

# Pros and Cons of Functional Medicine – Insatiable Season 7, 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' 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]

[0: 00:47.4] AS: Hello, everybody. Welcome to Season 7 of Insatiable. This season, **our theme is hunger** and taking a fresh look at different approaches to satisfying our hunger. To be physically and emotionally hungry is to be vulnerable. As Dr. Brené Brown says, 'Vulnerability is uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure. To have physical hunger or to acknowledge our emotional and soul hungers is to choose to be open to the daring risk of being fully satisfied'.

We will be exploring various diets and approaches to satisfying our holistic hungers. Before we get to our episode today, the pros and cons of functional medicine, during our transition episodes to season 7, I had hinted at something about if you love the conversations we have here and are all about exploring and experimenting to find the radical truth for everybody you have, your physical, emotional and soul, I had something exciting to share with you. Drumroll.

Introducing the [Insatiable membership community](#). This community is designed to help you take action around the topics we discuss here and support you to find your radical truth. I rolled the community out privately last year to clients new and old and the results has shown me there is a real need for a community where we can trust ourselves, learn from each other and as we get healthier, want to take more daring risks to make our life choices potent healing medicine.

I'm now opening it up to Insatiable listeners. In a nutshell, it's a community where there are no gurus and we learn from each other. Once a month we have mastermind topic that helps you gain clarity and have a group to support and learn from wherever you are on your path. Once a month, there's also a Q&A call with me where I coach attendees to get inspired, unstuck and clear on your next step. We start a fresh new season of topics in the community in March, which we will be focused on a fresh renewed look at our hunger. [For more information, visit \[alishapiro.com\]\(http://alishapiro.com\) in 2019.](#)

On to today's episode, which is a solo one with me, your host, Ali. I'm going to share the pros and cons of functional medicine through my own journey with it, plus what I've seen with clients who often come to me after trying to implement functional medicine protocols, either through books they've read, or working directly with a functional medicine doctor, or practitioner.

Now when we look to functional medicine, I really think we have a hunger for root cause resolution. Got this soul-craving for depth, right? That's what root cause resolution is. We don't want to just Band-Aid our symptoms anymore, which I think is also a hunger for common sense, right? I also think there's an emotional hunger when we're interested in functional medicine to understand our bodies and also be understood by our doctors, right? Which is a really healthy hunger, right? To want to be witnessed and seen and acknowledged.

Because our body houses our soul, I believe when we want to get to the root of any issue, it's also her soul finally getting our attention saying it's time to wake up a little bit more and to go a little bit deeper. I first found functional medicine way back in 2006 when I was at holistic nutrition school at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition.

At the time when I was going to that school, I know the curriculum has evolved a lot, but it was the live version and we learned all these different dietary theories from Ayurveda, to traditional Chinese medicine. I mean, very high-level understanding of them. We learned about functional medicine from Dr. Mark Hyman, who if you're familiar with functional medicine, him and Dr. Jeffrey Bland tend to be the face of it, and the westerner in me, right? I talked a lot about our cultural myths, but I'm very much a Western person.

My thinking has definitely become more integrated over time. At the time, the westerner in me loved the biology and the systems focus of our biology. Basically, functional medicine came along and said, "We need to look at our whole body with symptoms," right? This felt common sense to me and yet, so wildly radical. As I started to study, that was really the dietary theory that I was fascinated by, which is basically looking at food through a medical lens, rather than fat and calories, which felt really radical to me, because I had only looked at things really through fat and calories.

Functional medicine helped me connect the dots of my seemingly disconnected symptoms of acne, allergies, irritable bowel syndrome and depression. Discovering that depression was a symptom and not a diagnosis changed everything. You need to understand, I had struggled with depression basically since going through cancer at 13. I didn't know that I was struggling with PTSD, which led to my depression. I had just tried a bunch of different antidepressants, was on Wellbutrin at the time.

On my mom's side of the family, there's a lot of mental illness; people being committed to mental hospitals. A lot of people in my family on antidepressants. I had

tried natural things like kava kava, or St. Johns-wort and tried getting light. I had tried therapy and nothing really worked, so I had thought, "Hey, this is a diagnosis I had." By learning this stuff, I started to cook real food and I got off gluten and I learned how to balance my blood sugar.

I was eventually able to taper off my Wellbutrin, which was probably the first time I wasn't on antidepressants in about 10 years. What really moved the needle for me was cutting out gluten and getting off processed foods. This was new information back then. Having scientific research that showed evidence that this work was part of what helped me, as I'm very much a theoretical learner. I do need to understand the theory. In the science however, it was the live the experience of relief that got me to start cooking more.

Now I worked with a functional medicine practitioner named Jackie Doyle who's an acupuncturist and also one of the brightest minds in functional medicine. My office was in hers and she mentored me for four years. I also worked with her and she helped me match what enzymes and this GI powder I needed to help me rebuild my GI system, because I realized one of the main triggers of my depression was the chemotherapy. I was on really toxic drugs. I mean, the mop in my chemotherapy was what they used in the atomic bomb. I was on a ton of steroids, prednisone for four months, right? I had to rebuild my gut.

The main functional medicine tools I used were enzymes in this GI powder. They only worked because of the bigger changes to how I was eating. Again at the time, I thought I was eating healthy, but most of my food was packaged. For me to start cooking at home was radical for me, because I still don't love to cook. I was single at the time. I don't know if those of you who live alone – sometimes I would come home and just eat cereal, then I would often binge at night. I just wasn't really into cooking.

As I started to get on to real whole foods and gradually cut out gluten and introduced these enzymes to get my stomach acid back working, part of my IBS is I had really bad reflux. The enzymes helped reignite the digestive juices and stomach acid I needed and a GI powder helped turn over my cell lining, my GI cell lining much quicker, so that it didn't take forever to heal.

My immediate IBS symptoms got better. Over probably a year, my depression had gotten better. I really started to shift my relationship to food. I still really wanted to lose weight at this time, but I started eating well, because it truly made me feel better in a way that dieting never had, or anything else. It made me realize that when I was dieting and felt so good, it was because I thought it was being good, not necessarily that I felt good. I often had cravings, was hungry and I was still depressed when I was dieting, but I had normalized that.

A depressive fog that I had normalized began to lift. Carlos and I saw Hamilton the play a few weeks back. The Schuyler Sisters song in Hamilton is this ear worm that this rebel soul can't stop. They start singing and they say, "Look around, look around. The revolution is happening." I'm not going to sing it, because I know my limits. I do not have a good singing voice, even an eighth grade chorus, they asked me to lip-sync.

Basically, the Schuyler Sisters song says, "Look around, look around. The revolution is happening. New ideas in the air. Look around, look around. We are lucky to be alive right now." This is how I felt about functional medicine when I discovered it 15 years ago. This was radical to me, revolutionary to look at nutrition through a caloric lens. It really put the power of health back in my hands and I was getting results that I was never able to get from my doctors.

What I now know about adult development and becoming more the author of our lives with our health included, this set me up to question a lot more and how I had been socialized, to believe doctors know best, to trust the medical system fully and our

general society. I assumed our general society was on the right track with how to be happy and fulfilled. I think the symptom of that is I was still reading People Magazine and Women's Health and all these conventional magazines that I still contribute to today from an expert position, but I really thought that they had the answers.

One of the pros that I love about functional medicine is in the Institute for Functional Medicine, which is where practitioners go to study is that it has so much rigor and it's pursuing evidence-based, which means there's evidence of outcomes, right? I always say Truce with Food is research-based, because the model that I created is based on researched theories. I can't say it's evidence-based, because I don't have the resources to enroll people in studies, or the manpower, right?

Evidence-based is a super high standard in the medical community, to be able to prove that thousands of people have gone through this process and we can say this is evidence-based. Functional medicine, this group is really setting out to do this evidence-based medicine, so that you can know for example, my depression lifted because I was really inflamed and I had gut issues. Some people have essential fatty acid deficiencies, right?

It's really targeted healing for our biology. This is what functional medicine says on its website of this research, of this evidence-based processes; the result is an ever-evolving cutting-edge systems biology approach to health that treats each patient as a whole person. No longer is the patient seen purely through the lens of a dysfunctional organ system, a disease, or a syndrome, but instead of a person who can be helped on the path to optimal wellness.

By evaluating a matrix of fundamental causes in the diagnostic and therapeutic process, we can more accurately understand the roots of pathophysiology, leading to earlier and more effective interventions that not only extends lives, but also give patients years back of good living. This is pretty ambitious, because the medical

system is set to reimburse for treatments. It's not oriented towards wellness outcomes. There's a real lack of data and the Institute for Functional Medicine is trying to fill that gap.

If you think about this how revolutionary this is, when you go to get a blood test, or an MRI, or something, they are only evaluating did you get that test? They're not saying, "Wait. Does this actually improve any outcomes?" I think a really tangible example that I'm very familiar with is in the UK and Sweden, for example, they don't test for cholesterol, because they know that heart attacks and heart disease actually in most people, changing cholesterol does not improve the outcomes, so they don't waste resources on that.

Now in the US because our system is profit-driven, the pharmaceutical industries have really targeted cholesterol to say, "Hey, you need statins for this." You get reimbursed as a provider if you prescribe statins rather than saying, "Wait a second. If we actually look at outcomes, I think it's like 2% of people benefit from statins. This is a complete paradigm shift to start to measure based on outcome, rather than checking off the boxes of tests that we gave you, right?"

This is an emerging field and they're still using a foundation of biological system science that is helpful to know and we're on a gigantic learning curve, right? We have to be able to hold both. We know so much and we know so little. It's a really ambitious way of measuring outcomes, because health is so multifactorial.

I've had this conversation with some of my clients who are physicians and they are talking about with the Affordable Care Act, if they were really incentivized, the Affordable Care Act started to give reimbursement based on outcomes. It's really hard. I remember one client was telling me if you – she was a rehabilitation doctor and she was saying it's hard, because we could get someone well, but then what if they end up in the ER three weeks later, but it's for a different reason, right? How do

you measure that? It's not as easy as it sounds, right? I'm just bringing up the nuance here, because I really admire what Institute for Functional Medicine is attempting to do.

This is what revolution feels, right? We're leaving the old behind, but building that bridge to the new is messy as hell. For my clients who have worked with me privately or gone through Truce with Food, this is the muddle of the process, right? Our old identity is dissolving, a new one is still forming and healthcare is having its own identity crisis, right? Our institutions have identities too. Our health care system, what IFM has basically said on their website is we are no longer seeing the body as broken. We are no longer participating in this war metaphor that every symptom needs to be squashed. We are saying the body is brilliant and resilient and these are symptoms that we should be paying attention to.

I think this is the equivalent of what positive psychology is trying to do with coaching, right? An old model of therapy was the client is broken and we can maybe get them to zero. Carl Rogers in the 50s who was considered the father of humanistic psychology. I mean, I could go off on a tangent here, but he started to say no, the client is brilliant. We just need to ask the right questions. Positive psychology is trying to build upon that, right? That's the revolution that they're trying to embark on. It's a completely different mindset, right? You come from different perspectives.

Another pro that I love about this is that the health care providers who tend to be in functional medicine are insatiably curious. They're willing to learn how to learn. I don't care really any more if someone is book smart and graduated from a top school when it comes to my wellness, right? Maybe for surgery, or at least if they trained a lot. When it comes to any emergent disruptive field, I want people who are willing to learn how to learn, right? These are creative thinkers. They're willing to look at their blind spots, they're willing to say, "Whoa, let me explore this."



When I first started out, functional medicine people were far and few between. You couldn't find any medicine doctors. It was really people like Jackie, like myself who were early adopters. We were enthusiasts, right? We did it for the love of this learning and curiosity and we were doing it for the love and exploration of it. I still think those are the people that are in functional medicine. That's what I have experienced with people who are choosing this path. It's not an easy path.

You have to, especially for physicians, you have to basically say much of what I learned in medical school that I've spent 10 years of my life learning, hundreds of thousands of dollars, I may still have debt from, maybe it wasn't everything that I thought it was, right? Still grateful to obviously have a strong basis of medicine, but it's a different lens of things.

These are people who really for the love of learning and love of medicine, they are frustrated with enough of the lack of results for their patients when they see the insanity of only putting a bandage on a chronic issue and are willing to learn new things. One of the top OB doctors in Philly, she was a functional medicine doctor and I asked her how did you come around to this? She told me she had to be willing to unlearn much of what she learned in medical school.

Again, it's a huge philosophical difference. I just really want to honor that I think it's a huge pro to have people who are willing to learn how to learn when you get new medicine, a new information.

Another pro that I want to add that I couldn't articulate at the time, but I can now that I've had my master's degree in the change process and adult development, part of that is that the adult development awakening, it can provide in us. They used to think that adults' brains in our development stopped, right? We always knew babies and children develop, but we used to think, "Oh, adults are who they are once they hit about 20 – in their 20s." Now we know that's not true. We can continue to develop and

learn more with more complexity and become more self-authoring, which is a lot of what Truce with Food does for people, has become more co-creation, creators of our lives rather than feeling things just are the way they are.

On an everyday level, this feels going from knowing what to do to doing it more often, because we get it. You know those things you've heard before, but then it takes a while to sink in and for me if you're stubborn, it takes a long time to sink in? Well, that's the adult development when we actually implement the things, because we understand how it benefits us.

We really start doing things once we get the value of it, but we have to start valuing our health and how we feel, versus if we were being good and bad and following a diet, or the doctor's rules, or even anti-diet groups have their own rules. We have to start to say, "Wait, what guideposts and guidelines are right for me?" This is not as easy as a shift as most people make it seem. It takes time and results, right? We have to see that there's value and we need a framework to learn what our body really needs, mind, body and soul.

I really think that functional medicine can ignite this, "Whoa, I've been just taking this authority and trusting that this was how my body was, broken, whatnot and start to say, 'Wait a second. Maybe there's a different way to look at this.'" If you're really interested in how we can develop further as adults, I really recommend listening to my podcast interview with Heather Thorkelson, why change is hard. It was a rebroadcast from season five and six. If there's interest, I can do more episodes here about the change process, because I do believe that's a wellness tool that we'll get into more.

As all of this is happening, right, of me realizing that I reversed most of my IBS, my depression, at the time I thought I was feeling a 100% better. I would later learn I only got to zero, which was functional medicine, I'll talk about in a second. It was a huge

catalyst as it started my identity shift. I've always been suspect of authority. I've always had these rebel seeds in me. Never really felt "normal."

I was really not fully in that role. I was still in disbelief about how many more people didn't know about this. I wanted to share it with everyone, because it relieved so much pain for me. Then when I really started the study in grad school and especially after the November election, these cultural narratives around willpower or discipline that that's what we need for our bodies and stuff, it really comes from this nesting doll of capitalism, racism and patriarchy.

We are swimming in polluted water, so it's not as easy to start to think that we have more power than we do, because we have been disenfranchised, we have been victimized. This doesn't mean we need to stay in the victim role, but we have very real scars from living in the culture we do. This was a huge catalyst and you would think that it sounds really exciting and it wasn't some end, but it was also a really dark night of the soul for me.

People talk a lot about mindset shifts and there's many ways to define mindset, but in *Truce with Food*, it's really – the mind shift is so radical, because it's a completely new identity shift from a good patient and a good girl to a co-active creator of our health and lives. What I started to realize was no one was in charge at the wheel of our healthcare system. It opened me up to these books like *Food Politics* by Dr. Marion Nestle, or *The Secret History of the War on Cancer* by Dr. Devra Davis.

I started to really see a really gross and dark underbelly of how our medical system had been set up. It's not to say that there aren't great people doing great work in that system, it's just that there's inherent flaws, like there are in all systems. To me, I don't think you mess around with people's health. I've said this on the podcast before, right? If you want to try to make me feel like I'm a different person because I'm in a BMW or a Jeep, all right, whatever. That doesn't feel life or death. When you're actively

suppressing information and you're bribing the American Medical Association to say tobacco isn't harmful, I don't know. That just feels like that cross has a certain sales line that I think is unethical. I got off on a tangent.

This is some of the stuff that we have to weed out and see as we start to really understand why the authorities in our lives, it's not that they need to be perfect, but they have flaws and blind spots too. There's something terrifying about that, but also liberating, because then we realize as individuals, we don't have to be perfect, we don't have to have all the answers. We just have to start learning.

I was talking to a private client the other day and she was saying how it's been so great and our work together, because it's helped her find there are other – there are so many else of people out there that are saying this is bullshit, right? The weakness, the willpower, the discipline narratives, but we aren't the majority and we are the rebels out here on our own, so it takes time to get out of the surround sound of these myths and of these experts and authorities.

Really, we have to come to a developmental place where we realize no one is perfect, no one has all the answers, we are all complicated individuals and that can mean we can start and continue on our own path. We don't need to wait and avoid, or have all the answers. Functional medicine was a bridge to me stepping further out into co-creating my healing. I will always be grateful for that.

Starting to get to the mindset of things as symptoms not as problems, also made me start to wonder if inconsistency was a symptom, not a character defect from lack of willpower or discipline. Now this is the part that where I think the limitations of functional medicine turn into cons. First, since the early days, the term functional has been co-opted in a way. Everything I see now is functional. I see functional nutritionist. I see functional training. I see functional foods. Everyone's using a different definition, right? Just like coaching, which I talked about with Courtney Townley on season 2 – I'm

sorry, episode 2 of our season, there is a wide variety of training now for functional medicine practitioners.

Some people are functional medicine doctors, in the sense that they were doctors beforehand and then have gone through enough training. Some people are nurse practitioners who have tons of, tons of medical information and they've gone to functional medicine training. Then there's people like me, who I have a health coaching background, right? I was mentored in functional medicine. I've taken courses in it and I don't even call myself a functional medicine practitioner, because I haven't kept up with it, because I've now left functional medicine behind, which I'm going to share. I still keep some of the tenants.

My point is that I don't have as much knowledge as someone who's taking all the courses, right? There's new developments all the time, right? There's just a wide variety of education in where people are starting when they enter the functional medicine curriculum and then with how they keep up with it. There's various education levels and that can be really overwhelming. It's also really expensive now.

Now what's interesting and again, everything requires context. Some people's insurance covers it. My sister lives out in San Francisco and her insurance covers certain functional medicine practitioners, or people who have trained in functional medicine. Whereas, I'm out here in Pittsburgh and our insurance – I mean, granted I haven't looked super hard, but I don't know any functional medicine people who take insurance out here, which means everything's out of pocket.

I even had to pay out of pocket for vitamin D testing when my insurance was in Philly, even though my doctor wrote a note to the insurance company saying, "Ali has a history of cancer. We know low vitamin D levels. This is imperative for her health." They were like, "Sorry. You don't have active cancer. Not going to cover it." That was a time I

was in grad school and just starting my business and that \$150 to test my vitamin D was painful.

A functional medicine seeing the practitioners out-of-pocket and then all the testing that goes along with that can be really, really expensive. I have clients who feel very overwhelmed by either the price or all the results that come back. It puts them into avoider mode, right? Or the other extreme of nothing, of all, and thinking they need to do all these restrictive cleanses, or something like the candida diet. This is the limitation that most functional providers don't understand holistic behavioral change. In other words, how do we support people in a way that meets them where they are, not a one-size-fits-all protocol based on their lab work?

Honors that at least with my clients, they are trying to get healthy at the same time, they're raising kids, have a high-pressured career. In other words, they've got a lot of real life going on, right? Many of my clients are struggling with consistency of eating whole foods, right? All the supplements and powders of functional medicine aren't going to work if we aren't doing the foundational nutrition work. That includes even when you're traveling, even over the holidays.

Granted we're not going to eat as well over the holidays, or whatever, but we still need to not be binging during those times, especially because for a lot of my clients, there's a lot of consistent, inconsistent in their schedule from traveling from the cycles of work, from kids getting sick, from curveballs being thrown, right?

There's big transitional times of our lives, like new jobs, or new relationships and it's not a weakness if you can't do it. I think functional medicine can often add more pressure when we don't understand the emotional patterns that are protecting people when they eat out of alignment of their protocol. If you're a regular Insatiable listener, you know that we look at self-sabotage, not a self-sabotage, but self-protection.

I really think back to myself 15 years ago, right? I didn't have the money or see the value for that stuff. I just did an elimination diet of only gluten and dairy and only one at a time. I tried things here and there. Now granted I'm very slow to change, which is why I've become an expert in change, right? We teach what we need to learn. At its best, I'm discerning and wise. At its worst, I'm highly skeptical and frugal, which makes me slow to change.

As I talked about with Courtney, right? I'm faster at getting the support and paying for support, but it's something that still takes me longer than probably most people. Take my viewpoint from – consider the lens I'm coming from. My point in sharing all that as I was still able to get the transformational results without going to extremes and all the testing because of my real-life experience that allowed me to change a lot of how I was eating in the effort. No matter what you have, cooking more and eating more whole foods will support any root cause issues you have from IBS to depression to Candida, right?

Functional medicine got me to start cooking so much at home and it gave me targeted supplements to get my gut back on track, but I no longer need those supplements in the long run, right? If a supplement is doing its job, it's a healing protocol, so it should get you back to better eventually and not need them in the long run.

That didn't come from a test result, but my own experience of feeling better and my symptoms decreasing. I also want to put an asterisk here, because it also depends how much pain you're in. I was in so much pain physical and emotional, but I had really normalized the emotional pain. I was so high-functional, so my motivation is different than someone like Dr. Terry Walls who we've had on this podcast and also had a miraculous recovery from MS.

With how great I feel today, I seriously think the me of 15 years ago was resilient in ways I am not today. I was battling food all the time. I didn't love my job. I was in so much physical pain. The me of today would never put up with all of that discomfort, but I have normalized it, right? I'd been struggling with PTSD from cancer for 12 years at this point. Battling food was normal and mostly everyone else was doing it and I had accepted cravings and crashes as normal, because again, it was happening to everyone else around me. I didn't feel as lost as I was, but I was off track in a metaphorical way for sure.

Now for other people like Dr. Walls, they can have dramatic turnarounds and it can seem much more like a straight shot. All turnarounds will take time, right? Even if people like Dr. Terry Walls started to change things right away, it took her a lot to get to that point and it still took time, even if she was doing everything properly, or on protocol. Clients ask how people can do these dramatic turnarounds. They're like, "Well, I talked to someone and they had Hashimoto's and then they were able to just change everything overnight."

I tell them it's all based on how much pain you're aware that you are in. Many of us have normalized a low emotional fulfillment and tons of stress and overwhelm like I had, so we aren't aware of how much we were putting up with until we really own our story and get out from under that, versus if you are in so much physical pain from something like MS, or you have onset dementia and your functional medicine practitioner thinks it's from type 3 diabetes, right? There's different root causes of Alzheimer's. You have a lot more incentive to get with the program.

We have to think about how much pain we know that we are in. The more that we're in, the more incentive there is to change dramatically. Some people have, are in so much debilitating pain that they can't function and so their healing in doing something dramatic from a food standpoint can work. Functional medicine is great. Often at first, people who are introduced to the power of nutrition from a medical lens. This was the



case for me. I had only viewed food calorically. It's the same way people on Biggest Loser often lose weight on the show, because there's an education gap, right? They don't know to look for sugars. They don't know what a portion size is.

Many people aren't aware of the medical power of nutrition. Half my friends from high school are this way. They don't really know what I do, right? That's okay. Functional medicine is still pretty radical, I think. At least it hasn't hit the suburbs out here in Pittsburgh yet. Again, this is also I think something can only be as innovative as that it's looking at the cultural myths that have formed it.

Functional medicine looks at biology holistically, but it doesn't look at the whole emotional, or sole body of the person, or how that interacts with their physiology or physical pain. You get recommendations for example, that acknowledge stress from a functional medicine practitioner, but they aren't really getting to the deep roots of our stress, which are our stories, patterns and behaviors that need to be released and changed.

This is also the real-life obstacle many people find with implementing all the functional medicine protocols. For example, you'll get meditation recommendations or walks in nature from functional medicine practitioners. This is great. I love that people are recommending this, but those are reactions to stress, not preventing them.

In my work, we want to understand why you need so much stress management, right? What's happening? That's what we get to the root of in *Truce with Food* and we start to really understand why am I eating this now. Because our stories don't just cause us to battle food, they also cause us to be chronically stressed, overwhelmed and miss out on meaningful experiences. Healing isn't about only stressing less, it's also about living more, right?

I feel functional medicine has made the term physically, but not quite emotionally yet. Some people might think, "Well, hey. The change process isn't the realm of medicine," right? That's because our education system is siloed. Therefore, we aren't looking at how the change process itself is a radical healing tool. A system is only – I said this before, but I want to repeat it. It's only as innovative as it's willing to question the cultural myths that shape it.

I think functional medicine has stepped out of the battle or war metaphor that western medicine operates under, yet it's still operating under the separation myth from nature, including the quantum nature of nature and thus, our biology to a large degree. I know functional medicine honors the environment and they talk about environment and lifestyle turning on epigenetics, but I don't think it's gone far enough. When changing how we change in my approach using a developmental approach, rather than the traditional coaching approach, when we're becoming the author of our story, it has this ripple or quantum effect of radical healing. That's because we're getting to the root cause resolution of change.

It's not positive psychology or motivational interviewing, which a lot of functional medicine practitioners are getting into. That approach can move the needle, but you can only go as far as that story that your story is holding you back. It's a rubber band gun from middle school. It's like, okay we've got the – we're pointing forward and we're stretched and we're moving forward, but you can only stretch that rubber band as far as your thumb is pulling back. Or often on this podcast, we talk about it you've got your gas, positive psychology and motivational interviewing are your gas, but your story is your break and you're going to flood your engine eventually.

For example, when you change your story and work on the physical pieces, I have clients who they're binging when they come to me. That's the pain point. They've also never gotten – I'm going to give you one client example, or she never had gotten her period. She was also getting muscle cramps at night. She tried magnesium. Tried all

the tricks of trade to the muscle cramps. Just thought she was going to have to live with not getting her period and the main pain point was bingeing, which is why she came to me.

She had her Truce with Food, and so she stopped bingeing. Because we also cleared up some of the residue trauma from her childhood, her muscle cramps at night were actually psychosomatic symptoms. She got into at rather than being in a chronic low-grade fight-or-flight response, she started getting more into rest and repair. She was able to eat well. She got her period back and her skin cleared up. That's radical healing, right? She focused on the root cause, her story. Then I taught her about how to evaluate food for her based on GI and blood sugar and Oh, my God, right? Healing and health have become so much fun and rebellious, right? All of these effects have happened. That's quantum or exponential healing and that's how nature works.

That further propelled her into her adult development, ability to self-author her life. There were tons of ripple of changes in her career as a result. The irony though is quantum healing, or exponential healing, or you can think of it as cumulative. It's slow and subtle, but after you turn the ship around which can take about a full year, but because of the sustainability, the results continue to be cumulative and you start taking bigger and more fulfilling risks, which makes life more and more meaningful.

Then you have more internal, intrinsic incentive to keep your health routine up, right? Health isn't just about being healthy, it's about whoa, being so healthy and energized and optimistic that you're creating a life you want to be healthy for. If you think back to your own life, it's when life was blah or out of alignment or just – or you felt really stuck, or stressed, or pigeonholed, that tends to be the downward spiral.

I also want to emphasize, I always talk about you get encouraged to take more and more risks, the more you own your story and focus on this emotional healing. Risk aren't always about bigger, more faster. It's often about self-actualization and trusting

what truly lights you up versus what we think we should, or have to do. You literally expand your definition of what it takes to heal and health as you push your own frontiers as you become more resilient.

I always think of the metaphor of we're running through doors for more and more freedom, right? More and more fulfillment. The first one is nutrition and then the bigger one is emotional and we keep opening up more and more room, more freedom and fulfillment the more we develop as adults and self-author our story.

Now, there can be trap doors, right? Which my clients have realized that they'll be going along, going along and then they start to – it can be of years and they start to just – they're not bingeing, or overeating like they used to, but the nighttime eating comes back. What they realized – what they know to realize is another angle of their story has come up and it's time to step outside their comfort zone even more. If you want more insight on this, check out season 6 episode 6 for more of when our bodies become our projects when we're not creatively challenged. Creative can mean intellectually challenged as well.

The reason that I bring this up is because – and you've heard me probably if you're a regular listener, quote Octavia Butler who I learned about from the fabulous women in How to Survive the End of the World podcast. Octavia Butler has this quote that God is change. I love that, because it makes you realize that change is a healing tool. You get awakened to the divine within you. What could be more powerful than that?

We can also think of this from a Chinese medicine lens, we're clearing out stagnation in places, right? This is when I hit a wall about a year after gradually getting better with functional medicine. I felt better. I was amazed. I was telling everyone about how awesome this was. People thought it was crazy though, because this was 15 years ago. Then I couldn't stay in it. I started bingeing on sugar, because I felt restricted by being gluten free. There were literally no options in being gluten free back then, except

rice cakes. I was binging on peanut M&Ms and York Peppermint Patties. Then I would go back to gluten at times when I was tired and it was just tons of uncertainty.

It was much less than before, but I had enough nights where all my IBS symptoms were coming back. I still didn't fully understand self-sabotage or self-protection at all. Then I started to beat myself up. Now I know how amazing I could feel. It's helped me start to wean off my medication and now I have this pressure I don't want to go back on medication, why am I doing this? Why am I doing this? Am I so weak and uncommitted that I can't control my eating, even though knowing how great I felt.

Again, diet culture had taught me that my inconsistency and nutritional choices was about lack of willpower and discipline and that this mindset was still with me a little bit. This is exactly what my clients believe whenever they fall off track, or can't stick to their functional medicine healing protocol. It's a pervasive, but limiting vantage point. They've gone to other health coaches that work with functional medicine practitioners and doctors, or ones themselves, and the functional medicine world tends to give people advice like, "Don't go to the party hungry. Bring your own food. Ask yourself if it's worth it." That can be helpful, but this is also when you're not getting to the root of the emotional work, which isn't about food.

Over time, what I learned about my own healing journey and what I've seen with hundreds of clients over 12 years is that you can only go so far with changing your diet. What I realized is that truth tells us endings are beginnings. Just like my depression wasn't a serotonin deficiency. My falling off track wasn't a discipline issue. It was an invitation to find out more.

Now I'm not going to take you through every shift and change. Basically, after four and a half years in graduate school and working with probably about a hundred clients, I've come to the conclusion that emotional healing is equal to nutritional changes. When you focus on the emotional work, we can so much more easily discern

what works for us from a food perspective. The emotional work I'm talking about requires an identity shift. It's more subtle and takes time, but it's life learning. It's life changing. It's just not enough to stress less, or be consistent with our food choices. We need to live more for that consistency.

In other words, we need to own our story and in doing that, we create deep meaning in our lives that create possibilities and deep relationships that create a life we want to be healthy for. That's when I left functional medicine behind. I'm a maximizer. This is a personality type. It's not necessarily a good one. You can often feel loss. What this means is I'm someone who wants maximum results from their choices and I want that for my clients.

For me, I saw from my own experience and my clients that supporting people to own their story simplified all the health to do is people think they need, because many wellness tools are only Band-Aids for these root cause of stories, patterns and behaviors. I wanted to develop a clear process for owning our story, because of the results in simplicity it creates. Complex process to simplify, right? My client above, she was trying magnesium, Epsom salt bath, all this stuff for sleep and didn't get her period; all this issues. When we got to the root, a lot of things cleared up and she didn't need half the stuff she needed at the time.

Another client example, a functional medicine doctor put her on all these powders and supplements for GI issues. We were mainly working on how she was struggling to digest life, right? There's an emotional medicine for when we have IBS, depression all the stuff that's got related, or autoimmune, why are we attacking ourselves emotionally? Once we worked on her story and again, this took six months and my goal was never even to give input on what she was doing with all her powders and supplements, but she no longer needed the powder and supplements and she was like, "You know what? These don't even taste that good."

I was like, "Yeah." Because as she healed, she realized that health should be more and more pleasurable. Her skin also cleared up and she switched – and then she started switching over to non-toxic skin products, but only needed one skin product because she wasn't over oily anymore. Her consistency of eating well became easy from owning her story and it enabled her to better naturally detox, because then she decided to go out the birth control pill, which sometimes you have to detox if you're not eating well consistently.

Her body because she was so healthy, it did all that stuff naturally. She didn't need a lot of these bells and whistles that functional medicine practitioners will often give to people. My fear is that sometimes we're recreating the big pharma model, but from a functional medicine perspective and saying it's natural, when the underlying philosophy is still not getting to the root. Her story resolution saved a ton of money and simplified her to-dos.

I want to point out that the best tools will make themselves obsolete. This doesn't mean functional medicine isn't adequate. It's just that it really did its job. The best example I can give is chickenpox. The more we're finding out about these viruses, we're realizing that they – when we actually go through having these viruses and they actually decrease certain types of diseases. For example, a big study came out of Baylor University that children who have had chickenpox have a 20% less chance of a certain type of brain tumor. By having chickenpox, it left those children with some immunity, right? There was some resiliency.

Functional medicine left me with a stronger body and mindset that I no longer needed it, because it did its job. A simpler example was probiotics, right? Probiotics are super concentrated. I needed those at the time, because my gut was so compromised, a lot of my clients need them. If your gut is healing, you should be able to get them from food and shouldn't need the high concentration.

Clients after Truce with Food, they stopped needing therapists, they stopped needing expensive superfoods, right? I created the insatiable community, because it takes a while to master owning our story and skills. It's a much more subtle process. Then people start wanting to take bigger risks now that their story is not holding them back. Then those risks become meaningful. They become fulfilling and that becomes healing, right? You get this wonderful quantum effect.

I still integrate the blood sugar and hormonal – blood sugar is responsible for hormonal issues and gut healing principles into my work with clients. I found that when we are living more and not just stressing less by releasing our own story, we shift the body more into rest and repair than fight-or-flight and many issues clear up on our own without a hyper focus on supplements.

I've been amazed at how many clients have been able to revolve symptoms that are really psychosomatic. I'm a big skeptic. I mean, again, that's part of my – can be strength or a weakness depending on the day. I mean, I have somatic symptoms, but the lack of data makes me like, "Is that really a thing?" I can tell you it is. I conclude this, because food and lifestyle shifts, like sleeping, doing all the stuff for periods that a functional medicine person might say when we really get to the root of these emotional patterns, a lot of stuff starts working.

I can give you an example with depression, which a lot of my clients struggle with is that I thought I had gotten so much better that because I was better than I was before. What I really have to do to end up really getting over working through my depression to get away from zero and to I don't know, get much further outcome was I had to own my story. I had to blow up my life.

I mean, I was really off track, but not all my [inaudible 0:47:46.7] blow up my life. By blowing up my life, it was more subtle, but I had to start doing things that brought more of myself back to how I was making decisions. Seeing with my clients. Again, I



don't take – I don't focus on taking people off medication. I don't focus on that stuff that a lot of my clients after our work together, don't need their medication anymore because they've healed their gut balance, their blood sugar and they've gotten the parts back of themselves that had gone away to protect themselves at a time. They have more of a wholeness to them. They needed emotional and physical support for it to really get through the depression.

I really want to emphasize that health is not an end destination. It's a vehicle to pursuing the possibility you are meant for. You can be healthy, fully alive, even if you still have arthritis or certain conditions. I don't want you to think that story ownership is a magic bullet, rather it enables us to feel more fully alive, which includes feeling all our emotions, not just the “positive ones.” I don't even believe there are certain positive emotions, like that's a value judgment that hey, I love feeling happy and content and well-rested and all that stuff more than sad and challenging, but we need all of them and they all serve different functions.

What I now understand about quantum biology and healing and if you haven't listened to season six episode five with Brandon, where it's called light mitochondria dysfunction and weight gain, we talked about quantum biology. Nature is exponential. If we aren't getting exponential results, I don't think we're really getting to the root of issues. I'll share with you my own increasing awareness around exponential issues in a minute.

Again, I said this up above, but I've learned that people when they contact me about the podcast, only here tend to hear certain things sometimes. Exponential results take time. It is not instant like, “Oh, my God. I'm instantly going to drop 20 pounds, or I'm instantly not going to be depressed.” No. It requires a strong nutritional and emotional foundation. That can take six months at least to rebuild your foundation, or fill in the cracks, okay?

That over time though leads to exponential results, because of the consistency and accumulation. If you think about money, right? I always say oh, if you start with a lot, right? Then you can basically sit on the interest, right? Oh, if you win the lottery, you win 20 million dollars, right? Take the whole lump sum at once, get 10 million and then let 9 million sit on the bank and you'll be able to just accumulate interest, right?

That's what we need to do with our health from an emotional and nutritional stand foundation is get that initial chunk really strong and then the choices we make and the way that we take in life becomes more resilient, more growth mindset and then when we keep making more and more choices that feel exciting and aligned for us. Then we spiral up and that's quantum.

Yeah. Also, I want to bring up the importance of this emotional an exponential healing is because often, clients from a functional medicine practitioner will be told they need to go on a Candida diet. What happens is the emotional house is in an order. There feels like there's no structure in like, "Oh, I'm not in the job I want," or, "I'm not dating or whatever." Then we hyper-focus structure on oh, the Candida diet, or this functional medicine protocol.

Then after two weeks, we feel deprived. The novelty has worn off, right? We're not getting that – we're not making emotional choices that inspire a possibility. We do it first, "Oh, what's going to happen with this Candida diet, or this gut?" Then after two weeks, we hit a wall, or if we can even make it that far. It's like, "Oh, I'm only feeling so much better." Yeah, I feel better, right? That's getting to zero, but I don't feel so much better. The novelty has worn up. I need to create possibility, or novelty somewhere else in my life and I don't know how to do that because it all feels so overwhelming. That's why the emotional piece is really important.

Now where I said today doing foundational things that everyone needs to do if every functional medicine protocols to work. I'm doing the right foods for my body. For me,

that's staying gluten free, but I can do nightshades, eggplants and tomatoes, which used to cause reflux for me. I work on my lighting game. What I love about light is it's free. Again, check out Brandon's episode of season 6 episode 5. I get pretty good sleep, which I'm going to share in a moment, which is also why I left functional medicine behind.

I have a deeply meaningful and fulfilling career and relationships and now I'm working on fun and joy. I know that sounds really privileged and maybe even annoying, but when you're someone who is recovering from trauma, you can be very suspect of ease and fun and joy. That pattern was with me for so long, and I'm grateful that I started to heal that pattern 10 years ago when I did, but it was still with me for so long that it's making a bigger learning curve for me.

Now I want to share a more personal story about where my health has been the last two and a half years and how it further shifted the way I see functional medicine, because I think it'll help a lot of people out there. After the 2016 election, I developed insomnia. I thought it was about the election and it was very triggering for me. Speaking of PTSD, it's something that you definitely work through and it gets better and better, but uncertainty is a huge trigger for me. When that election happened, well I couldn't articulate at the time, but it was crumbling my entire worldview, but the country I thought I lived in and it would eventually crumble a big way – a big mindset that I was looking at life through, which in America we are groomed to believe in meritocracy, which is if you work hard, you will succeed, right? It's all on the individual's merit.

I had believed that. I mean, I knew that – I grew up in a very progressive household. I knew that not everyone started out at the same foot. I knew that there was gender inequality, racial inequality, class inequality, but I didn't realize the degree that it existed. If you want to hear more about how my world view of meritocracy collapsed and how that influences how we view health, because our healthcare system views life

often through meritocracy, which is why we think then people try harder, heavy people are undisciplined. All of that is because of the lens that we look at our cultural myths. That's episode 5, your green juice doesn't make you worthy, if you're interested in that.

Let's come back to my health. It had triggered major uncertainty with me. I manage uncertainty pretty well these days. I mean, that's why I always say entrepreneurship has healed me as much as chemo did heal me. I've been through so much uncertainty on this roadless travel of health and the way that I coach and having to support myself financially. I'm even great around my own scans for cancer, which I call scanxiety.

Something like this election is completely out of my control, right? I mean, you're depending on the totality of everyone in the country. A different angle of my story around uncertainty acted up. I don't overeat anymore. I was full-on feeling the depth of uncertainty. I don't have any vices actually. I don't like to shop. I never really drank, because that was – I was always saving my calories for food. Work used to be my vice and now I'm working on that.

The election made me more aware of my own belief blind spots, but it took a while to see that. I was really naive because I already felt so counterculture to America, because of the neighborhood I grew up in. We were one of the only families that didn't go to church. My mom was only one of the only moms that worked at the time. I'm not Christian, which the default in America is Christianity guides a lot of our holidays, our calendar, everything.

I've always struggled with my weight. Well, not anymore, but I had as a kid. Cancer. All these things that made me feel really different. Then I was outside the norm of what I didn't like about America. There's many things I love about it, but there is – the idea of

America. I had clearly internalized layers of misogyny, racism and capitalism that I didn't even know I was living by.

I had a lot of sleep issues and then I tried intermittent fasting. I'm all about experimenting. I only tried it for two weeks, because basically this is – I'm lazy and Carlos is eating breakfast and I was like, "Okay, I don't want to take time to eat breakfast either." I tried it, but it set something off with my periods. I was getting hot flashes and my periods stopped coming. I had sleep issues, blood sugar issues, I know period issues or blood sugar issues.

I started seeing a naturopath in late 2017. I had lived in Pittsburgh then. Frankly, I didn't really know any functional medicine practitioners, but I also felt I know enough from functional medicine that I can take care of it myself. I also had a low thyroid. It's always gone back and forth that it was starting to creep up again. I knew that with Carlos and I wanting to start a family and this influencing my fertility, that natural things take longer. I got on it in 2017.

My naturopath works with bioenergetic medicine. When I started, it was a total leap of faith. Other people had said that she had helped them, which is why I trusted her, did my due diligence. You hold these copper rods. They do this in Germany in other countries, but it's again, I'm still a western person, not that Germany isn't western, but I'm I can't comprehend how this actually works. She basically diagnosed that I have a very sluggish lymph system and have heavy metals, which she thinks are from my vaccines and I have a few mercury fillings left.

We started working. I said, "Well, you know what?" I said, "I had Hodgkin's disease, which is a sluggish lymph system." That's just how my body is. She's like, "Well, I think your lymph was sluggish and you couldn't detox from the pesticide exposure that probably eventually caused your cancer, because of the mercury and the vaccines that you had." I was like, "I don't know."

I took a leap of faith and was doing a lot of the homeopathic stuff that she recommended. I was like, "Okay, we'll see what happens." Then my best friend who's a little older than me was having some fertility issues and she told me, "Ali, I know you don't really love western medicine, but go get your numbers checked because you want to know the data," and she's right. I went to the western medicine facility here in March of 2018. I guess that was a year ago and they basically diagnosed me with early menopause on the basis of my insomnia and some of the symptoms I was describing. They say it's probably from the chemo. Nothing we can really do for you.

That was interesting. I mean, I definitely cried. Had a lot of sifting to do. I decided, "You know what? I'm going to try this natural stuff." I added acupuncture and herbs, got a lot more sunlight over the summer. Since then, my thyroid is at the lowest its ever been at 2.0, my periods are back to being regular, my sleep is 80% better, maybe even 90%. Now I want to hold that you can go in and out of menopause when it's perimenopause. It's not a one-time event. We're all on a spectrum. Some people start as early as 30s. Most people on average it hits the 50s. I could be out of that phase and I'm holding that reality.

In talking with my naturopath and the more I learn about how sexism and whiteness is baked into our culture, I started to realize that functional medicine is often doing what naturopaths, which women and indigenous cultures have to – who have been relying on nature have been doing for quite a while. Functional medicine in the approach is much more masculine approach. It's linear. It's not looking at integrating our emotional patterns and it's not always root cause resolution.

Granted, I haven't done the whole shebang with a functional medicine practitioner, where I get all the labs and I do all that stuff. My ND is using energy medicine in homeopathy, which is a very different system than functional medicine, that has gotten me quite profound results. That has really shifted how I view even root cause

resolution. When I look at Truce with Food, I started to realize that framework for clients is homeopathic when it comes to emotional stuff.

We gradually introduced uncomfortable feelings that make people feel overwhelmed or stressed or think in black and white or all or nothing and we learn to discern what those feelings mean, what they meant in the past and part of owning our stories, what do we want these feelings to mean today. In homeopathy, the dose determines the poison, right? Homeopathy is where you use not an extreme, but a gradual – I'm blanking out. I'll come back. I have it in my notes, what homeopathy really is.

Homeopathy is a very different philosophy than even functional medicine operates under. It's practiced in Germany and other parts of the world. For those of you in hospital, you used to be a completely homeopathic hospital, but it was eventually outlawed. If you want to know more about that in the show notes, there's an article that shows the capitalistic roots of why home natural medicine that women in indigenous cultures did versus standardized western medicine, that dance about the Flexner report. I've mentioned it on previous episodes here. If you want a great article, it's in the show notes of this episode. Also side note, we always do transcripts as well. If you ever want a transcript, it's there.

I realized that I wouldn't be as open to naturopathic medicine and this energy medicine, if it wasn't for the complete identity shift that functional medicine began from highly – from helping me to co-create my life, right? Because this energy medicine and her telling me that I still have heavy metal stuck at my lymph, which I thought was how my body was, could actually be just another symptom I never realized, because I don't sweat a lot. I get inflamed very easily. If I eat dairy, I still do it and take the hit, but my face gets really puffy. Her telling me that that could be even reversed and then her telling me you have traces of Lyme.

I don't have Lyme disease, but she says most people in western Pennsylvania have microbes. Now that we've gotten rid of those, my thyroid is at a level that it's never been at and I had told myself because of the radiation, my mom's on Synthroid, my grandma was. All these things, it's just to show you there's layers and layers. That's what I'm really interested in right now.

Functional medicine was an important bridge for my western mind at the time. I'm much better at evaluating things outside my own comfort zone now. Thanks to my own Truce with Food transformation, which what made me actually take the time and money to pay out of pocket for my naturopath. She takes a half hour to get to, then it's an hour appointment, right? There's a commitment of resources there that I don't know if I would have done had I not bridged from functional medicine.

Now these days, I am much more into herbal medicine, homeopathic. Now as I realize nutrition movement and owning our stories is about reconnecting us to our hunger for alignment with nature. Nature, nature, right? Food is nature, sunlight is nature. Also our own true natures. I'm also at a tweaking place with my health and many people think tweaks mean small changes. Once you have the foundational pieces of nutrition, emotional safety, belonging and meaning in place, subtle is quite profound and exponential.

I have a much more integrative belief system now and I know what – I have a much also different definition of integrated than I think, even functional medicine practitioners do and definitely our medical system. Like I shared on his podcast before I once met a doctor who thought he was integrated because he shared a billing system with someone, right? We all use integration differently.

I've also seen in my own peer group functional medicine can be an entry point for many practitioners. Often if they stay long enough in what's possible for total radical healing, especially the women, they leave it behind for a more holistic approach that



integrates the more yin, or feminine archetype qualities like nature, pleasure, emotions and cycles.

If you listen to episode 55, I define the masculine and feminine and their patterns and why they – how they affect our health. It isn't really male and female qualities. We tend to think of that way, because of how we've been socially conditioned to think of what is male or female, but rather these patterns. I did my master's thesis on it. It's a pretty good episode. I'd recommend it if you're interested in more of this – what true integration is. That's episode 55.

In summary, functional medicine can be a huge developmental experience for those of us who benefit from it and need to shift into a nutrition as medicine mindset. That is all some people need. Our growth comes where we struggle and for some people, especially people who haven't had food issues in the past, they can transform the relationship to food much more easily than those of us who have struggled. We all grow from various mediums, right? For many of us, it's our relationship to food.

A tangent, but the point being is it's important to be clear about what function medicine can and cannot do. It's not a magic bullet. It's a tool and it's not the final solution or destination. What I've seen with people is even sometimes functional medicine, their protocols for work will work for a year or two and then they start to feel they can't keep them up and they think that that's a failure on their part.

What I want to say is that's the same way for me. It was an invitation to look at what that inconsistency is. It can mean you're ready for a different tool. It doesn't mean that it didn't work. It meant it was great. It got you to that point. Now you're ready to hop onto another lily pad. Even if you do functional medicine, you still have to do the work of cooking more, using more whole foods, getting better at sleep, sunlight, movement that works for your body. Again, it can be really expensive. If it's behavioral change, you really need to do the basics, which are highly complicated because of how or society is just structured.

I don't want to discount how powerfully motivating. It also can be to have a healthcare provider witness you acknowledge the pain you're in with you on your issues. Functional medicine at its best does that. If your bigger pain point is consistency, you don't feel you've gotten all the results you can from all your shakes and powders and pills, working on the emotional work first can simplify and clear up enough symptoms that you don't necessarily need functional medicine.

When people come to me asking should I do a gut cleanse, or work with you or whatnot? I always ask them what feels the most inspiring to change first. Does going on a gut cleanse feel like, "Uh." Or does it feel, "Huh. I really want to explore this," or does looking at the emotional stuff feel, "I got to take care of that, because I can't – I want to do a gut cleanse, but I can't even muster the energy, right?"

What we often say is lack of willpower or discipline or thinking we're weak is actually when you know how to decode it, pointing you to your next best step. Because healing isn't linear, you're going to have to circle around to all of it. It's all about what feels curious and expansive for you to explore.

Now I want to leave you with three questions to ask yourself if functional medicine can serve you right now. First, am I eating mostly whole foods and still struggling? If so, functional medicine can be really helpful. It can help with those tweaks, right? Do I need some enzymes here? Do I have SIBO here, right?

Question number two, do I have the ability to prioritize only my health right now? Because usually, if you're working with a functional medicine practitioner, this is going to have to be your full focus. It doesn't mean you have to quit your job, or not be a parent anymore, but it's going to have to occupy most of your free time, because it's a learning curve.

Lastly, do I feel really inspired to change my food right now? Yes, if you do, this feels a great next step. If you can't do another diet or protocol, emotional work is probably a better first step in functional medicine. I don't feel even their stress management techniques, or meditation, or any of that stuff really gets to the root. It feels like a reaction to stress, rather than preventing it.

Look for what will give you the results and momentum for your next step. Healing isn't linear, and so like I said just a minute ago, we need to do it. Oh, okay. Not all at the same time, but it's important to listen to yourself and feels like what feels curious and I want to explore, rather than I have to do this protocol and it's my only choice. There's many choices. I hope this was helpful for you guys to get a nuanced understanding of functional medicine. It can be wildly helpful and if it's not the right tool at the right time, it can be wildly frustrating.

I hope this episode has helped you make the choice for when it is helpful for you, or if you even need it. Yeah, thanks for being here.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:09:07.7] 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](http://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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