

Eating Triggers:

Ways to decrease the power of the scale

Insatiable Season 5 Episode 3

[INTRO]

[0:00:08.4] AS: When you're fed up with fighting food and your body, join us here. I'm Ali Shapiro, creator of the Truce with Food Program and your host for Insatiable, where we explore the hidden aspects of fighting our food, our weight, and our bodies, and dive deep into nutrition science and true whole health. Fair warning, this is not your parents' health care. This is a big rebel yell to those who crave meaning, hunger for truth, and whose lust for life is truly insatiable. Believe me, freedom awaits.

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:47.4] AS: Welcome to Insatiable Season 5. This season, **our theme is eating triggers**; namely, triggers for the on-off eating cycle. Our goal is to give you clarity about these eating triggers, because clarity is a process and a tool. What do I mean by that? Well first of all, you get to get to the root cause, right? Many times we think we're putting in all this effort, but we're not actually getting to the problem.

For example, when I was struggling with depression I thought it was a serotonin deficiency. Really, I had inflammation issues and I had to do a lot of emotional healing. That's why I didn't really get worse, but I also didn't get better. Once I got to the root cause, oh, my God, all my efforts started mattering.

The second is logic doesn't change us. We all have – our logic is informed by emotional feelings and resistance. As we start to get clear, we can start to really

understand what our feelings are in a situation and then were open to changing and not just learning. Lastly, clarity equals distance. If you've ever gotten "over something" in your past and you can look at it with distance and say, "Hey, this is what happened. I could have done this differently. This person could have done that, but I'm really at peace with that, or I'm over it." When we can name things and label them appropriately in the present, we get a little bit of that distance and that can start to diminish the trigger that is triggering us, because we can have a little bit more choice in the moment.

Today's episode, Eating Triggers: The Scale; the scale can be our biggest motivator when things are going well, and our biggest enemy when it's going up, especially mysteriously. Today's episode, Juliet and I discuss why the scale is so triggering and offer ways to make what you weigh a less influential force in your life. Warning, this episode may blow up how you live your life.

For our new listeners, Juliet is our insatiable OG co-host for the first pretty much, I think two years, and she's co-hosting this season. She's active in the fitness community since 2008. We're on a decade for her. An expert in her field, she came to Philadelphia after working in York City as a personal trainer at a prestigious sports club. She is the partner and nutrition director for Unite Fitness Studio franchises, the hardest workout in Philadelphia and a rapid growing group in personal training studio.

She's helped to craft Unite's trademark heart, muscle, mind workout methodology. Juliet's a regular contributor on Fox and ABC News, helping educate people on the topic of fitness, health and nutrition. When she's not in the studio, Juliet loves to connect with nature and frequently takes trips to the Woodstock, New York area to hike and relax. Welcome back, Juliet.

[0:03:42.2] JB: Thank you. You forgot one thing about my bio.

[0:03:46.3] AS: Oh, tell me.

[0:03:47.6] JB: I like to pet my cats.

[0:03:50.5] AS: I was going to say something about your cats.

[0:03:54.3] JB: Somebody took my class earlier from New York. They were visiting Philadelphia and they said that they were stocking all the bios of the different trainers and they chose mine, because they saw I was from New York City. She's like, "Oh, I love how you get to know a little bit about you and there, and said that you like to podcast and you like cats." I'm like, "This is so creepy. Like I'm glad you want to take my class, because I like cats."

[0:04:22.8] AS: Well, I think there's – I feel like dog people feel there's a bond with them, cat people with them.

[0:04:28.9] JB: I just think it's like your – I've never felt such an immense love for my animals, and I do you have the same thing with Coffee. You just feel so in love with him.

[0:04:38.9] AS: Oh, my God. Totally yesterday, I took him to the park. I take him to the park in the morning and he has these buddies up there, and he loves to race them, chase other dogs. There was this whole pack of dogs and they went flying. This one Labrador, basically ran over Coffee, like rolled over a couple times and I've never seen him do that. I was like, "Oh, my God. Is my baby okay?" Then he got up and ran around. I was like, "Yeah, Coffee. I was so proud of him." I'm like, [inaudible 0:05:07.5], but my heart stopped, then I was like, "I need help."

[0:05:12.7] JB: Yeah. I mean, one time I had to take my cat to the animal hospital the middle of the night, rush her there. It is the most depressing scene ever, because

people do feel this love for their fur babies. It's different than children. I mean, it has to be. It can't be the same. The human.

[0:05:34.7] AS: Well, but I think we like –

[0:05:37.1] JB: I think it has to do with the fact that they can't talk, so they can't communicate to you what's wrong. It just feels really vulnerable. I think it could probably be like that with a little baby too, but when you have a child that's old enough to communicate and say, "Oh, this hurts, that hurts," but when you have an animal that can't say anything and you can just – they're crying in pain, or you can see they're in pain, I think that that's what makes it so heart-wrenching. When you go to the animal hospital, everybody is sitting there and experiencing that together and everyone's crying at 3:00 in the morning. It was so crazy.

[0:06:11.5] AS: I said to Carlos, I was like, I forget that Coffee can't talk, because I talk to him so much. He's never said a word back.

[0:06:20.5] JB: You know. You know how he's feeling and what he needs.

[0:06:22.9] AS: Yeah, yeah. What I was going to say is I'm not comparing children to animals. However, I think again, we put humans – we think we're above nature, or separate from nature, but when you really think about animals and babies and it's the caretaking, right? It's that same caretaking energy that can make you feel so vulnerable. I think maybe it's to various degrees, but we don't want to diminish the vulnerability of when you're taking care of something and it's going through challenges.

[0:06:51.1] JB: Yeah, it's beating up the scale. This is how I open the episode. I have one 20-pound cat and I have one 8-pound cat.

[0:06:58.1] AS: Oh, for a minute I thought you said like 120. I thought you meant a 120.

[0:07:02.1] JB: Oh, my gosh. No.

[0:07:04.6] AS: I was like, "Do you have a tiger in your –"

[0:07:05.7] JB: In the Guinness Book of World Records over if that were the case. I had one really, really overweight cat and he barely can walk around or do anything, because of his weight.

[0:07:19.1] AS: We're going to talk about what it triggers in us, because as part of this series, we are talking about how all of these different triggers are inherently neutral, right? At the end of the day, the scale in its most basic form is just an electronic machine that spits out numbers. Yet, it's what it brings up in us that feels really vulnerable, and often oddly makes us eat, and we're going to get into that.

Before we kick them up, I want to make a very clear statement here, because this is something I was just chatting with in a client this week. Society correlates your weight with your health, and those do not correspond. As a society, that narrative hasn't changed and we our society, so if we can start to change our own perceptions, we can start advocating for ourselves and educating other people, but I just wanted to put that out at the beginning, that you can weigh a certain weight and still be very healthy and you can be super thin in a small number on the scale and not be healthy.

I just wanted to put that out there, so that we can move on, that we're not talking about health. We're strictly talking about what the numbers on the scale mean and when it feels like the scale is not going our way.

Juliet, I wanted to ask you and then I'll share mine, the trajectory of the scale in your life. How have you used the scale and how are using it today? Then we're going to get into some of the different levels of triggers that the scale creates.

[0:08:44.6] JB: Well, I think that I never focused on the scale until I was in eighth grade, so I was 13 years old. In the beginning of the school year, you would go to the nurse and they would have checkups. Do you remember doing that?

[0:09:02.2] AS: Oh, my God. Yes.

[0:09:03.1] JB: Right? You'd have to have a checkup at your school nurse. I think it's bizarre, because you're getting – get a better checkup at your primary care physician. Anyways, so I remember going and it's the same school nurse from seventh grade to eighth grade and I remember being a 115 pounds. I believe the nurse had said something like, “Wow, since last year you've gained, I don't know 15 pounds, or whatever it was.”

I just remember feeling whatever she had said to me felt very negative, and made me feel really vulnerable and just exposed. I'm not doing something right. Something is wrong. At that time also, my parents were going through a divorce and there was a lot of home stuff going on. That is when I went on my first diet, which was probably me reading something out of Seventeen Magazine of what to eat, what not to eat. It was like, “I need to eat salads all the time.” It wasn't – I didn't really even – I didn't know about calories in, calories out, low carb, high carb. I didn't know. I was just like, “I can't eat junk food anymore. I'm eating salads.” I didn't really stick with that, but –

[0:10:21.5] AS: I think it's interesting though that you're like, “This must be wrong,” and one of the triggers is uncertainty with those triggers. It's like something must be wrong. Then how you even – your parents are going to at a divorce at the same time and it's

almost all of these events get mushed together, even though they're very separate, but right?

[0:10:40.8] JB: Yeah. Because controlling what you're eating and exercising can become a way of managing your anxiety and stress levels, which is what it did for me. It was giving me a purpose and something to think about and obsess over, other than actually dealing with the real emotions, which is I should be obsessing and freaking out over who's getting custody of me and my brother, like where are we going to live? What's going to happen?

[0:11:07.4] AS: Yet at that age, you don't really have any influence, right?

[0:11:10.6] JB: Yeah. Instead, I would just start going running, went to the YMCA, started lifting weights in my freshman year of high school and just was constantly thinking that something was wrong with my body. I was trying to fight the bulge, the inevitable bulge that I thought that was going to happen to me, especially because I do have a lot of overweight family members. My dad was extremely heavy and ultimately when I was 16, he had a massive heart attack and he passed away, and he was about 350 pounds. All of his brothers, he had a bunch of half-brothers and they were all about 400 plus pounds.

It was always in my head that I had to – I was running away from becoming really overweight. The scale was something for me that I just used as a way to measure if I'm okay or not, what my fate is going to be. Then it got to a point where, because a scale made me so miserable, I avoided the scale. I'm an avoider.

[0:12:14.0] AS: That's right.

[0:12:14.7] JB: I am. I'm a procrastinator of Whitter, like perfect example today, I have a lot of work to get done. It's the doldrums of August right now, this is how I justify it. This

is my avoider justification. I'm not getting a lot of e-mails and my clients are out of town, even though I do have a lot of things to ramp up and get ready for post-Labor Day. Instead of doing all of that, I just went to sleep for two hours. I just took a nap before we got this podcast going, and that's one of my major avoiding techniques; I'm really good at napping.

[0:12:44.2] AS: You should take why I'm eating this now. It's about emotional agility too.

[0:12:48.1] JB: Yeah. I know that –

[0:12:51.4] AS: You're avoiding the scale, that's what you were saying.

[0:12:53.6] JB: Yeah. Similar things. I just started avoiding the scale, then never going on it. That didn't take the obsessiveness and the focus off of my body and how I looked in clothes, or how I felt about myself. All that still remain the same, even though I was not stepping on the scale. Then the times that I would be like, "Okay, you have to step on the scale. It's been so long since you stepped on the scale." It would just create even more of a miserable feeling for me and a feeling of worthlessness and I'm not good enough. I need to change this.

Then it wasn't until I worked through a lot of my emotional issues, food issues in my early to mid-20s, that the scale started to shift for me. Also as actually, when I started really focusing on bodybuilding, I've never done a bodybuilding competition, or anything, but working on strength training and changing the shape of my body through weight training and learning about body fat percentage, versus your weight and the difference that your weight is comprised of body fat, muscle, tissue, water. Your weight isn't just one number. What is the number actually mean?

That helped me shift things a little bit, just understand the science behind things, because when I was focusing on really strength training take care of mice my body fat

number ended up going to a really, really what you would call healthy lean spot on the – if you look at a chart of what a good body fat percentage is.

However, that can still be the same thing and that now, it's looking at that number and not a weight number, right? It did help just take it off of the – just the scale number for me. I think then over time, things have just shifted more and more that I love myself, accept myself. I step on the scale or I would say it's still a little more challenging with the body fat, because again, I use that number instead of the week number to feel I'm in a good place or not.

Now it's like, "How do I feel about my life? How it's going? The relationships around me? It's not just about how I look, or what the number says about me. It's very much beyond that. I've been able to weigh myself pretty regularly. I'm not one to weigh myself every day. I don't own a scale, but it work. Occasionally, I'll go on it and it might be a little up, it might be a little down and I just – it's just a number. It's just data.

Now I do have to say that I'm comfortable enough with myself that if it's – the scale is really up, again it's just data. It's something for me to be aware of and think to myself well, "I do need to maybe start taking a little better care of myself maybe I've been a little loosey-goosey with going out and not eating clean, but it doesn't make me want to scream, cry, tear my hair out, hide under the covers and not leave the house that day, like it used to.

[0:15:54.7] AS: Yeah. Well, you said so many interesting things. I love how – and again, if the people don't need to use the scale, they don't need to use a scale. The avoiding, sometimes we think like, "Oh, the scale." We're over that, but it's just an avoiding technique, and then we look to other metrics. I think that's a really great point that you brought up.

Also, just how it has evolved over time, right? I think a lot of times who would like, "I'm never weighing myself again, but that doesn't solve the problem of why we're basing our worth to your point on the inadequacy on certain metrics. I'm glad that you share that.

As I was thinking about this episode, I was thinking about for me like, I think when the scale really became something meaningful was when I went to Weight Watchers at 11 years old. I remember struggling with my weight, but I don't remember monitoring myself so closely. I was just trying not to eat and generally trying to like sports. Then when I went to Weight Watchers, it was like, you would get a star if you lost weight every week. It became – turned it into this, I guess competition or whatnot.

I was like, "Oh, my God. I think Weight Watchers was part of gave me my issues." I mean, clearly they were going to accelerate anyways based on the ended up happening in my life. I think Weight Watchers itself, having to go in there and trying to gain the system by not wearing shoes and wearing as little clothes as possible, so that they didn't count and like, going to your meeting in the morning, and so you didn't have food in you.

Then in front of everyone too, not that they saw your number, but they would give you a little booklet and write down. Every week you were monitoring. I remember that. Then I remember when I was 14, I don't remember, and also we joke like my sister and I and Carlos, that my sister and I had different childhoods, because she's a lawyer and remembers every detail and I'm just like, "Is that what was happening?" I just remember a general sense of things, so this is what my memory tells me now, but I remember after chemotherapy and obviously I was vomiting and throwing up and stuff that I was – I remember this, I have lost 20 – I was a 119 pounds, which was the thinnest I ever was as a teenager.

Before chemo, I had been like a 135 pounds, which for a 13-year-old was pretty – I remember feeling heavy, whether I was or not, I don't know but. I remember seeing the scale at the doctor's office and I was like, "Oh, my God," and was excited about it, even though I obviously didn't the circumstances that it did happen. I was like, "Oh, my God. I'm a 119-pounds.

Of course when I got through that and then I like started to work out a lot, I got so much attention being thinner and all that stuff. A lot of people because I'd gone through chemotherapy in eighth grade and my high school was so big that there were three different middle schools, and then you all filtered into ninth and 10th grade was one school and then 11 and 12 was another school.

A lot of people never even knew I had cancer, right? Because we went into the next school year and I didn't lose my hair completely so people are just like, "Oh, you look good, or whatever," and I could fit into all the clothes my friends put in to. Then I remember just really struggling with it once I got to college and started emotionally eating and really like, "Oh, my God if I was like – I remember trying so hard on diets and the scale wouldn't budge at the end of the week.

I was like, "Uh," and I would eat. That was that uncertainty like, "I'm doing everything right. Why is this not working?" Then through healing first my health and losing weight as a side effect of that, I was like, "Ah, the scale actually it's a demotivator for me. It's not helping me in focusing on these health metrics." That was a really big turning point. Then another big turning point was actually when I was working with Bob, our mutual therapist and he's I think episode 24 of Insatiable; fat is not a feeling, but the –

[0:19:45.2] JB: I miss Bob.

[0:19:46.6] AS: I know. He's not even in practice anymore.

[0:19:49.1] JB: No. He's retired living on a lake now.

[0:19:51.2] AS: I know. He e-mails me sometimes and I'm like – He's amazing. I remember really not caring about my weight. It needs to be a certain number. While I was working with him, I remember going to see Dr. Raquel for my physical and she's like, "Well, you've gained 10 pounds," and it was the year that I was working with him.

I remember being like, "Wow, I'm really doing some deep healing, because I didn't even care." The old me would have been panic like, "Why did I get 10 pounds, whatever?" I knew that the work that I was doing with Bob was so important that – I still don't have quite language for it, but basically because of the healing I did with him of going back and really emotionally healing my cancer experience – it was one piece of it. There's many pieces; it helped me be with uncertainty in a way that I hadn't been able to be before.

That's when I realized that the scale was just the lowest level of safety of this is how I know if I'm okay or not. When I didn't need that anymore, because I could handle uncertainty, I was just like – Dr. Raquel was like, "Well, you gained 10 pounds since last year." I was like, "Wow, I guess I must have lost it for my wedding," because I had lost weight. I don't know how much, because I didn't weigh myself, but it was this –

[0:20:57.3] JB: That wasn't on purpose when you lost weight for your wedding. That just happened.

[0:21:01.4] AS: Yeah. I mean, I was consistent with exercise five days a week, which was a big deal for me.

[0:21:06.4] JB: Was that your goal around your wedding to lose weight?

[0:21:08.4] AS: No.

[0:21:09.8] JB: Didn't think so.

[0:21:11.0] AS: No. I just wanted to enjoy myself and I actually had hypothyroid and I had a thyroid cancer scare, so it was just more about really slowing down. I was still I think in that avoiding piece of the scale, because I was like, the scale would still – it wouldn't set me off like it used to, but it definitely would make me frustrated and I was like, "I don't need that right now."

[0:21:30.2] JB: It's funny to think though just around events, like a wedding for example. I had always imagined years ago that when the time came for me to get married I would kick it into high gear and I would be so motivated to eat the cleanest I've ever eaten and exercise, and I would have the best body I've ever had in my life, because those pictures last forever, and this is your moment.

There's ever a time that I would be motivated to be the thinnest, it would be then. I remember months would go by, no motivation. More months would go by, still not a motivation. Then I got married and I was like, "Because I'm not in that place anymore."

[0:22:13.9] AS: Well, you also realize it's like how you feel that day. I feel like the fact, it's just this patriarchal myth that this is your only moment. Like, "fuck that." Like, "I want more moments than just my wedding. This is not my peak." At the time, I was still avoiding it and then it's just – it has just become something neutral. In fact, I think you even remember like, to your point about sometimes you'll use it to get to see like, "Oh, maybe I've been too loosey-goosey." I had to go to a doctor's appointment in February and I noticed that I had gone out 5 pounds. I think it was since I've moved to Pittsburgh, I don't really remember the whole date, but I texted you and I was like, "How much cardio do I need to do, because I hadn't really been working out consistently?"

It was more like – it wasn't like there's a deadline for this. It was just like, “Okay, Ali you gained 5 pounds in the past three years, and it's probably from not walking as much.” Like, “You just need to work out.” I mean, I've been doing it too, because it's the summer. I'm like, “I'll do it three in the fall when it's not as hot and stuff.” I've been working out and I can feel the little bubble I thought on my waist decrease. For me, it was just more like, I want to nip this in the bud turning 40, because they say the average person gains what? A pound or two a year. Then it's like, you end up 20 pounds heavier after a decade and I just –

[0:23:33.5] JB: I think hormonal shift for people and that the thing is I really – I've been having a lot of older clients who have been coming to me wanting to, “I need to get rid of this tire around my waist.” This is a big thing for women who are post-menopause. There is a reality to this that I tell them, which is that tire may never go away. The flat stomach that you had in your 20s, 30s, even up into your 40s, it might not completely disappear in your 50s, going into your 60s, going into your 70s. Your stomach is going to shift and change.

We have to focus on different metrics, which is as you're going into getting older and Ali and I are doing an episode on aging, so – but you do have to have a level of acceptance, while trying to do your best. It can't be so focused on again, the number on the scale, or your body fat number decreasing. It is about just doing your best to take care of yourself. What happens Ali when it doesn't work? For example, that 5 pounds that you gained and you're starting to work out and exercise and do all the things, what if those five pounds they just don't come off, then what?

[0:24:52.3] AS: Yeah. Well, and that's what I want us to get into it, so that we can really get clear on what we are projecting onto the scale, because this is again, this episode may blow up your life. When we think of the triggers, again that caused us to eat, they are – what's at the tail end of this? Does the scale make me feel tired? Like, “Uh, I'm

exhausted from this battle. Oh, my God, I can't do it anymore. I'm just going to spiral," right?

Anxious. Why is this happening? Why can't I get the weight off? Why is the weight going up? Why won't it go down? Why won't my body change? Feeling inadequate, you mentioned that Juliet. I used to feel like that with the scale, right? Why am I not good enough? Why do I feel invisible? Why will I never meet someone? Why will I never get the job, right? It's amazing how we step on the scale and all of a sudden it spirals us into these feelings.

Then loneliness, like I'm the only one struggling with this. Why do I let this stupid machine guide my life, right? What I have realized through my own journey and that with clients is that these certain numbers that we arbitrarily pick, and I want us to get in the physical, emotional and soul level of this craving for a specific number, but the health world really reinforces this, the medical system.

What happens is we think certain weight numbers are going to be finish lines, right? We'll talk about that on an emotional and soul level, but we think the scale, if these numbers, we reach a certain number that we're actually not going to feel tired, anxious, inadequate or lonely ever again. That is what we believe. That's why that number – and we might not be able to see it at first and that's why we have to be willing to explore and learn our own self-awareness of what we think is going to happen, and we're going to talk a little bit about what's been really revelatory for my clients and seeing that number.

It's when you think like, "Oh, my God. If I get married, right, then everything's going to fall into place. Or if I get my dream job." You realize like, "Okay, that's actually when the real work begins, right?"

[0:26:54.7] JB: I just say something that just before I lose my train of thought that I just thought of a situation that happened last weekend. I was with two of my friends; one of which is she has a very small frame and a small figure, then another one of my friends who is a more voluptuous, larger woman. We were all out shopping and having a good time and they had just met, so they don't really know each other.

My friend who has a smaller figure said to me, "I just love her how she, this other girl, is so confident in herself and she really carries her weight well." The way she said it was saying like, as if she couldn't – she was in disbelief that somebody like her who was heavier could be living such an amazing life and could have confidence and could be enjoying herself and could be doing all the things that a skinny person would do. I just thought I'd throw that out there, because I feel that is a lot of how people perceive people's looks.

[0:28:07.5] AS: Yeah. I think a lot of us, we feel like we're carrying extra weight around because of what the scale says. What we're really afraid of is being misunderstood, right? It's like, that's that uncertainty. You don't understand that I'm healthy. You don't understand that I try. That's part of – I mean, that's the emotional hunger. We'll just jump right there, because that is the emotional hunger that we have, that the aesthetic will make us feel emotionally safe, that we belong, that we literally and metaphorically fit in, right?

It's like, "This is something I know. It's not about my weight for me, but it's like I never want to be misunderstood, right?" It's the worst feeling in the world. I think that's why we need to really start from a physical perspective, saying there's different health metrics that matter, right? Even the BMI. I was researching the BMI for this episode. Did you know it's a 200-year-old hack? It's something that scientists made that there's no correlation, because similar to what you were saying about the scale doesn't measure fat, your waist circumference, which can be important.

[0:29:15.8] JB: Which I also think is a little bullshit.

[0:29:18.4] AS: Oh, good.

[0:29:19.3] JB: Well, just because – I mean, I think both are and partially because of my own personal experience with it. My BMI is high according to that, and my waist circumference is high according to that.

[0:29:32.0] AS: Well, and what they were saying with the BMI is it doesn't account for how heavy your bones are, like how much fat you have versus muscle, but society believes this and a lot of people in the health field; dietitians, trainers, they really do think that then people are healthier. That's the physical –

[0:29:51.7] JB: Wait. I had an x-ray a couple years ago. My husband thought this is the funniest thing. We're getting the x-ray results back and the doctor comes in and I go, "I've really want to know this for a long time, but do I have big bones? I want to know, like are my bones bigger than most women? Because my weight is always higher than what the BMI says, or whatever." I was like, "Am I big boned?"

The doctor was – I was insane. He's like, "Your bones are perfectly normal. They're not big at all. They're just a normal average bones." Mackie was like, "I cannot believe you just asked that."

[0:30:33.2] AS: Well, and the doctor doesn't know how to measure the weight of bone, so he's –

[0:30:36.1] JB: Who knows? I know, but it was just funny. I was like, "It's just something I've always wanted to know. Am I big boned?"

[0:30:41.5] AS: Yeah. I did a solo episode, it's called Your Green Juice Doesn't Make You Worthy, episode 75. It was about how this meritocracy myth in America, and I want to just define that. This is why we believe – I believe that this is a big reason that we think that weight matters so much in our health. The meritocracy belief is fundamental to American culture. It believes that if you put in effort, you will be rewarded, and that we don't judge people based on color, creed, gender, religion, whatever, that it's a merit.

As a result, we believe everything is individual-base, right? It's like up to you. If you're succeeding, you're successful. If you're failing, it's your fault. That's the American Dream, what the American Dream is built on. America doesn't ever account for the environment that you grow up in, or where you start, or even the environmental issues with weight, like how much light you're getting every day. Or I mean, I first gained weight because I was exposed to pesticides, because it inflamed me. I didn't know that at the time. I was just like, “Why am I gaining weight?”

I want people to really understand that this myth puts in this idea that if you're thin, you've earned it, that you're disciplined, you're hard-working, that's success, you're in control, right? Throw in some puritanical influence, right? The Puritans were like work, work, work, right? Then the underlying meaning is that you're heavier, you're out of control, you're undisciplined and you're lazy. In America with its puritanical corset doesn't like that and I'm just again here to say fuck that.

[0:32:13.6] JB: Well yeah, and that was the perfect example of what I was giving with my friend. It's like, “Wait, she's successful? She's sure of herself?”

[0:32:20.2] AS: Yes, exactly.

[0:32:21.1] JB: She thinks to go on living. We were shopping, she was buying off clothes and into it and feeling confident with herself. My one friend was like, “Wow, that is

incredible." Not something that you see, because most women, I don't want to make a play give some and say most women, but women who are heavier, it's like they don't deserve to have those same privileges or feelings that thin women have, which is fucking bullshit.

[0:32:51.6] AS: Yes, exactly. I think it's like, why shouldn't – I mean, I think I'm overweight on the BMI. I don't even know, because I haven't weighed myself and I haven't looked at the BMI. It's just so bizarre. Again, if you believe in that meritocracy, like the most people don't see that that's what they're filtering life through, and then here's the thing is what we think being thin is going to give us a couple of things; first of all, ease.

Whether we can get the tire around our stomach as we enter perimenopause, or we just can't lose weight or not, why it feels so important to reach that number is we think a certain number is going to give us ease, okay? If you think about it, and there was this great article at Medium I posted on my Instagram account. It started, called the effortless white woman and they used Gwyneth Paltrow and Ivanka Trump as examples.

This woman just wrote this great thing. She's like, "I realized I thought when I lost weight, I was going to be on this deck with the breeze blowing and drinking a green smoothie. How I was going to afford that deck? I don't know. How I was going to have time where as I'm racing for my job? I don't know." What has really sold as weight loss is really ease. What really causes –

[0:34:02.0] JB: Doors opening for you, or more people loving you, more opportunities coming your way, you have this level of confidence and feeling reassured about the world.

[0:34:15.4] AS: Yes. What's really causing Gwyneth Paltrow and Ivanka Trump – it reminds me of this New York Times piece. It was either a New York Times piece, or this piece, they talked about how Gwyneth Paltrow doesn't raise her children, she enjoys

them. It was just like, how everything that those of us who really write, it's not about that they're probably thin in part because they're wealthy, because they have staffs and they can afford chefs. I mean, it was just really interesting and it's just not only their looks, and then of course that helps.

If you're wealthy, you can invest the money to be pretty, right? Carlos says this whole thing how even teeth are such a class issue, like straight teeth, right? It's like, "Could you afford braces?" All these things that we associate with beauty, because we care about meritocracy in this culture, we also confuse the two. Here's the challenging thing is a lot of people who struggle with food and their weight have unresolved trauma, right? Those of us who have unresolved trauma that we don't know, we don't trust ease, and so we never create it in our life but we want it. We think that losing weight is going to give us all that ease. Is that clear? That projection that we have?

[0:35:26.3] JB: A 100%. I think that's why for me for so many years I continued to overeat and binge eat, even when I had thought that I had resolved a lot of well, the external things in my life, like I'm not in that bad of relationship anymore, I'm not living in that environment anymore, I'm creating more like – I've got a routine for myself and yet, I still held on to overeating at night and couldn't let it go.

Until I dealt with some of the really deeper issues, like my fear of safety. I had always had this fear of I'm not safe and that was from having a really traumatic childhood. Until I really tackled that and went deep enough to then relax and feel the world isn't as scary, things are safer, then some of those things finally started to fall by the wayside and I didn't need to overeat all the time.

[0:36:26.5] AS: Exactly, exactly. I want for listeners, think about are you projecting ease onto a certain number on the scale? Then do you love ease, but then struggle with it? I'm someone who loves that I'm a hard worker, right? Part of that is I am a hard

worker, but part of it is also I don't trust ease that much, right? That scares me. Even with all the healing I've done, I still sometimes, I'm challenged with it.

If you're someone who says it's just going to be easier to be the real me if I lose weight, you may not have unresolved trauma, or have to go as deep as Juliet did. There's some judgments around ease, so like you want it, but then to have it, could be really scary. If we think weight loss is going to eliminate those tail triggers, "Oh, my God. I won't be tired because, right? Oh, my God. I'm going to have all the energy in the world to make green smoothies and sit in journal while the breeze ruffles my hair, right?"

Or a lot of my clients say, "Oh, you won't be so tired from being on all the time, or you won't be so doubtful and have to be like you'll be on, or inadequate, or lonely." The good news is that you don't have to lose weight, or reach any number on the scale to have that. What really makes life easier, and I would say that even if you have wealth, that definitely doesn't mean you're going to be life will be easy, because to your point, you had eliminated a lot of the external things, but it's still an inside job, right?

What really makes things easier is resilience. All of us can cultivate that. Resilience is just like, "Hey, I'm going to try these things. I'm going to go a little bit outside my comfort zone and then recover, right?" Resilience ease about recovery and stretching yourself. That's the cool thing and that's why I know in my work especially with [Why Am I Eating This Now](#), people start to slowly not care about the scale genuinely and feel more neutral about it, because they're getting the resilience that they thought was dependent on what they weighed, or the ease that they thought was dependent on what they weighed, but really is about cultivating inner resilience.

[0:38:33.2] JB: I was just talking about this earlier with someone in relation to food and how I am as an eater now, versus how I used to be. Years ago, one could have looked at what I ate and said, "Oh, my gosh. She eats so well, so clean, everything was

sprouts and salad choices and just really what you would think is healthy eating, right?"

My dinner last night was bread and cheese. I was saying that I am so much happier in my life now, than I was then when I was eating "perfect," or really clean. I eat with ease. I don't think about it being good, bad, is a neutral thing for me. I have all the knowledge and tools to know how to eat healthy, and by no means am I disrespecting my body on the regular, because I know that eventually that would not make me feel good, but I have so much other stuff like the emotional resilience I have is so strong, that the food it's almost like – it doesn't even – I can eat things and it doesn't even affect me anymore.

[0:39:55.9] AS: Yeah, because you trust yourself too, right? You're like, this isn't a regular thing. Often, because we don't have resilience, the minute that we go "off," right, it triggers uncertainty, and we don't have any resilience to how do I manage this uncertain feeling and we spiral downwards. Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up. Yeah, I don't eat perfectly either. I mean, in fact we've –

[0:40:18.1] JB: People think you do though, don't they? I mean, at least being in our position, I'm sure people say to you, like you must eat so well all the time.

[0:40:26.8] AS: I'm like, "No." I mean, I do most of the time, but I don't even – it's just not a thing anymore. Again, I'm also not competing with the scale of like, am I winning, or losing, or so? All right, and then we're going to get to the last one. This is the one that is probably the most will blow of your life, but we're going to take a short pause for our sponsor of this episode.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[0:40:50.5] AS: This Insatiable episode is sponsored by my client-described life-changing program, [Why Am I Eating This Now?](#) If you are tired of the on-off cycle, want food to stop being worth it in the moment but not afterwards and you want to stop self-sabotaging with food, this live program is for you.

Early bird registration begins on September 10th. Visit alishapiro.com/foodfreedom2018 to sign up to be notified when registration opens for this year's live session. Want to know a little bit more? Stay tuned to the end of this episode.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:41:35.4] AS: Okay, Juliet. Now that we're back, I'm going to talk about the soul level hunger that we have with being a certain number. The question for that is like, is my life meaningful? Let me explain a little bit about what I mean about why a number on a scale represents is my life meaningful? This really came up in our last Truce With Food round.

I've said it on this podcast, but I shared this Truce With Food, that I joke that people who don't have religion find nutrition. It's a different promised land, or being saved. We assume that clean eating is going to prevent us from disease, or that weight loss will give us this freedom to be us and to choose. What's happening is when we believe we're going to get ease and we're going to get all the good things in life, culture is giving us a plan of how to orient our days, right?

If everything hinges on what you look like and what the scale says, then weight loss is what gives your life meaning, right? Or being obsessed with health and eating so clean. That means if you're counting your macros, or getting to the gym, you feel productive, right? If weight loss is our goal, or a specific number on the scale, or a certain body fat is our goal, then we know what our to-dos are, right? We know we

need to weigh our food, we need to read about nutrition, we need to work out, all of those start to feel really meaningful.

In America, which is a land of extreme, it likes us to believe that we have one dramatic purpose, right? We build that up to be this big, big thing, and so we put off the very things that would give us meaning by using weight loss as an avoidance technique.

[0:43:19.3] JB: What you mean by this one dramatic purpose is like finding your gift to the world?

[0:43:25.4] AS: Yes. Yes.

[0:43:26.4] JB: What is your gift? What are you going to offer the world? You must use your gifts. Like a fairytale. You're holding back. You must find the gift within you with it.

[0:43:45.1] AS: Yeah. I remember when I was struggling with the scale and would go to weigh-in every week, it was like, "Oh, all of that stuff felt it counted if the scale was on top."

[0:43:53.2] JB: What a great way to distract you from actually ever even finding out what your gift is.

[0:43:56.9] AS: Yes. My client was like, "Well how do you figure out this orientation of meaning?" I'm like, it's really hard. It takes a lot of work to figure out who you want to be when you grow up, and you also evolve and change, right? You and I are at this place with our businesses, where we've really mastered skills and tools and now we're having to learn how to be business people, right? It's a different skill set. It's like you never arrive. When you're figuring out what matters to you, you're going to be tired, you're going to be anxious, you're going to feel inadequate at times and you're going to feel lonely, because opting out of normal is not where everyone is hanging out,

right? Because ultimately, if you're opting out of the scale and these triggers, you're not going to necessarily have a conventional life.

[0:44:41.1] JB: Yeah. I'm sure you felt this way with people that you used to surround yourself with, who or maybe in the same place as you, misery loves company kind of thing. When I was all about the scale, or my body, I had other girlfriends that were in a similar place as me, so it would be something that we would discuss and talk about. Now being around that energy, feels so counterproductive and I just can't be around it, because I can't relate to it anymore.

[0:45:12.7] AS: Yeah. My closest friends in college, it was all about what we were weighing and losing weight. Nowadays, I never talk about that with people. It's just not what I –

[0:45:21.6] JB: Isn't that interesting too, like being a health coach and doing what you do for a living? I know that one of the things you say Ali, which I love is you tell people off the bat, "I cannot guarantee you weight loss for you. If you are expecting that coming to see me, if that's something that you're putting a measure on, or that's how you're going to know that I was a successful coach for you, then we're not the right fit."

[0:45:43.9] AS: Yeah. Totally, totally. Yeah.

[0:45:46.5] JB: Then you make sure that you're getting the right person for you too, because I have definitely had clients who have gotten angry with me that, "I gained a pound. It's your fault. What you put me on your program." That's never a conversation that you want to have to have.

[0:46:06.1] AS: Yeah, for sure. Probably what's happening is a lot of, again they're being triggered, right? It's not you. It's not the lack of weight loss. It's like, what is that

bringing up in me? Am I tired of this? Am I uncertain of why this is happening? Do I feel inadequate? Do I feel lonely about this?

I think again, we can be so fulfilled. If we start to look for meaning outside of just our health routine. It doesn't mean that you don't have to prioritize it. It just doesn't have to be front and center. I just want to explain to everyone, because again, I think this is so glossed over, because wellness overlaps personal development, and a lot of multi-level marketing, like essential oils, supplements, shakes, these people who sell this they're like, "I found my passion, my purpose in the world," and they keep reinforcing that there's one purpose in life.

Really a passion worth devoting your life to is something that grows over time. Truce With Food on the surface is totally about getting people healthy. What I really care about is taking people through this adult learning process that frees them and getting people out of what's called the socialized mind, and getting people to think for themselves and think originally, and for clients to take leadership in their lives and go out and change the structures that are in our culture. That took me eight years to really figure out what I was doing.

I think again, it was part of that ease of once I lose weight, it's just all going to be easier. Or like, "I'll feel I belong," right? On our soul level, it takes work to figure out your unique purpose. I mean, and we can all do this too in various configurations. Juliet and I obviously were experiencing that through our career, but you don't only have to do that for your career, right? I'm always growing in my relationship with Carlos. I'm growing in my relationship with my friends and how I want to be as a social justice advocate.

[0:48:00.5] JB: There's no right or wrong way to be using your gift, or having a purpose. You can experiment with things all the time and just see what feels good to you. I mean, there's no real definition of this. It's what do you feel good doing in your

life and what fulfills you. No one can give you those answers. It's not about one day waking up and you have this big aha moment, the light bulb goes off and you know, "Okay, this is what I was put on this earth to do." Things like that, unfortunately don't happen to most of us. They happen to some people, but not to most people. I'd say it's just about giving different things a try and just seeing what makes me feel good.

[0:48:47.5] AS: Yeah, and what makes you feel deeply rewarded. I mean, I think, and we talked a little bit about this with our episode with Kathleen Shannon, the difference between soul and spirit, but your soul expression is how unique you are. It really is about your gifts, but it's an amalgam of gifts, and it's a combination of things that only you can express. You can figure that out by really exploring your emotions and your body, because the soul sits in the body.

If you're like, "This is bizarre. I feel really good doing this." I remember one of my clients like, "Well, I just love walking my dogs and walking other people's dogs." I'm like, "Then do that. That is one of your purposes."

[0:49:25.4] JB: Don't feel bad about it, because it's not some big thing that people would look at you and be like, "Oh, my gosh. She's doing something so incredible for humanity."

[0:49:39.3] AS: Exactly, exactly. A lot of my clients, they really discover a passion for being a leader in their workplace. I mean, they're with I guess you would say entrepreneurs in their companies. Not officially, but they really love developing people, or developing themselves as leaders. It's like, why is this so fun? It's like, it doesn't matter. If that feels meaningful, let's start focusing on that. I think that is so important for, I really want people to take away. Don't dismiss this because the soul is so esoteric, or whatever, but so much of our lives will feel meaningful, independent of the scale when we really lock into that.

[0:50:15.5] JB: I want to say that I have a friend right now and he is finishing up his residency and he's becoming a doctor. It's something that he had a thought that he wanted to do since high school, and was really encouraged to do so, because I think that there's a lot of pressure put on these prestigious professions, right? If you say, "I want to be a lawyer, or I want to be a doctor," at a young age, then it's really encouraged, right?

Here he is now finishing up his residency and he is questioning his passion and calling and we were having a conversation, he said, "I really need to do something creative and I feel interior design is my calling." It's like, "What do I do? I'm so far down the rabbit hole." We were just having conversation about, you don't have to have a crisis about it. It doesn't have to be a big like, "I'm quitting my residency and \$200,000 in debt for nothing," because that's a big deal to step down from that when you're this far. He's already a doctor.

[0:51:25.2] AS: Wow.

[0:51:25.8] JB: We were just talking about ways that he can be feeling fulfilled in that being creative and having an outlet. One of them is his apartment is freaking amazing. He designed his apartment and it's so nice. I said, "You know, you could come over and do you have any interest in looking at my apartment and helping me pick things out, because we just moved?" He was so excited about that. I'm like, "Well, you can help friends."

I also brought up to him and he thought this was a good idea, was working on designing hospital rooms to be more – to have more of an ambience and be less scary and less sterile feeling, because I know for me that the environment of a hospital room, it's not a warm and fuzzy environment, right?

[0:52:11.9] AS: Well, and research shows, even if people look at nature on a picture in a hospital room, they heal faster, than people who look at a brick wall.

[0:52:20.6] JB: Exactly, because I was like, "You could use your design skills for something like that," and that is – I was like, "Oh, my God. I'm having so many ideas right now."

[0:52:30.4] AS: I'm so glad you brought that up though, because we are really an economy in a world in transition right now, right? We really are. I even think about him as he has this creativity. When you looked at the Greeks, poetry and medicine were together, right? They always were describing the body in metaphor and illness as a metaphor, right? Then the more that we've become separate and like Descartes saying, "I think, therefore I am," and Newton and his physics law. We just divorce the two, and so then people think their science are creative, or if they're only creative, they have no analytical ability. When really, we all have both.

I was even reading how left and right brain, that's a scam too. That was designed to sell books. Actually, your brain hemispheres are always talking to each other. I think what is such a great example, like a conclusion of what you're sharing is we are such an economy in transition. Even one of my good friends, Jack actually who helped me reposition my own business, she's starting to do a lot of executive work with people who have gone to really prestigious MBA schools.

I was like, "This is so exciting that they're bringing in your gifts, which is all about emotional intelligence and all about bold leadership." I'm like, if it's happening at the Harvard's and the Penn's and people are really understanding how important emotions and personal development is in the business world and the cutthroat corporate world, just keep following those inklings, because even again, Truce With Food is totally like, I just reunited different disciplines that should have never been

separate. Like body and mind unite. You guys reuniting workouts, like the way we move that should have never been separate.

I think if you really want to have meaning, especially in a career, or even how you work in your communities, or in the organizations that you volunteer for, or how you raise your kids, it's not going to look like what came before, because it's just everything's broken.

[0:54:26.4] JB: Yeah. Everything's segregated and things need to be a little bit more cohesive and everything works in tandem, right?

[0:54:32.1] AS: Exactly, exactly. Yeah, any closing thoughts as we close out, how to start to pay attention to whether the scale is making you feel tired, or uncertain, or inadequate, or lonely?

It's not the scale itself. It's what you think those numbers mean, or what you think it not budging, or going that means, and how can you better manage those feelings. Anything in closing Juliet?

[0:54:54.8] JB: I would say for our listeners, I had a feeling that some of our listeners might be thinking to themselves, "Okay, I am someone that has weighed myself every day as a measure for 20 years," I'm just throwing a number out there. What advice would you give to that person to start to make that shift? Should they stop weighing themselves daily? Should they continue, but think about things differently? What exercise would you try to give that person to support them with changing their relationship to the scale?

[0:55:26.7] AS: Yeah. Well, I think it depends on what the trigger brings up, right? If you're feeling tired, and again, also look at your stress response Juliet. I mentioned she's an avoider. You can take my quiz at alishapiro.com, because that will help you see how you're framing your choices. If you're tired, what metrics actually help you? Is

it going to the bathroom every – having a poop every day, right? Or your cravings going down, or the fact that you moved.

Start thinking about the metrics that will actually make you feel better daily if you're tired. If you're feeling uncertain, I think finding a new approach altogether, because uncertainty is a big one, it's a big trigger, and I think finding an approach that will help you start to develop belonging, independent – because I think you have to work on the emotional level before you can get to the soul level, because you need a good spot to go after soul level, wouldn't you agree?

[0:56:20.9] JB: Yeah, definitely.

[0:56:21.9] AS: Although, they're all working on the same thing as you're helping to discover yourself. The uncertainty is find an approach that really focuses on nurturing you and helping you figure out what works for your body, because I think people think the scale motivates them, but it doesn't.

I mean, I would say that's around emotional health. How can I start to feel okay with uncertainty and trusting myself? If you're feeling inadequate, I think enjoy it, chime in here, because it's not a quick fix, right? Some people, all of my clients they all handle this a different way. Some of them tactically will say, "Okay, I'm going to cut down to once a week," and that's a different delta for them. Maybe you can go every three days. Maybe that's clearer, rather than looking –

[0:57:04.3] JB: Yeah. I mean, I always say to people, I don't think it's necessary from even a data standpoint to do it more than once a week. I just don't think you're getting anything out of that. I mean, just scientifically that number is fluctuating, because of so many things; how much water you drink, how much poop you pooped, how much salt you ate, it's that scale moved 1 centimeter on the floor. I think it is over killing us

unnecessary to do it more than once a week, if you are something that really does still feel like you need to have it as a comfort point.

[0:57:44.5] AS: Yeah. I would also say extend your timelines from however long you think weight loss is going to take you, because we do things weekly, but that's just not how weight loss works either.

[0:57:55.3] JB: Yeah, and that also is this random metric that was given to us this whole calorie in, calorie out scenario, right Ali? It's like, well 3,500 calories equals 1 pound, and so if you create a 500-calorie deficit over a seven-day period, then everyone should lose a pound. Well I'll tell you right now, that from working with clients for eight years doing nutrition coaching, that doesn't work. It's not an exact science, because there's so much more to the human body and the soul level of whether or not somebody is holding on to weight, or – there's just so many different factors than just this simple, plain 3,500 calorie deficit equals 1 pound loss.

[0:58:37.9] AS: I know, I know. We are such a barren culture. That's like what – like no imagination, is so linear like, my God.

[0:58:48.2] JB: Yes. Anyways, not to confuse everybody at the end of the episode, but feel free. I think that this episode might get a lot of questions, comments, so I would love to hear from our listeners. If you guys have any questions or comments about this episode, I want – this conversation I think is just so important for so many people.

[0:59:07.7] AS: Yeah, yeah. Find us on Instagram. I find that's where I have great conversations. If you want to work on the tail triggers that the scale brings up, consider my life changing program; [Why Am I Eating This Now?](#) It's client-described life changing. It's not an exaggeration. It's true. Session after session, clients tell me this program changed their life, or in the case of Shelley who said, "I wish I could bottle this feeling up and give it to everyone."

If you're tired of the on-off cycle, want food to stop being worth in the moment but not afterwards and you want to stop self-sabotaging with food, especially after you don't like what the scale says, this program is for you. You will learn a clear and exact process with tools for getting to the root cause of why your emotions overpower you and you eat. You'll also learn with and from a dynamic community that likes to connect over the type of conversations we have on Insatiable.

We simplify food, not give you more rules to rebel against. As one, why am I eating this now client says, there is no white knuckling with this process. Early bird registration begins on September 10. Early birds will receive a discount, early access to the classroom and a freebie you won't want to miss. Be sure to visit alishapiro.com/foodfreedom2018 to be notified when registration opens for this year's live session.

[END OF EPISODE]

[1:00:38.6] AS: Thank you, health rebels for tuning in today. Have a reaction, question, or want the transcript from today's episode? Find me at alishapiro.com. I'd love if you leave a review on Apple Podcast and tell your friends and family about Insatiable. It helps us grow our community and share a new way of approaching health and our bodies.

Thanks for engaging in a different kind of conversation. Remember always, your body truths are unique, profound, real and liberating.

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