

**EPISODE 99**

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*The process just doesn’t seem right to me, and I didn’t know why I was doing it, and it was actually really getting to be frustrating after about four or five years of being in that cycle, “I was like, “Why is this happening?” It was exhausting, and I didn’t want to be in that cycle anymore.*

*It is amazing how much it really does parallel, because it wasn’t conscious. I wasn’t consciously thinking about. I want to be further ahead and I’m not where I want to be in my business. Yet, when you brought that up it was like, “Oh my God! I am doing this again. I want to be further along with my weight and my body and also in my business,” and that’s where a lot of that parallel is coming in and there I deflect from my business on to my body.”*

[INTRO]

**[0:01:25.0] 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]

**[0:02:05.6] AS:** Welcome to episode 99 of the Insatiable Podcast: What's Underneath I Need to Diet? With health coach, Laura Folkes.

For many people the feeling of “I need to diet” is the background music of their lives. Sometimes it's at a lower volume and then sometimes it's so loud it drives a panic to find a new diet or approach to quiet the thoughts down.

In today's episode we talk with my client, Laura Folkes, about, first, her journey of losing 60 pounds, yet finding herself trapped in the fear of gaining the weight back that led to a battle with food. How adding in this food group was life-changing and help stabilize her thoughts and appetite around food. Lastly, what she discovered was really happening underneath feeling fat and like she needed to count points again to lose weight.

Laura is a graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, is a certified holistic health coach. She's supports busy adults who know what they should be eating, but have a hard time sticking to it by helping them identify the root cause of what's keeping them from sticking to what they know what works. You can learn more about Laura at [laurabfolkes.com](http://laurabfolkes.com), and all these information of course is on my website in the show notes. Enjoy today's episode.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:03:17.4] AS:** Welcome Insatiable listeners. We are on episode 99 here with my client and a health coach, Laura Folkes. When I was writing episode 99 I thought immediately of Jay-Z's 99 problem and then I thought of 99 Red Balloons? Do you remember that song from the 80s, Laura? I don't know if you would — It's like 99 red balloon.

**[0:03:39.4] LF:** I think, vaguely, yeah.

**[0:03:40.7] AS:** Okay. God! That's my brain. Jay-Z and the 80s.

Laura, I'm so glad to have you. Today we're going to talk about your journey in terms of losing weight and then us working together and this idea of what's underneath when we feel fat. We

had done an episode, Juliet and I, back in the beginning, episode 28, with Bob Schoenholtz about fat is not a feeling, and that often when we feel vulnerable, we'll say we feel fat, but because we can kind of target our body as the source of that and the culture will confirm that. Often, people in our lives, confirm that word "fat". We talked about that on a very broad level, but I want to really — you and I have worked on that a lot in the past year and so I would love for people to hear your journey with that, because I think they're really going to relate. Thanks for being here.

**[0:04:36.0] LF:** Thanks for having me. I'm so excited to be on the podcast, because i actually listen to that episode as well, the one with Bob, and it rang really true for me, but it wasn't until about a year, a year and a half after listening to it and the work that we've been doing that I was like, "Okay, this is really what I'm doing." It was great to hear the podcast, but then to be able to live it myself and actually be able to discover where it shows up for me has been really interesting journey.

**[0:05:03.5] AS:** That's such an important point, because I think a lot of times when we hear this kind of stuff, like it's not really about the weight or whatnot, and I think that's what's so awesome about your story and how you've been so open about what's really going on, because we hear that a lot, but then people are like, "Yeah. Yeah. Whatever." That just applies to everyone else, right? Like, "No. For me it really matters."

Let's start with — By the I met you, you had already lost —

**[0:05:29.3] LF:** 60 pounds.

**[0:05:30.4] AS:** Yeah, but still felt "fat", and you're not fat. You're not overweight. Let's first start with how you lost 60 pounds, and take us there. Let's start there.

**[0:05:44.7] LF:** Sure. I have been overweight basically starting around the age of 12 and tried every diet. Went to my first Weight Watchers program, I think, with my parents around when I was 12 or 13 and it was just something that was a battle for me and something I struggled with all the way through my 20s. I even got to the point where I was feeling like I was meant to be fat, because I thought I was big boned, which is hilarious since I wear a size four and a half ring, so

I clearly am not big boned. It was definitely something that I battled with, and I went through three different approaches to lose weight starting right after college. I finally lost the 60 pounds in 2008 and I was able to keep it off for about five years by the time we met. Even though I was keeping it off, there was something that was going on with me where I would — Because I was a lifetime member on Weight Watchers and I would have my weigh-ins once a month, I was doing what I call working the system where I would eat well for a while and then I would be like, “Oh, I’ve got three weeks, so I’ll just eat whatever I want,” and then a week before I’d be like, “Oh, wait. I need to weigh-in back in and just be good again and be back on the program so I can weigh-in within my 2 pound.”

The process just doesn’t seem right to me, and I didn’t know why I was doing it, and it was actually really getting to be frustrating after about four or five years of being in that cycle, “I was like, “Why is this happening?” It was exhausting, and I didn’t want to be in that cycle anymore.

When we met and started talking about business stuff, and then I learned about Truce with Food, it was like, “Oh my God! This is exactly what I need. This is what I’m doing.” Somebody actually has been working on this and has developed a program to help someone like me who knew what I should be doing and was able to help me figure out what was emotionally happening that was pulling me to food.

**[0:07:48.6] AS:** I think you bring up such a great point, because what we often project on to weight loss or the size we want to be is freedom. I often hear, “I’ll be the real me,” or “Life will really begin.” What people are saying is, “I’m going to feel free.” Yet we often — The systems that help us, and then they can be useful in the beginning, they end up being the cage that traps us. As much as it was probably great to have lost the weight, did you feel free at that point I guess is the question.

**[0:08:18.0] LF:** No. I mean I felt — There was a sense of accomplishment and pride, obviously, with actually losing the 60 pounds. I never thought — I went from being a size, I think, 16 or probably pushing even an 18, and it was down to a size 4 and I was like, “Oh my God! I never thought that I could be a size four. That just never even felt like it was a possibility.”

When I was able to get there, I was like, “Oh my God! This can't happen and it is a thing,” but what I found is that even when I would go to my meetings, I would talk to the leader and she was like, “Laura, maintaining your weight like two years into it,” she said to me, “fear is not going to be something that is going to keep you at your weight long term,” and that was something that kept coming up for me, was I was afraid to gain the weight back, which is what was keeping me to stay motivated and to have the willpower. People would say to me all the time, “You have such great willpower. How do you continue to do it?” and it was. Then it was true, four years, five years into it, the fear was starting to somewhat diminish or it was just — I don't know if it was actually starting to diminish or it was more that it was just exhausting to live in this heightened sense or state of fear all the time about gaining the weight back and having what you talk about a lot, is that battle internally in the conflict of like, “I like the way I look. I feel better, but I still never felt like I had arrived. I still wanted to lose another 10 pounds,” even though I have lost 60. No, I didn't have that sense of ease or arriving like I thought I would.

**[0:09:58.2] AS:** Yeah, I think all of us — I mean I know my own journey, it was like you think something is going to be solved by weight. Looking back now, I'm like, “Why did I give my wardrobe that much power?” But I really believed. I really did that time.

Okay. You have lost 60 pounds through Weight Watchers and through learning about nutrition and all these stuff, and then you're exhausted of the battle. What did you discover in Truce with Food first of all? We'll get to the fat is not a feeling, kind of what's going on with that, but what did you discover was really underneath that fear and lack of liberation? Because I think what's interesting about your story is some people, when they come to me, they haven't lost the weight or they don't need to lose weight and there's just this.

There's this thing they can't put language to, because our culture doesn't give us language for it, but you lost weight, but in many ways you were still — I think what you discovered was there was still that insecurity there that may had originally caused the weight gain. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**[0:11:07.4] LF:** Yeah. The first thing that I'll mentioned though that I did learn too that was a huge thing, is because I was losing weight in the early or late 2008 and a little bit before that, 2003, I was still following a low-fat diet. One of the biggest things that I learned from doing Truce

with Food is that having good fats is really important in blood sugar control and balance, and that was a huge life changer for me, because I was eating sugar with breakfast as a snack in between breakfast and lunch, at lunch. It was like seven times the day I was eating sugar of some sort even if it was just in my yogurt. Even just being able to balance my blood sugar and not be on that mindset of when am I going to eat again, I need to make sure that I have food around me all the time. Even that in itself was stressful of making sure that I had snacks around all the time and that I wasn't to get hungry, which now I also know that part of that was the fear of discomfort, which is one of the story is that we also identified.

That was the first big thing that really helped me to start you be a little bit more balanced, but then there's much that I learned from the emotional aspect, and one of the biggest things was from being bullied when I was in high school. That was, I think, when a lot of stuff really — Actually, in middle school. I think that's when a lot of these stuff really started coming up for me, which would make sense since around the age of 12 is when I started to remember that I was overweight and battling with my weight.

What I really learned was that a lot of the triggers for me that led to me not caring about food or putting me into automatic pilot were feeling unsafe or uncertain if I was feeling vulnerable, especially also avoiding my — Healing my feelings was a huge one, which also comes down to not wanting to feel discomfort. A big one that I still somewhat struggle with too is when I feel depleted is another time that I turn to food or if I feel misunderstood. Uncovering each of those and getting into the different layers within them and seeing how they show up in different areas of my life was and still is just — I'm still amazed at how some of the stuff shows up and where it's hiding out and how it presents itself and then how it leads me to just not care and then I lose my willpower.

**[0:13:41.1] AS:** We've talked about this, it's like I care but I do. It's like I don't care, but I do, and what is that disconnect? It's the emotional discomfort that is telling a whole story that most people — I think what people are surprised of, I think, in discovering the emotional aspect of things, they thought they had like worked through that stuff. I thought I over that. But we often realize that we develop during those traumatic events of childhood, we developed really great coping skills that worked, and they continue to work to this day and they're also causing a vulnerability at the same time. Until we deal with that, no amount of weight loss is going to feel

sufficient. Like you said, it will be — In 10 more pounds. Once I get here. I think for everyone listening, really think back to when you were losing weight, or thin, if you're struggling with weight, wasn't it always like, "Oh, but I still want to lose 10 more pounds," or "if I can just tone my legs this way," or something like that.

**[0:14:43.7] LF:** Yeah, and that still comes up for me. You know that too. We even had a conversation a couple — Probably about a month or two ago where I was like, "No, it's real this time. I really do want to lose the weight. I just want to lose another 10 pounds," and you were like — I was like, "It's real." I think you said to me, "What's been going on recently? Has there been an increased level of uncertainty or vulnerability or something?" I was like, "No. No. Everything is fine." Then as we talked through it, it was like, "Oh, yeah. Okay. No, I have a big presentation coming up and I am feeling a little extra level of uncertainty and vulnerability in my business with working to my health coaching business and getting that going and it still shows up where I still, sometimes, even though I know that all of the stuff in there, that it still comes up and I know we're going to get to this, but then I do focus more on my weight and wanting to lose weight and almost going to a crisis mode around it.

**[0:15:43.5] AS:** Let's talk about that. I think this is the cool thing is that — And why this process, I think, is actually — It's challenging, but it's kind of fun, because it's almost like every time you get like more clarity, there's more relief, there's more liberation and there is more peace within ourselves. You did a lot of work and I really have to give you kudos, because it's challenging work. It's also very rewarding.

You start to uncover these layers and how kind of some of the coping strategies of when you were bullied, you're still bringing those patterns to life today, which then it creates the sense of like, "Oh!" I think a lot of people think once they lose weight they're going to be "bulletproof", right? All of a sudden what they're saying as those patterns are going to be gone. It's actually no. Then you're in crisis mode, because you're like, "My weight was supposed to fix these patterns and they're still there."

**[0:16:34.5] LF:** Right. Actually, one thing I wanted to mention too, as you had said, as we grow up with these coping mechanisms, we know that they exist. I think, for me, I didn't even know that any of these patterns or any of these stuff actually existed. I almost feel like I was living

under a rock. Even with you mentioning that, part of me wonders if part of the reason that I'm still working through and digging through all of these after a couple of years, is because I was kind of in a state where I didn't even know that this was the feeling of uncertainty or vulnerability or avoiding feeling my feelings were even a thing.

**[0:17:10.5] AS:** That's a good point. I think I meant — Because I think most people live in their heads. I actually have found that like a big part of this is making people feel safe to go back into their bodies, which is where all these data and information is. I just meant more like we're all aware of what we've been through and maybe we're like, "Yeah. I feel tough. I survived." I don't think any of us have — I wrote about this when I was launching *Truce with Food: Tapas Style*, a lot of us are very self-critical, yet were not necessarily self-aware and there is a huge difference. We think because we're self-critical we know how to read a room. We can anticipate what other people think. We know our horoscopes. We know our Myer Briggs type. We know all these kind of like outward facing patterns, but we are self-aware of what our own triggers are, what our own emotions are, what domino effect they are. I think that's a really good point and I'm glad that you brought that up to clarify.

**[0:18:06.1] LF:** Yeah, and I think that that's exactly right too in terms of, for me, being bullied. I always thought that that made me a stronger person. I always felt like I could hold my own and I could protect myself, and I didn't realize how much it really did affect me and how defensive of a person I was. Not always different, but just more of if I was in a situation where I felt misunderstood, my defenses came up right away and I would just fight back. Whereas my coping in middle school or high school was to kind of retreat and just to take it and then afterwards that's where the negative self-talk would come in and be like, "You should have handled it this way." for week I'd play out, like what I should've said to that person or why didn't I do this.

It's interesting, because looking back, now I know that, yes, I'm sure it did help shape me in a certain way, but it also — I'm sure that I am strong in certain ways, but I also do now know that it did make me more of a defensive person and that's something that we've been working on too, is just softening a lot into different situations, which has really helped me in a lot of different areas.



**[0:19:21.8] AS:** You just bring up, again, this — I love that you can articulate this, because I think most people don't realize how defensive they are. Most of my clients are out in the world and they're struggling with food and they have happy moments, they have great relationships. They're pointed in their careers and they think of themselves as defensive people. I know I would've never thought of myself —

**[0:19:44.2] LF:** I wouldn't have thought it either. No.

**[0:19:47.7] AS:** I think that's what so challenging about this, is that it's this huge blind spot that the culture will tell you, "Oh! No, lose weight and it's going to solve all your problems." No one is giving you incentive to look at this blind spot and it gets very matrixy, right? Then once you see it, and I think this is the — I always talk about the word and, but being bullied did make you really strong and, however, we also need to soften into that, and it gave you a lot of great qualities, like empathy, that's why you're a great coach, all those things, and it created some wounds that need to be softened again. For everyone listening, I think this is really important to realize that your past experiences that were traumatic and, again, it doesn't have to be you're a refugee, right? It's that your sense of safety was threatened, and I think one thing that I've become very clear of this work is that any time our sense of belonging was threatened, because I was bullied. A lot of my clients realize being bullied escalated their eating or was the inciting incident as I call it, but that, again, this emotional health and the sense of belonging, if we weren't part of a pack when we were tribal people, you were left behind, right?

**[0:21:02.4] LF:** Yup, for sure.

**[0:21:03.9] AS:** Especially women, which is we're burned at the stake, like martyrs are praised in this culture. All these dynamics go on that our sense of belonging was so important to our survival, and so I think we need to honor, for everyone listening, like think back to those times where you felt like an outcast or bullied and like what were your coping mechanisms and how we've become stronger, but also how has that made you on guard. It's hard to see, because it's invisible, right? It's like right in front of our face.

**[0:21:32.7] LF:** Right, Yeah, it's so true, and I think those are really powerful question and things to think back to too.

**[0:21:40.3] AS:** Yeah. You start to realize this softening, and I love that you said it's affected other things. Like you were talking about just the other day with your ring. Do you want to share people? But how these patterns are — Like how we do anything is how we do everything. You've, over the past year, just have totally worked on your stories, transform them. Give an example of how you feel less defensive today as a result.

**[0:22:02.0] LF:** Sure. I'll try to keep it as short as possible. I took my rings and my wedding band and my engagement ring to have the diamond tighten, because there were a couple of diamonds that were lose. When I got the rings back, I didn't notice it right away, but the next day I was looking at them and I was like, "Something looks really different," and there was some really nice detail work in between each of the diamonds in the channel. I looked at it and they had polished out all of the detail, which is exactly why I bought the ring, because it brought in a little bit of the Victorian feel that I like, as well as a modern feel of the rings. I looked at them and I said to them, "Do you think I should be mad about this? Should I call them or I should person I just deal with it?" She's like, "I would be mad." Call them."

I called them and their initial reaction was, "Oh, that probably just happened because we had to push on the metal and then once they did that, they were already worn and so it would have wiped down some of the detail, and then when we polished it, it just took it off. If you want the detail added back in , you can pay for that." I was like, "I'm not paying for that. You completely messed up my rings. You guys can put that back in." It wasn't that I was being rude or defensive or anything like that, it was just more of, "No. That's not happening."

I ended up taking the rings back in and they said, "Okay. Bring them in and we'll work with you." I took them in and, going into it, I was ready to fight. I was sitting there and was like, "Alright. Let's get into it. You tell me that you can't do it and we're going to have it. I'm going to be yelling at you and we're going to just going to just have it all out right now." I got in there and for some reason I was just able to keep it really calm and very matter-of-fact of you guys polished this detail out of the ring. This is why love the rings. You guys need to fix it. I'm not paying for it. How can we make this happen? Basically not even a win-win, but this was the first time I was using this jewelers, so I know that they want to make it right too, and I just stayed calm the whole time and they even maybe wait for 15 minutes before they brought the jeweler out, which in the past I

would have been getting more and more angry and building it up and building it up and just having that tension until I was able to blow and let it all out.

I was able to handle it a lot more calm, more with a sense of calm that I normally would have, and they're going to fix them. I have no idea what they're going to come back looking like, and I am still readying that if they don't fix them and make them the way I want them to, that they're going to remake my rings. There is so little bit of that defensive sense of me that's like, "Okay, if you mess them up, you can remake them. Even that isn't as bad as it has been before where I've actually sworn at people or have gotten into fights in public with people if they've made me angry or if I felt misunderstood. It was a very interesting approach that I took that wasn't even planned and it's just a completely different sense of calm and just — I wasn't even worked up and I didn't build it up afterwards, which was nice.

**[0:25:06.7] AS:** And that's so important too related to food, because often when we are so defensive, that adrenaline and cortisol, like you said, it gets buildup, it gets build up, and so the adrenaline, the fight or flight gets kicked in, which then triggers adrenaline and cortisol, which then makes you hungrier. On a physiological level, often we are hungry if we're always in defense mode even if we don't realize it. Our systems just jacked up.

I love that use the example compared to in the past, because often if we don't know we're being defensive we then create a self-fulfilling prophecy where we're like, "See? That's why I should have been defense," right? Because it's our own triggers of like yelling or whatnot that actually then create tension with other people. I just love that Carl Jung quote, he's like, "If you don't —" I'm paraphrasing, but he's like, "If you don't look at your own conscious, it's going to come to you as fate."

**[0:25:57.8] LF:** That's so true. That's such a good quote.

**[0:26:01.5] AS:** I know. I just love that example, and I think that's why people find that the Truce with Food work or whether or not even — People listening, if you just really, really do the work to transform your past, it becomes so life-changing in every area and beyond just — Transform it on a somatic level, where the emotional stories really are, not just in the mind and the thinking, I think, is important.

Okay. Let's talk about this, this feeling of fat and I want to lose weight. Yeah, I'm trying to figure out where we should start with it, because —

**[0:26:36.5] LF:** So much.

**[0:26:37.7] AS:** Right, and it's like each time — Because it takes a while. Let's start with this. It takes a while to see that connection between — Especially if you feel it all the time. A lot of times people are feeling it all the time, because they're feeling constantly defensive and vulnerable and they can't see it. As you started to get more space — Let's talk about that. You started to realize, like, “Oh my God! My blood sugar is more balanced. I'm feeling more calm around food.” You made so much progress with alcohol, “Oh my God! I don't need to drink anymore, like I can see things.”

You're starting to not feel vulnerable all the time. You're not starting to feel defensive all the time, and then you're getting success and then all of a sudden you feel that I'm fat. Oh my God!

**[0:27:17.3] LF:** Right. I think it took about six months to a year of us working together before I was able to recognize that. I think it is — Really, there are so many layers to our emotional stories and everything that's going on that I think that, first, I needed to uncover that feeling of unsafe. When I don't feel safe, that's something that triggers me; the vulnerability, the uncertainty, the feeling my feelings and syncing into those.

There were lots of layers, feeling misunderstood was a huge one and I think once we got to that feeling, when I feel misunderstood and also when I feel discomfort, it was kind of — Those to me were some of the biggest parts of my story, or they felt like they were ones that showed up in so many different areas and as soon as we hit on those, it was like, “Oh! Okay, I see what's happening in all these different areas and how it's showing up in so many different places.” It was those two I think were the biggest ones in the last year that we hit on. I think once I got to be able to see where those were showing up, then it was like, “okay, what else is here?”

Like I said before, feeling fat felt real to me, it felt like reality and it was just — It would create such a level of anxiety, and I don't even know how to articulate it, but it just made me feel

terrible about myself all the time. I think it was just that negative self-talk. It wasn't until we started to chip away at it, and I can't remember exactly when that, if we want to call it the aha happened, but I think it was just — Overtime, it was more of slowly starting you bringing up to me and helping me realize that when I was feeling fat, we were correlating that to something that was coming up in my business that was leading me to feel uncertain or vulnerable. It was more of starting to see, "Okay. I see this correlation," and then I started to doing the work on my own. I would feel myself or find myself feeling fat or feeling like I needed to do a diet again, or getting into some sort of a crisis mode around food and losing weight and I'd be able to look back and be like, "Okay. What's happening here," and usually it was something where I had something big coming up in my business or I had been turned down by a client or something wasn't going well or something wasn't going the way that I had planned or had hoped or I also have disproportionate thinking sometimes, especially around my business. Even in those areas.

I was starting to see more and more how I was deflecting from my business on to my body, and it's still is happening, but I am able to see it a little bit more quickly, although three weeks ago I did have it happen again and it took me a couple of weeks to be able to tell what was going on, but I even got to the point where I was like, "Maybe I just need to count points again," and I was like, "Okay. There's something going on. What is this?" It came up that I was just feeling really depleted, because I had taken on a lot in my business and there was more uncertainty that was coming up. Also, I was feeling — It's not necessarily feeling ahead or behind in my business, but I do feel like many times that I want to be further ahead than where I'm at and when we really — This is something that you really helped me realize, is that I also want to be further ahead with my weight and my body. It is amazing how much it really does parallel, because it wasn't conscious. I wasn't consciously thinking about I want to be further ahead and I'm not where I want to be in my business. Yet when you brought that up, it was like, "Oh my God! I am doing this again. I want to be further along with my weight and my body and also in my business," and that's where a lot of that parallel is coming in and where I deflect from my business on to my body.

**[0:31:33.3] AS:** Yeah. This is going to be like a really like rough for the people listening. There's this thing called projection, and this is like 101. Basically, what happens is think of like all the buckets in your life that you think you're going to provide like relief, or then I'll be happy. I call them finish lines, but what happened is when we feel vulnerable or when we feel some sort of

uncomfortable emotion, we put it in one of those buckets. Rather than looking at it, because we're not in our heads, we're in our bodies, and because it's uncomfortable, we often then project it on to like one of those buckets, into one of those buckets. For a lot of my clients, because food really has legitimately been a battle in the past, they often, "Oh my God! I want to go on Weight Watchers. I want to do a whole 30." It's like the panicky sense of that is when they're feeling like they need to get out of that vulnerable discomfort. They're projecting belief on to a diet, on to some sort of plan, on to a finish line. Some people, it's once I meet my partner. Other people, it's once I make certain amount of money. That's what we do with body image a lot.

**[0:32:45.3] LF:** As you were saying that, something just clicked for me too, is that I feel like part of the reason that that happens for me is because it feels safe, even though it's exhausting and it is an awful feeling, it also feels safe, because I've gone to that place so many times and it feels like it's something that you can control. Even though it's, yeah, I guess you can control it, you can control what you're eating, and if you're doing a diet and if you're doing it well and you have the discipline while you're on the diet, yeah, you are controlling it, but I think that that's what happens for me, is it's because I do feel a sense of safety in that area is why I project there when I may not be feeling as safe or something or I'm feeling an added level of stress or pressure somewhere else. It's like, "Let me go back to where I know I can start to focus my efforts."

**[0:32:45.3] AS:** Yes. Yes, it is the safety, because someone else is telling you, "I got this. I have this figured out for you." People don't realize that's what they're looking for in a diet, but someone else is offering them security, and I did it too, so it's like, "Oh my God!" What we're saying in that moment unconsciously, but to our body and our system, is I can't handle this. I need someone else to handle it for me, which is unsafe but to your point it's — My clients often ask me, "Why do I do that though?" because it is maddening and I say safe also means familiar. It's familiar to do that, and that's what I mean this is such a matrix, because the culture will offer this to you. It will tell you, "No! Don't listen to yourself. Don't stay with the discomfort. Only positive thinking. Only high vibes." High vibes are not a thing. There is no — Good vibes.

**[0:34:31.5] LF:** It's also a sense of structure too, right? A diet is a structure, and so many of my clients have come to me too, being like, "I just need a structure. What's your plan? How do you

go through this process?" It's like, "Yeah, it's a structure that works temporarily, but then all these other stuff that we've been talking about comes in." Like all that discomfort or the vulnerability and uncertainty. If you feel unsafe, all that stuff can come in and then it completely takes you. You don't have the capacity to deal with that structure anymore, because it's one added layer when you're already feeling depleted.

**[0:35:05.2] AS:** And then you don't really get what you — You don't develop the grit to go after what you want in life, because one of the things that I want to give you credit for, is you don't you don't like discomfort, you don't like being misunderstood. This is why I say this process takes about a year. The first six months were kind of like figuring out what are these stories. Let me get a handle on them, and then it's kind of like — The second half is like, "Okay, now how am I going to make these feelings mean different things?"

I said to you, and you know this, but building a business is uncomfortable. You are going to be misunderstood. How are you going to make that feeling not mean what it used to mean about now you're rejected, now you have to just take this? I think, for people listening, when you start feeling the vulnerable feelings that cause the battle with food is in first place and cause the safety and wanting to be rescued by weight loss, and I say that because it's really what it is and I wanted to be rescued by weight loss too, so I'm not judging. I wish you could be, because if you could've been we would've all been happy once we kept the weight off.

Part of that, the biggest times that you started to feel like, "I want to do Weight Watchers," or "I want to count points," or something, was probably those times when there was that element of feeling misunderstood. It was like, "See, I tried this, and then I did it." How have you — What are some of the things that you're working through so that when you do feel that sense of feeling fat you can say, "Okay. Here's what this really is," but it still stings. It's still hard,

**[0:36:43.7] LF:** Right, and it's still something that I'm still working on, because it does sometimes still feel real and I will sometimes want to avoid feeling whatever's coming up. Even though I know that there's something deeper going on, I'll be like, "Oh, I'll just get to that later. I don't have time right now." That's just my way of avoiding, feeling the feelings or analyzing it. It's still something that's a work in progress.

However, what I've been doing is as soon as I find myself even right before we went on here, I even told you that I was sitting in the chair, Ali had to step out for a second, and all of a sudden I started feeling a roll in my stomach and I was like, "Wow! I'm feeling a little bit fat. I need to lose some weight." Then I was like, "Oh, I'm feeling a little bit vulnerable and a little probably unsafe going on to a podcast that I've never done before." It was really interesting to be able to identify right in the moment of being like, "Okay. Here's why I'm feeling this way and here's why I'm basically overanalyzing my body and every inch of roll that I have on it."

Just able to even label it has been really helpful to — Not only label it, but just to be able to see and have the clarity of what's happening and to know that feeling fat as you've said many times is not a feeling. It's a matter of what else is happening. What is going on here? Where am I feeling depleted or uncertain, vulnerable, that is leading me to feel this way in this moment? I'm not necessarily always able to get there immediately, but usually I do start with my business, because that is a place that we've seen where does show up most and it seems to be the bucket that I do tend to have that feeling around when it's usually something going on with my business.

Usually around that and just stopping and figuring out and sometimes it's just even journaling also and figuring out why. I'll even ask myself why am I feeling that, where is this coming from, what has happened recently or what coming up that is leading me to have these feelings or thoughts.

**[0:38:59.2] AS:** I want for people listening, especially because we're in the health field. Part of you could justify and say, "Well, I have to lose weight so that people think I'm walking my talk," and you totally walk your talk and those. This is something that it's not about magical thinking. It's like both Laura and I, we have the bodies we have. People are to judge us, because we're in this field. People aren't going to work with us because of it, and some people are, and this is part of transforming our stories and resilience, is learning that you don't need everybody to love you. You don't need to belong everywhere, and I think that's super important for people to listen, because we do judge people. People judge us, and so I think that's part of this process of why it takes time, because we basically have to come to terms with our own humanity and then other people's humanity as well. Once we come to terms with our own humanity, it is so much easier to be with other people's humanity.



**[0:39:57.8] LF:** For sure. One of the things that as you're saying that too that has really been challenging — I don't know if it's challenging or just something that has been interesting that has come up too, is that because I don't want to be misunderstood and that's something that I work hard not to have happen, because I'm not at my ideal weight and where I would like to be and have, in fact, put on a couple of pounds since I had lost the 60 pounds. That's something that has been coming up for me a lot of that I am a health coach. I am in the industry. I have put on a little bit of weight, and I could potentially be misunderstood.

On top of the uncertainty and the vulnerability with running a business, then I also have this level and layer of potentially being misunderstood, which also is such a big part of my story which doesn't help the whole cycle or the process of how we've been working through, but it also does help to know that that is something that does come up for me.

**[0:40:58.0] AS:** Part of the healing process is knowing that you might be misunderstood and you're going to be okay. Like it doesn't this you have new tools, new skills when that comes up, versus when we're younger, we're really at the mercy of a teenage understanding or even younger, and we don't have coping skills. Our parents don't have coping skills. My God, our culture doesn't have coping skills. That's why we demean emotions. Like we're trying to — We beat ourselves up for not knowing this when our society, the very fabric of our society, doesn't even know how to deal with it. I want to know why we don't learn about finances, emotional intelligence and food like in elementary school and middle school and all that stuff. We need to be knowing about this stuff. Yeah, it's totally kamikaze stuff.

However, isn't it so empowering once you work —

**[0:41:53.7] LF:** It is. One of the things too I will say about our bodies and the fact that we are in the health coaching industry and we aren't a size 2 and all of that stuff. I'd actually had many clients say to me that authenticity is a really big value for me in my business that we've also uncovered as we've been working through — Went through the program, and a lot of people have told me that they like working with me, because I do feel like a real person and that I'm not just a size two and drinking my green smoothies and not eating and starving myself for

whatever it is that other people in our industry lead people to believe. I do share and I am very honest that this is still work in progress for me also.

One thing that we didn't mention is that when I started to put on a couple of pounds is when I had moved to Australia with my husband. We were living there for two years. There was a lot of change, a lot of uncertainty. I felt unsafe. A lot of even vulnerability just picking up our lives and moving over there, and I also changed industries and decided to leave my career in advertising after 13 years and started a business.

Looking back, it's no wonder I put on a couple of pounds, because there was so much going on and that when also we did start working together for the first time in Australia when I was going through a lot of that stuff to help me realize what was actually going on and what was leading to me not being able to stick to the foods that I knew I should be eating.

**[0:43:32.7] AS:** Yeah. I think the important point there is, especially about with the clients that find you, say with my clients, like we have a mutual understanding and mutual values. I think that was kind of what I was saying is you find you don't need everyone to like you. It's safe, and what I think most of my clients find in this kind of belonging bucket is when you find someone who really gets you and you get them. It's like you need just a couple of those people and it feels — Even me with my work, because it's kind of out there. It's not out there, it's just very different, because I have clients like you and all of my clients who are like, “This is awesome!” It's helped me go out in the world and be like, “Okay I'm happy to like —“ It was on a freak flag, because it's very methodical, it's very scientific, but it's very different than the smoothies and crushed it at the gym, and that has helped me having such amazing clients. I think for people listening, thinking about like developing really intimate — Again, intimacy isn't only sex. It's emotional intimacy of people who really see and share values is a huge way to feel safe and all that stuff.

You've given so much to think about, Laura, and I love that you can break that down. Now, you have your own health coaching practice and I'm curious how the work that we've done has informed your own practice and what you've seen, because I think a lot of people — I know when I was struggling with my weight, it's like, “Oh! This person is the exception,” because what we learn from our stories is they make us feel different and isolated, that we're broken in a way

but then we're also really unique and great in a way. It's like this crazy dynamic. How have you seen this translate with your clients when you really focus on the emotional side of stuff?

**[0:45:23.5] LF:** It's been amazing. It's the amount of clarity that I've even had in my coaching practice and to be able to help my clients see and uncover what's been happening for them even in the last six months has been incredible. I am still so grateful that I ever was introduced to you and that we met, because you've been such a great mentor and such an inspiration for me, but it's just been really incredible and I feel like I have been able to lead my clients to having more of those. I know we don't really like to call them breakthroughs, but to having them to have more — I guess it's more of the clarity, which also can be thought of as a breakthrough, which has been amazing and even my confidence in coaching too has improved a lot over the last six months, because of having more of the clarity in my stories and also seeing what you've helped other people come up with and what the trends are in the themes are that happen in people's lives. All of that has just helped guide me in my coaching as well.

**[0:46:34.9] AS:** Yeah. I guess, also, for everyone listening, I will be licensing the Truce with Food model starting next year. I'm working on it. If you're a health coach, a therapist, a lot of people in the health care professional or in the health field who just want to help people make progress when they're feeling stuck, when they can't do what they're doing or they need some emotional support. Definitely get on my list [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com) if you're interested.

Thank you for that. I appreciate that. I was more — I guess let me refine my question. I was actually curious if — Now that you know how powerful the emotional stuff is for yourself and you see with your clients, and I hate dividing things by percentages, but don't you think it's almost some ways easier to focus on the emotional stuff first and then the food just falls into place? What's your perspective now? That's kind of what I was curious about.

**[0:47:23.6] LF:** Oh, yeah. What's interesting is I find that some clients come to me and think that they still just need the food. I actually just had somebody last week or two weeks ago to say, "Let's just work on accountability. I just need somebody to check in every other week, or every week, and just keep me on track."

Then after our first session, there was a lot they came up in that session. There was a lot of emotions that came up what she hadn't felt in years. By the end of the session she's like, "I don't need accountability. That not what I need. I need to work through this emotional stuff."

It was really powerful to be able to even help guide somebody to recognize that, yes, the food is a piece of it, but there is so much more that's going on that deeper and that is really where my passion is and that I will help people find the small habit that they need to make adjustments to with the food, but really helping them to get into this deeper level of understanding of what's going on emotionally has been really helpful for them and is super rewarding for me as well.

**[0:48:30.0] AS:** Do you find that, first of all, people are stronger than they know.

**[0:48:33.7] LF:** Oh, yeah.

**[0:48:34.7] AS:** Doesn't it just like you can see that people can handle it, and do you find — I think we're in this culture that such instant gratification, whether it's social media, whether it's people making billions off of an IPO, off of a tech stock that's never really made any money, or a company, but we're in this really instant gratification culture. But don't you find that — I'm just curious, because with my client, I found that once I get started on this, it gets kind of addicting. They like the challenge of it, because it sets them free. I'm curious if you've had that experience too.

**[0:49:10.0] LF:** Yeah. I've had a few of my clients where they come in and felt so heavy almost when we'd started working together. After a couple of session, they're like, "Oh my God! I'm starting to feel lighter and I'm feeling —" I even had a client say that she was starting to minimize more in her life, and I know that that's something that you've said that people have done as well where she was just doing a spring cleaning into the fall, of like clearing stuff out of the house, because she's simplifying her life.

Yeah, I have been finding that, for me, it's been addictive too for sure. It's like I just want to get more and more clarity. I think a lot of times my clients come to me not knowing exactly what we're going to actually be doing, and there's a layer of uncertainty there, but then once they start doing the work they're like, "Oh, wow! This is what I needed and this is so helpful," and

they just want to keep digging and digging and figure out where some of this is coming — What's going on for them.

**[0:50:10.8] AS:** Yeah. If you're listening, really, if you feel like, “Oh, I'm afraid to look into this,” or whatever, like you're already dealing with it just in a really unhelpful way that is like exhausting, frankly. It was exhausting for me and everything. I just want people to realize that they can do hard things and those are usually the things that we're the most proud of. When you look back on your life, for me at least, I am the most proud of, for me, building my business, building this methodology. It's been an ass kicker, but it's made me feel like Teflon in a way, soft Teflon. Not plastic Teflon, which is like my heart is — I didn't realize how defensive I was from having been bullied and just on guard from having had cancer.

Now I feel like I have the best of both worlds of being really resilient, but also being really generous and openhearted. Of course, I'm still a work in progress. We never arrive. I think that's one of the kind of the things that's also kind of — This is kind of off-topic, but not. I remember in 2013 after I worked with Bob and really healed a lot of the trauma from going through cancer, I remember being at my co-working space there and just having really — It was a really challenging year for me. I was trying to finish graduate school at Penn.

I was writing my thesis. Carlos had been at Iowa now for two years in their MFA program, so we had been apart for two years and it was just like — I was depleted beyond and it was just like the year before, because I was depressed, I hadn't done a lot of marketing and I was just like, “What am I doing my life?” I was like when you have those moments, when you're really low, and I remember being like, “Oh! I used to think that losing 10 pounds would fix this,” and now I just know that this is life. It's just has its challenging moments.

In that moment I realize like, “Wow! There's a loss when you no longer think losing weight or having your body be a certain thing is going to fix things.” It's like we're left with what life really is, which is beauty, but it's also heartbreak and it's challenging. I think we also keep up that illusion sometimes without unconsciously knowing why, but hoping that it will get easier at some point when, really, we just need to develop the skills of digging in.

**[0:52:28.4] LF:** Right. Yeah, that was so powerful of a thought. There's so much that I am even thinking about, it's just even that morning and coming to terms with the fact. I think one of the thing that's coming up for me is like, "Wow! I think I am holding on to that feeling or projecting on to my body, because maybe I'm not ready to realize that this — Or not that I'm not ready, but I haven't thought about it in that way that there is a way of handling life that doesn't have to be focused on weight and our body and it is just living life and being present and building that resilience.

**[0:53:10.5] AS:** Yeah. Yeah. It's a huge — I would have never believed that. It took me 20 something years to get there. I could laugh about it now, because it ultimately freed me and made me more present and enjoy all of it, even the good stuff, even like last night I was talking to Carlos and I found this like great threat on Twitter about how Trump has basically — He loves conflict and anything that we've depended on as a harbor of safety, our institutions or anything he terrorizing.

I was like killing Carlos, it's like, "I want you to read this thread." He's like, "Ali, I'm trying to calm down." I'm like, "But it's so good and it gives language to what I've been feeling." He's like, "But this too will pass." I'm like, "Oh, yeah, because I can accept the good is going to pass. I can accept that the bad is going to pass." He's like, "Hopefully with the 2018 elections." I'm like, "If we even have a democracy left." He's like, "Ali." And I'm like, "No, you're right. Okay."

Because I've been able to accept that this is life and it comes and it ebbs and flows. I'm not saying it's easier, but I haven't been eating during this. Granted I've had trouble sleeping, but I feel like I've been more resilient than I would've been if I hadn't accepted that like it's not about just getting through things. It's what does every presence experience have to offer.

This was great Laura, thank you.

**[0:54:32.9] LF:** Thanks for having. It was so fun.

**[0:54:34.8] AS:** Good. Are you not feeling fat anymore?

**[0:54:38.8] LF:** Not right not, but let's evaluate in an hour after we're done.

**[0:54:43.7] AS:** Right. But, now, I hope everyone listening, we went over some great questions and Laura gave me like great x-ray on a really granular level of what feeling fat is all about for her. I've shared a past episode, but just for me, once I broke through that illusion of weight loss was going to make things better. I now realize when I feel really vulnerable, I just start thinking about my health, like I'm like, "Oh! I haven't had my MRIs in a while. I haven't been to the doctor. The air pollution is awful here in Pittsburgh, and the water." I go into a hypochondriac panic over my health, because that is ultimately my biggest fear, is getting sick again. But I recognize it for what it is, that it's a vulnerability. It's not about getting sick. It's I'm feeling vulnerable somewhere else in my life.

For all of you guys listening, I think the big take away in addition to a lot of these questions is if weight and feeling fat is a struggle, is where my where am I — When that urge to go on a diet, or that urge to just panic and to reach out to someone who's going to give you an answer, which is really helping you numb out this feeling, where are you feeling vulnerable? What feels really unsafe? What feels really uncertain? What feels like it could be make or break in your life?

**[0:55:59.3] LF:** Yeah, or also where are you feeling ahead or behind, because that's been a big one for me too, or especially more behind, or where do you feel like you're not achieving what you want, the goals that you want even could be one of them. I hope too that this helps provide a little bit of freedom for some people too, because it can be so exhausting, and being in that crisis mode of, "I need to lose weight. I need to lose weight," just having that thought. For me, it would consume my line of thinking and just what I would be focusing on all the time. I hope that it provides freedom for people to realize that it's not just their body or their weight and that there's something else going on and if helps at least one person to have a little bit of clarity, that there's something else there and helps them with these questions, figure out where that could be coming from, then I think that we've done our job.

**[0:56:54.7] AS:** Yeah. I think, also — I love how you wrapped that up. Also, realizing that you can still be convinced that it's your weight and that it's your body and take a look at some things and start to notice some patterns. It can be both.

**[0:57:08.8] LF:** Yes. Absolutely. Yeah.

**[0:57:10.8] AS:** Because it takes a while, as Laura share — It took a ton time for me to really believe that it isn't your weight and your body, and that's okay as long as each time you feel a little bit more relief, a little bit more curiosity.

**[0:57:22.3] LF:** I guess it's more relief than freedom, because freedom sounds like we would have arrived as well. Really, it's just more of that clarity.

**[0:57:29.8] AS:** Yeah, but I think to your point, freedom though, when you get those breakthroughs, and they are breakthrough, it's just we have to then embody the breakthrough. It does feel like you can breathe a little bit more, that you have a little bit more safety and how much space you take up and how much — That there's more "room for error" and like you can just be more of yourself. It does. It builds, right? It has its own feedback loop of benefit. But then you just, as you say, gets addicting. You just want to feel more and more free and more and more powerful and then you start accomplishing things and you're like, "Oh my God! What else is possible? How good can this get?"

**[0:58:04.5] LF:** Right. Absolutely. Yeah, especially as you start to see different patterns, that you create for yourself or that new behaviors that you start to take on and it's like, "Oh my God! This is different than the way that I used to be or the way that I've handled things in the past." Like you said earlier, and we didn't touch on it much, that alcohol is no longer really a thing for me and now, in fact, I actually make the choice of do I really want to feel like crap and not sleep well at night or do I want to fit in and just be a part of the crowd and drink a glass of wine, because everybody else is doing it. I typically choose not. It's not just a choice. I don't even need it. That doesn't even cross my mind anymore like it used to.

The fact that I can now take on new behaviors and look at things in a different way than I used to and not take up as much brain space also so that I don't feel as depleted in so many different ways has been amazing.

**[0:58:59.7] AS:** Yeah. I had one of my private client email me. She's like, "This work is so challenging, but I've never had so much fun therapy in like therapy," and she put therapy in



quotes because it's not therapy, but I was like, "I know! It's like this weird thing where it's hard and it's so much fun."

**[0:59:13.1] LF:** Yes. To get started, it was super hard, because the first time I was feeling my feelings, it was awful. I'm not used to feeling that sad and that intensive emotion, but then when you come out on the other end, it's like, "Oh my God! I needed that." It's like a weight is lifted and a breath of fresh air comes over you and it's just like, "Wow! Okay. It does suck at first, but it gets better, and then it keeps getting better, and it keeps getting better," and that's why it's so addicting.

**[0:59:45.9] LF:** It's the opposite of the diet cycle, where it's like you get those quick hits and then it gets worse and worse and worse. This is like — You do all the discomfort of — Not all of it is upfront, but it diminishes over time.

**[0:59:57.8] LF:** The hardest part. I think the hardest, because you haven't felt it. Well, I hadn't felt it in a while. It feels like it's the hardest part at the beginning.

**[1:00:05.9] AS:** But then you look back and you're like, "Damn! I did that!"

**[1:00:10.1] LF:** Right.

**[1:00:11.3] AS:** Thank you so much, Laura. Where can people find more of you? Of course, in the show notes we'll have Laura's website and all the info. For people who are listening on the go right now, how can they find you?

**[1:00:21.8] LF:** Sure. My website is [laurabfolkes.com](http://laurabfolkes.com). It's Laura then B as in boy, Folkes, which you'll get my name on the podcast notes. I have a website that talks a little bit more about the work that I do, which is inspired by you and, yeah, I'm looking forward to getting in touch with some of your listeners as well.

**[1:00:43.8] AS:** Yeah. For everyone, let us know what you think on social media and — Oh! If this episode, anyone who could benefit from this episode, please share it with them. If you can

leave a review, it would really help the show so people see that there is more options than just the Paleo bros out there.

Also, again, just to just to reiterate. If you are a health coach, a life coach, a nurse practitioner, a functional medicine doctor who has a health coach in your office or you're function medicine doctor yourself or a therapist, I will be licensing the Truce with Food tools next year. They're really pretty effective and there is a methodology behind it. If you're interested, definitely sign up on my website, [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com) so as that information becomes available you can get in on the first round of us doing that.

**[1:01:35.3] LF:** I'm so excited. I cannot wait for it to come.

**[1:01:39.4] AS:** I know. I want to health coaching to be more methodical and rigorous, because I think there's so much potential with it if we have the right tools. Yeah, and this is also just — Yeah, it's also like adult development and a little bit of a hybrid, but there's not language for it yet, which is so frustrating to me, but we'll get there.

**[1:01:58.6] LF:** Pioneering. You're pioneering it all.

**[1:02:00.4] AS:** I know. My mom and I always joke that it's so hard being ahead of your time. My mom was and my grandma was. Fortunately, things are changing very rapidly.

Thanks everyone for tuning in. We look forward to your feedback.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[1:02:18.7] AS:** Have questions or reactions about the episode? Reach out to me on Instagram and Twitter @alimshapiro, or Facebook at [facebook.com/alimarieshapiro](https://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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