

**S2 EPISODE 01**

[INTRO]

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

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0: 00:47.4] AS:** Welcome back Insatiable listeners. Welcome to Season 2 Episode One where we're going to talk about the missing key to sustainable food changes with my client Jess Ivans. If you've listened to the Season 2 trailer, which I hope you will do because I've got a lot of thoughts about what's happened since we've taken a show break. We are talking about the feminine perspective and I thought what better way to kick off the feminine perspective than having a woman share her story about what she discovered is actually true for her versus the conventional ideas from the healthcare and diet industry.

Because here's the truth guys, those industries they want you to believe that you are a widget but you are a wonder not a widget and to Jess's story shows how what you need is actually a framework to continue to experiment and discover what is true for you and that's what she's going to do today. In today's episode she's going to share about how she had to leave vegetarianism behind, how she was pleasantly surprised that she could manage her endometriosis naturally and in this process this one change that nothing else changed but she changed this and it led to her losing weight, which was pretty interesting from a chucking calories in, calories out perspective to the curb.

Then she's also going to share the missing emotional components that are necessary so that you don't feel like you're on a diet, yet you're still getting results and still able to make choices aligned with your goals. So you're really going to enjoy today's episode and one more thing, just

so you guys know Truce with Food is coming up in February. We start February 6th. Go to my list at Alishapiro.com and sign up because in mid January, the week of January 15th, I'm going to be offering a free mini intro to Truce with Food so that you can get a taste of it to see if it is the right fit for you.

I don't think we have time for women and very evolved men to be doubting themselves any more. We've got to get this show on the road and so as you'll learn in the free intro to t Truce with Food, this isn't a diet it's a self discovery process to you feeling powerful, resilient and courageous in your body and in your life. So sign up at Alishapira.com to be notified and sign up for that free intro. Okay, on to today's episode. I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed interviewing Jess and I feel inspired and ready to kick off 2018 in a rebellious way.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:03:18.4] AS:** Hello insatiable listeners. It's been a while! Welcome to Season 2 Episode 1 of the Feminine Perspective and we are here with my client Jess Ivans. Jess, thanks for being here. I'm so excited you're here for people to learn from your story and your dedication to experimentation and evolution of progress.

**[0:03:39.4] JI:** Thank you Ali it's great to be here.

**[0:03:41.4] AS:** So, a couple of years ago we started working together and I'd love for you to share, what questions did you have at the time when we started to work together?

**[0:03:49.4] JI:** Sure. So when we started to work together I was pretty much exhausted. I was at the end of my rope because I had been for maybe eight years or so trying really hard to lose weight to be healthy and to do all the things you're "supposed to do", and by the time I got to you I was just exhausted. I couldn't find what worked for me. I had experimented with excessive exercise and calorie counting and vegetarianism for a long time and I just didn't feel right. So I came to you and that's finally when I started working with you that's when I started to learn what would work for me and I've been building upon what works for me ever since.

**[0:04:30.4] AS:** Yeah. So what did you discover worked for you? Like what surprised you in the sense that I think a lot of people think they're doing the right thing and they are, according to magazines and in the media and the trends. What surprised you the most when you first started really figuring out and experimenting what works for you?

**[0:04:47.4] JI:** I think there were a couple things that surprised me. One of the things that I guess did surprise me was that it usually doesn't work when you take somebody else's defined model and try to apply it to you and that could be anything. Like, "Ok I'm going to be vegan, so I'm going to follow the strict instructions for being vegan. Or I'm going to do paleo and follow these strict instructions. Or I'm going to do CrossFit and I'm going to follow these strict instructions and I'm going to get the results I want." I guess that was the big one of the big takeaways working with you is I learned that with your guidance I was able to design a lifestyle and a way of eating and an exercise regimen and a way of managing stress that worked for me and that got me closer to the results that I wanted.

**[0:05:30.4] AS:** And as you were talking about with exercise I know this last year like because your life was so stressful, in a way you had to take a little bit of a break from exercise. Was that this year or last year? I'm forgetting.

**[0:05:41.4] JI:** That was this year. Yeah I think you're referring to — My mom passed away. Yeah that was earlier this year, January of 2017. Yes.

**[0:05:58.4] AS:** Yeah, and that seems counterintuitive of being healthy, but it was so important that you get sleep at that time.

**[0:05:54.4] JI:** Yes.

**[0:05:56.4] AS:** Your morning workout had to be prioritized. And I think that's a great example of what starts to work for us at one point, it won't continue to work for us.

**[0:06:04.4] JI:** Yeah you're right. So I really had to adapt at that time. Last year, 2016, I had finally transitioned to becoming a morning workout person, right? And I remember you had helped me with that and I was so excited and because I am not a morning person in general.

But I got myself into the habit of working out in the mornings and I did it for pretty much all of 2016. I think I had actually started it in 2015 and I was going to the gym really regularly taking good care of myself. It felt great, and then at the end of 2016 early 2017 my mom had a massive stroke and she actually died at the end of January in 2017 and during that time and even after she passed away, my sleep was so disrupted. So I have insomnia, I still struggle with it. Sometimes it's really bad other times it's not. It comes and goes, and I was having so much trouble sleeping through a lot of this year as I was grieving the loss of my mother that I couldn't have it both ways.

I couldn't get all the sleep I needed and go to the gym in the morning. I just I couldn't get enough sleep at night to be rested enough to exercise and I really struggled with it and I was really angry about it. I was getting into these moments with myself where it's like, "I have to exercise. You know, I was doing some good last year and I can't exercise the way I want to this year and I should really be getting up in the morning and I'm so frustrated that I can't sleep." And finally I realized, you know what? It is what it is right now. I need to accept it and I need to focus on getting sleep. Because if my choice is exercise or get enough sleep, I'm going to go get enough sleep. Because if I get up and exercise on four hours of sleep I'm going to feel like shit and I don't want to feel like shit.

I mean, I've come to a point where I exercise because it makes me feel good and because it's like healthy maintenance from my body and exercise isn't going to be healthy maintenance for my body if I'm doing it on four hours of sleep. I might as well just not exercise and get that extra hour of sleep. So I really grappled with that for a long time this year and I finally got to a point where I was like exercising as much as I could. I was still exercising two or three days a week for the most part, which was great, and the past few months actually because of some of the work that I've done working through my grief, my sleep has gotten better and I'm starting to get back into that routine of working out four or five days a week, getting up in the mornings before work and while having enough sleep exercising, going to work, and feeling great.

Because I really love doing that. I really love starting my day with exercise. It just makes me feel so good. I feel like I've earned the day and I have more energy during the day. But I had to be ready. I had to be at a point in my grief where I was actually ready to do that and it was oaky to do and I had to come to terms with, "Okay, this grief is going to take time and my life isn't going

to look the way that I want it to right now and that's okay. I need to just work through my grief and focus on sleep.”

**[0:08:44.4] AS:** I think that's such a beautiful example of the importance of context when we're getting recommendations, right? I think we sometimes think like, “Well, can I sustain doing that?” But the paradox of “lasting results” is you have to be able to adapt to what happens and you knew your body well enough and to know that, “Hey exercise is actually going to backfire if I'm not sleeping,” and what I love a lot is you didn't panic and now you're starting to see, “Oh hey, I'm coming back around to my new normal because I took the time to deal with my grief and be with it, not try to ignore it and out run it by pretending things were normal but actually sinking into it and being with it,” and now you're coming out like, “Hey I'm getting back to morning exercise,” and think what's important for people to realize is you're like, “I was still exercise a couple of days a week. I just couldn't go full throttle.”

**[0:09:37.4] JI:** Exactly. Yes exactly. Yeah it's very true. I eventually learned that what I really needed was to just take the energy I had and put it into focusing on my grief.

**[0:09:48.4] AS:** Yeah that's just such an important point for people to realize that context is everything. We get these kind of generic recommendations of like, “Eat this not that. Exercise five days a week,” when the reality is it's going to change and be dynamic and having a framework to know what works for you, which is what we do in Truce with Food is so important.

So I want to circle back to the food too because you said something interesting about really being dedicated to being vegetarian and I know that really understanding your blood sugar was a game changer for you. So what did you learn about your blood sugar in your body in terms of “diet”? I mean, as like a noun not a verb. Like how you need to eat on a regular basis not like a plan per se?

**[0:10:22.4] JI:** Yeah, so I was vegetarian for a long time and I still like to think that I'm a vegetarian in spirit and that if I could feel great vegetarian diet I would totally do it. I really would. I love vegetarian food. I did it for a really long time. So by the time I started working with you I was more flexitarian. I was eating meat on occasion and not very often but just eating it on occasion and as I worked with you and I learned how to balance my blood sugar, I learned

basically what types of foods helped me feel energized and helped me stay full and keep me going until I get to the next meal, versus the meals or the types of foods that don't keep me feeling full that don't give me energy. Through that experimentation I actually learned that really healthy lean quality animal proteins make me feel really good, especially at breakfast and lunch.

So the more I started to eat meat the better I started to feel and I just came to terms with it. I said, "Okay." I'm actually not a huge fan of meat. Like I'll eat it. It's not that I dislike it I just I'd rather have a vegetarian dish than a chicken dish. But I eat it because it makes me feel better and since I've been doing that the last few years I've actually really come to appreciate animal protein and I actually find myself actually craving it. So there are times if I'm stressed out or times where I used to probably crave sweets, now I'll actually crave like plain chicken, which is kind of strange. Not all the time, but I never ever craved plain chicken like five years ago when I was a vegetarian.

So it just goes to show how much more in touch I am with my body now and what my body really needs to have proper fuel.

**[0:12:08.4] AS:** So when we have that framework and we know what works for us, we — our cravings shift and change and you craving meat when you're stressed really is nurturing your adrenal glands. It's nurturing your system because for people who do well with meat, when they're stressed they need extra support. I mean, we all need extra support but for some people that's more healthy fats for some people it's more healthy carbs. But for you, it's chicken. You know, it's like everybody knows.

**[0:12:35.4] JI:** Yeah, yeah and it's funny because I never pictured myself to be a paleo person but a diet similar to the paleo diet actually works really well for me. I think there's some irony me being a former vegetarian and I certainly don't follow the paleo diet strictly at all. But, you know, when I look up recipes or if I'm looking up a new chicken recipe often Google paleo Pesto Chicken. Because I know that I'll find something that doesn't have dairy in it and I'll find something that's really clean and I'll either make it as is or adapt it to my needs.

So yeah I've learned through all this experimentation and balancing my blood sugar that actually healthy fats and animal proteins make me feel really good and help you feel full and keep me energized.

**[0:13:17.4] AS:** Yeah, and you mention being dairy free and you were comfortable with me sharing that you have an endometriosis diagnosis and so since learning about stress and gut health and blood sugar and food more from a “what works for me”, how is your approach to managing your endometriosis shifted and changed?

**[0:13:35.4] AS:** Jeez, that's been a huge shift. So, I was first diagnosed with it in 2014 when I had to have surgery and the surgeon went in and found all this endometriosis and removed it. And I didn't even know that I had it. So the — right away after I had recovered from the surgery the OBGYN wanted me to go on the pill and that's what I did. I didn't really want to be on the pill but I was basically told, “Yeah you need to go on the pill because you have this endometriosis.” And I didn't care for the side effects of the pill, they were just — I don't need to go into details but I think everybody who's experimented with the pill probably has experienced some of these side effects and I just thought, you know, “Why is the pill the only answer?” Right?

So if you talk to your doctor, usually if you're having a lady problem, if you want to call it that, they'll usually suggest you go on the pill. And I thought, “I bet you somebody else has figured out how to deal with endometriosis that doesn't deal with being on the pill. So what I did was I did a bunch of — I talked with you about it and I told her I did a bunch of research on how to manage endometriosis naturally. I read a bunch of books on endometriosis, articles and I learned that basically you can manage it. It's kind of like how you can manage diabetes by eating really clean and eliminating sugar and processed foods from your diet.

You can do the same thing with things like endometriosis because when you eat really clean your hormones stay in better balance. When you eat sugar and lots of processed food it disrupts your hormones and then when your hormones get out of balance it has a negative effect on your endometriosis. But if you eat really clean, meaning you eliminate most processed foods, you eliminate things like dairy it actually helps keep your hormones in balance and it helps suppress or reduce the endometriosis.

So that's the approach that I decided to take and I actually took myself off the pill and I've been much happier since I've gone off the pill. I don't get as much acne anymore. I lost like eight pounds in a couple months after going off, just from going off the pill and I was already eating clean and being really healthy. I didn't modify anything else other than going off the pill and I dropped weight, and I feel great. My periods are really regular, they're not painful. It's really nice and I should add though, if there's anybody else out there with endometriosis, it can be a very painful condition. I'm fortunate in that I have what's called Silent Endometriosis that where I have it, but it doesn't cause me a lot of pain.

So a lot of women have pain, like constant pain with their endometriosis and I don't, and the blessing with that is that I'm not in a lot of pain. What makes it hard is that when I modify my diet and eat really clean I have to pay really close attention to my body to see whether or not what I'm doing is working because I wasn't in pain. So I've read case studies about women who started eating clean and they had less pain and whatnot. So I can't use pain as a metric I need to use something else. So that's why I pay really close attention to things like acne or things like how regular I am and it's just going off the pill and taking this approach I feel like has just put me really in touch with my body even more so. Because I really have to pay attention to the nuances to know whether or not what I'm doing is working.

**[0:16:35.4] AS:** I love that, that you know what symptoms like mean you're getting better. Right? Because when you read these inserts of side effects or "you should experience this" it's like, no one has a bell curve health experience, right? Like every time we come to, even some people could have the same diagnosis but different things are going to work and it's going to have pain or not pain, acne or not?

**[0:16:55.4] JI:** Right, yeah.

**[0:16:56.4] AS:** And I just think you mentioning hormones, for people listening, getting your hormones balance, which is what blood sugar really helps to do is such a crux of so many things you can control that. I mean again, maybe not totally with natural methods but you have a lot more power than you think you do and I think, Jess, the point you brought up even about weight loss is a side effect. I mean I always see weightless as a side effect of our body getting

healthier and you were doing everything right and to lose eight pounds because you've now balanced your hormones naturally I mean, I think that's really important for people to hear.

**[0:17:32.4] JI:** Yeah I agree. Yeah, learning to balance my blood sugar was a huge game changer and it's funny, while we're on that topic, I've told you this a few times how I feel like I'm on this lonely island of enlightenment because I've learned about things like how to balance my blood sugar and why vegetarianism didn't work for me versus like, "Oh I just decided to stop being vegetarian, or oh I couldn't resist the temptation of meat." I guess my journey for me has been so enlightening but it seems as though a lot of people out there aren't where I am.

So it's really hard, like when I hear the topic of dieting or health come up and the things that people say it's just it's so different from the way that I see health now and the way that I see wellness. I feel like I want to talk about balancing my blood sugar but there's nobody else to talk to about it except for the people in Ali's program because they just don't get — I mean, it's not something you hear about a lot. There's never been a trend of balancing your blood sugar like there's been a trend of eating paleo or South Beach Diet or something like that. It's just not — It's not really a known thing and it's hard to talk about it, actually.

People, you know, they kind of have the glazed look on their face when I say "balancing my blood sugar". But I think if I if I talked about some of the more popular approaches like going paleo or running a marathon then that's something people can relate to. So I just, I do feel like I'm on this lonely method of enlightenment.

**[0:18:53.4] AS:** Yeah. How do you manage that? I think that's a really big thing that I hear from a lot of my clients. Like once you've kind of been through this birth canal of like learning what works for you, understanding that it's a much more holistic process. They feel very lonely in some ways. So how do you manage that? I mean, I know we have a Facebook group but you need more than a Facebook group for Truce with Food alumni.

**[0:19:14.4] JI:** Yeah that's a good question. I guess one of the ways, honestly — so one of the ways I've learned to manage it is actually this little bit of a segue maybe, but expressing my needs. So you've worked with me on recognizing how one of my natural tendency is to accommodate. So for example, I was at my sister's house a month or so ago and her husband

cooks meals. He cooks dinner for everybody, and I forgot to tell them that I wasn't eating dairy very much anymore and he comes home and he's like, "Okay, I'm making pasta with Alfredo sauce for dinner," and I'm thinking, "Oh no," because I just do Alfredo it's like it's the most dairy thing you could possibly have. It's heavy cream and butter and cheese.

**[0:20:00.4] AS:** It's like the dairiest of dairy.

**[0:20:02.4] JI:** Yes. So I'm like, "Oh no," and my gut reaction would have been, "Okay, sit down and eat the Alfredo because that's the polite thing to do," and I said to him I said, "I apologize." I did apologize because I knew he was cooking dinner and he was already making it up. I was like, "Look, I apologize. I forgot to tell you I'm not really eating dairy anymore." And he goes, "Oh okay. Well, I'll just make you a side of aioli." Well I'm not really sure how to — It's basically pasta with olive oil a little bit of butter and some Italian seasoning. And I was ok with — Yeah. Oh yeah it is. It is great and it's got no dairy in it and he actually, so my brother in law, he actually does that for my nephew because my nephew doesn't care for a lot of dairy. He just doesn't like it.

So he's like, "Oh yeah I do this for Jack all the time and I'll just make you a side about this," whatever he calls it. I can't pronounce it. It's just basically pasta with olive oil and some spices in it. Then I said, "Oh okay," And I always have dibs on their leftovers and I also heated up some of the meat that was in the fridge and we were we had a salad and I had a little bit of pasta and it was great and it worked out. But the old me would have just sat there and eaten the Alfredo and felt awful afterwards. Because if I eat pasta with all that dairy, even before I started working with you, Alfredo never sat right with me. I just never felt good after I ate it. I mean it's delicious, but it's just so rich. It's just too much, and nowadays if I try to eat it because I've been eating so clean, I would have felt awful.

But working with you, I now feel equipped and I feel comfortable expressing my needs to people, right? And not having to accommodate not having to eat things that I think are going to make other people happy or content.

**[0:21:35.4] AS:** And realizing that you're not disappointing people if you don't eat their food and then are sick for the next day. Right?

**[0:21:42.4] JI:** Yeah.

**[0:21:43.4] AS:** They don't get attached to — If you explain your needs, right? I think that's part of why people are afraid too, often.

**[0:21:49] JI:** Yeah, it's funny too because I don't follow any sort of prescribed diet. I think people get baffled by my my need sometimes, you know? Because it's like, “Oh, you're not eating dairy but you ate a piece of bread,” and I do try to avoid bread gluten. I don't eat it very often, but I'll eat that every now and then and it's just it kind of makes me laugh because I try so hard not to get back into that rigid mindset of dieting where like, “You have to follow these rules and you can obey those rules, but you can't just obey these rules,” and you know what? Like if there's a piece of bread there, I do try to avoid it. But if I decide I'm going to eat it I'm going to eat it, right? So it's

**[0:22:22.4] AS:** But that's part of aligning yourself with the dynamic nature of, hey if you want a piece of bread once in a while. It's not going to destroy it.

**[0:22:30.4] JI:** Right, exactly. Yeah. Or every now and then, you know, I'll just have a piece of cake. I'll be out somewhere and I'll have cake or I'll have a brownie or something like that, and I can tell, I don't know? People just seem a little perplexed, “Well you are not eating dairy, but you're eating a brownie. A brownie is not healthy.” Yes, but it's what works for me right now. Right? And I'm going to eat the brownie occasionally. It's okay. Which brings me to the whole dieting mindset; When I first decided to experiment with going off dairy, I decided I was going to completely cut it out, and that did not work at all.

I felt like what I was doing to myself even though I wasn't intending it as I was putting myself into this restrictive diet mode where, “Okay, Jess, you can't have dairy,” and it just wasn't working. And I realized it wasn't working, I tried it for a few weeks and I would go out and I would eat the dairy and I said, “Okay, this isn't working.” Telling myself “no you can't eat dairy”, it's basically like fighting with your inner toddler, is what I call it. It's like, you know, like if you lock horns with a toddler like if you're with this toddler and you say, “No,” the toddler is going to be like, “No!” And they're just going to fight back.

So you have to you have to kind of approach things a certain way with toddlers unless you want to lock horns with them, and I felt like I was just locking horns of my inner toddler. It was like, “Jess, you can't have dairy.” “Yes I can!” This like constant battle and then I was like, “All right this isn't working. So what I'm going to do now is instead of telling myself I can't have dairy, I'm going to experiment and see how much dairy I can cut out and I'm not going to beat myself up if I eat it every now and then. I'm going to try to eliminate as much as I can.” And that's actually been really working.

So I've been eating dairy maybe twice a month and that's it, and before I did this experiment I was eating it three times a week probably. So I'm thrilled with the fact that I went from eating dairy three times a week to twice a month and I've also noticed that when I eat it I tend to get zits on my forehead a day later. That's what happens to me too. Like a day or two later, I see all these tiny little zits like all over my forehead and I'm like, “Oh my goodness wow like this has got to be from the dairy. Because I know where I'm at and my cycle I know it's not my cycle. I just. Wow.” I was never able to see the way that dairy was affecting my skin until I basically eliminated it like twice a month maybe three times a month. Now when I eat it sometimes a day or two later I have zits all over my head.

**[0:24:46.4] AS:** Yeah I'm always like, I'm willing to take the hit sometimes.

**[0:24:50.4] JI:** That's what I said, yeah. I had something that was like so delicious. It had like a bunch of cheese on it and I'm like, “All right, the zits are probably coming in a day and a half.” And sure enough. Yeah, so.

**[0:25:00.4] AS:** But to me, that's such a healthier way of approaching things because I think one of the things, and talking about not having our needs met not even knowing our needs, it causes a lot of stress and because we can't officially measure stress with a blood test or it doesn't have a hunger signal or something we kind of know that stress impacts our health, but we kind of discard it at the same time. Because it's just, I don't know, it's just thing that's hard to grasp.

So if you can have this attitude of like, “Look, sometimes I'm going to have a piece of bread. Sometimes I'm not.” But you trust yourself that one piece of bread or one piece of cheese or it's worth the dairy hit, isn't going to lead into this downward spiral.

**[0:25:38.4] JI:** Yes!

**[0:25:39.4] AS:** There's freedom in that.

**[0:25:40.4] JI:** Yes, and that's the beauty of it. I've figured out how not to get into that spiral. I just remember, you know, a lot of people are scared. Like, "Well if I eat that cookie I'm going to eat 20 cookies, right? Or even five cookies. I can't just have one cookie because it opens the floodgates, right?" And for the most part, with some rare exceptions, I've found that with all the work that I've done I don't get caught up in that spiral and even if I have more than one cookie a couple cookies, the next day or at the next meal I know how to recalibrate and I know how to eat healthy to get my blood sugar more grounded so that I don't have more cravings.

I know how to recover from it and I know that now if I have one cookie or a couple of cookies or whatever it is, I'm not going to get sucked into this downward spiral, "Oh now I've just lost everything and I might as well eat junk food for the next six months." Like I'm so out of that thank goodness, and I feel like I have the tools now to deal with it. So yeah the downward spiral is not something I dread anymore, for the most part.

**[0:26:34.4] AS:** You know, I think sometimes experimentation takes a little bit more time on that front. But the on the back end, it develops trust. Like I can trust my body to let me know I can trust myself and so the long term the long term benefits of having the trust of knowing and being in tune with your body far outweigh a little bit of a delayed quick fix reaction you get from like "oh I'm on a plan" right? Like that, because they feel safe. Like, "Oh, this is working," versus the experimental route, it takes faith. You know? "I know Ali says is different or I know that this has worked for other people," it still takes faith and trusting in betting on yourself and what you're describing is not getting in that spiral. Half the time you get in a spiral because we're worn out worrying about the spiral, right?

**[0:27:17.4] JI:** Yeah, yeah.

**[0:21:39.4] AS:** One of the things that I just loved seeing us working together on and off through the years, is how much you continue to surprise yourself. Because you do have the tools to

understand your needs and, you know, I'm thinking about this year. You know, you've had a lot of loss this year and then you went to a funeral. When was that funeral?

**[0:27:37.4] JI:** I think it was June or July.

**[0:27:39.4] AS:** June or July. Normally at places like that, people kind of give themselves “permission”. It's like, “Well it's a sad occasion it's it's this. You had to travel for it. You have a very high intensity life,” and you were like, “Oh my god I didn't even like “eat poorly” there.” Because you have so many like kamikaze with knowing how your needs and what you need. So can you talk about that, how you keep surprising yourself?

**[0:28:05.4] JI:** Yeah, so that was my great aunt's funeral and she was in her 90's and she passed away, and I live in Tennessee so I flew up to New Jersey to attend the funeral. It was a really nice service and then we had a really long luncheon at an Italian restaurant and this is in southern New Jersey where all the Italian restaurants are just amazing with great food and I told myself before we went to the restaurant like, “Look my goal is to eat clean and not because I want to restrict myself and try to fight the urge to eat Italian. Like I want to feel good while I'm there. If I eat a bunch of junky food or drink,” — there was an open bar.

It was daytime but there was an open bar. You could go up and get wine or beer, whatever you wanted and I just knew like if I ate crappy then I would feel crappy and I just wanted to have a nice day and I wanted to really connect with my family members and remember my great aunt's life rather than eat a bunch of junk. So it was interesting. A couple of things happened where I remember somebody said to me — oh they were going up to the bar and they said, “Do you want a drink?” I said, “No thanks, I have water.” They were like, “You sure? It's free.” And I'm thinking that like...

**[0:29:09.4] AS:** They sound like my family.

**[0:29:10.4] JI:** Yeah, because it was open bar and I'm thinking, “Well if I day drink,” — I know now if I drink during the day I feel like crap and I'm just thinking to myself, “Well why would I want to feel like crap even if it's for free?”

**[0:29:24.4] AS:** There's still a cost.

**[0:29:26.4] JI:** Right, yeah. I mean, it's not going to cost me any money but you know I'll feel great — I know if I had a glass of wine I'd feel great for 20 minutes and then I'd feel tired and cranky. So I didn't drink the whole day, and I was I still had a great time and I also I went and looked at the buffet before everybody went up to eat and it was all pasta and all this stuff. So I actually approached the waitstaff and I said, "Hey," and I took the simplest approach I could and I said, "Hey I can't eat gluten or dairy, so I was wondering if there were any other meal options for me. It doesn't look like a lot of the stuff on the buffet is going to work." And I just I basically said that because it was it just cut to the chase and I thought it would get their attention if I say "I can eat dairy and gluten" and they were really cool about it.

They were like, "Oh yeah like we can make you some gluten free pasta," and I'm like, "I don't know if that's going to work for me." And I said, "You know, do you have any plain like animal proteins like chicken?" And they're like, "Oh yeah we can get is just plain grilled chicken." They said, "The vegetables up in the buffet they don't have any dairy in them." I said, "Perfect." So they brought me a plate of plain grilled chicken and I had vegetables from the buffet. I had a lot of vegetables. I had a ton of them because they were delicious and it was great. It was delicious. I think I had like a smidge of pasta just so I could have a little bit of a carb in there. You know, it's not that I can't eat gluten. I just I do try to avoid it as much as I can.

But yeah and it just worked out really well and it was funny I went through the entire funeral not barely eating any junk food at all I don't think I even had any dessert and not drinking, and then we went to my cousin's house afterwards and I'm like, "Okay, it's nighttime I'm going to have some wine," because I know at night I can handle alcohol I just can't handle it during the day. So then I started drinking wine at my cousin's house. It was great.

**[0:31:05.4] AS:** Because you knew you could handle it and you wanted it then.

**[0:31:06.4] JI:** Yeah exactly. Because I just knew, my goal is to feel as good as possible at all times. That is really my goal and I feel good. I mean I want to have energy, I want to be alert and awake. I don't want my stomach feeling wonky because I've eaten junk food. I don't want to feel tired and cranky because I just drank a beer during the day. Like I want to feel good and I knew

that if I drank some wine at night even if I didn't feel very good it's like, I'm just going to go home and go to bed soon anyway, so and I'm ok with that. You know?

**[0:31:35.4] AS:** What you described there though also is our food choices we make really good choices that are good for us that day when our emotions are also manageable and what you also described there was you knew what your needs were you knew how you wanted that day to end and I'd love for you to share your perspective on what's missing in terms of our emotional health in this food and health conversation. Right?

Because you had to become aware of your patterns your needs what you wanted, not what worked good and so — I mean, I'm kind of leading you through your answer. But say what you want to say. But I think for people who don't, who haven't been through this process of being able to see why food can be so difficult and such a battle sometimes it's hard to see what you actually did from an emotional and agency standpoint and really taking radical responsibility for your health there.

**[0:32:28.4] JI:** Geez, that is a great question. I would say, until I worked with you I didn't really know how to sit back and explore why I would go for food in certain situations or why I would eat junk food even though I didn't really want it, but I did want it and why was this happening? I think it's a very personal thing. I think our brains are all wired into specific patterns and that's part of being human and I think that the patterns become unrecognizable and until you have the tools to recognize them and see them for what they are, like you can't really work on changing them. And I don't think there's any kind of diet out there that's going to do that for you. I don't think there's any kind of exercise regimen out there that's going to do that for you. I think it's all a very personal case by case basis.

As far as I know you're the only person who's giving people the tools to identify these things. I haven't — Maybe there are some other Ali Shapiro's out there doing the same work. I don't know? I haven't come across any. But yeah I think that's my big takeaway and since I've started working with you I've never ever, when dieting or health comes up, I've never ever heard anybody talk about doing that.

**[0:33:36.4] AS:** Because I think people have compartmentalized our emotional health as separate from our physical health, which is what we normally think of as diet and exercise. Right? But you know because you know your blood sugar so well that like your blood sugar influences how emotionally resilient you feel for the day and then how emotionally resilient you feel determines if you're going to sabotage your blood sugar or not. Right?

**[0:33:59.4] JI:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah it really does and yes it's just a lot to think about just, you know, wheels turning in the head.

**[0:34:06.4] AS:** Well, and one of the things about knowing these patterns and these tools, it does make us more emotionally resilient as we get more of what we need and I wanted to talk about, you wrote this amazing article that I shared on my Facebook page and so many people loved it and it will be in the show notes of this episode. But about how you were fat shamed by your neighbor, and two things: first, I love that you didn't even mention your weight because the comments on your page were like, "If you're fat, what's the rest of us, Right?" But you didn't put that in because it doesn't matter what people's body is. It's just inappropriate.

But what I loved and what I don't know if I would have been able to do, but you were able to do was see it for the power grab that it was that it actually wasn't about you, and that takes incredible emotional awareness and distance and so you talk about that experience a little bit and how that made you stronger and more empowered rather than diving into Ben and Jerry's?

**[0:34:58.4] JI:** Yeah. I would say I'm in my mid 30s and I've been put down about my body almost my entire life and for the first time last year I successfully stood up to a bully who decided he was going to put me down about my body and I stood my ground and I did it in a diplomatic and respectful and firm way and I actually got him to apologize to me. And that's that's the first time I've ever been able to stand up to somebody for body shaming me with such grace and such diplomacy and getting an apology for it.

So it was a long time coming and I was really proud of myself for the way I handled it and I had told my friends and family about it and they were proud of me for the way that I had handled it. And so I wrote a blog post about it and people really appreciated it and I think it was interesting, I shared the blog post and the point that I was trying to make in the post is, don't body shame

people, it's inappropriate. Somebody's appearance is not an open target for you to hit when that person pisses you off or when that person threatens you like just don't go there, right? Don't body shame, it's not okay.

That was the point of the piece. But what people told me they really took away from the piece was, "Wow you stood up to him with such dignity. You inspired me to stand up to people who hurt me with dignity." So it was really interesting to see the takeaways that people have from that piece.

**[0:36:20.4] AS:** That's what I was so impressed by. Because when you're sitting there being, this is kind of a tangent it wasn't about me but I came down my apartment building the other day and this woman was berating these delivery people like over something and I just, it was so alarming to me. I stood there because she was starting to make up lies about them and I was like, "I'm just here as a witness. Like do you guys need my name?" And I tried to tell her like, "Ma'am I think we all want you to get your Pottery Barn stuff," — it was over a Pottery Barn delivery. "We all want to get your stuff delivered. I think they're trying to help you out," and she kept saying this guy was attacking her.

Meanwhile he was just being super polite and I just wanted to be there as a witness and all that stuff but I walked away and I started crying because I just couldn't believe someone would talk to another human being like she was talking to these people and I was like, "Oh I wish I could have gone back and said something else and made it better," and for you to be able to in that moment when it was directed at you, right? I mean, I was like crying when it was directed at delivery people, it wasn't myself, and with your body something that you had such a history around being like you could have easily just closed down or not stood up for yourself because it had to do with the dog and your allergies to dogs.

But that's what I was just so impressed with I was like, "Wow she was so diplomatic," and if we could all be that diplomatic the fact that he apologized, you gave him the space not to be judged but to really reflect and see what he did so that he could come to that conclusion on his own, which is just you have to read the piece. Check it out at [Alishapiro.com/podcast](http://Alishapiro.com/podcast) or it's on Medium under Jessica Ivans. But it's such a great piece.

**[0:37:50.4] JI:** Thank you.

**[0:37:51.4] AS:** I want everyone to read it, and yes the message is the fact that we think we can comment on other people's bodies, why is that normal? I don't understand.

**[0:37:58.4] JI:** I don't either, and thankfully it's — we're getting closer to it no longer being acceptable, thankfully. But we've still got work to do.

**[0:38:07.4] AS:** Yes. Oh my god, yes. So here we are, and you are dedicated to continuously tweaking and whatnot. What questions do you have now? I always say that health is a spiral staircase and you know we just learn more deeply and committed to change. What's your focus for 2018?

**[0:38:25.4] JI:** I'm thinking about it. I'm not really sure what it is yet, but one of the things I want to get back into is really remembering to sit with discomfort when I want to go for food that is not in alignment with my health goals and the tools that you've given me have allowed me to do that and when I was in the Truce with Food program and the program was still active, it was very top of mind. Now that I'm out of the program, it's still on my mind but not as top of mind. So I want to play around with how do I explore?

So the other night I was doing things in my apartment and I just opened up a thing a peanut butter and had a little bit of peanut butter as a snack. Like I buy this organic, unsweetened, unsalted peanut butter. It's basically just peanuts, like pureed into a butter. Right? And I had some of that for a snack and then I put it away just like half tablespoon maybe and then I thought, "Huh, why don't I just do that? I'm not really hungry but I really wanted that peanut butter," and from working with me you know that chocolate and peanut butter is like my favorite thing ever.

**[0:31:05.4] AS:** Mine too!

**[0:39:20.4] JI:** But even if it's unsweetened it's like, you know...

**[0:39:23.4] AS:** It's still chocolate and peanut butter!

**[0:39:25.4] JI:** Yeah, 88% cocoa, like organic cocoa, barely has any sugar in it with like super healthy peanut butter, I still love it. Like anything from a Reese Cup, no matter where it is on the spectrum, I love it. So peanut butter is like my thing and I thought, "Well, why did I eat that peanut butter?" I mean I do that quite a lot at night. I just go in and eat some peanut butter. I'm like, "Hmm, so why am I doing this?" And it just becomes habit. Right? So after dinner I go in and ate some peanut butter and I don't really sit with it and explore, "Okay, what's going on here? Why do I want this peanut butter? What's going on here? Am I bored? Did I not eat enough fat at dinner?" Because peanut butter is a fat. Right? So I try to eat healthy fats and dinner maybe I need to eat more fat with dinner?

So things like that I really want to explore. I also want to explore this year just with everything going on with my mom I couldn't really focus on my exercise. You know, just with the insomnia and not being able to work out as much. But explore, pushing myself to try new exercises, which is something I wanted to do this year but maybe I'll focus on that next year. So I have an exercise regimen that works for me. But maybe there are other things that I can do and trying to find something that, you know, one of my beefs with exercise in gyms and trainers and stuff is that you go to these classes or you work with these trainers and they're like, "All right, I'm going to hold you accountable and you're going to do 50 burpees and blah-blah-blah," and it's just like I'm not in it to just like push the boundaries of my body and like no pain no gain kind of. Like that's not me.

But I do want to push myself a little bit further and I just I find that it can be hard to find that middle ground, like somebody who's willing to work with you on that. Like I want my body to be healthy, I want to feel good. I don't want to be able to brag that I can do 50 burpees. Like I don't care how many burpees I can do. That's not why I am taking care of myself, you know? So it's more like, we're finding avenues for exercise that I enjoy that are going to push me but not push me too hard.

**[0:41:15.4] AS:** I think that question is part of this bigger question of you feel like you're on this island, right?

**[0:41:19.4] JI:** Yes yes.

**[0:41:20.4] AS:** Because I'm the same way with trainers. Like I don't want someone who's going to like want to make me vomit. Like that means I've gone too far, right? Like I want to do just enough that I'm out of my comfort zone. But like it's hard to find people who really understand a more like effective route, you know?

**[0:41:39.4] JI:** Yeah. Oh yeah.

**[0:41:40.4] AS:** So, this again is coming out around New Year's, what would you say to people that are struggling and really feel exhausted by a day? Like what would you tell them as like a first step, I think, to entering the new year that could get them out of that cycle?

**[0:41:55.4] JI:** I would say there's more than just dieting, where there is and it's hard to find it because dieting is the standard. But in my experience, I tried it for years and years. It doesn't work. I've been that person who lost 40 pounds counting calories and eating 1400 calories a day and running five miles a day and that's a great way to lose 40 pounds. It's not a great way to keep off 40 pounds and stay healthy for the rest of your life because I gained a lot of it back, you know?

So I would say for me, I'm a believer that diets just aren't the answer and that there's more out there than dieting.

**[0:42:28.4] AS:** I love that. I love that. And so, what we're ending this season with, a question for everyone is what is your radical truth?

**[0:42:36.4] JI:** I would say the same thing. Yeah I think it bears repeating that there's more to — I was about to say there's more to getting healthy than dieting, but maybe the answer is dieting is not the same as being healthy and maybe asking yourself what is it that you want? Like do you want to quickly lose weight and then cross your fingers that you keep it off? You probably won't be doing it through dieting or do you want to be healthy and do you want to take care of yourself? And it's okay if you want to lose weight and that's what you want to do and that is your goal. Go do that.

But if you want more and if you really want a sustainable long term healthy lifestyle that's going to make you happy and fulfilled and fuel you and support you and doing the things you want to do in your life, then dieting is probably not going to get you there.

**[0:43:20.4] AS:** I love that. Unlinking diet with healthy.

**[0:43:22.4] JI:** Yes.

**[0:43:23.9] AS:** That's a really strong — I think saying that so clearly. I just kind of was like, “Oh yeah. Like diets aren't healthy. Like even if they're “clean”, there's still like a lot of pressure that goes along with them and rigidity and lack of self trust. You don't develop any.

**[0:43:41.4] JI:** Right, yeah and very very very rarely does somebody stay on a diet for ever. Like it very rarely becomes a lifestyle because it's usually not a sustainable eating plan, you know?

**[0:43:51.4] AS:** Well and another important profound thing you were like, “What do you want?” I think so many times we'll think I want weight loss and maybe that can still be the case. But is that really the goal that you should be focusing on? Is what I heard you saying. Like what is healthy and fulfilled and enjoying the process? I mean, you don't have to just be miserable getting healthy. I don't even think you can get healthy being miserable. I don't know? Maybe?

**[0:44:15.4] JI:** Yeah I mean that sounds like a paradox to me. Like being healthy while being miserable. Yeah. But yeah and working with you it's a continual journey of reminding myself the answer isn't weight loss, the answer is finding what works for my body and when I find what works for my body I slowly start to shed the weight because my body is getting to where it needs to be and that's where I'm at now is constant — and we live in a world that tells us we have to be thin we have to be youthful we have to be beautiful and I'm constantly reframing and recalibrating and saying, “Okay, that's not what I want to chase. I look forward to the journey and the challenge of continuing to figure out what makes me healthy, what makes me feel good,” and as a result of that I'll probably shed weight and it will be a journey and it'll be slow but it's worth it.

**[0:44:59.4] AS:** I love that. That's so radical to opt out of the like relentless pursuit of like someone else dictating what you should be.

**[0:45:05.4] JI:** Yes.

**[0:45:06.4] AS:** I love it, I love it. I live for this stuff!

**[0:45:10.4] JI:** Yeah, nice. Me too. I'm an educator. So, me too.

**[0:45:17.4] AS:** Yeah, you're doing like super innovative work in the world. Jess, thank you so much for your time. Is there anything that I haven't asked that you wanted to share today? Because you have so much wisdom. You're on the path. So much amazing results from managing your endometriosis differently to learning about blood sugar, to understanding your needs. Being able to adapt your exercise routine. Like you just showed us a concrete example of this dynamic nature of our bodies, and thank you for that. Thanks for being a trailblazer.

**[0:45:47.4] JI:** Yeah you're welcome. Thank you so much for having me. I did want to tell you a quick funny story. So I recently went on vacation with my family. It was a family vacation. We rented a big hotel suite with a couple different rooms and all my cousins who are older than me are like partying, staying up late drinking, you know and drinking a little bit. I was hanging out but I was like, "All right I'm going to go to bed early so I can get up and go to the gym you know and start my day that way." And they're like, "Seriously. You're going to the gym? This is a vacation." Like, "Well I feel good on vacation. So I want to get a good night's sleep and go to the gym," and then in the morning when I was still at the gym my sister and my cousin got up and they decided to go to McDonald's to get breakfast and my cousin goes, "Hey should we just Jess if she wants anything from McDonald's?" My sister is like, "No. Jess does not — No, no. Don't even bother. Just will find vegetables."

Sure enough after the gym I got showered and then I went down, I went down to the hotel restaurant and I asked the chef. It was like a buffet, they had eggs and stuff. So I got eggs and I asked the chef to sauté me some vegetables, and he did. Then I took a picture and I showed it to my cousin and my sister I'm like, "See I did find vegetables. Where there's a will there's a way."

**[0:47:01.4] AS:** See that just, it aligns with your exploratory nature to like, “Let’s do this.”

**[0:47:07.4] JI:** And it's not like, it wasn't a matter of, “No I can't stay up late and drink because I have to go to the gym.” It was like, “No, I want a good night's sleep and I want to go to the gym and I want to start my morning off right so I can hang out with my family tomorrow.” And that's where I am, and it's interesting. Like I'm at a point now where like I enjoy being on vacation and exercising and eating clean. That's actually a vacation to me. Right.

**[0:47:30.4] AS:** Right? Well and part of that too is because I think a lot of people go crazy on vacation because they feel so restricted in their everyday life. Right? So if you don't feel that restriction you don't feel the need to then to the other extreme, right? I love that though. And again, another great point about how you can ask the chef, right? A big part of this is just learning to ask for what we need.

**[0:47:51.4] JI:** Yes, that's another thing. I never would have asked the chef before I worked with you. Yeah, and I still don't pay — like he said, “Oh you want vegetables?” And he's looking at me like, “You want vegetables?” Because it's like 8 o'clock in the morning.

**[0:47:59.4] AS:** Like you're the only person who's ever asked for vegetables on their vacation!

**[0:48:03.4] JI:** And I said, “Yeah, steamed or sautéed, either one of those is fine. Just some some healthy veggies.” And ten minutes later they brought me up this beautiful spread of like broccoli and carrots and mushrooms. I was like, “Awesome.”

**[0:48:16.4] AS:** That's like really accommodating people like they like to please people. So take a note of that everybody. Wonderful I love hearing that kind of stuff. Yeah we don't need to have like an on and off track. It can all just be on and research.

**[0:48:34.4] JI:** Yeah.

**[0:48:35.4] AS:** Thank you so much, Jess.

**[0:48:36.4] JI:** Oh, you're welcome. Thank you so much for having me.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:48:43.4] 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, and remember always your body truths are unique, profound real and liberating.

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