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Megan [00:00:06] Hey, everybody, it's Megan Ramos. I'm here today with my lovely co-host, Dr. Nadia Pateguana. Nadia, how are you doing today?

Nadia [00:00:14] Doing good, Megan, how are you?

Megan [00:00:16] I'm good, thank you. I'm excited for today's episode. It's been a minute since we've done sort of a Hot Seat / Expert Guest, and, actually, this is our very first expert guest that isn't you or I - so our first interview together. I don't think we've done an interview together in the past.

Nadia [00:00:35] I don't think so either. One of my very favorite people is in our hot seat today.

Megan [00:00:41] Yeah, one of our beloved TFM experts is here joining us today, so hopefully, she goes easy on us. [laughs] when we are talking about today's hot topic. But I'd love to introduce to everybody, Dr. Terri Lance. Terri, how are you doing?

Terri [00:00:58] I'm good, very good. Good to see the both of you.

Megan [00:01:02] Thanks for joining us. And hopefully, [laughs] you'll go easy on our first tag-team interview here today, but we'll give people a little bit of our backstory here. So Terri's part of our TFM family. She has the role of a fasting coach and our behavior expert. So Terri's background is in clinical psychology. So, Terri, tell us a little bit about your background, how you got started in fasting, and what led you to The Fasting Method.

Terri [00:01:32] Sure. So I was very unhealthy and I was working as a psychologist doing private practice, and I was type 2 diabetic and very overweight and struggling and had been for many years. And someone introduced me to the idea of the Whole30. And it changed my life - I started eating differently, I started coming off my diabetes medications. And I had certainly fallen into the belief that I was going to be diabetic for the rest of my life. There was nothing I could do about it. I was just going to take more medication and, you know, lose my feet or something at some point. So I started changing how I was eating, and I came off all my medications, started losing weight and I thought, "Wow, there's surely something to this."

[00:02:22] But, over time, I needed to change a little more because I was still eating in a way that my body wasn't processing very well. So I needed to go a little bit lower carb. I started doing ketogenic eating. And through that, I started working with the group of folks - the 2 Keto Dudes - and that's how I met the two of you. I met the two of you and, of course, I had already been listening to Megan and Jason, but I met the two of you at a conference while I was staying with the 2 Keto Dudes in a big house. And Megan and the 2 Keto Dudes recorded an episode. And I remember I was laying on the floor in the basement, [laughter] chin on my hands, just watching these people that I admired so much and got to have dinner with both of you, and it was so exciting. So then over time, I started working with Megan as a coach for a period of time, fixed more of my health concerns, and worked on my weight. And then Megan said, "Hey, would you be interested in joining us?" So you don't pass up an offer like that. So here I am,

Megan [00:03:31] And we are very lucky to have you. I still remember meeting you for the first time at Breckenridge with Nadia. That was actually such a cool trip because Nadia and I had just started working together, it was our first trip together. It was a very low-budget trip for us, so we shared hotel accommodations and really got to know each other. And that's when we went from colleagues to really good friends. And then we met you and it just sort of clicked and I was so happy. We all stayed in contact, and I think we're doing some pretty cool stuff together today. So we owe Richard and Carl [laughs] from the Keto Dudes...

Terri [00:04:11] That's right.

Megan [00:04:13] ...for the introduction. Well, there's so much that you are a unique expert on at The Fasting Method. Offer all of the same perspectives on fasting and nutrition that Nadia, myself and the rest of our team does. But you've got a unique skill set that helps take what we're doing in fasting and nutrition and really unpack some of the root causes of issues of how people got to a metabolically unhealthy spot. And some of those issues why, you know, it's not always necessarily sustainable for certain individuals. And I think the work that you do is some of the most important work we do at The Fasting Method. So Nadia, where do you want to start off grilling Terri today? [laughter]

Terri [00:05:01] Oh wait, I thought you two wanted me to be easy on you. I think I need you to be easy on me. [laughter]

Nadia [00:05:08] I can't, I have tons of questions. [laughter] So first of all, I actually didn't realize that we met Terri together. I somehow, I felt like you guys had known each other before. But the funny thing is, I remember that conference so well; it was awesome and I remember that house, what a fun house you guys stayed at. And really, I don't know, it's kind of a blur how we went from that day to working together because it just feels like you've always been here. But besides being great friends and colleagues, I'm a big fan of yours, Terri, and I don't know who came up with a saying, "What would Terri say?" but I use it all the time [laughter]. Whenever something comes up in our program, in our meetings, in my coaching calls, I jokingly but not jokingly say, "Well, what would Terri say?" So I always say I'm not an expert in this field when it comes to the mindset of things, but it's a very, and it's become more and more obvious as we work with clients over the years. It's been six years now that Megan and I have been working together. You know, I think this is the 10th year anniversary of The Fasting Method, or IDM at least, right Megan? But every single day it becomes more and more apparent that we can have all the practical tools available, but really, the mindset of it is so important. So I'm no expert in that field, but I like to learn as much as I can from you. I just did your masterclass. So again, not only am I a friend, I'm also a member and a fan of yours. So let's talk a little bit about that, if you don't mind, some of the practical things that you work with people on. What are the most--if I can say, that's a big question and a hard one, probably, but what do you see? What are the most common things that you see when it comes to fasting challenges or eating challenges in mindset and behavior?

Terri [00:07:03] Sure. I think starting off kind of broadly, paradigm shifting that we have to do, learning so much new information that kind of competes with how we are used to doing things, and having to learn new ways. This isn't as easy as just changing a habit. It sounds easy when you read a book about habit change, but there are so many pieces involved. And part of that is our mindset, the limiting beliefs that we hold. If we think of ourselves as someone who can't succeed at weight loss, all the knowledge about how to fast will fall

through at some point because our belief behind it is that we can't do it. And so working on changing our limiting beliefs, working on our mindset, how we talk to ourselves. I'm sure both of you have heard people say, "Fasting is just so hard. I mean, it's so hard when I'm fasting, I'm so hungry." And not that these aren't real responses, but if that's what we keep telling ourselves, our brain is not going to be able to do what's challenging, it's going to feel defeated. And so we have to start finding new ways to talk to ourselves, new ways to think about ourselves, to see ourselves as capable of fasting.

[00:08:26] I remember when I couldn't go three hours without eating, so it felt like I was not capable of fasting, but I just finished a 42-hour fast this morning. So it's possible, but we have to work on the mindset, the limiting beliefs, and the habits that we've created. Most of us, not just over the past couple of weeks, but for 20, 30, 40, 50 years - these habits of eating and thinking.

Nadia [00:08:55] I'm going to throw a couple of things at you that come up, only because I hear them, I learn them, they make so much sense, but sometimes people might want to know where some of these things come from. For example, there's that, "What would Terri say?" saying that I repeat, one of many that I repeat, all the time, which is, "Terri says, 'We can do hard things.'" Where did that come from and what does that really mean?

Terri [00:09:17] Actually, I think when I first started really thinking about that was when I did the Whole30 the first time through. And Melissa Urban talks about, eating differently is not hard, fighting cancer is hard. Birthing a baby is hard. Losing a parent is hard. I thought not having pancakes for breakfast was hard. And so I had to start shifting how I thought about that. And then I think she also really emphasized, we can do things that are hard. We do. We get through really difficult things. And so if someone says, "Taking cream out of my coffee is really hard," the idea that yep, but you can do it. You can do difficult things because instantly we want to shut off the effort. "Oh, that's too hard. I don't need to do it."

Nadia [00:10:10] That's definitely one of my favorites. All right, another broad topic for you here, Terri. I hear you talk a lot about self-sabotage, and I almost feel like this requires its own masterclass or its own coaching package with you just to deal with this one topic, but do you want to talk a little bit about self-sabotage and how you work with people?

Terri [00:10:30] Sure. I think the important thing for everyone to first start off with around self-sabotage is everyone does it. You are not broken, or flawed, or weak, or somehow messed up because you do behaviors that get in your own way. Even the most successful people do some self-sabotage, so it's very normal. And in some ways, it's kind of a protective thing. We could go into a lot of details about it, but there are so many avenues related to self-sabotage. But often we are doing the behaviors to protect ourselves from feeling something that's uncomfortable, or something that puts us in a state of change, or something new. Well, learning to fast and learning to change our way of eating, that involves a lot of newness and novelty and doing things that are challenging for us. So, of course, self-sabotage gets activated.

[00:11:27] One analogy that one book I really like about self-sabotage uses the concept of your saboteur. It's like you're a boxer, and your saboteur knows when to punch you just right to knock you down. And if you want to learn how to interrupt that process, you've got to learn how they fight. You've got to watch their videos and learn, when do they use that left jab or that upper right hook or whatever? I'm not great on my boxing terms. But you've got to learn their strategies.

[00:12:00] So many of us have things that we say or think that get in our way. Going back to kind of limiting beliefs. So if I think, "I'm not ever going to succeed at this." My saboteur is going to find ways to punch me when I'm vulnerable to make me believe I can't succeed. So I've got to start to learn, what are these tricks it's going to use? What is it going to say to me and how will I ignore it? How will I work around that statement so it doesn't hold me back?

Megan [00:12:34] Do you think---there's so many people that come into our Community that have tried dozens, if not over a hundred, different types of diets, but individuals I've worked with, and Community members we've chatted with, you know, a lot of them have been dieting since they were in high school. Some of them even middle school. And it's, we know that most of the diets out there are all based on calorie restriction, the principle of calorie restriction. And it's the same thing that all of these other dietary programs' goals are - less calories in, more calories out. So whether it's a juice diet, a meal-replacement diet, a fish-only diet, whatever it is, is all based on that same principle. So here we have hundreds of individuals who have done the same thing over and over again expecting different results, so we know that's the definition of insanity. But these poor individuals didn't realize that that's what they were doing, and it was encouraged by their doctors, by all of their health care advocates - try this program, try that program. It's the same thing; it's just like comparing Costco toilet paper to Target toilet paper. It's still, toilet paper, it's just different brands packaged differently. Sometimes you get a bear, sometimes you get a cat, but it's the same thing.

[00:13:55] So I find with so many individuals, it's such a struggle for them to recognize that when they're fasting that they're not doing the same thing over again. It's a completely different physiological event, but they've just gotten so hung up on this constant failure, constant failure. What are your thoughts on an individual that you're starting with - they're new, they've tried, you know, at least half a dozen diets and, clearly, they're not coming to you because they've succeeded at those diets. We know those diets don't work. 95 percent of them fail. What about the sort of mindset issue when they've just, they're coming from a history of failing with weight loss and just developing more and more illness along the way?

Terri [00:14:38] That's a great one. I think the most important piece, ultimately, is that what we're working on and what people are learning with us is a lifestyle. And if you're not willing to look at it as a lifestyle, it will fail like everything else because it will be something you do for a period of time, then you turn it off, you go back to old things, old habits, and you go back to the old results.

[00:15:06] So now that you're learning a tool that does work, it's not the same old thing. It's not just caloric restriction or, you know, as you said, calories in, calories out. That you're actually changing what's going on metabolically. It's sustainable. It was not sustainable for me to live on a thousand calories that was low fat. I was miserable. I was hungry all the time. So it didn't matter how hard I did that for six months or a year, I was going to go back to my old ways because it wasn't sustainable.

[00:15:43] So what we really teach people is a sustainable lifestyle. Eating in a time-restricted way, I can do it today and I can do it when I'm 93. It's not something I have to do for six months and then stop because it's too hard to keep doing. It needs to become a lifestyle. And helping people recognize we're not teaching them a diet, we're not teaching

them a fad. We're building a lifestyle. We're building a lifelong approach. To me it is kind of foundational when it comes to this.

Megan [00:16:22] I think that's so important because it is, it's a lifestyle. It's not a diet, it is a lifelong approach. And you know, people get so hard on themselves any time they sort of deviate from their planned course, any time that they've done that with previous diets because, first of all, they're not sustainable, as you described, they never are. It just sends them, you know, rolling into total disaster. And this though, it is sustainable. You can have an off-course day and the next day you can get on course again. So really thinking of it as a lifestyle and something that we're going to be incorporating, maybe not 24-hour fasts or multi-day fasts, maybe it's, you know, 16,18 hours of fasting on a more regular basis.

[00:17:12] I think it's just so important, and I think we see identity struggles at all points in someone's journey. I'm interested in your thoughts on this specifically because I've been in this situation a few times. I've never really quite known how to handle it. So an individual - they get over the initial mindset hurdles, they get on course, they learn to navigate it, and then they reach their goals. You know, they're in their 60s, they have been battling weight since their first kid was born, or those freshman 15, that started the insulin ball rolling and the weight gain accumulation. And they have pretty much spent time since their early 20s trying to figure out how to lose weight. And I've had women especially, like a dozen of them, break down once they reach their goals because they have no idea who they are anymore. Their identity was always this person, this woman, who would just always be overweight and always be unhealthy and be needing to find the next dietary program. And they realize at this moment that their hobby over the years has been weight loss, and has been trying weight-loss programs. That's their hobby like people pay to knit, play the piano, go hiking, camping, that's been their hobby because it's been such a struggle. And then they lose their identity. You know, it's kind of like someone who took care of their kids at home and that was their main career. And then their kids go off to school and get married, leave the nest and they lose their identity. I'm seeing people break down for the same reasons. So what are your thoughts on sort of the identity mindset shift that happens over the course of someone's journey?

Terri [00:18:59] Another great question. I think all habit change has to involve focus on identity. We're not going to make successful habit changes if we're trying to change something that's incongruent with how we see ourselves. So again, if I see myself as someone who's always going to be unhealthy, I'm always going to be overweight, I can't make those healthy habit changes stick because they're incongruent with that identity. So if people reach their goal, you know, kind of just through grit and hard work, but don't work on changing their identity throughout, it's a big shock. It's kind of like that empty nest feeling when parents' kids, you know, first all leave the home. It's, "Who am I? And how do I navigate this world?".

[00:19:50] So I really encourage people to take stock in this throughout, and be working on those underlying identity messages.

[00:19:59] "I'm someone who's healthy."

[00:20:01] "I'm someone who can manage my weight and my health in an ongoing way."

[00:20:07] "I'm worthy of respect and love and affection, regardless of my health status or my weight status."

[00:20:15] But to really be working on that inner core kind of belief system about themselves so that they have a strong sense of self that's not tied to: "I have to be improving," "I have to be fixing myself," "I have to be losing weight," or "I have to be finding the next thing."

[00:20:37] The other thing I notice, for many reasons, in our program is that people really need to spend some time kind of finding themselves. What do you like to do with your time? What is important to you? What do you value? Because many of us have spent so much time seeking food, eating food, cleaning up from food, seeking a new diet, all of these things suddenly free up a lot of time. And many of us have not spent much time on, "What feels good to me outside of eating," "What are my hobbies?" "What are my creative outlets?" "What are the relational places I want to invest more time in my life?" Because we've spent so much of ourselves tied up in our health or our weight journey that we kind of forgot to look at this other stuff. And, you know, again, empty nest - "I have to kind of rediscover myself." So I encourage people to discover themselves along the way.

[00:21:39] But I was also thinking about something you brought up, Megan. It brings up the topic of maintenance, and this has been discussed a lot in my groups lately in The Fasting Method Community. I think for a lot of us, maintenance has this kind of weird feeling about it. For some of us, it's kind of scary to think of getting to maintenance because it feels unknown and our brain doesn't like what's unknown; it would rather do what is familiar. So maintenance feels a little bit risky in that way. It feels maybe challenging - "That sounds like a lot of work. I thought I was just going to get there and be done." Because a lot of what we've been taught to measure in our lives are things we can check off a list: lose 50 pounds, "Oh, good. I lost 50 pounds," check.

[00:22:29] But I've been using this analogy lately in my groups. It's kind of like if you have a lawn at your house. It's June, or whatever summer season where you live is, and you mow the lawn. So it looks nice; it's cut, it's just right. You don't wait until October to mow the lawn again. You have to maintain it, even though you got there. The lawn looks great. Every four days, every week, whatever it is, you have to maintain that lawn. So the journey isn't done when you reach a goal. The journey is the journey indefinitely. And I always say, "I'm going to be focusing on my health and my weight for my whole journey. I'm not going to be done with it this August or next January. I'm always going to focus on my health and my weight."

Nadia [00:23:20] Wow. I learn something new from you every time I listen. And, Megan, by the way, I loved your two very deep---and I learned a lot from just listening to those two things that you and Terri were just talking about. I have a list of questions here, Terri, bear with me.

Terri [00:23:36] Yeah.

Nadia [00:23:37] But as you talk, it kind of brings up a couple more things. There's two things that came up just from listening to you talk just now. In my groups, people bring this up a lot in The Fasting Method Community meetings that we have - the idea of hearing this from you, that we need to find our 'why'. Finding your why. And last year, I spent the entire year thinking about this because my why at some point was something and it was very strong. And I think that that motivated me to do very, very well and to achieve the things that I wanted to achieve. But then things change, right? Life gets in the way. I always say

in my groups, "Nobody's journey's ever linear," "Life is nice and curvy," and "We have to learn how to ride the waves," and whatnot. So this idea of 'finding your why'. I know you talk about this a lot. How do you explain this to people? And is there a changing why, and how do you deal with that? Or is it one why forever? In my group, I think yesterday, there was a very big discussion about this because some people said that your why has to be outside of yourself, bigger than yourself. Things like, you know, "Your children are your why," or your spouse. And then other people, because we have a lot of people in our Community that don't have children, don't have spouses, live alone, were saying, "No, your why has to be all about you," and "You can't take care of others if you don't take care of yourself," and so on. So tell me a little bit about your thoughts on that.

Terri [00:25:03] It's a great big topic! [laughter] So I think the important thing in looking at our 'why' is that it has to be something very valuable to us. And I think you touched on another really important topic - it does change. Very few of us have one why that we stick with the whole time we change. Let's say my goal is to no longer be diabetic. Well once I get there, why would I keep working on this stuff? I have to have a new why, I have to have a new focus. But it has to be something very valuable. And oftentimes people choose a why that is very evident. Like, "I want to be able to wear a bathing suit when I go on that cruise this summer," or "For my daughter's wedding, I want to feel comfortable in my dress." It's a very concrete, immediate why.

[00:25:58] And what I find is, in the long run, those tend to work less well for us because we're only focused on the outcome and we only care about doing the steps to get the outcome. And again, if we want to make this a lifelong, sustainable lifestyle, we have to be focused on the steps, not just the outcome. So again, choosing something that's really valuable.

[00:26:25] If losing weight is really valuable, why? Dig down to another level.

[00:26:31] "Well, because many of the health factors involved in excess weight will put me at risk for other diseases."

[00:26:38] OK. Why else? "Well, because I want to be mobile. If I have grandkids, I want to be that grandparent that can get on the floor with them and jump back up and go skiing with them."

[00:26:51] OK. Why else? So even taking a big why like, "I want to lose weight," and dig down to, "What about it is valuable to you?" And it needs to be very valuable.

[00:27:04] I joke about this, but I think it's a really clear example for people. I listened to a motivational speaker talk about this before, and he said, "Look, let's pick something. And, you know, motivation does not just fall out of the sky. You have to build it and you have to have a reason why."

[00:27:20] So if I said to you, "Megan and Nadia, if you exercise more, you will feel better." You might be a little motivated to think a little bit more about moving, but it probably wouldn't really get you going. But if I said, "Hey, if you walk for 30 minutes every day for the next 30 days, I'm going to give you a million dollars." Every reason that you would have told me you couldn't take the time to exercise would be out the window. It wouldn't matter that your kids were up at that time, you'd get up earlier. It wouldn't matter that you

had lunch at that time and you needed to work, you'd find a different time to do that work. There would be no reason you wouldn't prioritize that because the reward value is so big.

[00:28:13] So if I say, "I'd like to be healthier." It's so vague. I don't have enough 'teeth in the game' if that's what they say. I need to know what does being healthier mean for me? It means when I'm in my end stages of life, I'm mobile, I'm taking care of myself still, I have the ability to think clearly. That's valuable. Just saying, "I want to be healthy." It's a great goal, but it's so vague that it's hard to really motivate challenging change.

Megan [00:28:53] Early in my journey, I realized that motivation is a crap tool to lean off of. It's totally fleeting. And like so many individuals that we work with, I went through the same thing. You lose a bunch of the weight, the numbers start to improve on the blood test results. Doctors who thought you were crazy now think you're fabulous. Friends who thought you were crazy now want to know what it is that you're doing. And you've sort of reached this level of quote-unquote success before you've really conquered the insulin resistance and the condition. And that's when it's really tough because you're getting all of this positive feedback from these places and some of them who are negative places. So for me, where my A1C really started to improve, when I really started to see a big shift in the weight, I know there wasn't that urgency that day I was diagnosed with diabetes. All I did for a career essentially was watch people die from diabetes. So talk about that lighting a fire under me. Like that propelled me, but then it was no longer this major threat, but it was still there. There was still work that needed to be done and really losing weight was key.

[00:30:09] I mean, we all know that weight loss, you know, can't be your factor. So it had to shift for me. "Why do I want to lose that weight?" Well, my uncle died at 36 from his third heart attack. My other very healthy uncle had, you know, his second heart attack at 41. These are things. Like my uncle who died, he had three small kids. None of them even remember him. And how heartbreaking that is when I talk to the youngest one - she has no recollection of this guy. That's her dad.

[00:30:36] And then just from all of the science that I know, like, I don't want those fat cells pumping out all that unhealthy estrogen and the potential cancers. Like I had a grandmother and a great aunt who had ovarian cancer. Like, no, I need to get rid of the fat. I need to squash that estrogen or the estrone - that unhealthy estrogen that the fat pumps out. So I had to totally, radically shift my whole concept. You know, weight loss wasn't about getting back into those size four pair of pants. Weight loss had to be about something that was so deep. And then, like so many people, I gained some COVID weight, right? And I gained it. I learned so much about the power of snacking and not snacking, and how it can be detrimental because I eat great foods but, during lockdown, we ate all the time.

[00:31:25] So now I'm entering that family planning phase and I want to have a healthy pregnancy and I want to have a really healthy baby. I'm older. I'm still pretty metabolically healthy, much more so than a lot of people who are younger than me, but, gosh, I want to give that kid every chance it gets because I'm pretty sure I came out of the womb with some degree of insulin resistance, or hyperinsulinemia, and I want to change the trend in my family. And you know, it's not just to lose this COVID 10, like, that's not my plan. So I feel a little bit more comfortable in my jeans. I still fit into my jeans, so that's not motivation enough. I can still get into them. So when there's temptation, it's not, you know, "To fit in them better." That's not going to serve me well. So motivation. I'm so happy Nadia brought

that up because that was something I definitely wanted to touch base on. Anyways, I'll stop. Nadia, I know you've got a long list of questions.

Nadia [00:32:22] I'm looking at my list here. I'm like, "OK, what's not too general?" Because I'm throwing these big ones! I'm going to address something that we talk about in our Community group meetings every single day. Every single one of our Fasting Method Community meetings starts. And I know, I know there's importance in this, I just want to hear it from the expert. But every single one of our meetings starts with encouraging people to celebrate their victories along the way. And I always tell people, "There are no big or small victories. They're all huge and we need to celebrate them." And I know, I just don't know the actual explanation of it the way that you probably will explain it. But I know that there is a lot of power and probably has a lot to do with this transition that you were talking about, we're changing beings, right? And our journey is long. I always tell everyone I work with, especially when they ask, "How long do I have to do this for?" Which is a question that kind of irks me. But I try to spin it in the most positive way that I can, which is, "Hopefully, your journey is long, as long as you shall live. And hopefully you will live with a lot of health and obviously happiness."

[00:33:29] But why is it so important that we celebrate our victories along the way and not wait for that inevitable goal that never seems to come? And the fear that maintenance, whatever it is. Why should we celebrate our victories? And we call, sometimes call, these NSVs (non-scale victories). But whether they are scale or non scale victories, why are these important?

Terri [00:33:51] On one surface level, I'd say they're important because they help build momentum. We all know when you're not doing well at something, it's a little harder to keep investing in it. It's a little harder to keep going. So when you can acknowledge the positive things that are coming from it, you have a little more reason to keep doing it. It's kind of just a logical thing in that way.

[00:34:14] But on a deeper level, dopamine. People love to talk about dopamine. People refer to it as a feel-good chemical. It's really not just a feel-good chemical, it's a motivating chemical. It makes us seek things. And so, if I get a little bit of a dopamine hit by saying, "Woo hoo, I skipped lunch today. Awesome job." That dopamine will help keep me going. It will motivate me to continue to grow, continue to seek. When we lack dopamine, we lack drive, we lack drive to move forward.

[00:34:53] Some people have heard me share this before, but there have been studies with rats. They don't keep eating it just because the food tastes good. What happens is they keep eating it because they got a dopamine hit from that food. And when they interfere, when the researchers interfere, with that dopamine response. Even though the food tastes good, the rats don't go get it. They won't even move one rat-body-length to get that good-tasting food because they don't have dopamine.

[00:35:25] So dopamine drives us, moves us forward. So celebrating the steps gives us dopamine. Making decisions to move forward gives us dopamine. If I wait and celebrate when I lose 25 pounds, that's a long wait for some dopamine. Got to be celebrating and reinforcing those steps.

Nadia [00:35:49] And on the other hand, what we see a lot of---so I know that this is another big topic that you talk a lot about - self-talk and self-sabotage. What we see a lot

of is people constantly (until they make the change that is, until they can change that mindset and paradigm shift) highlighting their quote-unquote perceived failures. Like, "I didn't do a 42-hour fast today. I only did a 24-hour fast." Whereas I'm like, "Whoa, hold up. Why aren't you celebrating the fact that..." You know, but our natural-- I don't know if it's natural. Is it natural or human tendency to, at least for some people, highlight, "What I couldn't do," versus, "What I did do." And then when people switch, when they figure that out and when they (and this takes some practice) start celebrating these victories and celebrating (because we encourage them to do this in every single one of our Community meetings), then they, week after week, they're doing better and better. And when they don't have great days, supposedly, if they find a way to celebrate what went well about that day, they have a much better next day and so on and so forth.

Terri [00:36:58] And even, maybe, the best thing I can celebrate that day is that, "I stayed put," that, "I didn't go overboard with my food," or that, "I didn't eat all day. I only ate the meals at mealtime."

[00:37:13] We do have a natural propensity toward that negative, unfortunately. We have a negativity bias. And, unfortunately, our brain is not set up for sunshine and roses and butterflies. Our brain is set up for survival and avoiding things that kill us. It's negative, it's, "How do I avoid danger? How do I avoid risk?" And here we are saying, "Let's take more risks, let's try new things, let's learn new things." That's challenging for our brain. And so we have to be reinforcing that and getting that positive reinforcement.

[00:37:52] If you are teaching a kid how to ride their bike and the first couple of times you let go, they crash. You don't say, "You know, I knew you weren't going to be able to do it. Look at you. You're not even moving your legs right. This is pointless." No, you'd say, "Hey, look, this time you got almost halfway down the hill. You're doing it." You would encourage them.

[00:38:16] We could borrow how we would talk to someone we love and give that to ourselves. The whole topic of self-compassion is really a big one of mine. But highlighting, "Hey, today was a really rough day. And although I had planned to fast, I ate two healthy meals instead. Maybe it wasn't right on point with my plan, but I managed to do two healthy meals even though I was having a really hard day." That's celebrating progress.

Megan [00:38:47] Perfectionism is something that is such a huge roadblock for so many individuals. Fortunately for me, I crashed and burned with perfectionism really young, and my dad gave me a great piece of advice - it's not how you fall down that defines you; it's how you get yourself back up that defines you. And he gave me this piece of advice about five years before I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Well, I hadn't necessarily listened to his advice. It always stuck there at the back of my mind. And when I got the diagnosis, I said, "Megan, you can't screw this up. You need to get rid of this soon before it ruins your body. So you can't come up with this plan to do three, perfect 42-hour fasts a week and to never eat (a vice of mine was chicken fingers) another chicken finger again. You need to show yourself some self-compassion and give yourself some flexibility." This drive for perfectionism, it's so difficult. We see it every single day, a dozen or plus times a day. Each one of us coaches in our Community.

Terri [00:39:53] Absolutely. And I think Nadia kind of touched on this with a wording thing. Oftentimes, people will negate the positive progress by saying, "I only did this," "But I did it like that." We will add, we will tack on to the, "We're almost celebrating," but then we're

going to highlight how it wasn't enough. And again, this goes back for many of us underneath it all of how we're not enough. And when we're not enough, we want to fill that with more - more food, more achievements, more friends, more clothes, more money, more cars. That's a big one, Nadia! [laughs]

Nadia [00:40:31] Oh, I got more. [laughter] I got more big ones! But Megan just got us started---and I don't even know how much time you're going to give us today, Terri, but I mean, I got lots more. But Megan just got me thinking about this all-or-nothing mentality, right? Like, I'm one of these people. And then we'll start off by saying, "Well, I'm all or nothing," like, "I've already defined myself, so it has to be all or nothing."

[00:40:53] So I'm working on this myself, and I'm working with our Community members on this, you know, not because, again, I'm definitely not the expert, but I pick up things from you here and there. And as a human, right, I share my human experience with them or some thoughts or my clinical experience. So is this the same as this idea of all-or-nothing? Is all-or-nothing, you know, perfectionism? Because what we find is that people are either fasting for days on end or they're snacking all day long, right? And how do you deal with this?

Terri [00:41:28] I'd say they're a little bit different topics, but they're a similar theme. Oftentimes, all-or-nothing thinking, again, it's kind of set up in our brain that way. We know what to expect. We want this. If we don't do this, it's off. But most of us have to work on having a little more shade of gray in there. "I wanted to do a 42-hour fast. Something really urgent happened during the day. I felt the need to eat a meal. I completed a 24. That's a good adaptation from my plan."

[00:42:00] A lot of people struggle because they don't give themselves any flexibility. They're so rigid that, in order to succeed, it has to look like this. And oftentimes, even what we think it has to look like is very arbitrary. "Well, I heard someone mention that in a group, so that must be what I need to do now."

[00:42:19] I also find that when we get really rigid about all-or-nothing when it comes to fasting, this is not a video podcast, but if you can just imagine a pendulum swings and how far it swings in one direction, it will swing in the other direction. And I can never think of what those little metal ball, hanging ball things are where you pull one and you let it go and it knocks the other ones to the other side. [Newton's cradle] We're kind of like that - when our brain goes in one direction, it will respond and can go full force in the opposite. So what I see a lot of people do is they want to increase their fasting quickly or they want to do a long fast. So the pendulum swings far this way. And then it's time to break the fast and the pendulum swings very far the other way. And so oftentimes we need to be less rigid. We need to find a middle ground. It's not all-or-nothing. It's a smaller swing of that pendulum.

[00:43:20] And one of my favorite analogies that everyone in our Community who comes to meetings has heard, probably a hundred times, comes from a book called 'Breaking Up with Sugar' by Molly Carmel. And in it, she talks about this analogy - If you're driving your car, let's say you're driving from San Antonio to Los Angeles, and you get a flat tire. You can feel it, you feel the bump. You get out of your car, you walk around and you see that you have a flat tire. The thing to do to keep going on your journey is to fix the flat tire. You go get the tools and fix it, or you call AAA (or whatever the road service is) and you fix the flat tire and then you get to keep going. But what a lot of us have learned to do around our

eating, is we go back into the car, into the trunk, we get out this huge machete and we come out and we slash the other three tires. Now the car's not going anywhere. We're stuck. So this idea of all-or-nothing. "Well, I ate some olives today during my fast, so I blew it. I might as well eat this cake." That's the machete, that's the slashing of the other tires. It's OK. Fix the flat tire and keep going on your journey.

Nadia [00:44:38] I had personally never heard you say that, but I heard it through Community members in my groups. This week, somebody brought that up and it was brilliant and a whole bunch of people were like, "Oh my goodness." Because again, a lot of the feedback that we give ourselves and we tell others is, "I am all-or-nothing. Therefore, I cannot change, and it has to be this way because I am this way." Well, you want to change certain things, right? Like this is one of them. Like, why would you go and slash all the tires? That was brilliant. And the guy that said this in my group, John, he was like, "I heard this from Terri this week," and he had to sort of share with everyone because it made so much sense.

[00:45:15] Anyway, I have a million questions. As I said, I'm going to pass this on to Megan and have Megan tell me when to stop because people will probably want to know, "What other questions did you have for Terri?" And maybe we'll even reschedule and have another one of these later, sometime later, when you allow us.

[00:45:33] But I had some questions around food, and I don't know how much you want to talk about food today, but the idea that people when they go into this diet mentality, deprivation, that's a big one, right? Another big topic. So I'm not expecting you to answer this today. I'm just listing the things that I still would like to talk to you about in the future.

[00:45:53] Another big one is this 'guilt and reward' that we get into with lots of things, but particularly when it comes to fasting and eating. As in like we eat something that we are not happy about - we feel guilty, so we fast. So fasting, you go into fasting with this guilt mentality. And then when it's time to break a fast, it's like, "Oh, awesome, I did a great job. I fasted. Now I'm going to reward myself with junk." And we just get stuck in this guilt-and-reward sort of mentality. And as much as I try to explain it to people, I know it's not good. And I, myself, and I know we've had some great Community members come up with some great analogies and expressions for, you know, "Fasting being your healing days and eating being your rebuilding days." And really the importance of getting out of that guilt-and-reward mentality when it comes to eating and fasting. Another big one!

Megan [00:46:49] Well, Nadia just gave everybody a sneak peek of what we're going to be grilling Terri on for episode two. We're going to have to have Terri back.

[00:46:58] But just to tie in to some of the themes that are going on in The Fasting Method this month. You know, we've just started Fasting February and one of the things that we're focusing on in Fasting February (of course, aside from fasting) is Coach Larry every Monday is doing a lesson in the Community talking about what we *can* have in our diet. We'll touch base on, you know, Nadia's first hot topic that she just mentioned there, that feeling of deprivation.

[00:47:29] It's funny, I've worked with so many people and they say they've always had rice and bread at a meal, every meal, every single dinner in their life span. We're talking like 50 years they've had rice and bread. And then we take away that rice and bread, and they tell me that their diet's so boring now. Your diet was boring as heck before because you

always had rice and bread every single day. [laughter] Or me, I come from an Italian background, pasta and bread were like these side dishes to our meals, or accompaniments. But people are so focused on what they *can't* have, what they *can't* have, what they *can't*, have rather than what they *can* have. And you know, I know, for some people, a lot of these foods are foreign. Like a Brussels sprout was super foreign to me in my journey and now they're my favorite things. I'll have Brussels sprouts over potatoes any freaking day of the week. But the initial deprivation, it's like people will get smacked in the face with it when they start and that causes so much fear and anxiety. So before we let you go, let's grill you on this one last hot topic.

Terri [00:48:32] I think we could probably talk about food in a whole episode of its own, but there are a couple of things that I think are really important. One is that oftentimes we identify emotions or experiences with foods, and we then hold on to them even more strongly. Like in your example, Megan, if rice was something I ate every day with my family, I've got some emotional things attached to having rice. It's not only, "It's a normal part of my meal," but, "It's part of my family tradition. It's part of my time with my family." So learning to disconnect emotional ties to feelings.

[00:49:11] There are certain foods that I very much associate with my mom, and I could keep eating those in order to feel connected to my mom. But instead, I can just remember it. When it comes to Christmas time and her favorite candies are out, I can look at them and think about her. Or I can remember the times I ate a specific thing with her. I don't have to do it in order to have that feeling.

[00:49:38] So I think that's important for a lot of us. And a phrase Nadia you may hear sometimes in the Community from people saying, if they repeat me on this, is, "That's not my food."

Nadia [00:49:49] Mm hmm.

Terri [00:49:50] For me, looking at what Coach Larry talks about is, "What can I eat? I enjoy what I eat. I don't eat anything that I don't enjoy." And there are some foods that I used to enjoy that I know are no longer good matches for me. So when I walk down the grocery store aisle, I don't walk down most aisles, but if I did, I would just be looking saying, "Well, that's not my food. Well, that's not my food." And I would go to the food that *is* my food. And sometimes I've had to do that even where I lived. I lived with a roommate for a while. Her side of the fridge was not my food. Those were foods that didn't work well for me. There were cabinets in our kitchen. It was not my food. You know, it was a little bit easier because she was a friend, it wasn't a family member. So it was easy. I don't eat her food. That's not my food. But recognizing, "I'm not deprived or suffering because I'm eating healthy food, and I wasn't any better off eating those problematic things." So 'that's not my food' is a big phrase that I try to instill in people. Owning what you eat and enjoy that is healthy for you and releasing the things that aren't healthy and don't work well for your body.

Megan [00:51:08] Thank you so much, Terri. I think we're definitely going to have to have you back very soon to answer a ton of these eating questions because I think we have just sort of opened the box for so many individuals and just sort of like glimpsed on deprivation and Nadia has got some amazing questions for you on the food topic. But thank you so much for joining us today.

[00:51:30] Now, in addition to thefastingmethod.com, where can people find out about what you're up to? I know you've got a podcast and it's one of the podcasts that I listen to religiously every week, and my time doesn't permit me to listen to many, but it's a must-listen on my Apple Podcasts lists. So where can people find you and learn more about your podcast?

Terri [00:51:54] It would be at Monday Mindset podcast, and it's one that I do with Daisy Brackenhall, who also has the Keto Woman podcast. So Megan, I'll make sure to include that for you all to put in the show notes, but any other podcasts that I've been a guest on, different topics. I do a monthly episode with Daisy on Keto Woman, and we're talking about Mindset Matters. So just different places that people might catch some different messages from me. I'll be sure to include that.

Megan [00:52:23] Thank you, Terri. And a special shout-out to Daisy. This podcast - The Fasting Method podcast - would not be possible at all without her expertise and helping coordinate us, educate us, support us, edit us, [laughs] make sure that people can hear us through the various platforms. So Daisy - she's an incredible resource on fasting, low-carb, ketogenic diets. So definitely check out Monday mindset. Check out Keto Woman podcast. Fantastic stuff from Daisy and from Terri.

[00:52:56] Well, thank you so much, ladies and everybody listening today. Just a reminder - it's not too late to join Fasting February. Head over to thefastingmethod.com to learn more about our Community and our coaching program. And we will see you next time, everyone. Bye for now.