

Eating Triggers:

Embody Self-Respect with Brodie Welch

Insatiable Season 5 Episode 7

[INTRO]

[0:00:08.9] 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 efficient science and true whole health.

Fair warning, this is not your parents' healthcare. 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]

[INTERVIEW]

[00:00:47] BW: Welcome everybody to season 5 of Insatiable. This season, **our theme is eating triggers**, namely triggers for the on/off eating cycle. We really want you to get clarity about these triggers, because clarity is a process and a tool. What do I mean by this? Well, when we are clear, we are able to get to the root cause. Rather than wasting our time and energy working on things that aren't really the issue. For example, falling off the on and off cycle is not about will power or discipline, which we're going to especially learn about today.

Second, logic doesn't change us. We need to have things resonate, see things from a different angle, and clarity helps us do that. It connects to our emotional logic. Lastly, clarity equals distance. So if you've ever been able to get over something from the past, you know that's because you have distanced from it. You're able to see what you were doing, what other people were doing, the context of the situation. When we have clarity in the present moment, we get a little bit of distance so we can choose differently moment by moment. So that's why we're focusing so much on clarity.

So what triggers us specifically to stop our self-care? What's the difference between willpower and habits? In today's episode, *Eating Triggers: Embody Self-Respect*, Brodie Welch, acupuncturist, Chinese medicine expert and self-care strategist will teach us how to not let stress trigger us to eat a little.

A little bit more about Brodie; Brodie Welch is a licensed acupuncturist, board certified herbalist, which is no easy feat by the way. Chinese medicine expert, Holistic transformation coach and self-care strategist. She is the founder of Life in Balance Acupuncture in Corvallis, Oregon. I hope I pronounced that right, where she's been treating patients since 2003. Brodie helps caring high-achieving women put themselves on their own to-do-list so they can trade stress and burnout for energy, joy and vibrant health. She's also the creator and host of A Healthy Curiosity, the podcasts that explores what it takes to be well in a busy world.

Thank you so much for being here, Brodie.

[00:02:58] BW: Oh, I am so excited to have this conversation with you, Ali. Thanks for inviting me.

[00:03:03] BW: Yeah. Yeah. So I think I want to first open up with finding embody and self-respect, because I think you define those differently than probably most people. So I'd love to kick that off.

[00:03:16] BW: Yeah, both of those words have a really deep meaning for me as I think about the kind of like what it is I do and who I help. Essentially, that I work with women who want more out of life, and a lot of these women, they're high achievers, they're professionals, they drive and strive, they achieve, they're so super competent. But they don't necessarily embody the same kind of rocking performance that they do in the outer world. They don't feel like that inside. So it's like they're likely to override their own needs in service of getting the job done, or "Somebody else needs me. Therefore, I'm just going to put off." Even little things like drinking water or getting up and stretching and moving before answering an email, or getting to bed on time. Just like the little things which are really – It's these little things, which is how we embody self-respect in the sense that like we wouldn't take it from anybody else if they were like, "No! You need to sit there and finish this before you can get up and –" whatever it is, or like, "No! You should blow off your meditation practice so that you can get to work."

The driver in our heads is often totally disrespectful of our humanity. So recognizing that even though a lot of my clients are such rockstar achievers and yet they do have this inner harshness, which is not particularly compassionate, not particularly respectful even. So it's the kind of thing we're like embodying self-respect to me means that you treat yourself as though you were the goddess, as though you were absolutely worthy of care without doing a thing.

[00:04:59] AS: What struck me as you were explaining that, because I was thinking of Juliet and I who are both pretty so hard drivers, probably like your clients, is that feeling of like the insides matching the outsides. I think Juliet and I both probably work with people as well who it's like you get all these accomplishments and you get all these done, yet it's never enough, because on the inside, it doesn't feel satisfying, like that word embody. I love that. The inside doesn't match the outside.

[00:05:28] JB: Yeah, and I think for a lot of people, the achievements, it's not the answer, right? And it's this tough. It's feeling good on the inside and you're having your health aligned that will actually give them that feeling of satisfaction. But it's funny, because you don't even think about that. You just think about achieve more, achieve more.

[00:05:48] BW: Well, and it's no one's faults that that is the orientation because we live in a society that so obsessed the with doing at the expense of the being. It's a very masculine thing. I think it's part of living in a culture that is obsessed with yang as opposed yin, if we're going to use Chinese medicine. Yang is the active, the external, the speed, the productive, the hot, the transforming; and yin is the quiet, it's the still, it's the inner, it's the intuitive, it's the yielding, it's the inward. So were in a society that, basically, if you're going inward, if you're slowing down, if you're taking a rest, you're lazy, you're not doing enough. So there's this deep contrast between it's very hard to honor your yin, and when you do, this is the paradox that – I love Chinese medicine for its paradox, the fact that we need really good yin in order to have good yang, that you can't possibly – We know this, right? When you haven't gotten a good night sleep, you can't possibly be at the top of your game. You can't be creating and producing and on in the same way that if you had slept solidly through the night and you woke up and you had just exactly the kind of morning that's going to set you up for being in the zone. It's like you can't do that if you haven't been taking care of yourself.

It's these simple things that we do every day that allow us to – This is how we embody self-respect, is put these core competencies of self-care. When we have those onboard, we really are able to show up to do our best work in the world, but it's really, really easy, because nobody sees that stuff going on. We don't see that that's actually the key to being able to achieve beyond what we imagined we're capable of.

[00:07:31] JB: It's so funny you say that, because – So I took a nap yesterday and I took a nap today –

[00:07:36] AS: Good for you.

[00:07:39] JB: Part of it is that I have my period, so I'm just like a little extra exhausted. So my body just really needing the rest, but a friend of mine, he knew that I had taken a nap yesterday, and he called me today. It was so funny, he was like, "Are you taking another nap?" I was like, "I mean, I was thinking about it," and he's like, "Are you laying right now?" It was just hilarious. I'm like, "Yes, I am laying right now."

[00:08:06] BW: As though that's like the most decadent and shocking thing possible that you dare allow your expectations for yourself to fluctuate with your monthly cycle. What are you? Some kind of – I mean, just really?

[00:08:18] JB: You're a witch.

[00:08:20] BW: You have the audacity to respect to yourself.

[00:08:22] JB: I was like, "Yes, I am laying right now." But then it was like, "Oh, but I'm doing emails while I'm laying. I'm going to get things done." The reality of it is that like I need to rest. I'm not productive right now. I need to let my body reset and be able to go inward so that I can produce more outward.

[00:08:46] AS: I'm curious though, Brodie, how you approach this? Because I think people hearing this will be like, "Yeah, I get this in theory," but then – Okay. So we have one foot on the gas, right? I get this. I want to feel good. I want to feel fulfilled. But then the break is always, "But what if I miss out. What if I fall behind?" Really, what I think I'm hearing, and maybe I'm projecting my own internal what I think, is you have to have trust in the long tail of life, not kind of like what Juliet said, "Well, I'm being productive."

I'm getting emails done." How do you develop that respect or trust to trust that the long tail of, "Okay, you may be taking a nap today, but that's going to help you reach beyond what you imagine possible," as you said just a couple of minutes ago?

[00:09:34] BW: I'm hearing several questions in there, which I'd love to address. It sounds like you're saying there're some resistance to, "I get what you're saying in theory, but if I actually do this, if I actually dare to honor my yin, if I actually dare to listen to my body and have a nonproductive day," the risk of the productivity police coming over and arresting you, right? "That I might – What? Lose my edge. I might not work."

Inherent to that question is the idea of having to show up differently in the world. For a lot of us, we have used for a very long time and to great success either a survival strategy for navigating the world that's gotten us where we are today. So whether that's over delivering, or over serving, or being a perfectionist, or a people pleaser, or like whatever it is, we might need to stop doing that and let go of that way of being in the world in order to actually embrace our potential, and that's very scary, because it means letting go of the tried-and-true and the momentum of our past has a lot of influence about – If this is our safe zone, is just suck it up and do it. Then we never get to explore and play with those colors of what it could be like to actually have a little more time for ourselves, actually have a little bit more time to do our creative passions or to go inward or to have that fallow season that will allow for the crops to yield even greater supply next season. It's very scary and there's not a lot of support for that, because when we try to let go of the way that we used to do something, there's all kinds of things that can drag us back. So it's super hard. That's like what the first part of what I heard you say.

The other is like basically is that like people don't necessarily trust that, like walking out on that limb feels perilous, and I think is because we have this sense that I think, again, a cultural thing where we're so steeped in the idea that we have to be constantly

doing, that we don't actually acknowledge that everything in the universe operates according to this pulsation, right? In yoga, it's called spanda, right? The expansion and contraction, like the lub-dub of the heartbeat, the inhale and the exhale of the breath, the taking in and letting go of the digestive system, like absolutely everything in the body operates in this yin and yang pulsation, and we like to think that we're machines. We like to think that like from 8 to 5, we have to be in this hyper masculine productive mode, and you're like that.

The idea of there being work smarter, not harder, the idea of really syncing up with natural cycles in our own internal biological cycles, it goes against the grain of the brainwashing that's inherent in the culture that we live in. So it means like it's pretty radical. It's a pretty radical act of feminism, I think, to take care of yourself just because we are in a culture that where it's not about how it feels, it's about how it looks and it's about doing more and like even at the expense of your health and happiness.

[00:12:35] AS: Yeah. So then I guess my question, and I totally agree with all of that, and I love that you said this is like a feminist issues, because when you're talking about over delivering, or over performing, and a lot of the stuff that drains us, especially as women, is emotional labor, right? Making sure everyone else is okay and happy with our choices, or we're not disappointing people and blah-blah-blah.

But when you say potential then, I think a lot of people might think, "Well, my over delivering is helping me reach my career potential." Are you saying there's a sweet spot and that our potential may look differently or not? I'm just curious.

[00:13:11] BW: Oh, well I think that people have been able to achieve what they've been able to achieve running the race, carrying a 50-pound backpack, and that when we honor our yin, when we do things like start the day with meditation, or get enough sleep, or nourish ourselves the way our bodies want to be fed, that it's like the backpack comes off and we're still able to do far more than we could before with

more ease and with more satisfaction and personal fulfillment than we ever thought possible.

The other part of our potential really is that being in that hyper productive, hyper responsible mode, is it does things to our energy in the body, right? The driving and striving energy in Chinese medicine correlates with the liver, and basically we can – It delivers responsibility. It's not just as the organ of filtration, helps detoxify us and helps us digest, that produces bile so we can digest our fat. In Chinese medicine, the liver is also about the free and easy flow of energy in the body and is responsible for the free movement of all emotions in the body and having an even – It's responsible for timing of the menstrual cycle, the digestive system of being able to have easy going to sleep and waking up, that anything that happens in a rhythm is affected by the liver.

So if we've been driving our nervous systems with caffeine, and sugar, and alcohol, like rev up, or slow down, or to kind of keep our hands on the reins, in service of our minds, when we're identifying with our minds at the expense of our bodies, that the liver chi stagnates, and when the liver chi stagnates, we get tense, we get tight, we feel it in the gallbladder channel, which is like up in the neck and shoulders area. So the tight neck and shoulders, the shallow breathing, we start to see hormone imbalance, we start to see migraine headaches. We start to see tension in the body because the liver also correlates with the tendons and sinews. It's like our whole experience of our bodies could be different if we let go of that stagnant liver chi.

Suddenly, all that goes away. Our experience of ease opens up. We have access to flow states in a way that we never could. When we're in fight or flight or when we're in stress mode, we're fundamentally not capable of being in our prefrontal cortex, our full humanity, our full creativity, our full compassion, all of that. So our whole experience of the world is different.

[00:15:25] AS: Oh my God! That's so inspiring. Seriously, like – Because when you were describing too about the pulsing, like yin and yang are going to pulse, or what not, an expansion and contraction. So it's like you can either work with that or make it feel like it's sabotaging you.

[00:15:40] BW: Exactly, and there's nothing in life that's immune from that, the cycles of day and night, the cycles of the season is all about this, this, everything, everything, from the day, to a plant, to an animal, to us, to every cell in our bodies, microcosm and macrocosm. Meaning, if it's out there, it's in here. It goes according to the cycle of birth, growth, maturity, declined and death.

So it's just like where are we in that cycle, recognizing where we are in the course of a day, in the course of our lifetime with respect to any particular project, and being able to work with it and not against it is the original bio hacking, thousands of years old. Thanks to Chinese medicine.

[00:16:17] JB: I guess one of the things that I've been thinking about is how do we un-program ourselves and allow ourselves to give in to this yin more, the practicality of it all. I'm sure that you work on this with your clients a lot, just giving them some concrete things to put into practice. Myself as an example, is I definitely have the constant need and drive to feel productive, yet it doesn't mean that I'm being productive. It's just the anxiety and the guilt that comes along with it if I am allowing myself to, like I said, lay down, or I'm not doing anything during hours that I feel like I should be. That guilt and that anxiety weighs heavy on people, even if they're not actually doing the things that they intend to do.

[00:17:11] BW: Yeah, definitely. So when you are aware of that the other day, when you had that voice in your head that was telling you that you needed to be checking your email while you were resting, or feeling like you needed to defend yourself against your friend who was going to send the productivity police, what was it that you

became aware of? I'm curious about your inner dialogue in that moment, just that part of you that knew that it was kind of a false belief that you actually needed to be "being productive". Why? Sort of what I'm curious about is what was the limiting belief that was driving you in that moment and what was the deeper truth that you were eventually able to realize?

[00:17:47] JB: Yeah. I mean, I'm pretty good at taking care of myself and trying to understand my monkey brain versus my intuitive nature and what it really needs. So in that moment, I could really kind of differentiate between the two. It would be nice though to not even have that like lingering guilt or anxiety. I think, for me, because I'm a business owner, it's this constant defense of like, "I need to be on and I need to be making sure that things don't fall apart," even though the reality of it is I have lots of pieces in place and lots of things that won't allow that to happen.

It's also, I think, defending yourself against just wanting to look good, like make yourself look good not even for other people, but I think a lot of us just like want to impress ourselves than feel like we look good in our own mind.

[00:18:39] BW: Yeah. So what I hear you saying is that you had some mindfulness and awareness that, "Oh yeah, there's this part of me that feels like I need to be on all the time, but I actually know that my business isn't going to totally fall apart if I lie on the couch for half an hour," that there's an awareness, there's this pressure that you felt the need to be on and some self-awareness recognizing that it's actually not the end of the world if you give yourself a bit of break. Is that right?

[00:19:03] JB: Yeah, for sure.

[00:19:04] BW: Okay. So mindfulness is one of those tools, is recognizing when you are caught up in a stressed state and recognizing that what you're believing is a choice, that we can choose to believe that our self-worth is solely predicated on our

productivity. But, probably, that's not your true value, Juliet, right? That's the value of the society that you're living in. Yes, you value productivity, and you're a business owner. Of course, you care about that, but there's probably also lots of other things that you value like, for example, your own health and your own ability – Basically, that being at war with yourself creates another layer of tension, which doesn't need to be there, and goes away when you relax into the fact that there's going to be a time for productivity, but there's also going to be a time for rest and feeling capable and confident enough to be as committed to wherever you are in that cycle and letting it be okay to be a human being.

[00:19:59] JB: Yeah, and I think that also, Ali, I don't know if you feel this way just like being an entrepreneur, because we create our own structure. Sometimes we start to like live by rules to make ourselves feel almost like we're little bit more apart of regular society. I need to be working. I need to fill this productivity level. When, really, the reason why we're entrepreneurs is to have the freedom to not be that. I think it can be sort of challenging, because, again, the messages that we receive from those around us and the world we live in about needing to be on during these specific hours or times.

[00:20:38] AS: Yeah. As Brodie was talking, I was thinking – This just happened to me today. I'm in a co-working space, and this one friend of mine who we met at the – We went to the Families Belong Together rally, or we we didn't go together. We ran into each other in Pittsburgh several months ago when all the – Well, kids are still in cages and separated at the time of this recording. But we met down there. So we have this social justice bond or whatnot, and she stopped by in my office today and she's like, "How are you doing?" I was like, "Ugh!" I was like, "I just got off the phone calling my senator and representative about there's this bill in the Senate right now for the 5G networks." Long story, whatever.

She's like, "Well, it's great that you called." I was like, "It feels like it's never enough," and that's what I was like saying there. I was like, "I used to feel like there're all these problems," and I know I have this protector role, like I feel protective of my clients. I feel protective of people in my life, and I feel like I have a lot of capacity to protect people.

So now that like everyone in my life is okay and my business is okay, like my clients are doing okay, and I know how to hold them there. It's like I've gone to social justice, right? To be like, "Oh my God! There's more protection to do." She's like, "Well, isn't that so how work condition as women though? Like, to do all the emotional labor and to keep feeling like we aren't doing enough?"

As Brodie was talking about, it's like, "We need to unhook to say like, "It's inhumanly possible to care about every issue," and I think this comes back to trust though. It's like trusting that other people are doing their part. Yet when you look at the reality, and this is where I have trouble with. As much as I look at all – Like, everyone's talking about white women need to understand about intersectional feminism, I don't see a lot of white men doing any sort of activism, right? We see Louis CK just came back on the circuit not having like done any sort of soul-searching work or whatever. I have watched Louis CK and I used to be a big fan of his. So I've been paying attention to this.

But how do you navigate the fact that like some people just aren't pulling their weight? I mean, this is kind like a total tangent, but I think this is what deep down it's like, "I need to unhook from that," but like you still want to be a participant and contribute to things. I don't know.

[00:22:46] JB: What I hear is like a very black-and-white kind of thought thinking, I think, we get trapped in, which is like either I'm really productive and a part of everything and I'm doing and I'm contributing, or I'm just like being really lazy and not participating and it's like staying on the sidelines of my life.

[00:23:04] AS: But I think that derails us from self-respect.

[00:23:07] BW: Well, it really can. I think it comes back to a question of motivation, and what is your motivation? For example, I grew up feeling like I didn't have the right to exist on the planet by virtue of the fact that I was born into a white middle-class households in suburban Massachusetts. I just felt like if I literally wasn't spending my days volunteering in social justice work and activism, if my external did not match my internal every single day, that I should basically kill myself. I mean, that's really where I was, because otherwise you're just complicit and evil. So what good are you?

The thing that like got me unhooked from that is spirituality, is recognizing that if we just judge ourselves by our actions, we're essentially falling into the materialist trap and not actually seeing ourselves as – For example, you could go – Again, polarizing the black-and-white examples, that somebody who's burning out, burning the candle on both ends, giving 110% of their job at their home and on the social justice front, is that person doing more or less good in the world than the person who is meditating eight hours a day, like the Dalai Lama, and who's just radiating love at everyone that they pass, and smiling at strangers, and holding the door for people, and being just an all-around, like just awesome force of love in the world and giving where they can and writing the occasional letter, or making the occasional phone call.

But I feel like there's a big spectrum there, and that we all have her own dharma, and, really, that before making our self worth predicated in our actions, we're going to lose, because we're all inherently worthy, or at least I believe that we exist. We didn't ask to be here, but we are, so it's a gift. What we choose to do with their lives, that there's, again, to go to Chinese medicine on this, if we all have a purpose, that is said to live in our kidneys. That's part of like where our mission in life would be housed. It also is connected to your innate gifts and talents, that that's your innate nature, is your jing.

Jing is the special substance that – It's also the sand in your hourglass, and when you run out of it, your time is up.

We can slow down our rate of consumption of our jing by living in balance, by making sure that we're not overextending ourselves, that we are nourished by our life experience, by the food that we're eating, by getting enough sleep, etc. It's just kind of like that when we are living off the interest in our bank account and not dipping into the principal, or the jing, that is basically how we can stay healthy. Also, there's enough stillness that the consciousness can reflect on your essence such that you know what's yours to do in the world, because the only real way to navigate chaos in the world, which clearly is facing us every day, is by being present enough to recognize the right action and the right moment.

[00:25:54] AS: Yeah. What I love that you said there, I think that was – I mean, I loved all of it, but I think especially when we're getting caught up in these old cycles and habits and patterns of, "Okay, I'm still over delivering. I'm still overworking," is like, "What's the real incentive? What would be really meaningful of why to changes this?" When you're just talking about the kidney and the jing, I'm like, "Oh my God! I want to conserve my jing. I'm not watching the news for like a week or something."

[00:26:20] BW: Exactly. Yeah, good call, right? Spend your life force. Being really judicious about what's getting your energy, because where you put your attention is where you put your soul.

[00:26:29] AS: Yeah.

[00:26:29] JB: Yeah. I think a lot of people start to feel like they're being indulgent and taking care of themselves in that way, and it's hard to differentiate like, "Am I being indulgent, or is this like self-preservation?"

[00:26:44] BW: Well, Juliet, I'm really glad you used that word, indulgent, because that is people's – Especially women, that is the biggest fear. That self-care is somehow selfish, and this is where I really want to flip people's thinking, because we somehow believe that it's totally fine to take care of our health once we have the heart attack, or once we get the cancer diagnosis, or the autoimmune diagnosis. Once it's an emergency, then we're allowed to pay attention. But everything that we know, that every functional medicine person, that every Chinese medicine person, or ayurvedic practitioner, like whatever expert you want to talk to is going to tell you that we all need the same things. We all need to be honoring our sleep. We all need to be eating whole foods. We all need to be digesting well. We all need space and time to digest our life. We need connection to other people. We need to be hydrating and pooping. These are the things that we need in order to be healthy.

I don't care whether you're a brain doctor, or a heart doctor, or a gut doctor, or a mental health technician. You're going to prescribe the exact same things for your patients. So doing those things every day for like a half an hour, or like having boundaries around these things that everyone agrees, are the pinnacles of self-care. It's not indulgent. That's socially responsible, because if everyone were to act as if – If everyone were to do that, we would save billions of dollars as the society in healthcare, and this isn't about pedicures. This isn't about the empty calories of self-care, which some might and say could perhaps judge us indulgent. This is the absolute basics. I would say it is responsible. You owe it to yourself and to everyone else around you to do these things, because when you do, it's not selfish. It actually benefits everyone in your life.

[00:28:27] AS: I love that. We're going to take a short break, Brodie, but when we come back, I want to know how we start making this happen with the difference between willpower and habits.

[00:28:35] BW: Sounds good.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[00:28:37] 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. So 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.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:29:22] AS: Okay. So we are back. I love all of these. Thank you. I feel like I'm having so many mindset pivots. So, thank you. I'm like, "I need spirituality back in my life. I need to do my dharma." But as we start to like, okay, test this out, that it's not this win-lose. Even as you were describing, like we wait till we have the heart attack, or whatnot. It's like that black and white thinking that Juliet had outlined before, it's like were such an extreme society. How do we start to do this? Because I feel like people think, "Okay." People tend to approach self-respect, what you're calling self-respect, like in this very dramatic way sometimes, like, "Okay! I'm going to wake up, I'm going to meditate every morning, I'm going to dry brush, I'm going to get sunlight, drink my smoothie," and they think they need all of these willpower. But you said there's a difference between willpower and habits, and I love to hear that.

[00:30:14] BW: Yeah. Well, we are not creatures of willpower. We are creatures of habit. 40% of our day, an estimated 40% of our day, is spent on autopilot. Meaning, on the things that happen pretty much without any conscious thought on our part, and if

we can just automate the right habits and get all those things that are those core competencies of self-care, if we can get those on to autopilot, we don't have to spend time thinking, "Let's see. Should I meditate today? Where am I going to meditate today? What am I going to need for that? Where's my cushion. Where's my –" Just all these thinking. If it's just on autopilot, you don't question it. It just happens.

So when I start working with clients, I'm big into habit change and teaching people how we automate, how we bring these things into autopilot. So until they're on autopilot, they require willpower, because it requires intentionality. But once they are on autopilot, none of us really have to think about brushing our teeth, or taking a shower. It just happens, because we are creatures of routine.

Generally speaking, with respect to willpower, while you're bringing a habit into automation, it requires repetition, and all habits exist – Like all habits are inspired by a trigger. Then there's the behavior itself and then there's a reward that happens as a result of doing the habit, or else it would evaporate. So there's always a payoff to us doing what we do, and sometimes that payoff is immediate and we don't need to create a reward for ourselves, but sometimes the reward is down the road. With meditation, it's like you might feel a little bit more focused, or a little bit more peaceful, but we know that after eight weeks of meditating 20 minutes a day, your actual range changes, and at that point that you might really be feeling like you're operating differently in the world.

Generally speaking, when we think about all the things that happen to us over the course the day that are stressful, every single time we have to make a decision. Anytime were under stress our willpower is reduced little by little, so that by the end of the day we have very little left. When we're trying to create a new habit, it's a really good idea to start in the morning. This is kind of the fake it till you make it, like to circle back to something Juliet asked earlier, is how do you actually do these things? What are some of the secrets to bringing it online?

One is to act as if, right? So if we just kind of practice embodying self-respect, eventually we will be that person who embodies self-respect. So in other words, bringing in the behaviors first and then our identity shifts as a result of that.

The others mindset, is just if you wake up in the morning and you feel like, "Oh yeah, I know that I am worth taking care of regardless about how much I get done in the day. I know that when I start my day from a place of centered calm, I am going to be much more intentional about how I live today." Then basically start habit stacking.

For example, if you know that what's missing from your life is exercise, and like that enables you to be clear. When you exercise, you're more likely to make healthy eating choices. You're more likely to get better sleep. That's going to be what we call a keystone habit, or a habit that provides structural and foundational support for other healthy behaviors. For a lot of people, it's exercise. For a lot of people, it's getting enough sleep. For me, I'm much less likely to crave sugar and caffeine if I'm well rested. I'm also much more likely to have an even mood. I'm much more likely to handle stress well.

For me, getting enough sleep means going to bed on time. So what does it take for me to go to bed on time? Well, what does it mean that I need to be doing it 9 PM if I'm going to try to be asleep by 10? Because, again, we're not machines. We don't shut off in an instant. Getting curious about what are keystone habits might be and starting there, because a lot of times if we can really dial in our keystone habit, a lot of these other behaviors just are going to fall into place by themselves, and that's really the trick, is getting habit to flourish, is finding the right place for it to live in the course of our day so that we just know it's got a time, it's got a place. We know it's going to happen and it can be nonnegotiable.

[00:34:22] AS: I like, especially when starting new habits, this is like dynamite. I love knowing that like meditation takes eight weeks, because I had meditated on and off in my life, but that would motivate me to try it. I'm like, "Okay. I need eight weeks," and then brain will change and it's not going to take as much effort. Because that's like hugely – Like, "I think I'm going to try that."

[00:34:45] JB: Versus, I'm like, "I would like eight days, please."

[00:34:48] BW: Of course, and it's like that what we're promised, is that like the eight minute abs, or the like three day detox, or just this idea of do it fast and get it over with. Sometimes there is more isn't necessarily better. We know with exercise, a lot of the gains are the first 20 minutes. With meditation, you don't just really need hours and hours. But we do know that there's good data on the 20 minutes, and we also know that even something like a gratitude journal of this five minutes of gratitude journaling can have an effect on happiness even six months later.

So there's certain things where there can be a little bit of effort that can result in big bang for your buck, so to speak. A lot of these things that once they're there, once they're on autopilot, it's easy to scale up, especially on things like meditation where it's challenging. I've had a meditation practice for 20 years and I still am tempted to go "do stuff", be productive, and it can be like – And I feel like I'm a caged animal trying to champ at the bit instead of sitting on my cushion. So I will set a timer and I know that the timer will go off, but I know that every time I choose to refocus on my breath, I choose to refocus on what my energy is doing in my body, I choose to watch my thoughts. What I'm doing is I'm regaining, I'm taking the reins so that I can pull my mind back to what I value instead of getting caught up in the sea of other people's values and agendas. So that makes me more self-respecting, because it makes me more autonomous and inwardly directed as opposed to falling prey to being in a reactive state. I'm driving the bus. I am being proactive about what I want my life to look like that day.

[00:36:29] JB: Yeah. I was thinking for people that when it comes to creating a new habit, lot of what holds people back is wanting to do it the right way, wanting to master it, or wanting to do well at it, "Oh, I'm not good at meditation. So it's like I'm not going to keep going with this, because I suck at it." You know? That kind of thing. Or, "I don't feel confident in the gym, or in shape enough to go to that class yet." So it's like putting things off because they know that they're not going to be doing it well.

[00:37:03] AS: Avoiding.

[00:37:03] BW: Yeah. Yeah, avoiding and perfectionism. It's like it's an ego strategy. Just like going to the gym for the first time, you wouldn't expect yourself to lift the heaviest barbell the first day out, and it's the same thing with meditation. As I'm constantly saying, give yourself permission to be the world's worst meditator, but don't let that stop you from doing it.

[00:37:23] AS: Yeah. One thing I think is really important that I want listeners to really realize, because I think the term mind and mindset get thrown out like very – Like, "Oh! It's about your thoughts, and mindset is one thing that happens indefinite. Like you have a mindset and it never changes. To your point, Brodie, about being a 20-year meditator, it's like your mindset may feel different every day. But what I really want people to realize is that your mind is not just your thoughts. No one has been able to locate the mind. It's an invisible projection between your body and your thoughts.

So knowing that, we know that what we're sensing and what we're feeling and what we're intuiting is just as important as what we're thinking. It's not like – I always tell my clients, "We're not going to make you stop thinking, because that's a really great part of you, but we want to bring up these other inputs." I think embodying self-respect gives us access to these other, like the senses of what it feels like on our body, what it smells, what it tastes, what we're really feeling. Then our intuition, we can get clear.

Versus, as you were talking, Brodie, about how we can just get swamped up and everybody else's stimuli and making these habits and working on this, I can totally – I'm starting to see like the exponential effect of really getting more done with less, like flailing and self-sabotage.

[00:38:45] BW: The other thing about thoughts is that we think that they're ours, but they're not. That what we believe and what we think about is affected by – Were ecosystems. So we are affected by the conversations that we have every day, with the news and media that we tune into, or don't tune into, that even how our gut serotonin can influence our view of the world, like what our micro biomes can affect our mental health and our outlook. What literally – And in Chinese medicine, again, digesting the world and our life experience and digesting our food is the function of the spleen and stomach, and that also is the organ system responsible for our intention.

So when we think about our mental focus about what we're choosing to focus on, what we're thinking about and what we're believing, that is influenced by the people that we hang out with, that is influenced by the conversations that we tune into. The fact that everyone listening to this podcast episode right now is choosing to – That this show is nutrition, right? This show is adding to their life. It's adding them some nutrients. It's hopefully giving some information and some inspiration that is uplifting and that can be digested in an excellent way to uplift their life in a way that having to filter out toxic, depressing stuff all the time, it's like that can be adding like a mental sort of drag.

So really choosing to keep good company to be around people who help us aspire, to really like affirm what we know to be true and don't allow us to stay stuck in limiting beliefs, like we are only as good as what we produce every day, or that you're not worthy unless you're perfect, just like all these things that we might be buying into. It can be really helpful to have somebody in your life, either a group of people, or a coach, or a friend, or a group of people that remind you of what you really believe

and what's more true than the stuff that is coming out of us all the time. Because it takes effort to filter that. So it's – Just like it's easy to choose healthy foods at the farmers market. It's way harder at McDonald's. So it's just like choosing the environment that you're part of helps to keep your thoughts nutritious.

[00:40:53] AS: I love that. Are there any like environmental tips that you recommend, or like cornerstone habits that you think are – I mean, as you're talking, I'm realizing that a lot of these requires self-awareness, because every person is going to get a different boost or a strong foundation. You talked about sleep. I'm a 90-year-old grandmother inside. I cannot skip on sleep. But other people can. Sleep doesn't necessarily – Exercise is their main thing. I know this is very individual to each person, but do you have any kind of greatest hits of foundational habits that you've seen work really well for people?

[00:41:31] BW: Well, I think that like we're all human beings. So certain things are just going to be really important. But depending on – In Chinese medicine, we think about the fact that each of us have the different constitution. So we can think about whether we particularly have more yin energy, or more yang energy. Whether we are wood, fire, earth, metal or water types in general, like there might be habits that are more important to different types because they balance a certain kind of energy internally. So I often view the world in that regard.

For example, I'm a wood type, right? My energy grows like a tree, where I'm constantly learning and growing, and teaching and leading. If I'm not growing, I'm stagnating. I have a lot of upward-outward energy.

For me, movement is helpful, because it helps that upward-outward energy to relax and to feel easeful. But I also definitely need that yin downward-inward kind of energy where I really need my meditation practice in order to feel connected to myself.

So the idea of recognizing that my own energy needs to be counterbalanced. So somebody who's like a super social fire type, who's an extrovert, who really needs other people, that person – Especially as women, one of the ways that we deal with stress as we tend and befriend, right? You talked about like, yes, we're often the emotional laborers, or it's like taking on that emotional processing role. But we also – It's part of how we reduce stress biologically. As we band together, we make sure everybody's doing okay and we connect with one another.

For a fire type, they might need to have social time and to feel connected in order for them to feel like themselves. Of course, fire is a very young element. That person also needs the quiet and downtime, but they're going to resist it even more than a wood type will. For that person, they're going to need things like sleep and meditation.

Earth types tend to want to make – They're their nurturers. They want to make sure that everybody else is okay. They want to take care of everybody else. Earth element is digestion, right? So those are the people who tend to – when they're not tending to themselves, they might overeat or crave sugar in ways, because they're not necessarily meeting their own needs. So for that person, healthy eating might be an important thing, or aligning with natural cycles.

Anyway, I could go on and on.

[00:43:41] AS: No! Keep going. Go through metal and water. [inaudible 00:43:44].

[00:43:44] BW: Okay. This is not like – This is by no means true. This is just kind of like what I've found in working with people.

[00:43:53] JB: Although it's always different architects with people.

[00:43:55] BW: Yeah.

[00:43:56] JB: We're all unique butterflies, but then we also are all very alike as well.

[00:44:02] BW: Yeah, exactly. Right.

[00:44:04] AS: Water and metal.

[00:44:06] BW: Metal is, in Chinese medicine, correlates with the lungs and large intestine, but personality, metal types can be very structured and very rigid, like metal can tend to be too hard. So, actually, for metal people, having enough space in life that's not structured, but a space for spontaneity can be really important for metal types. Again, that social connection with other people, that's in the fire element. Fire melts metal, so that that can be kind of a softening effect, and also metal people can also be very artistic and they might need time to be creative. The element that nurtures metal is earth. Again, just that making sure that they are nourishing themselves.

Water people, they need a lot of time alone. Water types, kidney and bladder are the organ systems that relate there. Water types tend to be introverted. They tend towards a spiritual path. They need their solitude and time in nature usually is what water types need the most and time to reflect, like water, that the moon will reflect on the calm pond, not the choppy lake. So they need stillness in order to feel like themselves. But they also, again, like to balance that tendency towards being inward. They also do you need to like get out in the world and do stuff. So it depends, whether that's exercise or whether that's being social.

But I kind of think that everybody needs the good nourishment, enough sleep. They need an easeful nervous system. So whatever allows them to feel relaxed, whether that is, for some people, we have access to that through movement, and for some

people, we have access through that towards something like petting a cat, or like tapping into love so that we can feel like everything's okay. For some people, it's nature medicine. And we need each other. We need to feel connected and loved and like we belong.

[00:45:56] AS: Juliet's a cat woman. I've seen when you were talking about the cat, Juliet. Rather than doing your emails, pet your cat while you're taking a nap.

[00:46:05] BW: Totally.

[00:46:06] JB: They're really good as nap partners. They're the best, because all they do is nap.

[00:46:12] BW: Yeah. Actually, one of my course numbers, that was her mantra for our easeful living module. Easeful living is one of the habits that we work on in my level up course. Yeah, what would Kayla do became her mantra, Kayla being the cat. A very elderly cat, by the way, who sleeps all the time. So just that – And that was how she was trying to honor her yin, right? Let it be okay that she – of course, she had just quit her high-powered job and she was getting comfortable with doing less and being quiet and going through a bit of an identity crisis. It was like, "Who am I now?" and getting comfortable with, "Oh, yeah." So just that there're these other colors that we get to paint with in our pallet even if we're used to just picking up one over and over again. We have all these elements within us and it is our birthrights. You know how to use them all.

So that kind of inner alchemy that we think about in Chinese medicine as a metaphor for how to evolve our consciousness is to get comfortable with all of these different aspects of who we are, even if it's not our predominate element.

[00:47:14] JB: Ali, do you have an idea of what your element is?

[00:47:16] AS: Yeah. So it's interesting, because do know who Molly Morrissey is. We had her on the podcast. I don't know if you've heard her, Brodie, but she does astrology according to the four temperaments. So I know that's different than the Chinese medicine element. But I have a lot of earth and water in my chart, like a lot of earth and water. But I think when I was hearing Brodie speak, I think I actually have a mix of wood and water. I think that is probably what I would – Or an earth. I don't know.

[00:47:45] JB: I was going to say, I would append you for earth, but –

[00:47:48] AS: Yeah. I mean – Yeah, I would say. What about you, Juliet? I would append you for like fire.

[00:47:55] JB: I think more wood, actually.

[00:47:59] AS: Huh! That's true. I can see –

[00:48:00] JB: I think I've morphed away from fire as I'm getting older.

[00:48:06] AS: Okay. Because I was thinking, maybe you're a wood –

[00:48:07] BW: Brodie, is that something that happens?

[00:48:09] AS: Maybe you're a wood on fire. Like you're a force –

[00:48:14] JB: I'm a burning piece of wood.

[00:48:15] AS: You have so much energy. The amount of physicality that you have, I'm just like in awe of.

[00:48:20] JB: But I think what Brodie was saying is the reason I need that physically is because like it helps me – What were you saying about wood, Brodie? About being physical? It's a way to sort of manage the energy?

[00:48:35] BW: Yeah. If you've got the upward-outward energy, that giving that energy somewhere to go, so giving yourself some cardio, giving yourself an intense workout. You can feel like, "Aah! There's some relaxation that happens after that."

[00:48:50] JB: Exactly.

[00:48:51] BW: Because it's not quite so pent up Again, with Chinese medicine, there's the constitutional type that we come in with, and that's a combination of our physiology as well as our psychology. But it's also true. So there's body type stuff and there's like face reading and hand reading and all those other stuff where we could really delve into, the what constitutional type we innately are. But there's also the idea of what it took to survive our upbringing. If you were raised with parents who really valued achievement, for example, you might have been rewarded for your what elements. Whereas if you had been raised by philosophers, your water element might've gotten stronger. If you were raised by artists, your metal element might've gotten stronger, or just depending on whatever it took to survive your upbringing, you might've donated more of your chi and blood to that particular element, which in a way a survival strategy.

So being able to – As we go through phases of our life, "Oh, yeah. Maybe I've outgrown the need to make everybody else happy. Now, maybe, I'm interested in blah-blah-blah, like diverting my energy towards this new thing, which I'm not necessarily in the habit of yet, but it's part of what's possible for us." Again, that speaks to identity death. We have to be willing to let go of doing things the way we've already

done them so that we can take risks and showing up really differently and having people –

[00:50:09] JB: Yeah. I was just thinking how people are wounded and have a lot of healing to do, and when you can become aware enough to know where that healing needs to start, then you can move towards maybe embodying these other elements and embodying different habits. But a lot of it starts with sort of taking a deeper look into to yourself to see like, “Well, where are these drivers coming from?”

[00:50:37] AS: Yeah. Brodie – So I want to ask a question. As you were saying, identity death. I’m turning 40 in like about a month here, and one of the things I really want to like let go is bracing for the worst. I mean, I think it's from having cancer and being bullied, and my parents were huge warriors. I mean, my dad grew up in a very violent area. My mom grew up very poor and have a lot of loss in her life. So I think I inherited some of that from them, and then my own life. What element do I need to work on if I want to – I don't want to like brace for the worst anymore?

[00:51:07] BW: Well, I don't know that I would go elemental on that so much as just –

[00:51:11] AS: Get a therapist? No. I’m just kidding.

[00:51:13] BW: No. No. I mean, it's what you're talking about is that you have a thought pattern that's carved the deep groove, right? This is something that it's a habitual thought pattern. So you're aware of that and you're wanting your energy to run in the different groove. So this is part of that neuroplasticity idea of how do we get our thoughts to run in a habitually new way.

Well, first of all, we have to be aware of what might trigger them to run the old way, then we have to be really intentional about how we can get them to like what is your

new beliefs that you're wanting to substitute? So maybe it's something like what would be the opposite of I always need to brace for the worst?

[00:51:54] AS: It would be like – Well, see, that's the weird thing, is because I take a lot of chances in life, but I think I'm losing a lot of chi in the process.

[00:52:02] BW: Yup. You might be. So what would you like to believe instead?

[00:52:06] AS: Well, I think part of bracing for the worst is always being in action and productivity and letting things come to me.

[00:52:12] BW: Got it. So a deeper truth might be that my life is a balance of effort and ease.

[00:52:19] AS: Oh my God, I could cry. Is that possible?

[00:52:23] BW: Will, it's kind of. That's the definition of health in Chinese medicine, right? Is yin and yang, being in balance. Yeah, if your life is a balance of effort and ease, and that's also *sthira sukha asana*. That's first yoga sutra, or yoga secret 2.1, or something like that. I forget what it is.

[00:52:39] AS: Do they get soft?

[00:52:40] BW: Yeah, right? Yeah, in any case, the idea that, yes, like if you want to believe that life, or from the Tao Te Ching, "Do your work, then step back, the only path to serenity." I forget which stanza that is. But if that's what you would like to believe instead, then what you can do is compile evidence in your life that that is true, because the brain doesn't know the difference between reality and imagination, and if your basically – Your belief is your standard operating system. So like when you go looking at the world, if you believe, for example, that life is risky and the worst is around every

turn, your brain is going to show you the Google results of that search, which is, "Oh, yeah. Tragedy here. Potential catastrophe here." But if you change your thinking so that you're searching for my life is a balance of effort and ease and you're compiling at the end of the day, here's what I did that was effortful. Here's what was easeful. Here's what came to me with that – I found \$0.25 in my couch. That was easeful. Money just came to me, or a seed that planted years ago, or a relationship that – A project you started might be bearing fruit just now, and therefore could be reframing your whole life from the sense of, "Oh, yeah. It's just natural and inevitable that the work –"

Again, like where you are in the creation cycle. Everything that – Like wood is the growth part, and then we go to manifestation, which is fire, the doing. Then what comes after that is the earth phase, which is reaping what you've sown and that idea of being nourished by your life, being able to receive the fruits of your labor, being able to reflect on the mountain that you've climbed and look at the view and go, "Wow! All my effort took me here, and I get to be here now, and this is my life that I've created. These are the people that I get to hang out with. This is the business that I get to run and these are the clients I get to serve. Isn't it amazing?"

Then you can start compiling evidence that life is in fact a balance of effort and ease. So then you're not just bullshitting yourselves with your new belief. You're seeing the evidence of it and your brain is like, "Oh, yeah, obviously. That's true."

[00:54:45] AS: Yeah. Yeah. No. I love that, gathering the evidence. I'm very data-driven.

[00:54:49] BW: Yeah. I guess it does sort of like fit back so that all the elements, like we are these elements, but we also move through them just like the seasons. So recognizing that where we are in the cycle of the cycle of life, really, the creation cycle,

that you are being able to be on that yin side of it, on the receiving side of it. Seeing how you are there as well just as you are also creating.

[00:55:14] AS: I love it. I love it. This has been so great. Juliet, do you have any final questions before we let Brodie go so that we can have some rest for her?

[00:55:25] JB: No. This has been so insightful. I love Chinese medicine is something I want to say.

[00:55:30] BW: Oh! It's brilliant.

[00:55:32] JB: I always vibed with it, and being someone who goes to acupuncture on the regular, lately, just over the years. That's always been the thing that I have returned to, is Chinese medicine. Just for those who are listening, I encourage you all to definitely dabble and check it out if it's something that you haven't yet experienced. I think it's pretty remarkable.

[00:55:56] AS: Yeah, and taking it off. If you are afraid of needles, you can work with Brodie.

[00:56:01] BW: You can. I am all about teaching people how to live the philosophy. Chinese medicine is applied philosophy. So it doesn't have to just be acupuncture or herbs. It's about living the balance of yin and yang. It's about integrating the five elements in this inner alchemy, and that's something that I absolutely love helping people look through the lens of Chinese medicine to see themselves in a new way and to be able to apply the energetics of life to your own life so that you can be your own healer.

[00:56:31] AS: I love that. Where can people find you, Brodie?

[00:56:34] BW: They can find me at brodiewelch.com. That's Brodie with an IE, and Welch with a CH, and they can check me out on my podcast, A Healthy Curiosity, available where all the finest podcasts are served.

[00:56:46] AS: Thank you so much. This insatiable episode is sponsored by my life changing program, [Why Am I Eating This Now](#), and that's not an exaggeration. 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.

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[END OF INTERVIEW]

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