

Pros and Cons of Weight Watchers (now WW) with Dr. Tina Boogren – Insatiable Season 7, Episode 5

[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]

[0:00:47.5] AS: Welcome everybody 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 fabulous guest today, 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 every body you

have, your physical, emotional and soul body, I have something exciting to share with you. Drum roll.

Introducing the Insatiable membership community. This community is designed to help you take action around the topics we discuss here and support you to buying your radical truth. I rolled the community out privately last year to clients, new and old, and the results have 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 can learn from each other. Once a month we have a mastermind topic and help you gain clarity and have a group to support and learn from wherever you are in 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. You can find out more at alishapiro.com/vic2019.

All right, so today we are going to talk about the hunger for weight loss with my very special guest, Dr. Tina Boogren, who has been a previous guest on the podcast who is a client of mine. I guess, former client, but current friend. Dr. Boogren is a former classroom teacher, English Department Chair, teacher, mentor and instructional coach, professional developer, athletic coach and building level leader.

She has presented at the school district state in national levels and has been a featured speaker at the International Literacy Association Annual Conference in Barnes & Noble's Educator's Night. I will put her full bio and accolades on the website but know that she holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa, a master's degree within administrative endorsement from University of Colorado, Denver and a doctorate from University of Denver in educational administration and policy studies.

Tina, I love that you said the hill you are going to die on is self-care for teachers and educators, right?

[0:03:54.6] TB: Yes, yes.

[0:03:57.3] AS: I love that. That's so rebellious. I feel maybe because I grew up with two teachers, but I feel the world doesn't understand how hard teaching is.

[0:04:06.2] TB: Right. Totally agree with that. Yes. I've had the pleasure and honor of – my dad – I'm an author in educational consultants, so I get to travel all over. It's mainly the US and sometimes Canada, so I've worked almost in every state. I think there's just a couple states I haven't been to.

In doing the work for almost nine years now, which the beginning of the work was all focused on research-based instructional strategies, which are fantastic. I worked for Dr. Marzano who's a legend in the field and his work is just amazing. What I found in the field as a practitioner was that none of those strategies matter if the person who's delivering the strategies is so depleted and burned out, as so many of our teachers are exceptional teachers are.

It just became this relentless passionate and pursuit of trying to figure out how I could help them, because the statistics are just so daunting of we're losing teachers and we're actually losing – usually we're losing our most phenomenal teachers that have the highest student achievement gains, because they're just so depleted and worn out. It's the whole message – the airplane message of securing our own oxygen mask before we use others.

It's been so fun for the past probably a year. Now most of my work has been focused on that finding that balance between the research-based instructional strategies and pedagogy that we know to help all students. The only way that we can do that is if we

help support our teachers. The only way that I can do that is if I model it myself. It's been this really since you and I started working together how many years ago, this journey that I've been on. It's all really related in a really fascinating and holistic way, which I love. It's been it's been a fun journey. Yes, this is my hill to die on.

[0:05:49.5] AS: I love it though, because it gets us to think about root cause resolution, right? You're not calling it that, but that's what it is. Let's look at the system that we're in. I think that's really appropriate for what we're going to do today about basically this is going to be a pros and cons episode on Weight Watchers and weight loss.

Before we get started, I want to explain to people how this episode came to be, because I was joking with Tina. I feel talking about weight loss in the worlds that I straddle. I straddle multiple belief camps, right? I am in the health and medical world, which is different than weight loss, although the health care industry does push weight loss and it's also unaware of its own weight biases. I also am in the wellness world, which does push weight loss and status of can you buy all the super foods and do all the things?

Then the diet lifestyle world, I'm aware of the trends of diets, right? Like keto, or paleo, or vegan that often push weight loss. Then I'm somewhat aware of body positivity, intuitive eating and anti-diet worlds, who I feel are so anti-weight loss that this feels about as controversial as if we were talking about vaccines or abortion.

[0:06:58.0] TB: Right, right.

[0:07:00.9] AS: I thank you for coming on to share your experience. There's so much room to be misunderstood on this topic and I hate being misunderstood and it's something that I'm always afraid of, of I fear happening. I just want people to understand how this episode came to be. I was planning this season in terms of pros

and cons of various tools. Coming at this that hey, no tool is right or wrong for anyone, it's all about where you are in your journey.

My greatest growth in life has been when I sit with people who had different experiences with me. As I was planning this episode, I was mostly candidly had a con list of Weight Watchers, because I had only remembered my experience and what clients come to me before they do the work on their relationship with food. Then Tina had posted on social media that you had done and you called it WW. Even though it's a new name and we'll get into that, I knew it was Weight Watch – we know it from a brand recognition sense. That's so Weight Watchers.

Tina was saying that you did Weight Watchers in – we're in 2019. 2018 and you lost weight and it really works for you. I was like, "Ah." I was like, "I really respect, admire and love Tina." I reached out to you to say what did you like about it? What has changed? You really educated me a lot on some of the shifts and changes and how it actually did work for you. I wanted to bring you on, so that we could have a fair discussion and I learned a lot during the research. That's how it came to be.

I'm excited to talk about this today, because it sounds Weight Watchers is trying to rewrite its story as well. Let's talk about what took you – people might be confused, because they said, "Hey, you worked with Ali before, you just mentioned that and now you're doing Weight Watchers?" Even though I say I don't – my program isn't weight loss, sometimes people still think it is. It's not the goal of things, but I want you to explain why you went back to Weight Watchers, or if that was your first time, or how you came to do Weight Watchers in 2018, let's just start there.

[0:09:04.6] TB: Yeah, perfect. Absolutely. I did my lectures years ago, years ago in college. I didn't gain that, what is it? Freshman 15, I don't even know because I gained a Freshman 35 40. I don't even remember what it was. A friend and I did Weight

Watchers back in college and I got the lifetime status. Was on and off it for years. Back then and that was the old program for sure.

I mean, I just like so many of your clients now – I mean, I just worked the system and then didn't work the system, right? A lot of people know, especially back then it was very much a point-based system, all foods were assigned points, so I easily could get away. Again, I was real young, so I was in my 20s, so all of my points went to pizza and beer. Nothing. Nothing about it was healthy at all, right? It was total restriction.

Of course, that's not what they're promoting, but that I could easily work the system and I'm good at figuring out loopholes and figuring the system. It worked and then it didn't work. Then I stopped going. I maintained the life time status for years and I stopped going for years. I wasn't going then when I found you Ali, and did all of that work. When I went back to Weight Watchers, it was when they started shifting their program.

For me, it was an entirely different program for two reasons; number one, because they changed their program. Number two, I came at it entirely differently. I am not your typical and again, they changed everything. They are now WW, which is Wellness that Works. I am not their typical probably client. I don't know what they call us. Member? Member. That's probably what it is.

Because I figured I've done so much work with you of figuring out what works for me, what doesn't work for me. For me, the reason that I'm back and I continue to go, I still go is my personality type works really well with accountability. I know it can feel really restricting and limiting to people and I'm a big believer in different personality types. Just like you said when you were introducing this, I'm a huge believer in every person, not everything works for everyone.

I have figured out my – I know that I cannot eat dairy. I can't eat gluten. I can't eat soy. I know I have spent years, because of the work I did with you Ali of knowing what

works for me and what doesn't work for me. I don't use the system in a traditional sense. They still have point systems. I do utilize their app for different things. It's good for me, because it sparks just reminders. I have built my own database within their system of the foods that work for me and just helps keep me pointed my sales moving in the right direction, if you will.

I do really enjoy the community. I found a really great leader that I really love and her focus is totally on wellness. I know different leaders are very different personalities, but I found and she's all tattooed up and I just love her. I have a little group that I've joined. There's a few other teachers and we have side conversations off to the side of different ways to think through the whole wellness piece.

I continue to go. I actually even started an Instagram account for my own accountability, because it's again, my own personality. It just helps me keep it at the forefront of my mind and there's something to me about going and getting on the scale. I know that scares people, because I used to be like this. It used to oh, just totally derail me and that scale meant everything.

It's a 100% different relationship that I have with it now, that I am so pretty much stable now for the last oh, I don't know, probably year. I mean, I've gone up and down and I've lost some weight, but it's about probably – well, trying to think of the timeline here. It doesn't really matter. Anyway, I've lost some weight, but it feels really stable now. The scale is just my own – I don't think of it as the punishment piece. It's the just check-in. That just really works my personality.

It's a tricky balance and it's funny, because if people ask me – oftentimes people are always if you lost weight, "What did you do? What did you do?" Because they're desperate to jump on someone else's program and really it's like, "It doesn't matter what I did." It'll work for just anything, just paleo, or just keto, or whatever the latest

thing is. Any system will work if you – not only if you work the system, but if you play by their rules.

As you know more than anything in this community knows that only lasts so long. It has to be –you have to strip it away and figure yourself out, so it works for me and I say that because of the work that I did first with you.

[0:13:50.2] AS: Yeah. Everyone, I didn't tell her to say that. She said that [inaudible 0:13:53.6].

[0:13:55.1] TB: Oh, absolutely not. I can 100% defend that. Absolutely.

[0:13:59.6] AS: That's why part of why I wanted to talk this through for people to hear is because what you're describing and I talked about this a little bit with Dr. Will Cole on the Ketotarian diet, which is Episode 4 of this season, the one right before Tina and mine. I was saying to him, because in his book he talked about keto isn't a diet, it's a lifestyle. I said to him, I said I know that all of you as practitioners want people to approach healthy eating as a lifestyle. The person who hasn't worked through the relationship with food, or who is struggling with food right? Not everyone is struggling. It is going to be a diet. Even though you want it to be a lifestyle, it's going to be about restriction.

I think what you even said about the scale, right? It's not the scale, it's not food, it's not the system, it's how we relate to the system. You who in college, right? I love that you said pizza and beer, because I used to buy all the Weight Watchers' food when I did it right after college. Remember eating those gross bars?

[0:14:59.3] TB: Oh, totally.

[0:15:01.1] AS: Yes. They were chocolate.

[0:15:03.5] TB: It was only four points or whatever above. Yes.

[0:15:06.6] AS: Well they were only two points, but then they were one bite full. I ended up eating a thousand.

[0:15:13.2] TB: Then I do the math. Okay, if I eat the whole box –

[0:15:19.3] AS: Yeah. That's the thing is that it's all about how we relate to any tool or any system. One of the things that you would shared in the e-mail and just shared now as well is about that accountability piece. One of the things that – I wrote to my list about this and I've talked about it a little bit on the podcast, but starting new habits or maintaining new habits is very different than stopping habits, right? Than stopping the binge, or the overeating, or stopping – avoiding the food, even paying attention to food, right?

There's a difference between starting and stopping happens. Because you had come to this place when you really knew what worked for you, I think that accountability piece is super helpful, right? Because you said, it helps keep you top of mind, but it's not a punishment. It's not a check in of do you get a gold? I know you say you like gold stars, but if the scale goes up or you don't, I don't know, do one of the things that they reward you for anymore it's no longer like, "Oh, my God. I have to beat myself up." It's a more neutral, right?

That's why I call it Truce with Food, or Truce with Life. It's not that either is good or bad. It's let me look at this, rather than – and come at it from a very curious standpoint, versus spiraling down, because I can't figure out and in judging myself that I didn't do this, or that I gained weight.

[0:16:39.4] TB: Yes. yes. Totally, absolutely agree with that. The habits thing that you mentioned is fascinating, because I've been studying habits a ton lately. I'm in the process of reading right now the book atomic habits and I wish I could tell you the author.

[0:16:52.5] AS: Someone else recommended it to me. I totally forgot the name.

[0:16:54.4] TB: Yeah, it's really good. I've read a number of books, now come out the same way. What I love is he talks about in the very beginning is approaching every day of just this can I do 1% better today? I just love that, because I journal every morning and that's one of the things like, what could I do today in all – I'm not talking about weight by any stretch, but what can I do to be 1% better today in my career goals and family and relationships and all of that?

He talks about how really changing habits are not these big sweeping thing. It's just doing the 1% better every single day. That adds up to and then you look back and go, "Oh, holy cow. I've made these big changes," so that habit thing. Actually WW has a lot about habits and really has been emphasizing that more and more of just helping people understand that we – what those cues are that triggers some reward in response and how we handle that. There's been a lot of talk about that and I think that's just – that's huge. Our whole lives are dictated by habits.

[0:17:55.6] AS: Yeah, yeah. I haven't read the book, but I think one of the missing conversations though is again, stopping habits versus layering on habits.

[0:18:04.1] TB: Yes. Yup. He talks about both the difference and they're distinctly different. He uses this – oh, gosh. I feel I should know. I'm really in the midst of reading right now. He took the whole idea of what is it? The cue to trigger and the reward. He just expanded on that, but broke those down into these four different steps and what it

looks like when you're trying to add it a healthy habit and the opposite approach is distinctly different when you're trying to break a habit. Yeah.

[0:18:30.7] AS: Yeah. I just think that's so important, because one of the things that I loved on your post which you talked about staying on the treadmill longer when you added a podcast, right? I think it's important that and maybe you can even explain to people, because people who worked with me, they find it so hard to explain to people because everything changes, but nothing changes. You're still approaching exercise or food. It's still the same food, the same exercise, but the way that you relate to it is so different. I think that's what's so important about why you got so much out of Weight Watchers, or I'm sorry, WW is because – it's called Wellness that Works now.

[0:19:06.4] TB: I know. You can call it Weight Watchers. That's how we call it.

[0:19:08.7] AS: Yeah, this isn't a commercial –

[0:19:09.9] TB: Because they have made some pretty substantial and really honorable changes, in that I do applaud one, that that is one. For goodness sakes, we all know that it's Weight Watchers. It's so ingrained in our vocabulary.

[0:19:24.8] AS: Well, what they wanted to do from a marketing standpoint was keep those of us who knew what it was, but then the younger generation trained them just to see.

[0:19:31.0] TB: Yes. Totally, totally. They did change, because now they really are removing the focus on – truly they're accepting all people that even people that just want to focus on their health and never ever want to step on the scales. Part of their rebranding was a lot of those changes, which is I think that's all positive.

[0:19:48.9] AS: Totally. That's why I was like okay, this isn't just going to be a bashing of wait watch and I don't want to bash it. There's always a tool, I just think it has to be in the right context. The reason that I think it's so important for people to realize that, it could be a diet or lifestyle depending on where you are in your life is one of the things that they had on their website is they say that your coaches will set a plan for you right? It's important for people to realize coaching is not someone else setting your plan.

They're using that term which everyone is now, not just WW but now that people coaching has taken up, that's not coaching. I think that's really important for people is coaching – that's training. That's the accountability that once you get to the other – when you can relate to food – I always think about it when you can shift your relationship to food, it becomes something neutral. I don't know, the word the idea of cleaning comes to me. I don't love cleaning. I don't hate – well, I actually don't like it, so maybe not an example.

I feel good about organizing, right? Organizing some days, it's very neutral and I can approach food very neutrally now, because there's no charge to it. Once you get to a neutral place with things, accountability is really accountability. It's really helping you stay on track versus punishment, falling off. I think the challenge is that they say will set you – the coach – Weight Watchers on their marketing will say your coach will set you a plan. I just want people to realize that's not coaching, that's training.

Coaching is a real skill set and I talk about this on our second episode with Courtney Townley. It's about coming to your own conclusions. If you think of what Tina said at the top of the hour here, she had to do the coaching work. She happened to do with me about what works for me. I think the second piece to this that I really want to apply – I think that is great about Weight Watchers is the community that Tina mentioned, because Tina to your point, you have to be dairy-free, gluten-free and soy free, right?

I think one of the challenges is that unfortunately, it's so hard to be healthy in our culture.

[0:21:51.4] TB: Oh, amen.

[0:21:52.5] AS: It feeds into the deprivation narrative and yet, doesn't have – it is hard, but it's not naturally hard, right?

[0:22:00.2] TB: Right. Right, right, right. It's availability. Yup.

[0:22:02.8] AS: Yeah. It's our soil is crap, it's our government subsidizes sugar soy and wheat, and so healthy food is more expensive. We sit all day, so we're not naturally up and moving. I think that piece when you're really trying to get authentically healthy and not just ironically eat Weight Watchers food, or you do a cleanse, having that community to support you in a targeted way, to give you probably tips and tricks. Like you told me, your groups are on the go and you travel so much and it's wonderful, is it to get group intelligence of hey, this airport just added this, right?

[0:22:41.9] TB: Yup, exactly.

[0:22:43.0] AS: I was in the Minnesota Airport and there was an organic restaurant and I texted my sister and she was like, "Oh, yeah. I've been on that one." I'm like, "Why don't you tell me this?" I was sitting there going, "What am I going to eat for dinner?"

[0:22:54.0] TB: Yes. That's exactly, exactly. Yup. I think that that is important once what works for you. Otherwise, this is the same way that any tool can turn into a weapon, or not a weapon, but a weapon is using the word metaphor, but the same tool can turn into something challenging, because one of the things that I wanted to just mention though is one of the frameworks that I look at is for people to help them start to break

out of their patterns is are we competing, avoiding or accommodating? You can find out your stress response, comfort eating style on my website at alishapiro.com.

If you're in a group, that same group, if you really are – if you have a goal that you're really attached to in charge, and not that we don't want to be attached to our goals, but if you start comparing yourself to other people, which is what competitors tend to do when they feel very vulnerable, right? Like, “Why am I not getting as much ahead? How is everyone else able to do that?” Or you start avoiding going, because you feel different than the group, or accommodators and this is more about exercise, but often not want to do group exercise, if they have to feel they have to be as strong and fit and they don't want to hold others back, right? There's all these emotional patterns that can turn a community into something that actually is sabotaging us. Just wanted to mention that.

[0:24:16.3] TB: Yeah. You had mentioned earlier that – you said it so beautifully. The same but different – the same. You said so nice of just I'm doing the same thing, but it's totally different.

[0:24:32.0] AS: Oh, yeah. Everything's changed and nothing's changed.

[0:24:34.3] TB: Thank you. Oh, my gosh. There it is. I got home late last night. I came out of a late flight. I was thinking it's such a perfect example of – I've always exercised and it used to be a punishment that truly the exercise was just 100% to just allow me to have the pizza and the beers, so I thought thing.

I was a runner for a long time and I ran oh, gosh, 13 half marathons and two full marathons. If you asked me if I enjoyed running, I would tell you absolutely not. I did it. I am 100% the competitor. I'm also Enneagram, the achiever, all those frameworks. Yeah, that's where I fall. I did all of that. I remember, I think it was even you Ali. It was definitely the time that we were working together. I think it was you that even asked

truly if I enjoyed running and I said no and I laughed. It was like, “Why are you doing that?” I have stopped running and it was getting back to as I found myself again, that getting back to what I love and I love to take long walks with my dog. I love to go to yoga. I love to go –

I actually and have changed my mentality where I don't follow some program, or plan, or anything. I just tune in to what my body asked me to do, because I don't want the gym to ever feel a punishment. I want to look forward to it. Especially when I've been home working all day it's like, “Ah, yes. I get to go to the gym.” When I get there, I just do what feels good and a lot of times it's listening to a podcast, or an audiobook on the treadmill. Then I really love lifting weights, which is something that I didn't do before because I don't know why, but I love to do that. I love to stretch.

I think that personifies that whole idea of its – I've always worked out, but it was oh, it's just such a different mentality now that it's something, I mean, I truly enjoy. I don't do it thinking about how many points am I earning back. It's a whole different approach, which feels really good.

[0:26:28.8] AS: Yeah, that was one thing I was thinking about in terms of when the community and the accountability is really helpful is when you've already gotten momentum and you're getting results, because there's always a learning curve in the beginning, right? Where you're like, “What do I like? What's working?” Because part of why you really – you didn't like running, but it was again, it was helping you with the calorie deficit, right? This takes experimenting. This does not happen overnight.

Once through our work and I'm sure other work that you have done as well is once you realized that I can get results from – the result isn't just the end goal of is actually can I enjoy the process? Can I enjoy this? The same with food, right? A lot of times people think they're winning at food if they're still a little hungry, or they don't really like

what they're eating, when really what's healthy for you over time, especially to get balanced, you actually start to crave that of course.

There's a learning curve in there, right? I feel that's probably when it's not a great time to do WW, but it's great to do it once you're where you are, where you have – I loved how you use the word return to myself. It's like, you're very clear in your conviction through research and data. This isn't just like, "Oh, this is what it is," right? You've experimented. You know what works for you from your health perspective, because otherwise, I think especially I'm thinking the accommodator pattern. If you go there, you can think everything someone suggests it's like, "Maybe I should do that, right? Maybe I should adapt to that."

[0:27:58.8] TB: Absolutely. It's funny you say that, because I sit in meetings sometimes and it's like, I can hear your voice in my head Ali, because some people will say something and I cringed because I think, "Oh, no." It's not wrong. It's never wrong. It's a different part of the journey, but it's like, "Oh, I used to be there and you're going to get stuck because you're not digging to the root cause of that."

I wish I could give you an example offhand, but is, it's just the listening. You can hear and people – and I say this with so much love, because I've been in every single one of those seats, but you can hear where they are on their journey by some of the contributions that they make during the workshops when I go. Yeah, exactly you said, it's when you – I think I'm just repeating myself now, but it is when you come to it at different parts of the journey, it's going to be so distinctly different.

[0:28:49.4] AS: How about you describe that, because one of the cons that I had and you've mentioned it is WW is not going to change your relationship to food. If anything, it might reinforce the patterns that are there, right? If you're exercising to make up for what you eat, it's only going to reinforce that pattern. I thought of another way that if

you're trying to save your points, right, until the end of the evening, eating rhythm is so important to our blood sugar, right?

A lot of people have anxiety when their blood sugar crashes. If you're in this competitor response where you're just trying to get ahead during the day so you can eat all the food at night, right? You're not going to understand why you're sabotaging yourself, because you're going to tame the system.

[0:29:32.3] TB: A 100%. Another example is so – sometimes there'll be people having conversations. Everyone's allotted this certain amount of daily points and then you get these weekly points that you can use in different ways. I cringe because it starts to be conversations of do you use your weekly points? People sometimes say they don't use their weekly points and then they – that is so not healthy, because it's do – I don't know, maybe you don't need your weekly points, but maybe you do.

One of the ways that they've tried to steer people into a more healthy relationship as they've – in their transition in their new program, they talk about they have 200 free points, which are zero point foods. That's a list really of just healthy foods. It's fruits and vegetables and protein, things with high oh, carbs and sugar, things like that have higher points. The point of that may say is to help nudge people in the right direction.

It's also again, if you don't have a full understanding, those “zero point food” still – I mean, those add up, so you can't – If you're not tuning into your body, you can easily overdo it without – if you're not checking in with yourself of how much you need. WW is thinking that you can only eat so many chicken breasts, but really it's not about how many, right? It's tuning in what works, what feels good.

Yeah. Just by changing the point system as I said, and it threw people, because every few years they change their point system. This freestyle that it's on now when it made that pretty big shift I mean, people just lost their minds, which change is hard, there's

so many reasons. A lot of it was because the food that they used to – and I get it, because it was the food that they used to rely on was less points and the points went up significantly because it's got a lot of sugar in it. Weight Watchers, their point was trying to say, "Yeah, that's not – let's shift you and let's nudge you in a different direction that maybe you reach for some fruits and some vegetables and some fish and some lean protein and that thing."

Again, you can of course still work the system, because there's still ways – like you said, if you play all those games with the points of like, "Oh, I'm going to save up and use all of my points in the evening, or for this one thing, or go over my points and then try to swap out my points for activity," that's the part that makes me cringe, because that's not – that's totally a diet. That's not tuning in at all with how does this make you feel? What do you really like? How much do you need? Tuning into your body, that intuition piece of it.

Yeah, it can still of course – like anything, it can still be manipulated, if you will. There's no judgement for me, because I did that. I played that game. I see it in different ways. Although, there is an organization trying to nudge people in different ways with – an emphasis, they have the three pillars, which is food inactivity and mindfulness wellness. They've added meditation apps to their – or meditation, that headspace to their app and send lots of articles and they really, really talk in the workshops. They rarely talk about food anymore.

I mean, we meditated once in a workshop and that could be just a Colorado thing. I don't know, but I loved it. Yeah, I just get so torn because again, I feel it really works for me, but I hate to say that it would work for everyone. I don't think anything does, unless they've done the work beforehand.

[0:33:01.7] AS: Well yeah. That's why I wanted to have this conversation, right? Because some people – I mean, did you go into it because you wanted to lose

weight? Even though I know that they're getting away from that, but I looked at their marketing. It's still –

[0:33:13.7] TB: For sure. For sure.

[0:33:15.5] AS: Yeah. That's okay. Again, I've never cared of people – When I was struggling with food, no one could have told me not to want to lose weight. It's part of why I never did the anti-diet work, because I was like, “You guys can go over there, but I got to figure this out for myself.” I have a high competitor in response. It's not always bad to be a competitor or whatever, right?

I get that and that's why I wanted to have this conversation though is saying if you've done the work to get through where – Another example as you were talking, I thought about since you are high – you have a high competitor patterns at times, for you it's fun to gamify it. They're trying to gamify it, right?

[0:33:52.0] TB: Totally. Yup.

[0:33:54.0] AS: Because you have found what works for you and the emotional work we did too is also learning how to not think that your weight is going to change how your life is, right?

[0:34:03.6] TB: Absolutely.

[0:34:05.1] AS: Once you really get, the attachment to weight loss ironically is less and then it paradoxically becomes easier. It's not ironically less, but the paradox is it gets easier the less you're strangling it, right? I think one of the things – this is a great example of how it can go wrong is for you, that's genuinely fun right now, right?

[0:34:23.2] TB: Yes.

[0:34:24.1] AS: You had to do the work to figure out, because competitors are really big on the external rewards, right? Of finish lines, whether it's a promotion, whether it's the scale. You did the work to figure out why am I – let's use your exercise example, or even why be dairy-free? Am I going to do that just to be good, or what's the intrinsic reward beyond weight? How is it going to make travel easier? How is it going to make my – I don't know if you have allergies, but you fly a lot, right? You were able to tie it into whatever the intrinsic rewards beyond weight work for you by doing other work.

I think that's how the same system that they have set up now, because they're giving you new rewards and trying to gamify, which is very – everyone's trying to gamify it now. Meditation apps do all that stuff, because it works for people. If you're not basing yourself worth and what happens with the outcome of these things and that's the key difference.

[0:35:21.9] TB: Even my leader, are they – they changed everything. I think it's still called – maybe it's called a coach. I don't know. I still call her leader. Anyways, we were laughing, because part of the app is you can earn points for different things and they have a whole reward system. I love it. That tunes right into me. We were talking about it at one of the workshops and she laughed out loud and she's like, "Let's be honest. You're not doing that." This was to the whole group, not just me. She's like, "It's not about getting the water bottle or the yoga mat. You can go buy that right now. I mean, it's not about that."

It's the helping – Again, it just taps in – again yes, they're trying to gamify it and they're trying to help people create healthy habits. That's what they flat out say. The more that we have you tuned in, you attended the workshop and if you move and they don't care how much you move and if you for them track your breakfast, lunch and dinner and water those kinds of things, it's just helping to set up those habits and then they want to reward you for it.

Yeah, so it's a game to me. Yes, when she said that I laughed because I just took three steps back so I'm like, "Yeah, it's really not about earning this water bottle," but it's a system that works for me. Yup, that's their push is just trying to again, trying to help people establish those healthy habits.

[0:36:33.8] AS: Yeah. I mean, one of the things that I think the issue is again is I don't think and this isn't a Weight Watchers or a WW thing, this is a general health wellness industry is I don't think people realize that most reasons people "self-sabotage," has nothing to do with the food or being willpower or discipline. It's somewhere else in their life, right? That's the only challenge is that if you're stuck and you can't – I even think people in the avoider pattern, right? A lot of my clients once they've been like, "Oh, I did Weight Watchers and then I fell off," right? Something else in their life happened.

For the accommodators, I've had a couple clients who they're like, "Oh, I was doing Weight Watchers and it was working, and then my mom got sick." That accommodator response was I got to fix this. It's all on me, right? Or work got really stressful and they took on all the work at work, right? I think that's the only challenge. Again, this isn't just unique to WW, but in general if you don't really understand the root cause of habit, it's not going to work.

[0:37:40.5] TB: I totally, completely 100% agree. Yeah, yeah.

[0:37:44.5] AS: That's another thing too that I do feel the limitations are is that I do still feel they're trying to tell people what they want to hear, like you talked about the desert with zero points. There you talked about you can have snacks.

[0:37:58.2] TB: I don't know what desert zero points.

[0:38:00.4] AS: Oh, that's what it said on – because I went on the website and I was like, they have Kate Hudson on there talking about she wants to do this for her kids. I'm like, “Oh, you know they test marketed. Why women in their 30s and 40s want to do this?” I'm like, but that reinforce – this is the cynical side of me, right? Is that reinforces the sacrifice reward, either or pattern that –

[0:38:23.9] TB: Well, it's interesting that you bring her up, because in the WW community, when she came on as a spokesperson or whatever they call her, it was so interesting to me, because people were pissed. We all said that she was not – she didn't need to lose weight. It's not for people like her and she's already thin, blah, blah, blah. It was fascinating to read the comments and then you get a whole slew of other people.

WW coming, I don't know if they officially made a statement, but there were different leaders coming on and saying, “Whoa, you guys are missing the point. That's what we're saying. It's for everyone. She just wants to be healthy. It's not about the scale necessarily for her.” Yes, she had a baby, but that was an interesting – I mean, they're still – it's always anything that again, isn't unique to WW. I mean, there's always controversy.

They have a connect feature on their app, which I really like because that's the groups, like I – traveling group and a dairy group and there's different things, but then there's a general system and there's people that don't think that people me that had under 20 pounds to lose belong there.

[0:39:32.4] AS: Wow.

[0:39:33.7] TB: Exactly. [Inaudible 0:39:34.7]. Then people in the WW community is saying, “Whoa, stop. That's not,” – and they've missed. Again to me, that signals, oh. It

makes me sad, because there's bigger – they got a lot of stuff to work on. Why are you worried about me? Why? There's yeah, yeah.

[0:39:53.9] AS: I remember the other point I was going to say, because I was talking to my sister about I still struggle sometimes with how to explain the transformation of how I work with people. I mean, people listen to podcasts, they have a strong sense, but until you've really gone through it, you can't explain it, because we're totally just changing the meaning of food and things in your life. My sister I mean, she has celiac, but she doesn't – she's not really in the weight – she's not in my industry, right? She's a lawyer and the head of a tech startup, so it's completely different worlds.

She's like, "I feel the anti-diet movements have a lot of rules too though." I never thought of that. You're right. I did some research and it's like oh, my God. Everyone's creating a system, right? We want to pin this on WW, but it's I don't know, any system and that you're going to have some people that are angry about it, I guess is the point. It's so interesting to me that they thought –

The thing that I was cynical about with Kate Hudson when she was like, "I just want to find balance." They show her in this gorgeous kitchen, right? You know she's what, a multi-millionaire. I'm like, "Are they showing her staff? Come on." That's so interesting. Yeah. This is why I like social movements struggle, right? There's infighting always.

[0:41:12.1] TB: Yes. We're all here for the same – That's exactly it. I was like, "Oh, you've got to be kidding me." Stop, stop, stop, stop. Yeah. Thinking you want about that, right?

[0:41:25.7] AS: I think that's interesting though is that as WW tries to rebrand, right? Rebrand is about values. It's not just what's on the page. If they want it to be for everyone, the people who – this is a great example of the competitor response. Many people that they can't recognize, it's like they're isolating, they're distancing themselves and isolating themselves from Kate Hudson, because she appears to be so much

further ahead in the weight loss game than they are, versus hey, because again, part of the I think the emotional and soul hunger for competitors is this self-actualization of what benchmarks and metrics do I really care about and that are meaningful to me?

That takes work to do, right? It's not outside of the gold stars, outside of the promotions, outside of the scale, all the same pattern, like what really replenishes me and fills me up? For you on an exercise level, it's yoga and walks and podcasts in the treadmill when you're traveling. Most people have to do that work, I think so. Then they don't get triggered by Kate Hudson who whatever her goals are.

The other thing – it's switching gears, but also when I was looking at what they were – they were like, you can snack. Again, I think they're trying to be focused on health but also trying to balance that they are a very big business. Because when I see – I mean, I always tell my clients, you can snack if you want, but as your blood sugar heals, if we're getting you healthier, you shouldn't need to snack anymore.

[0:42:55.0] TB: Yes, one of my biggest ahas. I'm so sorry to interrupt.

[0:42:58.6] AS: No. Please do.

[0:43:00.4] TB: I was doing all this reflection and I remember you saying that. I remember in the beginning thinking that's crazy. I snack all the time. Oh, guys. Yes. The balancing the blood sugar to me number one, is the biggest thing I – It's just stunning to me. I don't snack anymore. I don't snack anymore. I have three meals a day, period. In fact, when I find myself wanting to snack, again it goes back to, "Uh-oh. Why? Why? Why?" Is it because my blood sugar is out of balance? Did something trigger it? It's an entirely different question.

That was the example – that's a great example of conversations that sometimes can get started at the workshop of like this incessant need to snack, so then people's –

what are you snacking on? They give ideas and I'm like, "Oh, no. It's not about what to eat when you want a snack. It's digging a little bit for why are you wanting to snack?" Again, that balance, blood sugar I think is just the biggest, because if you just – if you just had carbs all day, if you just whatever it is. It was such a huge – I was like, "Holy cow. I don't snack anymore. That's crazy."

[0:44:02.9] AS: Yeah. That's how I think, again, if you don't look at these accommodator avoid competing patterns, if you're an accommodator, you're going to say – you're like, "Oh, so-and-so asked me to go out to eat," right? I want to say yes to her restaurant. I'm going to save all my points. Then you're going to end up crashing. The avoider is going to not stick up for what they want to do with the restaurant choice, right? Then they save all their points.

There's a pacing issue, or it's going to not do anything to change these patterns, I guess. Again, the more that we talk about this and I said this on the functional medicine episode pros and cons is that any theory or system is only as healthy as the cultural narratives that it's chosen to examine. As a culture, we believe the body is a machine. That's a one size fits all. Even though I know they say not one size fits all, they're still giving you a reductionist looking at food through points, not through a medical lens.

I think our culture and again, the medical system is this way as well, still views, as long as you're losing weight, it's healthy. Instead of you had cancer and that's why you're healthy? Or do you have Crohn's disease and can't absorb anything? Maybe people can identify that as being unhealthy. I think our culture in general still equates like okay, well if you're losing weight, you're going to see the positive reinforcement and keep going, versus but is your body malnourished, right? Which then means we know statistically the biggest implication, or the biggest factor of why people gain weight back is dieting itself.

I feel that's the important piece of this is like, this is a lifestyle for you, because you were already working towards. Now this is just helping you through community and your personality type, helping you maintain what you already started and not looking at Weight Watcher, or W – we're going to have to edit out. Every time I said Weight Watchers.

[0:45:57.7] TB: Right. They're never there. It's got to do forever. 50 years they've used Weight Watchers. Yeah.

[0:46:03.9] AS: Yeah, yeah. That I think is the important takeaway that I want people to realize. I think you did such a great job of explaining why it's different for you now, because it's not coming from a deficit, judgmental shame place. It's coming from my personality needs this support.

That's one thing I think that is really important for people, I also want people to realize is we all need some structure, right? That's why diets, or lifestyles, or plans, whatever your systems can be attractive, right? Because they do help with those systems. The work that we did was like okay, what's the system, the structure required for your blood sugar control and GI health? It's a different discernment tool, but you're now using this not as the magic bullet or the solution, but the tool. Even when you kicked off, you discern so much of what you aren't going to get swept up in the meetings and what specifically works for you.

It reminds me of I had a client after we got done working together, she said she wanted to use my fitness palette to help with portions. She said, "I totally retract it based on – I edited it and know how to use it based on what works for me versus the system that they're giving me, to tell me what I should be eating." I was like, "That's my end goal for all my clients is you can discern what tool works for you when that provides the right structure. I don't think all structure is bad, right? As long as –

[0:47:31.4] TB: Yes. I thrive on structure. That's my personality.

[0:47:34.7] AS: Me too.

[0:47:36.5] TB: I thrive on structure. I don't do well unstructured. Yeah.

[0:47:39.6] AS: Oh, my God. It's so funny. I've always thought of myself as go with the flow and then we just moved everyone, so this is my first podcasted at our new place. Seeing how I can't – Carlos and I had to do a lot of collaborating during this move. Until I could see the big picture in the system and the plan, I was like, I'm overwhelmed. What's the big structure? I was like, Oh, my God. I am so much more – in middle school and high school, I was in the honors math and sciences, but then I've gotten away from that because I've gotten more into – my master's degree was in liberal arts and more language and deconstructing that. I'm like, "Holy shit. I am so much more logical than I think I am." Like structure-oriented.

I hear that, but I think what I love is you're making this – you're not just taking the system and accommodators would adapt to it. Competitors would just trying to beat it, right? Avoiders will dabble with Weight Watchers and then "fall off." You've actually found the parts that work for you. I love that you even found a leader that works for you. I think that's another point I wanted to make up. It's like, if people are going to try this, find a leader that you can connect with.

[0:48:48.9] TB: That's one of my biggest recommendations. People that do diet, that's one of the things they say. Again, I mean, different people need different leaders, but I – that was a big one. I mean, they do have a totally online component whatever. For me, I connected it – there's a couple that I really love. Yeah, that's one of the biggest thing I say to people. It's not right or wrong. It's just different – obviously different connections to different people.

Some are dedicated to of course, to moms with little kids. That's not going to relate to me. Oh, gosh. I went to one and it was so cute. It's all these older senior women. Oh, my gosh. God bless them, but they're in an entirely different place than I am. It's just finding that. Not all groups are done by personality. They just work that way and they tend to connect with whoever the leader is. Yeah, I think I can't overstate that enough. That person and the people that attend those same workshops, I think there has to be that connection there.

[0:49:49.0] AS: Well, I think that's the point, the bigger point of I think the takeaways are if you really know what works for you and you need support, you need – there's always a learning curve, right? There's new dairy-free products coming out. We think about that group intelligence, which is what I just realized I could plug the Insatiable community again.

We're working on that, but a different level, more on the emotional and physical level, what works for you. That is really important, because I think all of us are so lonely. Even though I have great clients, great marriage, great friends, I don't work with anyone day-to-day. I think being in real life with people in community is so healing.

[0:50:28.0] TB: Yeah. You're an extrovert. I'm an introvert. It feels the opposite that I would crave going to these meetings on Saturdays, but it's exactly as you said, it's because the relationships and all the other areas I mean, that's all good. I don't know. There's something about this particular community. Yeah, and even as an introvert. I don't talk much during them, but I go and I don't know. It's something that I look forward to.

[0:50:56.1] AS: I mean, Carlos is an introvert. He's like, "I love going to the coffee shops where you're around people, but no one talks to you."

[0:51:02.1] TB: Totally. Carlos and I can go together and then just sit there and not talk. I mean, those are always awesome.

[0:51:09.3] AS: Yeah. Is there anything else you want to add? Because I know I went off on a couple of tangents and I think that –

[0:51:16.9] TB: No, I love it. I love it. No, it's great. I just love having the dialogue. It's funny, because for a little while there when I was back doing WW, I kept it this secret because I did feel like oh, God. Because there's just controversy around it and people have really strong feelings. Then finally I was like, "Oh, I'm going to – this is part of me. This is who I am. It's become a part of my life in a really healthy way." Just putting it out there. Again, with the caveat of gosh, what works for you.

Someone recently had saw that I was doing WW and she had texted me and asked me. She said, "I'm hungry. I don't know what I should eat for dessert." I was like, "Good lord. I can't tell you. I won't possibly be able to tell you what you should eat right now." Now it's just such a ding, ding, ding of oh, I'm just – which is a celebration of just an entirely different. Yeah, the first time I get it. I mean, it was all as the competitor and I just look back and laugh at beating the system and then getting away with it for a little while and then having that backfire completely.

[0:52:21.7] AS: I think that's a really important point to end on is that at the end of the day, owning our story and whatever we need and that changes and shifts and changes and that's what continues to get us healthier and to other next levels, right? It's owning what we need, but first we have to identify what that is. I think that's the big takeaway for people, it's you haven't addressed your relationship with food. You don't know what works for you. You don't understand your body.

Weight Watchers is probably going to trigger old patterns and you can start to see your patterns at alishapiro.com/comforteatingquiz to start to see those patterns.

However if you work through that and Tina, I just want to commend you. I mean, you have done the work and it's not easy and yet when you get to the other side, it's so liberating. This is now a tool for you that I just love that you're willing to share about it, because yeah.

[0:53:11.1] TB: Oh, thank you. It's maybe to you truly, truly, truly. You changed my life completely. My favorite, so when people kind of ask about my journey, it's worse [inaudible 0:53:21.6]. My favorite is Ali and I met at a women's conference and I remember and I don't – we don't probably remember. We were standing in dinner together and I don't know how the conversation got started, but I said something along the lines of, "Yeah. Well, every time I eat I feel like shit." I said something like that. I remember you turning to me and you're like, "What? That is not okay." I don't know. I just pretty much always feel terrible. My stomach always feel terrible.

I remember just the look in your face and you're like, "No, stop it." It was literally my goal was to not feel like shit every time I eat was the original goal. The one it just morphed into was incredible. It just blew my mind. It was through my work with you and figuring out all these crazy food allergies and just so many discoveries. I thank you and I don't feel cute anymore.

[0:54:16.7] AS: It's so funny, because I knew we were doing this interview. You know what I remember about that weekend that they had that dance party that was really weird and you guys approached like, you can't do it.

[0:54:24.1] TB: Oh, God. Yes. I'm uncomfortable thinking about it.

[0:54:31.6] AS: Everyone felt so free and I was like, "I just can't do this right now."

[0:54:35.4] TB: No, no. I couldn't. I couldn't. I think I got in trouble because I was laughing.

[0:54:40.3] AS: Yeah. That was our nervous response.

[0:54:42.4] TB: Which was not laughing. Anyone, I was laughing at myself. I was so uncomfortable.

[0:54:48.4] AS: Yeah. I remember connecting over that thing that we can't be the only one who can't just – takes me a little while to warm up to things.

[0:54:54.6] TB: Totally.

[0:54:58.3] AS: Thank you so much Tina for your time and for owning your story and continuing to and helping us see some nuance and some – I just think it's funny that I seriously was nervous about not anymore doing this, but the controversy of even maybe finding something positive about WW. I think it's [inaudible 0:55:17.1].

[0:55:18.4] TB: Totally. Totally. If only more people in our world could have conversations like this, imagine.

[0:55:26.2] AS: Seriously, seriously. I mean, we could make some progress. Thank you so much for your time, Tina.

[0:55:33.6] TB: Perfect. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:55:39.2] AS: Thank you, health rebels for tuning in today. Have a reaction, question, or want the transcript from today's episode? Find me at alishapiro.com. I'd love if you [leave a review on Apple Podcast](#) and tell your friends and family about Insatiable. It

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

[END]