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Megan [00:00:06] Before we get started with today's episode, I would like to quickly read you our podcast disclaimer.

[00:00:13] This podcast is for educational purposes only, and it is not a substitute for professional care by a doctor or other qualified medical professional. You should always speak with your physician or other healthcare professionals before doing any fasting, changing your diet in any way, taking or adjusting any medications or supplements, or adopting any treatment plan for a health problem.

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[00:01:13] All right. And now we'll get started with today's episode.

Terri [00:01:19] Hello and welcome back to another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. This is Dr. Terri Lance and I am doing a solo episode. So it's a Friday evening and I am in my office alone to get this podcast episode recorded so that it can get edited and put out in time.

[00:01:38] So I asked, today, in a meeting in The Fasting Method Community for some ideas - things that people wanted to hear more about or things that people were struggling with in this journey. And as most of you listeners know, I do some episodes that are specifics about fasting but more and more, my topics are about mindset and behaviors. And one of the things we talk about a lot in The Fasting Method Community is about building habits. And one of the really important steps to building habits is to celebrate, to celebrate the small steps. Many of us are used to celebrating the big outcome, the big goal, the big event, and we struggle much more with celebrating on a smaller scale. And I was thinking about this after it came up in my group. Someone talked about it and talked about some difficulty they were having around celebrating a birthday, celebrating themselves. And it really reminded me that this is a huge topic that many people, when I talk about celebrating things that they're working on accomplishing or just celebrating themselves, you almost see a blank look come over their face like they don't know what I mean, or they don't know how to do it. And so I thought it would be a great thing to share with you.

[00:03:08] I think that, at this time of year, many people across the world have some type of something that they're celebrating. It might be the change of seasons. It might be a religious or spiritual holiday. It might be community things. It might be-- for some people, it's a New Year coming. So there-- people often are celebrating big things (like I said, holidays or big events) and that is one definition of celebration, but I think it's important to look at some other ways of celebrating or other things that we're referring to as far as celebrations. So, yes, I was a former English teacher, so I pulled up the dictionary and the word 'celebrate' means to acknowledge. And you can acknowledge something with a social gathering or an enjoyable activity. And then another definition of the word 'celebrate' is to perform publicly a ritual or a ceremony, or something that you're acknowledging publicly to other people.

[00:04:17] So how does this relate to celebrating yourself? I found this definition on someone's website and I really liked the way she talked about it. And she said that basically we're talking about self-celebration (again, something most of us aren't very familiar with), and it's really about celebrating the person that you are. And many of us struggle because we aren't fully comfortable with the person that we are. We are on this journey to improve our health or to lose excess body fat, and so we aren't really accepting of. And so we might feel like, "Why would I celebrate the person that I am?" But, really, self-celebration is about celebrating you as you are now, not who you will be when you accomplish a goal or when you conquer something, not the person that you wish you could be, but actually celebrating the person that you are now. Accepting and encouraging and empowering yourself in this moment - that's what it means to celebrate.

[00:05:26] When you celebrate someone else, you are telling them, "I see you." "I believe in you." "I enjoy things about you." "I'm excited for you." So again, you're doing this to encourage and empower them and help them see this positive in themselves. So this is exactly what we want to do for ourselves when it comes to celebration.

[00:05:50] And you can celebrate who you are any time, any place, and for any reason. One of the things that you might be experiencing or you might recognize in listening to others, even, is that many of us did not learn to celebrate ourselves. Instead, we actually learned almost the opposite. We learned that maybe to celebrate us was being boastful, bragging, that it was self-centered, that it was inappropriate - there are other people struggling or other people suffering. And I've talked with a number of clients about this who grew up in a family that did not celebrate each other, didn't teach anyone how to celebrate themselves, and maybe even went without any celebrations because they might have been living in a war-torn country or during political unrest, and to celebrate would be really disrespectful in some way. So unfortunately, an individual coming out of that learned that celebrating themselves was not even an option. It's not even something they didn't do, it was like there was a void. You just-- you wouldn't even be celebrating.

[00:07:04] Many of us didn't have other people that modeled celebrating themselves. We might have heard a parent or loved one who was self-critical, who, you know, never felt like they lived up to some expectations or something. And so instead we saw this. We didn't see them celebrating themselves. We saw them being critical or knocking themselves down. And then others of us also may have been in families or environments where we didn't have demonstrated to us that we were deserving of celebration, that it was something that other people earned and that we had not earned. And so I think these are all ways that kind of contribute to why some of us struggle with celebrating ourselves. We've learned that it's inappropriate to do, it's boastful, it's bragging, or that we're not deserving.

[00:08:03] And one of the things that I think is so important for so many of us in this journey is to kind of challenge that notion of what does it mean to deserve something. I can think of in a negative way, like, "Oh, you get what you deserve," you know, "You put that energy out there and you got what was coming to you," but we often don't really have a good sense of what is in our right to have or to experience. And I think, for many of us, celebrations fall in this. We learned that it was not in our place to celebrate ourselves. So this episode is really to encourage you to change that if it's something that you have noticed or, as I'm talking about it, you become aware that you don't celebrate yourself or that you struggle to do so.

[00:08:58] Sometimes when we talk about creating a new habit, people are concerned that maybe they're too old to learn that new habit. You know, I guess maybe they think it's like a dog that can't learn new tricks. But I want to really challenge you to think about we can learn new things and we can create new habits. So if you are not one that has ever learned to celebrate yourself or to feel comfortable doing so, I want to encourage you that you can learn to do this and you can get more comfortable with it.

[00:09:31] Now, I equated this to a current factor in my life. I recently moved to a skiing area and it is winter here, lots of snow and cold. Growing up and throughout most of my adult life, I never learned to ski. No one in my family skis or skied when I was growing up. No one modeled it for me. I lived in Michigan. There was plenty of snow, but no one really close to me did skiing. My friends didn't ski, most people I knew, even in my school, were not big into skiing. It was kind of rare and so I didn't learn that this was a normal activity. It wasn't supported, it wasn't demonstrated, and so I didn't learn. And now, in my 50s, I've decided I want to learn to ski. I want to learn this new practice. I want to enjoy this. And one of the big things for me is recognizing that other people know how to ski. Other people think it's normal to do. Other people do it on a regular basis and invest time and energy in learning how and going places. I can too. So I really want to challenge you, if you are someone who struggles with celebrating yourself, to please open up your your mind and your energy to the idea that it's something that you can learn.

[00:10:59] So what do I mean by celebrating yourself? It might sound a little weird. And it's okay. For many of us it is going to sound weird and it's going to feel weird at first, but by celebrating something-- when you celebrate someone else, as I mentioned earlier, it is your vote of confidence in them. It is you sharing, you know, let's say your friend won recognition in their work and you celebrate them. You send them a card or you take them out for a celebration or you clap for them. What you're saying to them is, "This is amazing. Congratulations. You did it. I'm so proud of you. The work you put into this really shows." It is a vote of confidence. It is a pat on the back. It is, you know, kind of a high five. It's that type of a sentiment. And so how do we do that for ourselves? How do we tell ourselves, "I believe in you." "I've got you." "I'm impressed with what you've done." "I'm excited for what you're learning or accomplishing." How do you let yourself know, "Good work. Nice job."

[00:12:18] So some of us need to actually think about some behavior, some actual activities we can do that would indicate celebrating ourselves. So this can be something like taking a long bath, taking time out of your night or weekend to just be in a luxurious bath and be warm and comfortable, and maybe listening to something, or reading, or just relaxing. This may be a way to celebrate you, to honor yourself with this special activity. For some of you, it might be reading your favorite book or listening to your favorite music. When you're struggling and you need to feel good, what do you do? You allow yourself to do these activities that feel good. So let's celebrate with those same activities. It might mean taking some time out for things that make you happy. This is a great way to show yourself some love, to say, again, "I've got you. Nice job. Way to go." This might mean, you know, going to a show, or getting a massage, or watching a funny video, or something that you enjoy doing.

[00:13:40] For some people, a way to celebrate yourself is to buy yourself something or engage in an activity that you wouldn't normally. So I used the example of getting a massage. Going to a new experience, buying yourself something. And for me, sometimes this can be something really little. It doesn't have to be a big monetary investment. But when I'm out and about, if I just buy something little that says, "Hey, I'm thinking about you." Now, of course I'm giving it to myself, but I know I feel good when someone else is

out and comes home and says, "Oh, look, I brought this for you," so I do that for myself. Like I said, it does not have to be an expensive item. For me, it might even be buying a new book. I get very excited when I hear a client or someone in our Community talk about a book that they found really useful. I get very excited. I'm celebrating this by going into Audible and purchasing that book so that I can learn that material too.

[00:14:48] Other ways that some people might celebrate is to do something physical. And again, some of us feel very self-conscious and might need to practice this, but doing things like clapping your hands, doing a little dance, getting a little, you know, movement going on. Think of when people do like a victory dance. Doing that when you recognize, "Hey, I just completed a 40-hour fast or a 42-hour fast," and you do a little bit of a dance right there in the kitchen before you break your fast. That's a great way to celebrate. Maybe celebrating, for you, looks like smiling and saying something affirming to yourself. I would love it if that would be an audible thing that you actually say out loud so that you hear it, you hear your voice saying these positive things about you. But let's say, for example, I'm in a public space and I need that kind of moment of celebrating and maybe I don't feel quite right saying something really affirming to myself out loud in front of all of these people, I can just say it internally. But that is a form of celebrating, acknowledging that this is what we do to celebrate other people so same thing we can do for ourselves.

[00:16:07] Now, I mentioned earlier a high five and I have done two podcast episodes about this topic. And those of you who listen to the Monday Mindset podcast, you may have heard one probably about a year and a half or so ago, and there's another one coming out soon, that is all about this concept or this practice of high-fiving yourself in the mirror. What a great way to celebrate you. Set your intention for the day, celebrate yourself, high five. In this podcast episode, I talked about one of the things that Mel Robbins (the one who was talking about) it shared, is that raising our hands up (I guess unless you're raising your hands because you know you're being arrested or something), raising your hands up is actually a celebratory activity. If you think about it, when you're on a roller coaster and it's really exciting, what do people do? They raise their hands in the air. What do you do when your team wins the championship? You all raise your hands up together. So raising our hands up is actually a physical act of celebrating. It's a positive energy exchange. And so when you high five yourself, you are affirming yourself. You're raising your hand up. This physical activity helps. And the thing about doing it in the mirror is that you're looking at yourself. You're really somehow communicating, "I am excited about you." "I'm supporting you." "I believe in you." "I think you've done a great job." These are the things that we high five other people about, "Nice job," and we, you know, throw our hand in the air. This is what we want to do for ourselves.

[00:18:00] The other thing I was thinking about when it comes to celebrating yourself is-- so far I've been talking all about how you can celebrate you, but it also made me think about the fact that some of us struggle with letting other people celebrate us. Now, you might recognize yourself here in that you may be someone who has a very hard time accepting a compliment. If you think about it, a compliment is really a way of someone celebrating you. And if someone says to you, "Wow, you did a great job on that," and you say, "Oh, not really. I didn't do as well as I should have," you are basically shutting out their celebration of you. You're not accepting it and basically kind of rejecting it. And I get it. Many of us, again, if we didn't learn that celebrating ourselves was okay and that other people celebrating us was a good thing, this was not a common practice. So sometimes we find it challenging because we haven't learned to accept positive things from other people about us, if they compliment us, if they point out something that we've done well, or if they get excited for us. We haven't learned to accept this and sometimes it's because we

don't feel deserving of it, we don't feel deserving of a compliment. If someone says, "Oh, you did so great on that," we point out how we did not-so-well on three other things. So we are judging ourselves harshly by taking that positive feedback about the other accomplishment or thing that we've done. We look over here at the things to be critical about ourselves. So thinking about how you allow other people to celebrate you, I think is also really important in learning to celebrate yourself. They both require some acceptance of, "I am worthy of this," "I am worthy of good things," "I'm worthy of feeling good'," "I'm worthy of praise," "I'm worthy of someone recognizing positive things in me," "I'm worthy of someone believing in me and trusting in my abilities."

[00:20:29] So what I want to encourage you to do is to start practicing letting in as much as you can when other people try to celebrate you, whether that's through a compliment, or with a gift, or, you know, just a high five, or one of these other things. And what I encourage you to do is start to practice just saying, "Thank you." Don't deny their compliment or their positive feedback. Don't minimize it, don't discount it. Just start to practice hearing it, taking it in, and saying, "Thank you." Kind of wrap yourself up in it. It's like a little physical hug when someone gives you that positive feedback, or that high five, or claps your hand, or something. So see if you can kind of wrap yourself up in the positive intention of that and hear it as a positive thing. Take it in, feel it as a positive thing.

[00:21:30] I'll say one other thing about celebrating ourselves that comes up for many people in our Community and in our listening community, and that is that some of us did learn some ways to celebrate ourselves and others and events but it was all wrapped up in food. And I really want to encourage-- I'm not saying that we should never celebrate with food. I totally get it, food holds a special place for many of us as far as celebrations go, but what I really want to encourage is, when you accomplish something that you've been working toward or when you kind of want that vote of confidence for yourself, I really encourage, as much as possible, not to use food for that because I really want all of us to start to learn there are so many ways to celebrate ourselves and to feel good. And for many of us, problematic food and eating has become a way to celebrate and yet it's actually interfering. It's holding us back from reaching some of our goals, holding us back from being healthier, maybe. And so I really just want to encourage, as you think about the concept of celebrating yourself, as I've been talking about it, as much as possible, I want to encourage you not to celebrate yourself with food. As I said, I get it. You're going to celebrate some holidays and food will be involved. You're going to celebrate some events with family or friends or colleagues, and food will be involved. But particularly when it comes to celebrating yourself, I really want to encourage you to stretch yourself to learn other ways to do it, that it's not wrapped up in food.

[00:23:27] All right. So over the past month, you have heard Megan, and Nadia, and me, and combinations talk about a lot of things about going through this time of year. Megan and I talked about consistency. Nadia and I talked about how you can keep your therapeutic fasting going, even during a busy season or a holiday season. A lot of interesting questions and answers in an episode with Nadia about food and how you choose certain foods and things. So lots of the episodes coming up these past few weeks and months have all been about what we're all doing at this time of year. What we are going to be doing for these next couple of weeks is celebrating some time away from the podcast, but we will still be here. So there will be a couple of repeat episodes between the holidays, and the Bitesize episodes in those weeks will also be segments from a previous episode, just to kind of replay that for you and really emphasize something that we wanted to share.

[00:24:45] So I hope that you enjoy this busy time. I hope that, if this is a time of year that you are celebrating holidays, that that is going well for you and that you enjoy this time. I hope everyone is continuing to focus on feeling well and enjoying themselves in this journey, most importantly, practicing celebrating yourself. And then we will be back in the New Year. Hopefully all three of us will be back in an episode if we can work that timing, but then also Megan and Nadia will be back more regularly, so we're looking forward to the New Year and lots of new discussions with you then. Until then, take good care. Happy fasting.