

S2 EPISODE 02

[INTRO]

[0:00:03.7] 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]

[0:00:47.6] AS: Welcome to Season 2, Episode 2 of the *Insatiable* Podcast; *Freedom from the Downward Eating Spiral*. With the New Year upon us, it's easy to think things will be magically different. Guess what? They can be if we do things differently.

We can start the year with a fresh start, but not necessarily a clean slate. In other words, we still have our emotional selves that we're bringing to the New Year. Because this season is about the feminine perspective or what's missing in our conversations, I'm going to be sharing what's missing in traditional and emotional eating approaches, including binging approaches, so that you can blow your expectations for freedom out of the water in today's episode.

It can be so much better than anyone has told you. If you've struggled with food for quite some time and you really want a fresh start, you know it's not enough to ask yourself, "Is the food is always worth it?" I wanted to do this episode today so you can see why in the moment it actually is worth it, right?

I'm also going to reveal the five-stage anatomy of a downward eating spiral, why traditional emotional eating approaches cause us to eat more over time, and the first step you can take today to put yourself on the right track for a fresh start. Enjoy.

[EPISODE]

[0:02:01.7] AS: Hello, Insatiable listeners. Happy New Year. Are we ready to do 2018? I hope so. I know I am. I'm actually recording this two weeks before the New Year and I'm already starting to do what I want to do in 2018 now.

I don't do resolutions per se, but I definitely have an orientation that I'm focusing on and a vision that I'm heading towards. For me, that includes getting back into yoga a lot, so that I can stay calm and grounded in my body. I didn't do a great job of that in 2017. I still work out, but staying grounded in your body is different. Yoga really helps me with that.

I'm also really cutting back on how much news I read and doing it in small manageable doses, versus plugged in. Those are some personal things I'm working on. Of course, I have some really big plans for just food and Insatiable this year. I'll be getting a new website in March and I'm working on a book proposal and I'll be licensing Truce with Food this year. I'm really, really hopeful for 2018 in many ways. That's where I'm at for 2018. I love to hear what you guys are focusing on health-wise as well.

Today might be one of our most important Insatiable episodes to date. I am going to clearly lay out for you the downward eating spiral that will sabotage the best-laid health and healing goals. I'm sure many of you have ambitious health goals as you should, and I hope the right size that don't stress you out.

This, what I'm going to call today 'auto eating spiral,' will sabotage those goals. If you don't know what to look for it, you're going to think it's about not having enough willpower, about not having enough discipline that you love food too much.

I really want to illuminate and clarify for you today what's actually happening, whether you're overeating and you don't want to be, whether you're bingeing, or whether you're just having one of those "F it" moments.

Unfortunately, the traditional emotional eating model leaves out three components of this auto eating spiral. I'm going to share it with you today, because for a lot of you I think just hearing this and hearing it map out will start to give you some relief and also make sure that you're focusing on the right food goals, which might be more oriented towards this.

I think the traditional emotional eating model looks like this; I want to give you that first, then we'll go into the missing components. The traditional emotional eating model looks like trigger, craving, then eat. This is the abstract, or process that a lot of experts have outlined. What they tend to do is encourage you to distract yourself from the craving. I've seen social media recommended by some of the top people in the field. I've seen taking a walk, I've seen journaling.

There is a couple of problems or holes here that can actually make you eat more immediately and in the long run. I think we can see some of the incompleteness of this model in the results that we had in terms of, it seems like we have more information than ever, we have more people focused on this and yet, we still have people – not only do we have girls worrying about their bodies at younger and younger ages, we have boys as well now too.

We also don't have the health results to back this up, that this is complete enough. Part of the problem with this model is first, many of the things like going on social media often cause new triggers, like comparing yourself to others. I'm not sure I've ever felt better about myself after going on social media.

I've certainly felt more informed. I've laughed, or I've maintained how I was currently feeling, but I'm not sure it's ever made me feel more grounded and able to proceed calmly. Second, often if we take a walk or journaling, these are all really helpful things. Yet, we often don't have the mental framework, or the right questions to understand what the actual trigger is.

Instead, we often start to just ruminate on, if we're taking a walk I know when I was trying this 15 years ago I'd be like, "Well, how many calories am I burning? I'm still really feeling like I want those cookies." Even though I was taking the walk, if I ever was able to do it, I knew that I was going to eventually eat the cookies anyways.

Then in terms of journaling, I often just journaled more about my food and my weight and how badly I wanted this. Why wasn't I doing this? It actually became a devolution, if that's a word, where I became so much self-critical, rather self-aware of what was actually happening that was triggering me. In other words, the craving was the symptom not the root cause.

Because of this stuff criticalness just, “Why couldn’t I fix this,” grew, the third chore coming on this approach is it actually doesn’t build self-trust with food, or around the trigger. Instead, it puts us in a very powerless position around the trigger.

It’s saying that the best that you can do is either avoid the trigger by going on social media, to try to distract yourself, or push through the trigger. That’s frankly putting us on a victim mentality of not even just addressing the trigger itself. As a result of feeling so powerless, like we have no choices, we say that we have feelings like anxiety and depression, stress and overwhelmed. Then we eat to numb the deep discomfort of actually not having choices or agency.

Adults do not like their autonomy being cutoff. I know I don’t. Because we’re not actually dealing with the root cause, you really do have intense physical and emotional discomfort that you can’t run away from forever. Again, like I said, this model creates a vicious cycle of being self-critical and not self-aware.

What happens if you can’t take a walk when you’re triggered? What happens if you can’t journal? What happens if social media isn’t working for you? These are very, almost like Band-Aid solutions. I would say they’re like the pharmaceutical industry of a pill, rather than getting to the root cause.

Again, sometimes this stuff can work just like sometimes medicine is really helpful. But it’s not really helpful in the long-run and it won’t give you true liberation from food. Plus, many times when my clients find me, they’ve come to me at a point where the trigger itself has become so intense that their eating is completely out of control, or they realize they really need help with this beyond just pushing through, taking walks.

That is something that if you don’t see, know the components of the auto eating spiral and you don’t transform it, you’re always going to be at the mercy of when will the other shoe drop? Which is a big reason people often overeat or binge whatever. Any one of those categories where I call we’re eating out of alignment with our goals, because sometimes you want to have some cake, sometimes you want to have a brownie and that’s fine.

I focused this auto eating spiral is present any time you're eating out of alignment with what you want to be doing. Traditional emotional eating model, I akin it to whack-a-mole at an arcade, where you're – every time a stress comes up, or a trigger comes up, you're just trying to whack it as it's happening. That can be really helpful. I think we're at an energy crisis.

We might call it a motivation, or willpower, discipline crisis, but underneath it all is an energy crisis. We have one globally, right? Are we going to be using unsustainable resources, like oil and gas that pollute our environment, or are we going to start focusing on wind and solar and just not using as much energy? Those are more sustainable solutions, and I think we are at a critical time in humanity where we personally have to so much is coming at us and we have to become better discerners of what's worth my effort, what do I want to focus on, I can't do it all. How do I actually get energy back from my efforts?

I think part of the problem with this model is you don't really get energy back. You're just keep the trigger at bay and you're spending a lot of energy just trying to avoid the craving versus solving the root cause. Again, I want to put an asterisk here. This is what I've experienced in my own life in terms of the shortcoming on this emotional eating model and with the clients who I see. Again, I'm going to see people who this traditional model hasn't worked for, so that's why they're coming to me.

This could very well work for people, this traditional model. I wouldn't know if it's working for large amounts of people, because I see the people who this model is not working for. I'm just sharing with you that the data I see is biased. Although again, I think when I look at the stats that aren't necessarily getting better on body satisfaction, weight loss and health, I think overall this model again puts us in a victim or powerless mentality, which is never a healthy position to be in.

This model does get it right and that there is a trigger that causes cravings, or feeling out of control around eating. This model is a great start. However, in the decade plus of academic, personal and real-world clients' cases I've been able to map out an auto eating spiral that gets you maximum food freedom and results.

I want to share that with you today, so that you can make sure not only you're asking the right questions for your health and food goals, especially if you want to heal depression, how she models or lose weight this year, this auto eating spiral is going to be your ticket. I'd say it's a magic bullet, but I don't like more metaphors. Also, it's really challenging work. It takes effort, but it's going to get you maximum results for your effort.

Before I kick-off the anatomy of this auto eating spiral, I want to remind you of one of my favorite quotes, which is Albert Einstein said, if you get an hour to save the world, he'd spend more time defining the problem than actually solving it. If you've ever been to the doctor and they don't really know what's wrong and you just start trying something, you know how important it is to actually have an accurate diagnosis.

I feel like in the anti-diet space, in the emotional eating space, in the diet space, in the body acceptance speech area, but again I'm not familiar with all those areas. But overall, I'm not sure if we've defined the problem accurately. Again, because this episode is about the feminine perspective, what you'll see is the feminine perspective integrating it requires looking deeply inward, not taking things at face-value and not often believing that what we think we're saying is actually what we're truly saying.

Often, the thoughts that we have that the self-critical judgement, like I've shared in the Food Versus Exercise Willpower episode, those thoughts run rampant when we're feeling really unsafe, both physically and emotionally.

Not having this feminine perspective of depth of how important emotional health is really makes us look at a very surface level at what food often is about and weight loss and body image issues. What I've seen and what this model rests on is it's not the craving, it's not the food thoughts, it's not the mental gymnastics around food. It's actually feeling powerless over the trigger.

The trigger is definitely what kicks off the auto eating spiral, and it's also what kicks off the traditional emotional eating model. It's not even having to be in control of what happens with life, it's about, "Can I roll with the punches? Can I create and collaborate with what's happening?" Because we know we can't control life. We have some control, but really the most beautiful and

profound experiences come from when we're able to roll what life unfolds and make the most of it.

You might be asking why no one else is talking about this. If you've listened to some of the episodes where my clients are sharing that they have this radically different perspective now, it's because again, of this lack of feminine perspective.

We price the cognitive, the rational really over the depths. As we have more women come to the field, we have more women changing the conversation, or more men who can integrate this more holistic perspective – this isn't about men versus women, it's about qualities of the feminine bringing into things. I think you will start to – we'll really start to see things change.

As a result, this process is not 21 days to fix a habit. That's overly simplifying in reducing change, not looking at it from a holistic perspective. It's also just not about reframing thoughts. Our thoughts actually aren't really accurate about what's going on, and also our feelings as we'll get into aren't always accurate either. That can make things a little challenging. Again, you go to go deeper.

This auto eating spiral is invisible until you're able to see it. We spend the entire first month of Truce with Food mapping out each individual person's auto eating spiral, because once you see it, everything is different. A lot of clients said it's just so relieving to see what's happening and to not think, "We don't have to focus on calories. We don't have to focus on calories and calories out could be freeing itself."

Just a little plug, Truce with Food is starting for 2018 in February 6th. If you're interested and this episode really resonates, hey we can map this all out for you and get it taken care of. Your resolution's orientations as I'd to call them for 2019 are really different. You can sign up at alishapiro.com to get all the information about that.

Here is the anatomy, or the architecture of the auto eating spiral. Then I'm going to go through each component with a little bit more depth, actually using my own story as an example, because I know that the best. Then I'm also going to share you an example of the exponential

results when you really transform this auto eating spiral from a client who gave me permission her story. I find that so inspiring and I know you will too.

The first component of this auto eating spiral again is the trigger. In the Truce with Food model methodology, the trigger is an emotion. Specifically it's an emotion that threatens either your physical or emotional safety. We don't look at triggers like, "I was feeling so stressed when my boss e-mailed me." It's the e-mail and the boss that are making me feel powerless. Or, "It's so hard with my friends who can eat whatever they want. Oh, my God. Poor me."

Look, you know, if you listened to this episode, Julie my sister and Carlos jokingly called me poor Rosita because I love powling about stuff. I was able to figure this out, because it's basically how I thought for so long. Rather than saying, "Oh, my God. This stuff is happening to me." We say, "What is this emotion triggering in me?" It's not the event itself, it's how this affects me emotionally.

It does have a very real somatic effect on us and we have to acknowledge what that is. An example of emotion here and the one that was really running my life would be uncertainty. Many people will say that they're feeling anxious, but underneath that anxiousness is there's something yet feels unsettled to them, there's something that feels they're unsure of. What I realized in my own life was anytime things didn't go as planned, I used food to then mount that feeling.

On the surface level, this was when I went off track with my eating. I would follow someone else's plan, because that eliminated uncertainty for me, at least in the short-term, until I couldn't keep it up. Or exercising, all the experts said you have to do this amount of stretching, this amount of cardio. If I couldn't keep that up, I would totally sabotage myself, because I was like, "Why can't I do this? I want weight loss so badly."

This is also why I couldn't trust myself over the long run, which actually increase the level of uncertainty in my life. I was trying to use these coping mechanisms that look really good on the surface, like being good on a plan, or following all these other people's ideas. But I was actually adding to uncertainty in my life, not only with falling off my diet and exercise, but I had increasing health issues.

I was diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome. Depression was getting worse. My skin started flaring up after I've gone on Accutane. It was like these mounting issues. I also really wanted to date at the time, but I was perpetually single and it was like, "Will I ever meet anyone?" I was 23 at the time, but it really felt like I was never going to meet anyone, especially because I couldn't lose 30 pounds.

To me, the story I had to minimize uncertainty was you need to lose weight to meet the right person, type of person you would like; your type. At this time, I also had increasing questions around if my corporate life was for me. The emotional trigger that was making me have a downward eating spiral was uncertainty, not just around food, but places in my life.

Basically, I was being triggered several times a day. No wonder at night time I would just come home and eat, because it was death by a thousand papercuts. I was just being hit with uncertainty so much in my thoughts, and also for real in my life. There are for me emotional triggers, uncertainty and anxiety the same. Those are one that I just shared with you, but there is four that are connected with a downward eating spiral.

I'll be sharing those four triggers in the complementary Truce with Food intro that I'm offering this year, so people can get a free taste of the program on January 15th. Again, go to alishapiro.com if you want to learn the other three, so that you can just start identifying your spiral faster. In this process, clarity is a process, but also a tool.

Like I said, when clients said that discovering this was relieving in the most uncomfortable way, or freeing in the most uncomfortable way. After our trigger, then we have a story about the emotion itself. The story is what the emotion means, which is often what we call feelings. The story usually comes from our early childhood years. For me, my story was if I feel uncertain it means life or death.

The story started from my cancer diagnosis. Or at least I thought it was, but that was the big one that I had to work on. I thought I was over my cancer diagnosis, because a chemo had been done, the radiation complete, five years out. Because I didn't have a map at the time, what had been 10 years since I had gone through cancer and I was like, "Oh, I'm over it. I'm strong from

it.” But I didn’t know that mentally and emotionally working through things are vastly different processes.

My body was still holding onto to this somatic memory. To my body, the feeling of uncertainty was so threatening, it was so overwhelming that food was the only thing that couldn’t numb out that threat. Even though it wasn’t a threat, the present are feelings are where we’re often reacting to the past. The story is really a story that has reacted in the past.

Because I didn’t know the story was running my life, it actually grew in the darkness, like mold in a petri dish, because it was never challenged. Without that light, it just took over my life into any areas where I felt insecure.

The areas I was confident in, it wasn’t active, but it was really, really taking over my life in insecure areas, like dating, like my body, obviously how to lose weight was a huge insecure area, or uncertain area, and increasingly my career.

What’s interesting about us reacting to the past today is that a lot of times in emotional eating, or the anti-diet movement, or even in therapy, the idea is to feel your feelings. I think we’re on the right track there, what we embrace dissolves. However, many times our feelings actually aren’t accurate. Because my story grew, it went from if I feel uncertainty, it means life or death, it means – if I feel uncertain, I’ve failed.

I felt like a failure with my body, even though I wasn’t really trying anything new. I was just, like diets set you up for failure, right? I mean, one thing we know about gaining weight is most people gain weight after doing diets, because of the metabolic crashing, and because also the self-criticalness that happens when you fall of the wagon. But my feelings weren’t accurate. When it came to dating, I wouldn’t even date, or put myself out there. I felt like a failure, but I wasn’t even trying. That’s the tricky thing and I think what we leave out about feel your feelings is sometimes they’re so overwhelming, because they’re not true. We’re reacting to the past.

You’ve got your emotion, you’ve got your story, then we have a stress response from that story. Because our story put us at – our story puts us on guard. It makes us very defensive, and this is something that is a shocker to clients. They do not think of themselves as defensive people and

they are very much out in the world succeeding, especially in their careers, especially as parents.

They may have doubts about parenting, but trying to do the right thing, they're wonderful in relationships, they're good partners, they're good mothers, daughters, sisters, husbands. They don't think of themselves as being defensive people, yet they start to realize how much they actually are on guard.

There's three different stress responses that we go between and that we also identify in Truce with Food. In my story, when I felt like I might fail I tried to prevent failure by adapting to what the medical diet or culture said I should do. This is why I tried so many diets, and I was all in until a big wave of uncertainty would hit me around body, dating and you know, my career. Rather than have any agency or independent choice, I thought I had to adapt to experts, rather than trusting myself, which only led to me never trusting myself and thinking I had some unique flaw that made me unable to fix my food.

The kicker about this is that this stress response in me adapting actually really benefitted me when I was diagnosed with cancer. I was only 13, my parents' right up on chemotherapy for my type of cancer Hodgkin's disease. Chemo was super effective. My mom also supplemented with me so soup. She was doing fermented foods and holistic remedies way back in 1992, because she's super cool.

She actually wanted to take me to a juice farm in Mexico, and my dad was like, "Hell no." Adapting to the medical industry at the time really saved my life. What my clients are to realize and why they can start to have genuine compassion for themselves is their stress response worked well at the time when they had that original story be created in their childhood.

However, one of our favorite sayings in Truce with Food that was made famous by Gloria Steinem and Erin Brockovich is the truth will set you free, but first it's going to piss you off. I didn't choose to have cancer. My clients didn't choose the traumatic events that they've had in their past. By traumatic events, I'm going to do a callback to Dr. Blum's episode on the huge link between emotional trauma and autoimmune issues is this doesn't have to be cancer. This doesn't have to be something so life threatening. It's all about what felt threatening to you.

A lot of my clients have been bullied. A lot of them lived in a very unstable home, because of divorce. A lot of them just really were body fat shamed as children and that caused the issue of feeling like they didn't belong. Anytime our belonging has felt threatened that is just as important. That's emotionally at risk, right? If we didn't belong evolutionary-wise, we were left for dead. Don't try to diminish your past in what really was there.

We usually didn't have a choice in how we could handle those stresses at the time, because we were kids. We don't have our full capacity and wisdom and perspective at that time. In fact, especially the younger we are, the more we feel like life is all about us. It has to be as we're developing identity and ego. But that also makes us feel like we were singled out in a bad way. Like, "Why did I get cancer? It used to be so rare."

What I'm just trying to say with this is my stress response of adapting to just what everyone said was really helpful at that time. As I tried to adapting to a very culture that tells you like, "Oh, you're only worthy of a great relationship if you look a certain way." Or you're only – so like I couldn't start dating until I lost 30 pounds. Or life will be easier for you once you do this way. I kept avoiding a dress in my career, because I was adapting to what the culture was telling me.

What was working stopped working, and I needed a new response, a new way to handle uncertainty. That was really more collaborative and enrolling with the unfolding of not only what my body was and what foods I needed, but who was I at my core? From the values perspective, what mattered to me? Once I got those things in mind by not continuing to adapt, and adapt is one type of behavior of the three stress response patterns, I was able to really not be a victim anymore of life just happening to me.

The fourth component is behaviors. Based on your stress response, you will have behaviors that actually make your story come true. These behaviors, like finding a new diet, or reading more, trying to learn more on holistic health. Like I said, in my own life I kept adapting and trying new diets. I thought was being dude and cool. I couldn't see any of these.

Again, this is part of why I'm so passionate about this work is I don't want others to have to suffer, or take as long as it took me to figure this out, because it's really hard to see on your own. Not only because the culture are large isn't talking about it, but the way that we approach

behavior will change in this culture is very narrow, because we don't have the feminine perspective.

There's these many behaviors as there are people, because again, we all come from unique stories and backgrounds and influences. Some other common behaviors that I see with clients in response to this trigger story stress response, that often leaves them exhausted and not having time to prioritize or put themselves, and to prioritize their health is over-preparing for work things, like presentations.

That's a behavior that actually stems from our stories and stress responses and triggers saying, yes when they mean no. Comparing themselves to other women and their bodies and their careers, or not asking for what food or other things in life they need.

Again, their behaviors are a symptom. They're not the issue itself. These behaviors have usually been going on for decades, so they think, "This is who I am," when really it's a behavior they have in response to life's triggers. Hence, why clients find Truce with Food to be more self-discovery process than anything else.

I also want to say sometimes, the behaviors can be the eating itself. Any time you find yourself saying, "This makes no sense," whether it's a regular habit, or if it's a food habit. I went to the party and I ate before I went, so I wouldn't eat, but now I find myself over-drinking or overeating. It's like, "Okay, what just happened? This auto eating spiral happened." But you couldn't see it, right? You need X-ray vision. No, you do need X-ray vision.

Each four stages of these auto eating spiral adds tension, which results in a downward eating spiral to release this tension. It's building, building, building, building, and each stage can add a different amount of tension depending on the trigger itself, the stories surround it, the depth of the story being aggravated.

For me, when I finally put dieting and had to find something out, my whole life was uncertain at that point. It wasn't just one area of my life. Again, that's often when I see clients is this trigger has reached a fever pitch and it usually is from some transition that's happened in life. Either, I've a [0:30:03.3] of a parent, I've had people who feel stuck in their job and they know they

want to make a transition, people who are coming out of the workforce to stay at home with their kids for a little bit.

Clients often find me in a transitional phase, because their triggers are so – they're one trigger of a fever pitch. They just feel out of control around food. Or many also are on the verge of a transition. They just don't know it yet. Once we go through the work, they then have the skills and the resilience to make that transition.

What happens is we eat to release this tension. We've heard the phrase, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. This auto eating spiral can happen in a time it takes to blink your eye and why you all of a sudden feel a lot of tension at a social event and you start thinking about how you can't wait to eat what's in your fridge when you get home at night by yourself.

Or it can build all day. Like the death by a thousand papercuts type of metaphor, where your trigger is actually active all day, and then night time is like, "I can finally release this." That's when we also often hear, "I deserve this." We think that we're treating our self for a reward, but we're actually relieving real pressure that has built all day.

Or it can build all week. Why you love to go crazy on the weekends. It happens anytime you find yourself binging in private. What I found with the difference overeating and active binging is for binging, the story is creating so much tension. It's just a lot more tense of a story and triggering people's lives, than if they're just overeating or having these random times of falling off the wagon or not. It all depends on how much chronic tension is in that auto eating spiral. Everyone is different and everyone's resilience different and everyone's sense of self is different. You can see how unique this process is.

That's what I also love discovering about this process is it can help anyone, no matter what your issue is, even including over-exercising, over-drinking, overeating, over-analyzing. Clients start to feel increase in freedom even after a month, because the tension starts to reduce just being able to see what's happening.

If you ever been with a good therapist and you start to say, "That's why I'm doing that." You know that feeling, that's like when you see all four of these components it's like, "That's what I

have to focus on. Well, if I can change this, not only is my food and health going to get better, but my whole life is going to get so much better.”

It takes a good six months, as is not traditional behavioral change, which can work if you don't have any emotional baggage with an issue. If you're just want to start – if you're new to food, right? This is why a lot of people can just do a Whole 30 and some people can't make it till day 9. If you're new to nutrition and you have no emotional baggage with it, sure it's easy to do a plan. You're not dealing with all these other stuff of food as a coping mechanism.

It takes a good six months, which is how long the Truce with Food program, or why I'll only work with private clients for at least six months. Because what we want to do is not just stop the bleeding, we actually want to get you well. We need to master a new story, which gives you a new healthy response and new behaviors.

The cool thing is, is that this cycle starts to build self-trust and increasing self-awareness. It gets you back in your body. You're actually able to be present for what's actually happening. Your feelings become more true, you become more intuitive, you learn to become more collaborative and creative with what's unfolding.

We don't pretend that you're never going to be triggered. Often my clients will say, “I'm coming to you, because I need help when real life happens.” What they're saying is, “I lead a stressful life. I live an intense life. I need to learn how to better handle it and manage it and lead it, rather than it just coming at me, so then I don't turn to food.”

Again, and this process just gets more and more freeing. I had another client the other day who finished out in August, or last round of Truce with Food because it started in March, and she was saying she just can't believe the compounding effect. How she goes to events now where she used to feel – she compare herself to other women. Comparing ourselves to other women is one of the patterns of the stress responses that we identified in Truce with Food. Because she's so much more in her body and she feels more resilient, she doesn't do that anymore. She feels actually open with them, rather than feeling like they're competition.

She's taking really big risks in her career and it's really playing off. Her clients are noticing that they're doing even better in her line of work, and it's because she's increased her capacity to be

with her own feeling. It's super, super exciting. She doesn't need to run and fix them, which fixing people is part of another – part of the three-stress response patterns, and again all those behaviors, but behavior trying to fix someone is part of the behavior of our triggers, is one of them for a certain pattern. I hope that didn't confuse people.

There is a pattern of a stress response and then there is the concrete behaviors that happen, like comparing ourselves to others, trying to fix people, etc. All of them are exhausting, just put it that way and really don't give us any return on our investment. Everyone just feels worse off. This is what health should be; increasing liberation, increasing freedom, increasing emotional capacity to take risks. That's what I want you to take away more than anything from this episode is that that's what health is.

It's when you feel vibrant, vivacious and excited for life, because you have the tools and skills to collaborate with it. You might be wondering like, "Why was I able to stick with a diet for a while, or do a rigid eating plan?" I will say that the trigger in the story, which really create the domino effect, they just weren't as active in your life where you were able to avoid the triggers.

However, we can't really do that forever. I would say, especially in today's day and age when everything is changing. A one big transition after another. That's why when you feel like you've been really able to "good" with a diet or stick with it, if you look back at that time in your life, you probably weren't very triggered. Probably a lot of things were going your way, or you were actively avoiding those things. You can't live like – I mean, you can live like that for sure. Yeah, I'll just leave that there. That's always a choice.

That's what I wanted to share with you today. Over the long haul, and again, it all depends on the person, but usually after about six months you start making choices where you actually avoid the trigger altogether. Often, we keep ourselves – you became better to learn from it. I always say, and again, this is over an eight-year period, but I say entrepreneurship did as much to heal me from cancer, as chemo did to cure me, because I lived with chronic uncertainty for eight years.

I left my corporate job. Carlos and I worked in binding school together. The kind of joke, we had financial PTSD for eight years as someone who doesn't like debt. Going to grad school at the

same time at Penn, which is a fortune. Paying for it myself and blah, blah, blah. The point was I had financial insecurity for eight years.

I was following this path that had never been done before. I was like, "Is this going to work?" You always have that question as a business, but taking that educational risk was big. Carlos and I then, he got a second fellowship, or a master's degree and moved to Iowa. Then I had a really stable force in my life and then he left. We're two years.

The point is that for basically eight years, I've been bombarded with uncertainty. It used to mean stop to me. It used to mean eat an amount and overtime. It now means, "What can I learn from this?" When something doesn't go right with my business, or if Carlos and I have a fight, which we're great communicators, but all relationships that are healthy, you have constructive dialogue.

I no longer think I've failed, or I need to shut down. It's, "Wait, what did I learn here? What was my part in this? What do I need here?" Over the long-term, it just makes you feel really bad ass. In Truce with Food, we call this the boss mindset and we have rated bosses. I don't want to swear.

The chemo's effect is my nervous system can just handle a lot more. I've been able to heal very deeply with some issues that I thought were just how my body was, even at this stage, which is super cool from a physical standpoint, but I just feel more and more emotionally free.

If you listen to other client interviews, you will realize that they started to discover things about themselves and being able to take more risks, and really discovering who they are in their path. Like I said, my educational path is very unique. I think it will become increasingly less unique. But at the time, 10 years ago, or should I say nine years ago, I didn't start grad school until nine years ago. It was very different.

You start to trust your intuition and your path more and more. Aligning with your truth is the path to healing. You are the medicine many times. It doesn't mean you don't need support, or tools, or techniques, but the base of our medicine needs to be us aligned with our truth, starting with the foods we need, the sleep we need, the exercise we need. But then the emotional choices we make. It creates a huge ripple effect.

Like I said, what surprised – Or, I didn't say this, but what I want to share now is what surprised me is I've become masterful at guiding clients through this process is the deep feeling that defies medical textbooks. I've learned that medicine doesn't really full incorporate the feminine perspective. Learned certain fun things and seeing how there is limitations of what we can expect.

I want to give you an example today of a client of just super cool healing that's happened in five months from her freeing herself from this auto eating spiral. By freeing, I don't mean that she doesn't still have to transform this, because she's at the point now where she's actively thinking, "What do I want from life now that I have more space and time?"

I'm realizing a lot of what I thought I wanted was just stress and coping mechanisms, what does she want to do? Let me back up. She's a client; someone I've been working with like I said for five months. She's in that 28-30-year-old age bracket, which is a huge transition time for people. She have been struggling with her weight for about 20 years.

When she came to me, she is like, "The night time seems to be really challenging for me. It seems like if I could crack that nut, I could get – work on other things as well." Which she was realizing was that her auto eating spiral built all day. At night, she had time to unwind. We use that phrase, because we're tensed from this auto eating spiral, which has really nothing to do with food. Is she'd finally have time to think about all that she did think about from like reviewing her day and questioning all the way she handled things, like did she do the right thing? Could this have been better? Is that person mad? What's going to happen now?

This really being in her head, because she wasn't in her body. Most of my clients feel like they're this bubble head, or just like a floating head attached from their body. It's was creating real physical anxiety in her. In five short months, she's gotten to the point like I said, where she is increasingly preventing this auto eating spiral altogether.

I always say, if we think of things seasonally the first couple months are like winter. We're composting this really hard ground, these fixed ways of viewing ourselves and food and really

composting. There is definitely lots of cozy moments, and the bright lights look beautiful in the darkness, but it's a composting time.

Now we're in the spring phase, where she is learning to work with her triggers, to learn to take bigger risks. She's getting more and more idea of new preferences and new ways that she wants to orient her life. It was interesting, we were in a session the other day and she kept saying things are getting so much better. She's now worried the other shoe will drop.

Her story actually happen to be around uncertainty too. She had a different story. It wasn't connected to failure, but it was something else. When we reviewed the day in the week, the truth was her old definition of the shoe dropping had dropped many times. She just no longer feels the emotional-physical anxiety, or the emotional discomfort about it.

When her big, big boss e-mails her, she no longer thinks, "What's wrong?" Or when family member's call has been missed she doesn't think like, "Oh, no. Something's wrong." She's like, "I'll have to get back to them." Imagine, the energy she's saving during the day, the emotional resilience she's getting just from not freaking out so much.

She was freaking out and probably because her nervous system was jacked up. It's really hard to calm down when your nervous system is jacked up. By transforming her auto eating spiral, she's totally calming her nervous system down. She's not in fight or flight on a chronic low-grade response all day.

We're healing her physiology by healing her emotions. She feels more in control of her schedule, she's not over-analyzing things as much. What are the results? What are the physical and emotional results besides just genuinely feeling better?

Well, she had really stubborn sleep issues that she's always struggled with. They are starting to improve drastically. The cool thing is she had all these muscle crampings she would wake up with and everyone was telling her, "Do magnesium, or drink more water." She's found that they're gone for right now. They may come back in a little bit, but they're increasingly improving. Because again, her body is not as tightly one during the day.

We connected together that she was put on birth control in her teenage years and she was like, “You’re the only person who asked me why I was put on birth control,” but we realized it was actually causing a lot of issues with her, not only from weight perspective, but some other health issues. She was able to get off birth control and it’s really clearing out her system and she’s feeling her emotions better now and she actually is embracing that. She feels more in-tuned with herself.

These health changes are dramatic. I mean, to get off the pill, to be sleeping better, she finds that with eating she’s making the right choice for her body about 80% of the time, with no formal plan, just knowing being in better alignment with what works for her. She finds that “little things that we think are little,” like being able to order what she needs in front of everyone. Without thinking like, “What are they thinking of me, because I’m getting extra protein, or too much fat?”

All of that has gone away, because we’ve changed her auto eating spiral. She’s also able to have really challenging conversations. They’re becoming second nature. They’re not feeling so challenging anymore. It doesn’t mean that they’re not discomfort, but the feeling of uncertainty feels so much smaller now. It’s almost like when we first start working together, that feeling feels like glass overwhelming, like you’re a glass in your foot like, “Oh, my God. That hurts so much. That’s so overwhelming.” Now it just feels like a little pebble and you’re like, “I can remove the pebble.”

From a weight perspective, she started to lose weight naturally without the old gearing up. In fact, she got on the scale the other day because she’s like, “I know this is working and I can feel this is going to work. However, I want to make sure I wasn’t gaining weight.” She was pleasantly surprised that she started to lose weight. Part of that is from going off the birth control. Part of that is again, reducing her nervous system so she’s not eating as much out of alignment.

Weight loss is often the side effect of this process. Not always, but often. She also is healthy angry about our medical and diet industries, which I fully approve of, because they each have their own flavor of crazy and she wants to help change things in her way. I share this with you, because with incentive like this, she doesn’t me need to “hold her accountable.” She needs me to support her when she feel stuck again, or she can’t see certain things in that auto eating spiral.

Her body wants to feel great. She wants to feel great. Just giving her the right tools and the right clarity and the right vision, so she can do that for herself. I want to be clear again though, like I said, she's in this spring phase. She's still going to be triggers. She's still going to have "setbacks," but she knows how to learn from them now, or she knows how to get the support to learn from them. I think that's what is really exciting.

Before I get to the next part of this is I just want to put an asterisk, for if you're a coach listening to this, or a healthcare professional listening to this, or if you are a consumer of coaching and wellness issues, I often feel really upset and disturbed when I hear other – I'm going to put coaches in quotes, because I feel like everyone is a coach these days, everyone's an expert, and maybe that's just – because that's the industry I'm in, so I see it all the time.

I often hear people saying to clients, "You don't want this bad enough. If you want to stay stuck in your story for more years and lose out, that's your problem. Or call me when you're ready." I think a lot of coaches and experts don't know what they don't know. It's not malicious. They think they're being motivated, they think they're pushing someone outside of their comfort zone.

However, in the Food versus Exercise Willpower episode, I got into how clearly it is when it comes to emotional stuff that we actually have to stay with the discomfort, not push through it. That discomfort is there, because it's protective mechanism.

If you are a consumer of health and wellness coaching products and you hear someone with that mentality, I'd really caution you to go at your own pace or to not participate if it doesn't feel comfortable. A lot of the step is traumatic. Why we don't do what we know we should is a protective mechanism until we have the right tools, the right empathy and compassionate person to lead us out of the self-destruction we're doing on our own.

I just get really nervous when I hear people think that they have to not go with their own pace. My process is always client-led. Clients lead the pace, because I really believe the psyche, the psyche which is part of the body lets us know what issues to focus on at that time. To give you an example, I had to focus on my cancer experience. After that, I discovered that being bullied was causing me a lot of issues.

I was no longer eating because of them, but it was causing my own emotional issues and stress that I needed to work through. I couldn't see that and I don't think my psyche was ready to see that until after I went through healing a couple rounds of my uncertainty failure story.

If you are someone who's participating with a coach like that, I'd really hope you will find someone who has compassion and empathy. If you're a healthcare practitioner or a coach, really respect your clients' brilliance. The way that you can push them is through asking better questions, so that they can own the process more.

Again, this is part of why I'll be licensing Truce with Food in fall of 2018, so that we can have really compassionate, supportive and challenging tools to get people to really get better results than I think the current models offer us. I just wanted to put that there. We are in a time of huge educational transition. The traditional healthcare model works if you're in a very acute distress. For the rest of us who are in this messy model where we're definitely not feeling as great as we want, the tools and the education aren't always sufficient. I don't blame the coaches themselves for this. If you're listening and a coach and a healthcare practitioner, I hope you'll be mindful of this at the same time.

To liberate ourselves from auto eating spiral, we create a new story so that same feeling doesn't feel so overwhelming and threatening. It feels like a little pebble in your foot and one that you can actually say, "Hey, what do I want to do with this pebble? Do I want to skip stones?" I don't know. Do people still do that? I did that in college.

In water, do I want to sand it down? Do I want to paint it? Rather than just thinking it's a nuance problem, which when we create this new story, we create a new response. Then we have healthy behaviors that are rewarding, that lead to rewarding outcomes and our self-trust grows and grows.

I think that's the big thing for this year, or for this episode is you can be free of this, and the results are so much more liberating and hopeful than I think our culture has currently offered. If you're interested in doing this in an a very efficient and elegant and supportive way, I hope you'll join us for Truce with Food 2018, which starts February 6. I'll be offering a free intro, where

you'll all learn the four triggers, the four truth triggers to the auto eating spiral and giving you a little bit more detail and client stories.

I hope today was helpful. Yeah, you can sign up to alishapiro.com. The free Truce with Food intro will be starting January 15th. I hope today provided you a little relief idea of how to focus your health goals for 2018 if weight loss and healing are your goals.

I forgot to say with my client too, she's tapering off her anxiety meds as well, which is exciting because of that work. But if this resonates with you and you feel like, "Hey, she's describing what I've been feeling." I hope you have more clarity around and you can start to deconstruct the process for yourself. Or join us, like I said in Truce with Food. It's a great time. I would love to have you.

We have a lot of Insatiable listeners now. If you like these kind of conversations, you're going to love the people, the women who join. If you found this show helpful, I'd love if you could pass it on to a friend or family member. Always, if you can leave a review. Thank you so many of you left reviews.

While we were off I appreciate that so much. Let's keep them coming so we can change the conversation to be more inclusive of the feminine perspective.

Have a good one.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:51:27.9] AS: Thank you, health rebels for tuning in today. Have a reaction, question, or want the transcript from today's episode? Find me at alishapiro.com. I'd love if you leave a review on Apple Podcast and tell your friends and family about Insatiable. It helps us grow our community and share a new way of approaching health and our bodies.

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

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