so great ones and [inaudible 0:48:31.6].

**[0:48:32.5] AS:** Yeah. There isn't anyone. Yeah.

**[0:48:36.0] ST:** Yeah. For me, at this point in my life, I need to feel that I'm in on the process and that I'm a respected partner in healing me, because we're healing me after all. I do know my body and I am intelligent person and I do deserve respect of knowing where we're headed. For me, therapy was a bit about what's around the next turn or why am I doing this work. I needed that to be answered. Something that was great about Truce With Food was really feeling like we were all part of the process and we're in on the conversation and you're explaining why we're doing the work that we're doing and how it may benefit us.

**[0:49:23.4] AS:** Yeah. I always say I don't have the answers, but I've got the questions.

**[0:49:28.7] ST:** Sometimes that's all you need.

**[0:49:30.6] AS:** Then you can't rebel against what I said, because I didn't say anything. I'm just kidding. Just kidding. There is structure there, but it's flexible structure and it's not a plan, like plan. It's just you discovering yourself more and more.

**[0:49:46.6] ST:** I miss it already, Ali, which is so weird for me to say about a nutritional program.

**[0:49:53.6] AS:** I know. Our groups get really close. That's one of the things. Let's lead into the results, because when we were talking about before we got on air of like if you — Before this, you would have never thought of yourself as a group joiner. I joke that the community here tends to be curious skeptics. We're not into dogma. We don't believe in one-size-fits-all, so that makes for bad joiners, because when you tend to join groups you have to be like all-in. There's no decenters. Versus I love when you guys challenge me. I like the intellectual challenge.

Yeah, what are some of the results and new ways that you see yourself and you see what is required for lasting sustainable change to have a truce with food?

**[0:50:34.9] ST:** Sure. Oh my God, Ali, you're so right about not wanting to join a group. I reread a letter that I wrote to you at the very beginning of the program and almost half of it was about my skepticism of the program and also how I didn't want to participate and I was worried about that. That in itself has been a huge transformation. I think another —

**[0:50:59.4] AS:** What did you discover that was really about this part of you that you thought was, "I'm skeptical." What did you really discover that was?

**[0:51:07.7] ST:** You know what for me that is, it's an internal conflict with feeling that my participation needs to happen in a certain way which thereby does not feel genuine to me and I then feel like crap about the program. I'm being a fake version of myself. Again, that leads to burnout. Once I realized this is all about me participating in a way that was meaningful to me if and when I wanted to, that pressure was gone. I actually participate so much, which is incredible.

Yeah, there's been a lot of really great outcomes. Again, I'm just ending it now so I expect many more to come. I think a fascinating thing for me is even how I measure progress and success, because prior to the program that would have been very specific metrics, pounds lost, inches lost, distance gained to jogging or endurance with physical activity, completing some sort of challenge, like giving up food product for a certain number of days. By the end of the program, those are not things that I am tracking at all. Yet, I feel very successful and I feel so proud of myself.

There are things now, like I can sit with discomfort for so much longer. I can constructively improve situations that thereby don't leave me feeling as depleted at the end of the day so I'm not ordering the pizza. I'm loving exploring food. I'm loving exploring this whole new world of possibility which sounds so trite but is really true. What else is it out there? I've been having fun meeting new people and trying new things and being so curious and all of that has come out of this.

The other thing is there's more basic. I don't snack between meals typically anymore. I thought I had to snack. In fact I obsessed about what healthy snacks I was packing. Lots of good things.

**[0:53:20.2] AS:** Yeah. Talk more about — The food changes are symptoms that other things have shifted, but what are some of the things that have surprised you, because I think for people listening who haven't gone through the process, it's hard to explain it. This is my challenge, like explaining what it is because what it is doesn't exist in our language yet. What are some of those other food things? I remember you talking about you've realized there's such a difference in taste between farmers market eggs and store bought eggs, but how your eating changed and that you know that you eventually arrive at those more concrete metric goals that you may care about in the future or something or I don't know. That you still — I don't know. Explain your relationship to those old metrics, but then also some of the concrete stuff that you can point to.

**[0:54:06.6] ST:** Sure. What's interesting is that I didn't need to do a lot of emotional work initially to just clear a path for focusing on my nutrition which I love that the program let me figure that out in my own timeline and wasn't telling me like, "While you're doing this emotional work, I also need you to do this prescriptive amount of exercise and prescriptive diet, because —" Well, it hadn't worked.

It's been fun to see, so balancing my blood sugar has been at really at the root of all of my food work, and so I thought initially that I didn't need as much protein, that I didn't need as much meat. Even just realizing that and how incorporating more protein into meals keeps me full longer, balancing healthy fats. That's just been fun, because it solves for so many other things, like the snacking that I have changed or not craving sweets as much. I'm really been loving playing around with quality of food.

My husband right now has this project where he's growing different herbs on our back deck and I care about that so much more now. I love going to the farmers market and I notice the difference in taste. Like you said, between those eggs, I'd rather not eat really crappy beef. I'd rather get grass fed now. I think there's going to be more discoveries and changes to that overtime too, I anticipate, because I knew those things all along, but now I'm really feeling them

and getting the data and seeing how my body responds, which is different than reading an article.

**[0:55:46.6] AS:** That's a really important point, because I think I always want to simplify things for people and they're like, "I had heard this stuff before," and now that they've connected it to how it fits into the benefits for them, because you also — To circle back to when you were saying a therapist diagnosed you with depression, I think there's so much of a value in an accurate diagnosis, but then you also have to understand the root causes of those diagnoses, but part of this program is actually stripping away those identities of saying, "Look, maybe you are struggling with depression and can you still do X, Y or Z." It's less about depression and stuff, but more about this is how you see yourself and whatever you think that means if you're depressed. Let's strip that away and see what so much of these diagnoses of mindsets are because of emotional imbalances of physical imbalances.

For you now, that's a huge thing that a lot of clients are like, "I thought I was a snacker. I was just someone who needed a snack," or I would thought I was the person who loved junk food. No one understood that, "No. I love that pizza," and you're actually stripping those identities away rather than building them up [inaudible 0:56:57.3].

**[0:56:58.1] ST:** It's really liberating, that whole process. It's also liberating and a little scary and sad. Again, that sort of balance between vulnerability and sort of liberation, but to see that the same sort of emotional theme and roadblocks have been part of my life for the entire time. It's everything that I — The way I reenact to different situations in life, whether it's what to eat for dinner or which job to take or how to approach my relationship or interact with my mother, all of these things have this undercurrent of this story, and for me that's like struggling a little bit with inadequacy and perfection. Once i can recognize that and see that it's also deeply linked, it's been freeing.

**[0:57:52.8] AS:** Yeah. Can you describe your relationship with the scale, because I think at the beginning you weighed yourself every day.

**[0:57:58.1] ST:** I did.

**[0:57:59.4] AS:** Okay. How was that evolution? Because I know a lot of people — I know some people in our group gave away their scales, which was huge. It was like, “Yey!” For someone who’s like using that as a metric every day, what was your process for —

**[0:58:14.4] ST:** I was so deeply tied to the scale, because there was a period recently in my life when I lost a dramatic amount of weight and I didn’t keep it off, but I did it quickly and in the wrong way for me. It was all about cutting calories in a really dramatic way. As part of that, I felt success and I was a good person every time I got on the scale and saw that it had gone down about. I had so tightly connected scale with weight loss success, because it was almost like getting on the scale was making me lose weight. I kept weighing myself every day.

I also found that when I got on the scale and the number had gone up or I changed, I felt like crap. I felt like I was inadequate. Again, that sort of undercurrent throughout my life. I’m not off the scale completely, like some of my classmates, but I probably weight myself maybe every three weeks now. The big different about it is that I’m not looking for it to tell me if I’m on the right track or if I’m successful. It’s just a data point.

I actually have a little pep talk with myself before I get on the scale now and I say — This might sound ridiculous, but I say, “Are you ready to get on the scale? Why are you getting on it? If it’s a higher number, are you going to feel badly about yourself? If it’s a lower number, are you going to feel like it’s determining your success?” If my answer to those questions is yes, then I don’t get on it.

**[0:59:54.4] AS:** Oh my God! I love that. That’s ultimate agency. It’s like I have a choice here and I don’t know what I want — It’s going to be different. Your answer is going to be different based on where you are, and I think that’s great. Some people need — Continue to use the scale, but I would say from every day to three weeks you’re still — That’s such an improvement because of the mental space and not reacting when — You’re trusting yourself and your body more and more by saying, “I just need a data point every three weeks rather than every day,” where it can fluctuate based on your cycles, based on humidity, based on the salt, based on if you ate loquat or drank loquat and now you’re retaining water. I love that. That’s such a great tip for listeners.

**[1:00:42.5] ST:** The days that I choose not to get on, because I do feel like I am vulnerable in that moment and it could impact my mood for the day, I'm actually okay with that because then I know that I'm feeling something that day that needs to be dealt with in a different way, "Okay. Why did I feel like if I'm heavier that my day is going to be ruined?" Let's start there and address that, "Do I need to go cry and listen to music or do I need to constructively tackle something at work or like what's going on?"

**[1:01:15.5] AS:** Yeah. What is your relationship to your weight now? If you can share with people if you want, if your weight has stayed the same, if you've gained, or you've lost since Truce With Food, because what's it's like — The focus hasn't been on weight loss, so what's happened as a result? I think people are afraid they'll blow up if they — That they'll gain a ton of weight if they don't hyper-focus on it.

**[1:01:37.3] ST:** I didn't, and I think an interesting thing with my weight is that I didn't lose 30 to 50 pounds or whatever over the course of 12 weeks, and I'm okay with it, but I didn't gain any weight. I lost a couple of pounds, but that was not the focus. Just for it not to be the focus and still feel successful and to have changed my eating habits and how I moved my body and changed those habits and do all these emotional work has felt pretty great. I was able to experiment for 12 weeks with the quantity and the type of food and without even intense focus on the food and I didn't gained any weight.

**[1:02:16.7] AS:** I think that's such an important stage. Some people in Truce With Food gained a couple of pounds that they shared in the forum and some people say, "Oh, and then I eventually lose it once the emotional stuff dies down. I'm just going to be really realistic about that. This is not — In any long term weight loss solution, you cannot lose weight drastically because you're not really changing much. You're cutting your calories for that point in time, but I think that's such an important stage where especially for a way to stay stable of like, "I can do all these stuff. I can go outside, what I thought was good or bad, and my weight doesn't change." There's a huge trust that is recalibrated, self-trust with our bodies that I think we all have to go through when we're coming out of this battle, this conflict with ourselves.

Knowing that, what would you say now as you — What are your questions that you have now and that you don't need to focus on now so that you can continue to go and what you think

really goes into that formula if weight loss is your goal. I'm assuming because you're on the scale, it may be, but I have never even asked you.

**[1:03:22.4] ST:** I think speaks volumes, about your program? It's a weight loss program where we never talk about weight or even —

**[1:03:31.0] AS:** I always say I can't promise weight loss. It's about healing your relationship to food, which is often weight loss is a side effect.

**[1:03:38.2] ST:** Yeah. For me, it is still a goal, because — From a health standpoint, I would like to lose more weight and to lose weight, but I think my timeline for it has completely shifted. The funny thing is I never really — I haven't even talked to you about this, Ali, but I'm actually okay with myself right now and I'm overweight. I'm not at my health weight target, but I'm still okay with that and I know that I'm going to get there. It just might take my time. It might take longer than some people, because I'm on my time table and I'm doing it in a way that is sustainable and I feel really positive about it. I'm not burned out after this program. I'm not looking forward to like my next cheat meal where I can have some fries and ice cream. Not even remotely. That is, for me, a dramatic difference.

**[1:04:38.7] AS:** Yeah. I love that, because — A lot of the popular weight loss programs now. I look at Weight Watchers or Beach Body, it's like, "Oh! Here's accountability." Ultimately, for it to be sustainable — I've never held any of you guys accountable, but you're continuing to free yourself which creates the "accountability". I love hearing you say that, "I'm not burnt out and I want to keep doing this, because I'm living my life," and I love that you're happy with yourself. That's the only — I always say we can't hate ourselves into a loving relationship with ourselves. We have to learn to love ourselves into a loving relationship. I think that's the sustainable path.

I guess my question is how do you see yourself now pursuing that goal and what questions do you think you need to focus on prior to maybe before it was as calorie deficit. What is the focus now?

**[1:05:35.2] ST:** I think now — Because the nutrition piece remains sort of fun for me. I'm still experimenting with foods. I think I'm focused on refining that. Really getting to know, "Okay.

Now that I'm making my lunches most days and making most meals at home and using different ingredients, what is that next level look like for me? Can I start to address them other days when I feel bloated or if I got acne? Do I want to experiment with trying no dairy for a month or trying no gluten just to see how I feel and how my body responds?"

Getting even more playful with that and even more refined with that will be fun. Maybe my portions might be smaller or larger for certain meals. That next level of refinement with food. Then in terms of exercise for me, I'm still searching for my favorite things and my favorite ways to move my body. I'm exploring a bit where there's resistance in wanting to do that. Sometimes I still find myself saying like I don't have time to do it and I know that's not actually true. Digging into the emotional part of that and seeing is there something else going on there and continuing to explore.

**[1:06:52.0] AS:** What about the emotional piece of your story?

**[1:06:54.3] ST:** Yeah. I'm definitely feeling a greater sense of agency and much more like boss these days, and yet I still have a lot of work to do. I think that, for me, un-normalizing situations where I've taken a more passive seat at the table and whether that's finding new ways to be creative. During the program, I even like did a DIY, make your own lamp project and wrote a poem and things that I normally wouldn't do. Finding additional creative outlets and additional ways to resolve conflict at work or things that leave me feeling empowered in all aspects of my life rather than running away from them or numbing out or turning to food or finding a myriad of ways to sort of squash these down to really dig in and face them. To me, that's what that phrase lean in could mean. How are you going to do that?

**[1:07:59.4] AS:** Oh my God! I love that. Yeah. How can we look at this situation more creatively rather than restrictive? Because I think the diet mentality is like, "All right. Take up less and less space. Be more and more restrictive. More and more disciplined." You're saying how can I be more free? How can I have more in my life, which is ultimately super sustainable. I think on a deep cultural level, what gets me so passionate about this is how can women show up, and men, show up as they are. Not stripped of the patriarchal conditioning that we all are a part of, but it being safe to be seen that way in their creativity, their voice, their expression of life, whatever that looks like. Whether it's raising children, whether it's your career, whether it's how

you are in relationships. How can I be more of myself ultimately, I think, is the biggest “weight loss tool/peace tool” we have.

**[1:08:57.7] ST:** Ali, the world needs us in our rawest, messiest creative form. We need this more than ever right now. I just keep thinking of like if I hadn't been focused — It's not a regret, because I am where I need to be right now, but if I hadn't been focused on diet, the old version of diet for me, what else could I have been focusing on and contributing to and offering the world? It's a very dramatic sort of statement, but it does motivate me.

**[1:09:30.2] AS:** Oh, I have thought about that so many times because I spent 18 years and I'm like, “What would I have done?” I remember being like, “Oh my God! This is a hobby.” Some people like art. Some people are learning languages and I'm learning how to lose weight again, but never learning. I never succeeded, but I know all the plans that are out there, so I totally understand. That's why I'm always packing everything in. I'm trying to make up for lost time or something.

Two more questions? Do you have time for them? I know we've gone

**[1:09:59.5] ST:** I do. Of course.

**[1:10:00.8] AS:** Okay. Great. One of the things also as a result is you're starting to look at your medical practitioners and providers differently, and I think that's a really important piece. You said you're looking for people who want to take the longer, slower approach now, whereas that might not have been true. Can you explain a little bit about how you're shifting your medical team now, or your healing team. I think sometimes when we say medical, we then think doctor and hospital. How do you think of your wellness team now?

**[1:10:29.5] ST:** I love the term wellness. A huge shift has happened for me because I feel more trust in myself and know what I need and what my body needs, and if I don't know, I know the way I'd like to explore finding out. During Truce With Food, actually one of our classmates referred me to an acupuncturist here in Chicago because she knew I was curious about trying it, and I've been seeing her and that's something I never would have done and I love it. Again, with the Chinese medicine model, it's slow and it's long. With food, it's slow and it's long and there's

a patience required but not in a bad way. It's also a comfort because it means that if something can change for the better on a dime, then it could change for the worst on a dime.

Like with our food, if I have a cookie, who cares if I'm eating mostly foods that support my health goals? With this, I really feel like it will be sustainable and maybe it won't always acupuncture. Maybe I'll try — I went to my primary care physician recently who when we took my weight, it's like, "Okay. What are you going to do about that? Why do you think you're heavier than you were last time?" She told me about the classic calories in and calories out model which go figure it. I never heard of that before.

**[1:11:56.2] AS:** No way! Can I Google that? Where did you get that info?

**[1:12:01.1] ST:** That is really some groundbreaking stuff right there. Wow! 1,200 calories a day? Amazing.

**[1:12:07.7] AS:** Never would have thought about.

**[1:12:08.5] ST:** Lean proteins. No.

**[1:12:12.6] AS:** Vegetables? How do you spell that? Let me write that down.

**[1:12:16.1] ST:** Then when I went to this acupuncturist and she said what is your — She didn't even say what are you doing about your weight? She said, "What is your nutrition currently like? What is your sleep currently like? What are you doing for spiritual practice and to relax?" When it got to the part about nutrition I tried to explain Truce With Food, which is always — It's complicated answer for me, but as soon as I mentioned to her that we focused on blood sugar balancing meals, her eyes lit up and she was like, "Oh, my God! You're definitely on — That's the right thing for you right now. That's amazing." She loved it. Just knowing that her receptivity to that is what I need in my life right now, and being able to discount my primary care physicians opinion of how I should lose weight and yet still go to her if I need lab work done is a very different way of being for me.

**[1:13:09.4] AS:** I love that, because it's not all or nothing. We're breaking down that all or nothing mindset. It's like my doctor is good for my lab work, but for these other things — That's total agency. What choice do I have here and where can I go get the information I need? I love that.

**[1:13:25.2] ST:** Yeah. If I need a Pap smear, I'm not going to the acupuncturist.

**[1:13:32.7] AS:** I don't think they can do those anyway. Maybe it's some shadier part. All right. One of the last things that you said that was so important, and this is kind of emotional patterns for people, is you said, "I have to find my own pace. I have to find my own way." I want you to talk a little bit about how you came to surrender or accept that, because I think, again, dieting wears away our self-trust. This isn't like we do one diet and then we doubt ourselves. This is patterns, and then this is even telling you when you've lost — We've all lost weight on diets, but then feeling like it still isn't enough and you're worried about gaining it back and like really having to find your own path is the ultimate self-trust. The obstacle is the path.

It's like, "I've got to trust this." What do you have for people who are listening — Recommendations or tips or would like to share kind of as a signing off to people who are listening and they don't want to diet anymore. They're tired. They want to maybe start to address the emotional stuff and they're like they don't want to give up on themselves either, which I think sometimes is the other extreme of body acceptance, like resignation. That's not always this case with body acceptance. What has helped you to be okay, and we have to relearn it again and again, that it's okay to do things my way on my path and my own time. Can you leave us with any parting wisdom?

**[1:14:53.5] ST:** Yeah. I just want to say that I know what that feels like. If anyone is listening, it actually makes me tear up a little bit, because that point of almost being a resignation, no one wants to be there. You often feel that you can control other aspects of your life and it just makes me so sad there's so many people feel that way at some point. I felt that way before it started and it felt like the end, like my last resort, but I have to that now it really feels like the beginning and like I'm poised to continue. That feeling is incredible. I start to get emotional.

What led me to take the leap really was just a belief that there is another way to approach this. You can have trust in yourself. You can pave your own path. All of these little micro-decisions you make in the day are important. Whether you are reading something that you post on your blog, Ali, or whether you're listening to a podcast episode and it takes you a year to get to a point where you're signing up for a program like this, or whether you're going to do it on your own. You want to try just incorporating a new vegetable today or whatever it is. That's your agency and your opportunity for agency and you can go into a crappy meeting at work and turn it around because you're worthy of doing that.

**[1:16:25.6] AS:** I love that. Breaking it down into the micro-decisions, like that's so important and that's not like highly marketable or highly sellable, like a shake or like a plan, but that's where the change happens in the trenches and those micro-decisions.

**[1:16:43.5] ST:** Those are decisions that we all can make. I think it's important that you don't need someone who you perceive as having more knowledge or power than you have to tell you how to do this stuff. You just need a space to be able to exercise it on your own, to workshop it on your own.

**[1:17:04.2] AS:** Ooh! I love that. Find a space, whether it's a journal, whether it's a good friend who won't give you advice, who will just listen, or someone — If it's therapist for you, or a coach that you have been following and you think could help create that space for yourself in any way, or the forest. I like going out in the trees, because I think one of the things you found is if you stay with those emotions and reflect, you got the answers that you needed, right?

**[1:17:30.4] ST:** Absolutely. That was incredible, Ali. I went into thinking that I needed to outthink myself and sort of I'm going to sit with my feelings and I'm going to come to a different conclusion. When, really, I just felt my feelings and things surfaced that were so spot-on. It was a different way of problem solving. Something I never done, and I came to some really deep and really accurate — I don't know, epiphanies almost by just sitting with my feelings. They just surfaced. I didn't have to outthink them.

**[1:18:10.5] AS:** That's brilliant. I think for everyone listening, that we gave a lot of good tips today and tools and I think the places is staying with that frustration or that desperation if you're

in that space or if your somewhere else in your journey, like staying with your emotions so you know what choices you do have, because there is much more out there. They're often in our blind spots in the beginning, which could be frustrating. I think what Stephanie's point is sit with them and stay there and you can't just see what arises from your intuition rather than your brain, and surprise yourself. That was one of the big ways that you approach life with now, which I love, is like, "Let me surprise myself here." Listeners, try to surprise yourself. Let us know how it goes.

Stephanie, thank you so much for your time. I know that you're a very busy women and I appreciate this insight into the emotional side of things and really making sure that we see that piece and address that and people who are willing to address that and willing to empower us to be our own experts, maybe skip that plan.

**[1:19:15.6] ST:** Thank you so much, Ali. It's been such a pleasure.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[1:19:21.5] 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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