

**EPISODE 93**

*“MW: Realizing that maybe those things that made them feel good to live into that identity to always be the one who’s working latest, taking on the extra project or being the great mom and picking everybody up and organizing everything, being the number one friend, all of those identities. Now, they’re starting to be friction where they’re sensing that they haven’t quite put their finger on it, but they’re realizing that there’s this low grade simmering unhappiness though. I think some of the cultural conditioning especially that we see today in feminism, and this might be a little controversial, but —*

*AS: Don’t worry! I love controversies.*

*MW: Is this idea of a strong woman is independent and does it on her own and is completely self-sufficient, but there is such thing as healthy dependents”*

[INTRO]

**[0:01:02.8] 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]

**[0:01:44.0] AS:** Welcome to episode 93 of the Insatiable Podcast; *Three Self-Care Myths That Keep You Stuck, Broke and Eating Treats*. Self-care has become a buzzword and catchall solution to anything that ails you. Marketers have pulsed on this as a way for women especially to empower themselves were making a lot of money. The kind of self-care that leaves you feeling replenished, not broke or indulging in wine and carbs are really rarely identified and

discussed. Instead, you end up with temporary relief yet long-term depletion of your bank account and trusting yourself if you don't have time for yourself care routine.

In today's episode, Melody Wilding, a licensed clinical social worker and coach and previous insatiable guest, episode 78, and I discuss how to get out of this vicious cycle. First, how the most common advice to get you to buy and do self-care is to put yourselves first. This is actually self-care you're already doing but don't know it and it's why you're so depleted. We'll explain what we mean by that and how to get out of this cycle. Second, key mental shifts to diffuse life stress and make life more fulfilling for you and your loved ones. Lastly, some of our all-natural, totally free solutions for deep self-care.

Melody and I are running a workshop in New York City called Radical Self-care on Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. If you're interested, check out [alishapiro.com/radicalselfcare](http://alishapiro.com/radicalselfcare).

Enjoy today's really, really fun episode.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:03:28.9] AS:** Hello insatiable listeners. Welcome to episode 93; *Three Self-Care Myths That Keep You Stuck, Broke and Eating Treats*. I'm here with Melody Wilding. Before we get to this topic, and I'm laughing because eating treats is just so funny to me, but that's what I always called what I did in high school. I love treats and I loved eating treats.

Before we get to these self-care myths, two announcements, Melody and I are hosting a radical self-care workshop which will be on Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> in NYC, Melody's hometown, from 6 to 9 p.m. in midtown Manhattan and we are going to be basically giving you really concrete solutions to the myths that we're talking about today. We'll obviously give you some steps today to get started and to really taking genuine self-care that works.

Come see us in New York City if you're in the tristate area. We're happen to be in town. You can sign up at [alishapiro.com/radicalselfcare](http://alishapiro.com/radicalselfcare). It's 50 bucks before September 1<sup>st</sup>, 75 after that, and it's going to be a great night, right Melody?

**[0:04:43.2] MW:** That's right. I hope everyone joins us.

**[0:04:45.4] AS:** Yes. Yes, it will not be the things you've heard before. No manis and pedis. Not that those are bad, but we'll get into why they're kind of — They fall short of the relief you're after.

Second, I am running a program this fall about how to stop falling off the wagon and actually turning your emotional stress that drives you to eat into more fulfilling outcomes. It will be open for registration after Labor Day. It will run six weeks and it's 500 bucks. Get on my list at [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com). It has a lot of intellectual property from Truce With Food to get you off the falling off the wagon cycle.

Alright Melody, are you ready to talk about these self-care myths that always made me eat treats?

**[0:05:34.3] MW:** I think that I can relate to being in that boat. When I was younger that was my MO too, so I can totally relate to it. It was an escape for me.

**[0:05:45.3] AS:** Yeah. It's funny you use that word escape, because one of the myths we're going to talk about today is that it has to be expensive. I see a lot of these health and lifestyle brands promoting escapes, like travels. They're like detox escape, or whatever the escape is according to the fitness brand and I think it's such a metaphor for we're all trying to feel like we're escaping our lives and sometimes I feel like that when I've had a tough week. How about you?

**[0:06:15.3] MW:** Like this one. Yeah, as we were just talking about some things in the air.

**[0:06:19.1] AS:** The threat of nuclear war.

**[0:06:21.6] MW:** That too. That's out there.

**[0:06:24.0] AS:** I'm going to down laughing. No, I'm just kidding.

**[0:06:26.8] MW:** It's one of those days. I think too with that idea of escape your life, find that bliss for just a few days, is this idea that are lives on the regular are something that we can't handle. Therefore, we need to carve out these periods of time where, "Oh! For just a few days you can feel in control by leaving everything behind because your regular life, you're not in such good shape there," and I think that's the narrative that we're hoping to change is that it doesn't have to be that way. We're calling BS on that idea, that your life and everything is out of your control and that you do have other choices than to just pick up and leave it all behind for a few days and pay a couple of grand to do so. Let's get you in a place where you feel like you have the mental, emotional and physical toolset to be able to handle it on a daily basis.

**[0:07:24.2] AS:** Yes! Mic job. So many of my clients, if they've gone away on vacation or they go on a health retreat, they're like, "I lost weight and it was like — And I felt so good." I'm like, "Of course! You left all your stress behind." When you can do that, of course it's easier, right? The challenge, and I think actually the ultimate fulfillment is, like you said, you have more choices in your life and I really do feel like — I mean I was joking about of course I had some tough weeks, but after 10 years of really learning how much agency and choice I have, that my life feels like a vacation and not like I need to escape from it where I'm just so worn out all I do is sit on a beach. It really does feel fun and invigorating and challenging.

Everyone can get there. I am not special. In fact, I think I'm one of the like biggest complainer, not complainers, but defensive. I'm defensive about — Because I — Not defensive, but I don't trust the safety of life a lot. That's been kind of my journey, but that's kind of a whole other topic. I'm not quick to make changes or whatnots as my point. I'm very slow to make changes which is why I do the work that I do. I'm trying to learn what I teach.

Getting back to those escape, I think one of the ways that people sell those escapes is one of the first myths we want to talk about, which is you have to put yourself first. I hear this all the time especially directed at women, right? I want to talk about today, that's a myth and how actually we are always putting ourselves first in ways that are unconscious even when it seems like we're not.

Yeah, do you want me to —

**[0:09:09.0] MW:** Yeah, you kick it off. You kick it off.

**[0:09:11.2] AS:** Yeah. I started to examine this several years ago when I first started in the online entrepreneur space. My business had really started in person and I saw all of these female entrepreneurs telling people like me that we had to put ourselves first and to do self-care and I was like, “My whole life is about me. I don’t have kids. I have a supportive husband. I have enough privilege that I — I’m working really hard and I have enough privilege where my business is all about me. Yes I’m helping people and I love it, but I’ve chosen this.”

The more I started to get really deeper with clients I realized that we had these identities that we love about ourselves. They’re the side of ourselves that we feel confident in. What happens is we put those identities first. I’m going to give you some examples. Entrepreneur, right? Business owner. It could be renegade, right? A lot of my clients think they’re different. They love those identities about themselves, or great mom, right? Great mom. Really hard worker, top performer, really busy, right?

There’s these identities that we love about ourselves that are — What’s important is in these identities, in our cultural conditioning especially for women is women get recognized when their martyrs, when they put themselves last. That’s how you know you’re a good worker, if you put everything — If your work first and yourself last. This is why a lot of people think there’s a disconnect between taking care of their health versus being a good worker, or if you’re a good mom. Only if you put your kids completely at the top of the list and you’re dragging at the end of the day. Otherwise, you start to wonder, “Am I a good mom?”

There are these identities that we protect and that make us feel like we’re not putting ourselves first, and this is kind of some tough medicine. Maybe I should’ve left this at the end, but we make — Because we love these identities, we actually make these roles harder for ourselves and we make life harder for ourselves than necessary.

Again, I want to bring in that cultural conditioning martyr piece and I joke with my clients who are Catholic, they have extra work to do, because they lived and breathed that for so many years. We are putting ourselves first. It’s just in ways that we feel good about and that doesn’t leave time for other things including just the space to replenish the time away from work. Realizing

that as a parent, often, when you prioritized yourself you're also sending your kids a message. Yeah, any thoughts on that?

**[0:11:54.3] MW:** Yeah. I think what's interesting and where I think a lot of client as we've talked, at the point they come to us they're realizing though that there's sort of this internal battle happening where they're realizing that maybe those things that made them feel good to live into that identity to always be the one who's working latest, taking on the extra projects, or being the great mom and picking everybody up and organizing everything, being the number one friend, all of those identities. Now, they're starting to be friction where they're sensing that they haven't quite put their finger on it but they're realizing that there's this low grade simmering unhappiness though, but they keep doing the same things. That worked before. That made them feel great, but now it's starting to lead to that — There some other side of them saying — Nagging at them that, “Is this all there is? Is it going to be like this?”

I have a lot of client say this to me that they can't tolerate the thought that their life will be like this for the next 5 or 10 years, and that's a big wake-up call to have them realize that what they're doing now. I work with a lot of clients who are your typical over functioner particularly in the work sense. They are that martyr at the workplace who will drop everything to be there for a project, work over the weekend without saying a word, but they're starting to realize that that is no longer in alignment with who they are if they're still so attached to this identity that they have.

I guess I wanted to turn the tables on you a little bit and ask, how did you realize — What got you to the point where you've realized you needed to kind of distance yourself from some of those identities? What was that moment for you?

**[0:13:47.9] AS:** Yeah, it was a great question. Because I'm slow to change, I was questioning this for like a year. Again, it's glorified. I think to your point, we get a lot of credit for these martyr identity and there is a point where they do stop working. For me it was actually in 2011. I was diagnosed with hypothyroid. It was a bodily wake-up and I had an integrative physician who was — I was like, “I don't want to go on meds. I just don't want to go on meds,” and I knew that there could be different solution. She was like, “You need to take a semester of grad school.” I was like, “Ugh!” It was hard because I just want — I love grad school, but running a business and going to grad school at the same time is insane, but my over performing and over functioning

identity was like — I also didn't know what I was getting into and I think a lot of us can be that way.

I took a semester of grad school. I also did a heavy metal detox and got my thyroid back and added some nutritional support and got my thyroid back into balance, but I started to realize that — That happened, but then I also started to realize that if I was going to do this long-term, I was going to have to learn to pace myself and I had to start figuring out how I was making things harder for myself. That was the turning point for me.

Then in 2012, actually — Actually, I was getting married that year, so it was kind of like, “Oh! Okay, I want to enjoy this time of like — Carlos and my mom helped plan the wedding more than I do, because I’m not a really a detail person, but I had picked the venue that I like and all that stuff. It gave me permission to be like, “I'm never going to be getting married again,” that I can take this time away.

As I started to think of how I could make my business more sustainable, I raised my rates, because I have the expertise that warranted it and I started to test, like, “I am “falling behind”?” and I realize that I had made up the timeline. No one else had. It took a lot of exploration, and then in 2012 I was doing work with a therapist, an imagery therapist, Bob Schoenholtz who we've interviewed on *Insatiable*, and I got depressed that year and I just couldn't do anything.

My business definitely slowed down that year, but it also didn't fall apart, and so it was going through that that I realized I don't have to take the path that everyone else is. It doesn't mean I still don't get hooked sometimes and there are times that I do have to work more, but then I know now that I have to equal time of like shutting the laptop off at five. Maybe I've got to take a Monday off. The eclipse is coming up, Carlos and I are going to go to the Science Center and watch the eclipse, and I've been working a lot lately. I don't know. Is that clear? It was kind of like a back and forth. Really, for me, it's always my body. My body always signals to me that you're doing too much, and because I value the emotional piece so high. Yeah, it was a work in progress and understanding my patterns and realizing I think a really big realization, and this is one of the tips and tools we were going to give it at the workshop, is learning the word and. That isn't either/or, of how can I be a successful business owner and walk my talk about prioritizing my health.

I'm really big on integrity and truth and walking my talk, and so learning that word "and" opened up a whole new world for me. How about you?

**[0:17:16.5] MW:** Yeah. I think you got to a very important point about this over functioning, sort of martyr mentality, which I definitely relate to as well. All my life I was sort of that high achiever, drive forward, but I was also very much in the helper role in my family and just in my friendships. I was always that person — I was the good listener, which everything has an upside and a flip side to it. To be the good listener, sure, it's wonderful. My empathy is probably the key skill in running my business and being an entrepreneur, that emotional challenges, but the dark side to that is just throughout my entire life and I think this is a theme I've seen with my clients, and I would love to hear from you, is that you burn out or you push down that radar, that spidey sense, I call it, of being able to recognize your own needs. You silence all of that, and we develop these are survival strategies around protecting ourselves.

Probably a lot from early experiences, maybe you were flooded by a feeling of everything was out of your control. I know that's personally something. If there were situations happening at home or in my life that just felt beyond my control, I would just sort of shut it out, but by doing so I also stop listening to my body. I kept going on, kept having my hand in that bag of chips rather than listening to, "Hey, maybe I'm full," or "Maybe this makes me feel pretty shitty all the time." Not listening to any of that and just sort of using all of these Band-Aid solution which we do as adults when we're on that crusade for healthcare or self-care, rather. We use all these Band-Aid solution that we think are going to get us there, but we've never really develop that sense of listening to ourselves, listening to — In our last conversation we talked a lot about how our emotions, the signals that we're getting from our body, our thoughts. All of that is real data that should factor into our daily decision-making, but we've just developed all of these hardening around it.

**[0:19:39.4] AS:** Yeah. That's episode 78; how to transform your emotions into power instead of over eating for those of you listening, and that is so true and that's undervaluing the bodily response as much as our cognitive response is, again, a cultural conditioning that values ratiion and logic over intuition and feeling.



I think about I'm not a parent and I'm not claiming how to judge with parents, because God, people are judged enough and as if there's like a right way to do due parenting, but I think we do that with kids too, right? If we can't do it as parents, then it's like kids are having all of these behavioral issues and we're only focusing kind of on the mental versus, "What are they eating? Are they sleeping?" I think they're overstimulated as much as we are as adults and it starts from childhood, I think. Yeah, we are overloaded in our bodies and then we retreat to our heads.

Like you, I mean that was part of my issue with food is I was never even in my body. I had detached after a couple of traumatic experiences, and because I got credit for being brainy, it was totally cool to hang out there.

**[0:20:50.3] MW:** Exactly.

**[0:20:51.4] AS:** Yeah. I think the big take away is to start to realize that are you really putting yourself first in ways that are burning you out, and look for the and there. Yes, our culture celebrates martyrs, female martyrs, and I think a lot of us it's — I mean I'm great at that. Carlos and my sister say, "Pobrecita," which is like, "Oh, poor you," in Spanish, because I'm great at doing that at various situations.

I just do want to say one thing about the parenting thing, because any chance I can get to bring in cultural conditioning, because the culture we live in is so sick and so detached. I am not to give any parents out there, especially mom's advice or recommendations, but I do think it's important to realize that how we parent today and the expectation that the parents, both dad and mom, because I know a lot of stay-at-home dads get thrown under the bus is a recent new phenomenon.

Historically, children were born to support the family, to farm, they were work, right? Mom and dad both worked at home in the farm. There wasn't mom's works and dad's work. It wasn't this idea that mothers were better caretakers.

I'm reading a book right now on the sexism of science and the beauty myth, which talks about how we've put women into these roles that burn them out. Then we're in the industrial revolution, which is when men started to leave the house and women stayed home, but if you

look at even Downton Abbey, the uber wealthy and privileged, they had caretakers. Even though they had all the time in world, they were never with their kids 24/7.

I think sometimes we have to unpack where did this idea come from, that the mom is the one who parents that stays home and has to be with their kids all the time. Granting each child is different, each parent is different, but I just kind of want to put that out there for people, that this idea that the whole family unit first has to revolve around children, that women are in charge of it and that they have to throw themselves under the bus is very much just a product of a culture that doesn't value women thinks that they are better homemakers than scientists, and it's all bullshit. Everyone could choose to do what they want, but just know how you've been influenced.

**[0:23:04.3] MW:** Yeah. I think that brings up an important point that we need to question the responsibilities, the mantles that we're taking on in our life and really ask yourself, "What am I actually responsible for in terms of how I show up at work, how I show up in my relationships, how I'm showing up for my kids?" Because what I tend to see a lot is that — I always say this to my clients and I might have said this in the last podcast, so forgive me if I repeat myself, but you really do teach people how to treat you. If you keep over functioning on everybody else's behalf, then just sort of turn this on its head that then you are actually robbing people of the opportunity to your kids, especially. This is a big thing in parenting. Not giving your kids the opportunity to fall on their face, to fall down and cry and get up and realize that, "Hey, it's going to be okay. You'll be fine. It's a scratch or a bruise," but that resilience especially at such a young age is so important.

You also have to give yourself that grace too, that if you don't — I always tell people, especially when it comes to dieting or working out, we tend to think in these terms of black and white, and you talk about this a lot too, that if I'm not 110% on my diet, then why even do it? We have to look within those shades of gray to give ourselves that, "Okay, I did pretty well this week. I'll get back on the wagon next week." There has to be this wiggle room and you have to let other people fail. You have to let other people make their own mistakes. You can't just keep trying to exert control over everything, and you have to give yourself that opportunity too. I think that's kind of a flip on this whole self-care mentality as well.

**[0:25:03.9] AS:** I'm so glad you brought that up, because in one of our last Truce With Food calls, I was kind of joking because my clients are pretty progressive. They tend to be feminist. Not all of them, but a lot of them, and I was joking with them that if we we're talking politics, they need to come a little bit more to the center. They can't always be so forgiving. A lot of my clients were practicing that and they're like, "Oh my God! It's amazing," because what they see is the other person rises to the occasion, right? So it's thinking that you're letting someone else fail, but what you're really doing is having them see what they're capable of, and we do cut that off from people. We have to expect that people are stronger and more creative and resourceful than we give them credit for, and part of — This is like a vicious cycle. Part of why we don't do that is if we haven't resolved our own emotional sensitivity, we become oversensitive to everything, right? We assume the other person is feeling is a sensitive and in pain or struggling like we are, but that's not always the case. I'm not trying to say life isn't hard and challenging, obviously. Neither of us believe that.

When we start to tend to our own emotional protection, we all of a sudden start to see other people as stronger and more capable and everybody wins. It becomes that and and win-win. I think for everyone listening, I think the takeaway tip for here is find that and and that black-and-white thinking nears either/or instead of and.

With a lot of my clients, it's like, "Oh! My food." If I have food allergies, or I'm eating healthy. I'm going to have to be a short order cook for my family, and it's like, "No! There is a lot of overlap." Where is the and? Just like vegan and paleo, "Am I going to be vegan or paleo?" Guess what? Those diets overlap 80% of the time. I mean there can be some difference and changes, but the difference is much smaller than the and.

**[0:27:02.4] MW:** Yeah. Actually, going back to how we started the conversation about this idea of using self-care as an escape, this idea that you go on vacation and you come back to real life. What I find is that, actually, a lot of times my clients will go away because they need too. They're at this place of absolute burnout, a lot of times medically, like on leave from work, because they are so burned out, that they are forced into that period of reflection and rest.

Understandably, they have some major insights during that time where they've realize, "Okay, maybe I am making this a little bit harder than it needs to be. I definitely need to change my

ways,” and it's about coming back to “real life” and realizing that let's look for those opportunities to incorporate what you learned in that time being away. What did you allow yourself during that time that you don't usually during your, again, “real life”? Let's not make that such a hard line, compartmentalize it so much. Let's figure out where the and is. Why can't you have a little bit of an “escape” in your regular life that you've got on vacation?

Again, it's about finding that — I always call it like a true north. You have to find those activities, those boundaries, all of that good stuff that we're going to cover in the workshop as well, but you have to figure out what that true north is for you and look for those ways to incorporate it in your life on a daily basis so that it isn't so much of that black-and-white hard lines, this or that.

**[0:28:45.9] AS:** I love that. It's like, “Where can you find the breathing room, the reflection time, the space in your everyday life?” so that you can then make life easier for yourself, and that's really the heart of true radical self-care, is the qualities of the escape, right? Ringing what's underneath it, it's into your everyday life.

I think that kind of lead us into myth number two very nicely, of how external solutions don't alleviate the internal depletion and lack of fulfillment. I'm starting to see backlash against the manis-pedis. Again, nothing is wrong with those. If I could find a non-toxic place, I get a pedicure, and I love that and I love massage, but those are temporary relief, and we're looking at root cause resolution of depletion and lack of fulfillment. I think, right now, women have been failed by the medical system. We're dismissed. It wasn't been until recently that they started realizing women in men's bodies react differently, like shocker, right?

This wellness industry has sprung up, I think, in large reaction to that, and so we can laugh at Gwyneth Paltrow and her you know \$90 jade eggs, or whatever they are, but this real need to have self-care and holistic healing and have women be heard and listened to, of course, there is going to be different interpretations of that. Depending on your income level and resources and full-time staff that I'm sure many of these Hollywood people have, but they don't talk about it. I love when it's like, “How do you get it all done?” Everyone's like, “Well, you just have to find your passion,” and I'm like, “Where's the asterisk and you have a whole staff that watches your kids and all that stuff.” Again, that's a whole other conversation.

I think it's become this idea that self-care is girlfriend advice, which can be helpful at times, but it's like go to brunch with your girlfriends and look on Pinterest and make sure it's perfectly beautiful, because that's your creative outlet, or the kids birthday party has to be like that, or it's this idea of kind of turning self-care into a spending Olympics rather than this internal fulfillment of how do I creatively and effectively turn stress into something more fulfilling, which is my fault program is all about and the workshop is going to be about. What's your experience with the topical solutions?

**[0:31:24.3] MW:** I always call them Band-Aids, because, again, you'll try something and then a few hours later you're right back where you've landed. Actually, for my clients, a lot of it, it just puts them in this cycle of perpetuating their stress more than resolving it because all of a sudden their to-do-list has now doubled because they have to make it to yoga class. They have to fit in the mani-pedi. They got to go to all their girls' nights. When something deep down they're, again, ignoring their signals from their bodies saying, "Well, maybe you just want to rest and stay in tonight," but they feel compelled by all of those should or those commitments that they've made to themselves to other people, mostly to themselves and not really having the vocabulary or that kind of inner sense of safety to feel like if they say no, to trust that everything will be okay.

That's definitely what I see, is that the marketing world and so sort of co-opted this idea of self-care and made it into this ultra-feminine thing too, that this image of what femininity should be, should be pink and pretty white officers with flowers on Instagram, things like that.

**[0:32:44.6] AS:** I forgot about that. Yeah.

**[0:32:45.7] MW:** Exactly. That I don't relate to. I certainly don't relate to that. I think too, then, that only reinforces the struggle where we feel like it's unattainable, and self-care isn't for me, because look at that image of it that's out there, and that's not me at all. I think that's too what we're trying to change is how do we even define what healthcare is and what are some other options beyond this sort of one-size-fits-all buy yourself a nice Gucci bag image of self-care that's out there.

**[0:33:17.3] AS:** Yeah. I think you bring up this great point about the difference between indulgence and self-care, because I think a lot of times when people are alike, “Tell yourself —” I think a lot of my clients’ minds is like, “Well, I deserve this pizza, or I deserve this ice cream.” That mentality is a solution to not having to being in the martyr role, or being over delivering all that kind of stuff. Then what they think is of self-care of, “I need to give my self-permission to eat sugar,” which sometimes we do, right? This is very nuanced. It's one it's not one-size-fits-all, but then you end up feeling worse about the very self-care that you — Or the wine, right? When one glass of wine turns into four and you're like, “Oh! I would've been fine with one,” and you're so depleted when you're at that point of depletion and you keep trying — I think topical solutions actually make you more depleted, which then make you more dependent on them and it creates a really vicious cycle, and then you feel like you're broke. You're like, “Ha!” or if you can't do — This is always my thing, I can't do it perfectly. I forgot to journal. I forgot to meditate. Oh my God! My whole day is ruined. Then you become — You think it's the self-care tool itself rather than your own inner resilience and ability to handle it, so you become more dependent on the outside thing rather than yourself, which true self-care is feeling resourceful and creative and being in touch with what you call your true north. I love that.

I think that just clicked for me, like seeing that cycle. Yeah. I'm think about it, for me, one of my self-care, which is an indulgence and self-care because I don't spend money very easily. I still have that middle-class mentality. Spending money on exercise, and I'm like, “Oh my God! It has to be a group exercise, because I need to be around people.”

Right now, in my beginning stages, it is really helpful, but the truth is I don't need to spend a lot. I mean I am right now, because I'm trying to get back into working out and it's been really helpful, but I I'm only going two days a week. I don't need to do — The old me would've been like, “I have to go every day for five days and get the maximum value because it's cheaper the more I go,” and like that's now where I'm at right now, but I'm not dependent. I know that I can work out outside of the group environment, which otherwise it builds up to get to the group environment. It builds up that I need more money rather than trusting — You do feel better after even a walk. Just go in the woods. It's free, and it is right there, right?

**[0:35:56.7] MW:** Yeah. I think what you're saying is that it comes down to understanding and accepting and having that inner understanding to examine your own motives and understand

them rather than the actual external action itself. It's not so much the men's or the pedicure or the fancy workout class. It's your motives behind them and coming from that place where you're saying, "I don't need to do this out of a place of dependence or like —" Sometimes I say it feels like we have blinders on where it's just we have to do this thing and we feel so trapped by that. Coming from this place where you're saying, "Right now this is what I genuinely want to be doing," and I guess I wonder from your perspective what is the difference in that discernment for you? How have you been able to discern when you've reached that point of getting a little bit — Going to the wrong end of the spectrum with my workout classes, versus, now, you're okay to say, "I'm going to spend that money here." What's that difference? Is there a quality there that's different for you?

**[0:37:11.0] AS:** I think it's the expectations that you put on to the self-care tool. When I was obsessed with trying to lose weight and exercise, if I didn't exercise — Because exercise helps me lose weight and it was like if I didn't exercise I was can't eat. The whole day was ruined and I would be over my calories or points. Then once I realized that exercise actually doesn't change your weight, and I am very comfortable in my body and with my body, I can become more discerning about what it really does for me. That's not a short-term solution, but it was over time, and now that I realize what is really meaningful to me with exercise in particular is — Like yesterday, I'm working on this program page for my fall program and it's just creatively draining me. When I feel creatively drained, I need to move so that I — Because I'm not really tired. I'm stagnant. That stagnation needs like out of me.

I can move, whether it's at that workout facility or if it's taking a walk, or if it's jumping on my trampoline. It has taken what is really meaningful to me versus what looks good and bad. I guess it's what do I really need for who I am versus what I've been conditioned to believe this tool is for.

**[0:38:37.8] MW:** Yeah. What the right option is to achieve that thing.

**[0:38:43.4] AS:** Yeah, because now I'm like — With exercise, it's like, "No, I just feel better with my moods. It helps ring me out and I feel like I can handle life more," and I'm going into my busy season. The beginning of the year, and then fall is really busy for me. If I want to really take care of myself and be at my best and top of my game, then I got to move my . When it becomes

about, that deeper sense of meaning and what I'm getting out of it, there's actually a return on the investment. There's actually — I get more out of it than what I put in, and that's how we as humans keep going.

Again, I'm using mani-pedis as a standalone for brunch, for eating what you want. If you do the thing and you feel guilty or more drained and more tired afterwards, it's not self-care. It's self-abuse.

**[0:39:29.9] MW:** Or self-sabotage.

**[0:39:31.6] AS:** Yeah.

**[0:39:32.9] MW:** That's exactly what I see with my client. Like I was mentioning to you, so many of them will say, “Well, I need to create time and space in my week for that yoga class or to do meditation,” but then it just becomes another thing on the to do list and it defeat the purpose. It becomes self-sabotage rather than self-care.

I think what you're saying is that the way that you can spot the different in some ways is true self-care are things and qualities and relationships in your life that make you feel energized and perpetuate that momentum, that feeling of momentum, rather than that feeling of being drained.

**[0:40:19.6] AS:** Yeah, and I think a good takeaway for listeners is — And it's been really helpful with my clients when we talk about this in Truce With Food, is rather than I should, I have to, I must, it's, “What do I choose?” Because it reminds us we have a choice, right? Often, I find that if you give yourself — The first answer that comes up might not be the first answer that is actually true. It might be a defensive, like, “I have to workout or I have to meditate. Otherwise, how am I going to be mindful?” or whatever.

If you ask that question and give it some space, even walk away from it, like why we get our best ideas in the shower. The answer will come up intuitively. You can't really think your way through this I've found a lot of times. The answer has to come up intuitively. If you trust that it will come, it usually does. I think what I choose here, and maybe it's to leave early from an event, and that is self-care. Maybe it's too — I'm thinking of all the places where my clients feel



like, “Ugh! I have to drink because someone else is drinking.” No. Maybe it's, “You know what? I don't want to drink.” That's self-care, “I'm here for the connection and for the intimacy, not the wine,” or “I don't really want to spend money on brunch. What if you came over and we cooked and just hang out, because that's what we're really here to do.”

Think about that in terms of your repertoire, because what I find is everyone has a couple things that really work for them and it's different for everyone, but once you lock into those, you don't need to do a thousand things. You go back to your foundations, and I think that's a big thing too is that, like self-care should simplify your life. It shouldn't add more to do, and I think that's a really big point of what we're going to get to at the workshop, is that the more you add to do the more just drained you get, which then it creates a perpetuating cycle of needing more and more.

I think that a key take away that people can — Kind of a tool they can implement in their life from this one is like, “What would I choose?” I think you'll surprise yourself, because I don't know about with you, but with my clients, Melody, as we get into this inner work, people are so surprised at themselves and what they're actually doing, what their actual patterns are versus often what they — They might know that they're making life harder for themselves or they might know that there's got to be something more. It's kind of like, “Oh! That's what I'm doing,” and their preferences change the more they uncover the cultural conditioning that they've been under and the more that they just extract the patriarchy from their system.

**[0:42:57.1] MW:** Yeah, and get comfortable admitting to themselves that it's okay to want the things they want or need the things that they need, and that's an interesting part of this too because I think some of the cultural conditioning especially that we see today in feminism, and this might be a little controversial.

**[0:43:17.5] AS:** Go for it! I love controversies.

**[0:43:20.6] MW:** Is this idea of a strong woman is independent and does it on her own and it's completely self-sufficient, but there is such thing as healthy dependence, and it's okay to want to be comforted by your partner sometimes. It's okay to meet other people, but you need to have that radical honesty with yourself, and I see so many of my clients deny themselves and, again, rob themselves of that opportunity and sort of go to the self-care Band-Aids because they

can't with themselves. That if they have any sort of down time they need to fill that space with, "Let me go out and do something. Let me go get my nails done. Let me go to that brunch. Let me do this thing. Let me take another class. Fill the schedule," because sometimes it's a little too unnerving to sit with all of the things that would come up if we allow that space.

**[0:44:18.4] AS:** That's a really good point, and I think your point about reaching out. There's nothing braver about coming to someone with your challenges or like — That's intimacy, right? At the heart, one of the biggest foundations we all need as humans because we need the longing, we need to be seen for who we truly are, the human version, not the woman who does it all, is intimacy and being true to who we are and having even one person in your life that you can do that with. It's amazing how everyone feels better once they can "get that off their chest". It feels like, oftentimes, nothing has been solved, but you just shared it, and that is radical.

It's interesting. I feel like when Brené Brown's work came out around vulnerability, which was great. I feel like all of a sudden, at least in the online space, it became this make performing vulnerability, like pretending that we were — I hope I didn't do this, but pretending that we were vulnerable — People pretended they were vulnerable, but then they wrapped it up in like a nice like conclusion and it all worked out in the end type of thing. It was like this performance vulnerability versus, "I'm struggling right now." Not that you have to share your struggles while you're amongst in the midst of it with the public. I feel like even the way we've talked about vulnerability is messed up. I don't know. How do feel about that?

**[0:45:49.1] MW:** I think it reinforces this idea that everything is a few easy steps.

**[0:45:55.6] AS:** Yes!

**[0:45:57.1] MW:** That even vulnerability — Look, you go through this hard thing and it's this myth that on the and everything will be okay, because you went through this hard thing and you followed the steps. You went through that vulnerability cycle and then you came out victorious on the other side and strong. I think what we're hoping to create space for in our work, generally, but in this workshop too is that it's okay to not be okay. It's okay to talk about that. It's okay to want to be validated by other people and just seen for all of your imperfections, all of that good stuff, and it's okay not to have a pretty bow on any story yet. I think getting into that

and being able to share that with other people who can say, “I totally get it. Here's what's worked for me,” can be incredibly powerful, because we pick up — I think there's a difference between picking up tips from other people and then fitting that into our own framework to see, “Okay, maybe a little piece of this diet will work for me, and maybe this work out style is what fits,” and putting together your own package rather than following that prescription of the patriarchal prescription of do X, Y, Z and you'll be fine and just listen to me because I'm the expert.

**[0:47:18.7] AS:** Yes. This is an iterative process and it will change based on where you are in your life. I was thinking about this as I — I started going to this workout place here call Shape Train. It is so hard. I'm also out of shape, but it's boxing, and I was thinking about how I beat myself up as I'm like, “Why didn't I do this sooner?” I'm always behind in some way when I beat myself up. I don't beat myself up all the time, but it was interesting

As I was doing the boxing and all the stuff and I'm like, “Oh my God! I'm more out of shape than I thought.” All these thoughts are going through my head. I was like, “You know what? When I was especially in grad school, when my exercise routine dramatically changed to be more Pilates and yoga and working, it was like that worked then because I was so depleted from being in grad school, starting a business and then — I love my business and it's a lot of helping other people with their emotional stuff, so it's intense unlike a lot of levels.

I'm not selling cupcakes here people, although I'm sure cupcake owners have their own challenges. I was like, “That the exercise I needed at the time. That's the outlet that I needed,” and now that my business has so much momentum, there so many exciting opportunities that I can't share right now, but I can in the future, and I'm at a place where I feel masterful in what I do. I love doing the podcast.

Carlos and I just moved to an awesome new place like. It's taken 10 years, but it's like, “Okay, I now have the energy to exert in working out whereas I didn't before. I just share that, because we go through cycles with what's going to work. Not just in exercise, but sometimes — I used to be a big journaler, and now I'm not like so much into journal. I want to dance and just like jump on t — I'm at a more physicality place. It doesn't mean I don't need to reflect, but I've realized I

like reflecting through talking it out with people, because I don't get to talk to a lot of people these days because I work a lot by myself.

I don't want to overwhelm people, but it starts with I choose versus have to, I should, I must, and obviously let this conversation that Melody and I have been having sink in and about the martyr and the either/or and and.

Let's get though to our last tip sense we've — Which speaking of patriarchy and capitalism. In those cultural narratives, self-care has to be expensive and the reality is most — The deep self-care solutions that we've talked about, like intimacy with someone who you can trust, taking space to decompress. It's free. It's all natural. You don't need to buy more. It actually takes less off your plate.

I told Melody, I wanted to use this example with everyone about the natural. Carlos and I just moved and even though we are minimalists, we still have way too much stuff, and I don't know how we got all those stuff, and we're downsizing, and we're downsizing. One of the things that even though we donated a lot of the stuff, we sold some of the stuff, I just feel a pit in my stomach about how much we, Americans, consume, and needlessly off of tchotchkes and stuff we just don't need.

I'm working on really — A lot of these stuff is environmentally toxic to our bodies. I have been using and experimenting with baking soda and raw apple cider vinegar for shampoo with myself, and I'm going to do a whole podcast episode on this because you can go down a rabbit hole, you can use herbs, and it's amazing, but it's really worked for my hair. I was like, "This so cheap. Baking soda, Carlos got some at Target." I'm like, "Get more baking soda," and then it was like two box and it's a whole box, and the more you do this — This is the what I love about this. What I've been doing is you take two tablespoons of baking soda and you mix it with water and you put it in your hair and you like — That's if you have long hair. Then you use two table spoons of raw apple cider vinegar and you rinse that out.

I used to have a little dry scalp. That's gone within a week, and I only have to wash it — I do have to wash it every other day right now, which I was only washing like every three days, but apparently the pH in your scalp will change over time.

Over time, I will have to wash my hair less and less. Do this less and less, and I'm getting better and better result, because it's natural and it's effective and it's inexpensive. I think raw apple cider vinegar, it might be a little bit more expensive than the pasteurized, but it's not nearly as expensive as the bullshit shampoo and conditioner that has chemical and is like actually making you sick and disrupting your endocrine system over time.

**[0:51:49.9] MW:** Which, if I can interrupt you, what you're really paying for is the salaries of the people behind all the marketing that went into it rather than the actual product itself.

**[0:52:02.3] AS:** Yes. It's like hype over results, right? I think that's a really good question. Again, some of branding — I don't want to discount the value of beauty. We, a lot of times, mistake glamour for beauty in our culture, but I mean the beauty of beautiful packaging and the beauty of a lot of these small skincare and makeup providers are taking time to tend to the earth and they're sourcing organically and they're bringing together this beautiful packaging in process, and that is worth paying for, like hands-down, I think. Again, according to my values, because you're getting — You're not getting any toxins. You're supporting small business owners and you're supporting healing the earth and —

**[0:52:46.0] MW:** [inaudible 0:52:46.4] yourself there.

**[0:52:47.4] AS:** And there's a lot of natural solutions that you can do, like walking in the woods, to create — I keep talking about walking in woods. Just, the trees — I sound like such a hippie, and I'm not. I can't be out on the woods too long. I can't camp or clamp event, but the point is, is that when you feel like you need to escape, you can do that in your life using natural solution and it doesn't have to be expensive. Again, look at the return on investment. How do you feel after talking with a friend versus — I don't know. What would be the more expensive alternative? Like a girls' weekend, like having — and those can be really effective. This is "and". I do think we need to get totally out of our environment.

I was sharing with Melody, when I was building my business and I was in school, I had to pay for grad school. When you start a business, especially one that isn't built on hype and is genuinely trying to help people, I couldn't afford to go on vacation for 10 years. Carlos and I did do a

honeymoon halfway through, but that was instead of getting wedding gifts we asked people to contribute to our honeymoon, and we went for five days. I had to find ways to get — I wanted to get away in the worst way, and sometimes I would go to my parents place, because it was in suburban Pittsburgh and I didn't have to pay for housing.

Get creative, but it still worked, just because I couldn't get completely away. I get when you have financial constraints or even when you feel like — A lot of times I class on the weekends, so I couldn't get away, but I had to learn to carve out space where I could find it. Ultimately, clearing my head whether it was with music, whether it was with walking, whether it was talking a friend proved to be just as effective as the big getaways, because when we went on our honeymoon I just was reading and talking to Carlos, which is what I do at home. It was in a gorgeous location and other people were cooking, but it was kind of the same thing I do in my everyday life. As my dad used to say; big thunder, little drizzle.

**[0:54:50.8] MW:** Like look at [inaudible 0:54:50.6].

**[0:54:51.3] AS:** Yeah. Is it worth the hype? Sometimes it is, and rock on, and sometimes you can get those equal results and equal relief at home.

**[0:55:00.7] MW:** Yeah. I don't want to make this an us versus them sort of a thing.

**[0:55:06.7] AS:** Right! That's either or.

**[0:55:08.0] MW:** Yeah, because there is a place for luxury products and buying yourself nice things sometimes, but I think what we're trying to get at is it really comes down to acknowledging your own needs versus wants, understanding — Being able to listen to yourself instead of being driven around by expectation, obligations and most importantly what the world is telling you that you need to do, should be doing, buy this, buy that to solve all of your problems and having the tools in your toolbox to figure out what's going to serve you best at the end of the day.

Just fun fact, I grew up in a — My family was a first-generation Italian immigrant family, came over here, and so it's always so funny to me because I grew up around the only cleaning agent

that we used in our house was white vinegar to clean everything. Just kind of going to the store and seeing all of these products out there, it was like, “Why do you need all these stuff when you can use white vinegar for everything, and it’s all naturally. You buy it for 99 cents.”

Also, another fun tip, I’m one of those people who is coconut oil for everything on everything, and it is the best makeup remover. Just saying.

**[0:56:37.4] AS:** First of all, to add to your white vinegar tip. If you use newspaper on the windows, it doesn't streak. You can use the newspaper. Yeah, my mom taught me that, because I don't use — We do have method, but my mom, actually, when we moved in, I'm going to get the recipes for people. Gave us vinegar with essential oils, and it smells delicious. When it gets on my hands I'm not like, “I'm getting myself cancer,” because that's what I think with other things, but it smells delicious.” Yeah, the newspaper totally helps not streak when you use it against the windows, when you're using on windows instead of countertops with white vinegar.

**[0:57:17.6] MW:** That's so funny.

**[0:57:18.5] AS:** Yeah. For everyone listening, I'm going to have to do a whole episode on natural solutions. Maybe I'll bring my mom on.

**[0:57:24.5] MW:** Yes!

**[0:57:27.9] AS:** No. She said she's gotten confident. Thanks to my sister and my dad. She grew up Catholic, so we always joke she has a further distance to travel with the — She's not a martyr by any means, but being like getting the spotlight. Women aren't supposed to get the spotlight, or they're turned into Mary Magdalene was a whore rather than Jesus's girlfriend. It's like — That's a whole other one.

I want to circle back, because you said something really important that could be a lifetime rabbit hole, but I was wondering if you could give us a thumbnail of the difference between needs and wants, because that's a huge profound point that you brought up.

**[0:58:05.9] MW:** Yeah. This could be an entire — It is entire psychology courses, but I think at the most fundamental level, I like to think of this and I have to think in frameworks. I think about this in terms of Maslow's pyramid. If you've ever taken a psychology course, you know Maslow's hierarchy of needs and at the bottom of the pyramid are those foundational needs for food, safety, shelter, and when those feel threatened that's where we act out. That's where we do things out of desperation, and I think for many of us, as we've been talking about the whole podcast and you and I have so many discussions about how a lot of our self-sabotaging, eating, working behaviors come from that place of not feeling safe when we put up these defense mechanisms.

Sometimes we need to get back in touch with those fundamental needs that we have for food, safety, shelter versus those external, I tend to think of wants in terms of — Those external goals that we hope to attain, like the raise, or the fancy job title, or the possessions in life, like you were discovering with moving. Those are the kind of things you wanted, but that's very different than what you actually need to find those more abstract things in life, that enjoyment, that sense of mastery, that sense of calmness in your environment. Those are two very different things.

**[0:59:47.9] AS:** Great. When you said that I was thinking needs or like if you're a plant, are you watered, are you fed, are you getting sunlight? Are people talking and playing music to you, because they've shown that plants respond to that.

**[0:59:59.8] MW:** Yeah, back to the basics, back to the fundamentals. What we'll be covering in the workshop too is this idea that — I see this so often that, for most of us, we've never learns some of these skills about communicating our needs to other people or putting up those boundaries of this is where I begin and the world ends and really owning that and being able to assert it and communicate it to other people. Most of us are either uncomfortable with those skills or we've never really learned then because of conditioning, but also because that's not what they teach in school. I think now, maybe more, they're starting to teach those emotional intelligence skills to children, but they're more in the context of how to be a good listener so you can be a leader in the workplace and not this kind of human condition sort of stuff.

**[1:01:00.4] AS:** It's so funny, so many of my clients in the heart of the intellectual property of Truce With Food and the program I'm going to be running in the fall, people are like, "Why didn't



we learn this in grade school and high school? It would've solved and saved and prevented so many problems and have been so much more effective.”

Again, that's the big culture — We don't value emotion. I mean you're hysterical if you're a woman and your emotional, “You're getting so emotional.” You're a pussy if you're a man and you're sensitive. The more you get out of the , the more it you're just like — I just have compassion for every American. You guys are functioning so well, so well under the conditions that you're expected to perform under.

I just think about what you shared with being from an immigrant Italian family. I think if you really want to accelerate getting out of the matrix, read news from Europe or Asia and look at their norms of what they do for self-care and how they treat the environment and what they eat. This is not a healthy place to learn your baseline.

We're changing it, and as more women and men step into this comfortable emotional agility and emotional intelligence, we can turn it around, but don't beat yourself up because you haven't learned this stuff. It took me a lot of years to figure it out and master it, like 10 years.

**[1:02:35.0] MW:** Yeah, multiple degrees.

**[1:02:37.5] AS:** Yeah. That's right. I forgot. Yeah. I didn't go to grad school to learn.

**[1:02:43.3] MW:** Exactly. It's just so funny, because I cannot tell you almost every client who comes to me, I ask them what their values are and they can't tell me. That is a very scary thing, because we are bombarded, especially now, post-election America. It is a very courageous act to self-preservation. It is more courageous now than ever because of everything we have coming at us on a daily basis and you really need to put those boundaries, it's the only word I can think of. You need to put those boundaries up for yourself because nobody else can and the world will certainly just keep steamrolling them, unfortunately, but I am very much a pragmatist and we need to deal with but the reality is and that's sort of what we're being handed now. I hope that changes. The optimist and the idealist in me says I hope that changes, but for the time being, yeah, we have to — Re-learning, I think.

[1:03:47.7] **AS:** I agree. Yeah, I always say, to remain an optimist you have to be a realist.

[1:03:54.7] **MW:** Yeah. That's perfect.

[1:03:56.2] **AS:** Yeah. Alright. We gave everyone — This was a great discussion as always, Melody. You are so full of insight and I love how you can break things down. Everyone, remember the workshop is Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 9 p.m. in New York City. If you're in the tri-state area, come join us. 50 bucks before September 1<sup>st</sup> at [alishapiro.com/radicalselfcare](http://alishapiro.com/radicalselfcare). 75 bucks after that, and registration will be open until the 11<sup>th</sup>, because we are having workbooks and it's going to be really life-changing and Melody and I are both like — We know our stuff, if you can't tell. This is not stuff you've heard before. We're getting deep, but it's liberating and relieving. I hope you'll join us.

Melody, thank you so much for your time and I can't wait to rock this workshop with you next month.

[1:04:48.3] **MW:** It's going to be amazing.

[1:04:49.6] **AS:** It is, and I don't mean that in a hype way. I'm just confident now.

[1:04:57.3] **MW:** Thank you so much for having me, Ali. It's always a pleasure and I couldn't be more excited. I think we knew from the beginning we had to do something together, and it's amazing to see this come together.

[1:05:08.0] **AS:** Yeah. Alright. Thank you everyone, insatiable listeners for tuning in. Let us know how it goes working the and concept instead of black or white and either/or. What about and? I choose instead of I should, and then filter your self-care through the big thunder little drizzle, like what's really going to give you results, and go out and get some white vinegar, okay?

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:05:34.7] **AS:** Have questions or reactions about the episode? Reach out to me on Instagram and Twitter @alimshapiro, or Facebook at [facebook.com/alimaries Shapiro](https://facebook.com/alimaries Shapiro). If you love this show,

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