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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.

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

Terri [00:01:19] Welcome to a new episode of The Fasting Method podcast. This is Terri Lance and I am joined by my co-host, Dr. Nadia Pateguana. How are you, Nadia?

Nadia [00:01:30] Doing great. Can't wait to put you in the hot seat again today.

Terri [00:01:34] Yes, I'm looking forward to it. So in this episode, we're going to cover a hot topic that we have teased people that we would cover and kept not covering so we will cover it today. We're going to talk about self-sabotage and then Nadia is going to cover a question that has been sent in from a listener. So we also will get one of your questions answered today.

Nadia [00:01:57] So this week I was reminded in one of our Community meetings, by a couple of people, that Terri and I promised, I guess in another podcast, to tackle this hot topic - self-sabotage. And I remember talking to Terri about this, and I remember Terri saying it was such a big topic that we would need-- kind of like our TRE-- and I think everything else-- it seems like every time you and I get together, Terri, to talk about anything, it's one of those, 'to be continued'. So let's see how much we can get through today because it certainly is a hot topic. It's one that I often feel like, even though I've coached for many, many years and I've been a naturopath for 20 years, it's one that I still feel like I could learn quite a bit about in how to help facilitate people's journeys, healing journeys. So self-sabotage. Can you tell us more about this? I'm honestly, as a listener, I'm eager to learn and listen.

Terri [00:02:46] All right. Self-sabotage is one of my favorite topics. It's one of those topics that, to me, feels like it has lots of loose edges. Everyone says it and I think sometimes it's such a big topic that we don't even know what all we are encompassing or what to do about it. And so to me, that's one of the biggest things, is understanding it a little bit, but then figuring out how it's at play for us.

[00:03:14] So it probably goes without saying but self-sabotage is when we get in our own way, when we are the barrier to doing what we plan to do or have committed to do. And I think you and I mentioned this in a previous episode, Nadia, but one of the things I think is so vital for everyone to recognize with self-sabotage is it is not a flaw in you when you do

it. Many, many people come to our community, come to coaching sessions and say, "Ah, Terri, I just-- I don't understand. I know what to do. I'm committed to doing it and then I don't do it. Why do I do that to myself?" And so what I want to remind everyone, and I'll probably say this more than once today, but everyone engages in self-sabotage. Even the most successful people, at times, engage in self-sabotage. So rather than just getting frustrated with yourself, more, what I invite you to do is think about, "Hmm, this is a mechanism that happens for everyone. How is it happening for me and how can I work with it so that it doesn't disrupt me so much?"

[00:04:24] Now, those people who are listening, who are also members of our Community, know that I talk about a lot of books, and many people in our Community joke that they have to buy a couple of extra bookcases for all the books that we talk about. But I do want to mention some specific books today because, for listeners who maybe aren't already in our Community and haven't been listening to these discussions, you might need a kind of a launch with some books. So in thinking about self-sabotage, I think for a lot of us it's helpful to have some type of a kind of central concept of what's going on. And I think, in general, there are different beliefs about what's happening and different authors write about the same thing, but they write about it from a different angle. So I'm going to talk about some common ways that we talk about self-sabotage in our Community.

[00:05:22] The first is to really think about is it is something coming from within our brain that's not really our conscious brain. It's not our personality, it's not our adult self, it's not our rational, reasoning brain (which is the prefrontal cortex, kind of the motherboard of our laptop of a brain). Instead, it's a lower part of our brain. That lower part of the brain contains the amygdala, and the amygdala is the fight-or-flight center in our brain. It's about the shape of an almond and it's what causes us to jump when we see a stick on the ground because we thought it was a snake or, you know, we hear a loud bang and our heart starts beating really quickly and we look around really fast. That's the amygdala getting our body ready to act. The problem is that we face a lot of things in our daily lives that activate this center of our brain, but we actually don't need fight-or-flight. Like if someone's at work and they have a difficult conversation with their boss, they don't need to go into fight-or-flight, but this part of the brain gets activated.

[00:06:45] Different authors talk about it in different ways. One way that people talk about it is that this is more-- you could kind of think of it as your emotional brain, that you experience things through this and then that kind of informs your thoughts. A book that I always recommend, related to this concept, is a book by an author named Julie Simon and the book is called 'When Food Is Comfort'. She does a great job in this book in breaking it down that when you are wanting that snack food or eating outside of your fasting windows, that it's oftentimes because you've had an emotional response, an emotional trigger. And that emotional brain, if you think of it-- and for some of us, it's like our younger self. It's like a kid. Some people would call it their toddler, but it's like a kid having an emotional response and it wants to meet the emotional response. How does it learn to do that? Going to the cupboard and getting some cookies, eating a muffin, having some potato chips, or just eating rather than fasting. So what happens is we need to actually get in touch with this part of ourselves to understand, "I'm walking to the cabinet right now, not because I need food-- and most people will say, "I know I'm not doing it because I'm actually hungry." We're going to the cupboard because we're having an emotional need. And the way that so many of us (I would almost say all of us) have learned to address some of our emotional needs is through food. It's easily accessible for most of us, it's pleasing, it meets lots of needs, and for a moment it meets the emotional need. So if I'm

bored and I go get those problematic foods, I'm not bored for a minute. Now all of a sudden I'm bored again and now I go grab another snack or something.

[00:08:49] So thinking about it in that way - it's our emotional brain and that we need to learn how to identify what is the actual emotional need and then how will I address it? So let's say, for example, I get out of a meeting and I'm really nervous about a project that's coming up. So I'm having a fear response and I'm having a nervous reaction, and I go to the refrigerator to grab some food. I'm kind of looking at it as, "I'm going to become less nervous if I eat food," versus, "How can I become less scared? Do I need to process this with a colleague? Do I need to write my concerns and discuss them with my boss? Do I need to look back on other projects and how well I did on them? How can I meet this fear response and manage it effectively?" It's a fear response in this example, it's not a need-for-food response. It's certainly not a need-for-a-muffin response, but that's often how we respond to it. So I highly recommend this book for those times when you feel like it's more of an emotional need so that you can learn a process of checking in with that emotional part of you, that younger self, and say, "Hey, I'm here with you. I can help sort this out. I can help address this need rather than go to the problematic food." So that's one way of looking at it.

Nadia [00:10:18] It's interesting that you mention this book, and I'm not exactly sure when this particular episode is going to air but, currently, in The Fasting Method Community, Coach Lisa is addressing this book - in the book club, in our TFM book club. And I know that probably a great lot of the books that Lisa has gone over with our Community in the book club have been books that you've recommended around our relationship with food and our rea-- and it's been really, really educational. I know this is a great one and I know this is one either they're still doing in the book club-- If anybody listening in wants to check it out, it's a great opportunity. Unfortunately, the book club meetings are not recorded, for privacy reasons, so you basically have to join in live. So a little birdie just told me that Coach Lisa is actually doing this book in the book club for two whole months. So if you're listening in and you still want to catch some of that, please join our Community in the book club meetings with Coach Lisa. Okay, Terri, tell us more.

Terri [00:11:18] All right. Another way to think about, "Why do I sabotage myself? Why do I engage in a behavior?" And in this case, food behavior. "Eating problematic food or eating when I'm planning to be fasting. Why do I do that?" Another group of people talk about it as kind of an animal brain. Again, going back to that image. People listening can't see but whenever I talk about this, I use my hands because the lower brain might be referred to by some people as the lizard brain. It's an old, primitive brain. Again, the fight-or-flight mechanism was really helpful to have when you were in danger of being eaten by a lion, you had to get out of the way, but we don't have many of those same threats to us anymore.

[00:12:04] So thinking about this lizard brain, two authors that have written books that we talk a lot about in our Community. One is Glen Livingston, and his book is called 'Never Binge Again'. And it's not actually about binge eating disorder. It's really just about eating outside of your food plan. And then another book called 'Brain Over Binge' by Kathryn Hansen. Hers really was about binge eating disorder because she struggled with binge eating disorder and resolved it by using this way of thinking. "This impulse to eat this food, to eat outside of my plan is an impulse coming from this lower brain, but that lower brain is not the one that gets to call the shots. I hear it, but I don't have to act on it." And so both Glen Livingston and Kathryn Hansen in their books really give great models of kind of how to think about this and how to respond to it.

[00:13:03] So thinking about when you have that impulse to go grab that food, or it's just out of habit that it gets to be 8 o'clock at night and this is what you do, I think for some of us, it's helpful to recognize that's not you in your rational brain. Your rational brain wants to reach your health goal. It wants to reach your weight-loss school and you know eating at that point is not going to help you get there. That's not questioned. It's whether that brain is really online and paying attention at the time or is that sneaky-snake, lizard brain taking over and kind of bullying you to get the food? In 'Never Binge Again' he talks about this part of our brain, he refers to it as the pig and he talks about when it's screaming out commands to us, he calls that pig squeal. And for some people, they don't like that reference and so they refer to it as something else. I refer to it as Jabba the Hutt. I just picture Jabba the Hutt is telling me, "Oh, we need this now." And then I go get it. I have to learn not to listen. I don't have to act on what Jabba the Hutt tells me. But for many people it's important to recognize, if I don't stay present, that pig or Jabba the Hutt, whatever I call it, has more freedom to take over. And it's going to bully you. It's going to lie to you. It's going to find every Achilles' heel, weak spot that you have and use it against you. It's going to say, "You know you've never succeeded that this before. You're not going to make it this time." "Oh, I might as well go get a muffin then." It's going to-- sometimes it's going to sweet talk you and it's going to say, "Nadia, this has been a really long, hard day. It's okay. You actually deserve a brownie. You can get back to your TRE and the right foods tomorrow." It's real gentle and sweet, it's like the fairy godmother voice. But it's deceiving you. It's tricking you to do what it wants, and it wants your rational brain not to catch up on this, not to pick up on this, and just ignore it and do what it wants.

[00:15:20] So this concept, I think, is really important for people to look at, and one of the reasons I love this book so much. And then in 'Brain over Binge', Kathryn Hansen doesn't use that same image, but she does talk about messages from that lower brain. She actually-- they both actually got their concept from another book called 'Rational Recovery' and he talks about in that book, it's our addictive voice. It's that brain saying, "You have to eat this or you're not going to feel better. The only way you can get through this evening is if you have some snack food. The only way you can handle this tragic event is if you eat this problematic food." It's an impulse and sometimes people say, "I know, but it's such a strong impulse. I can't resist it," or, "I'm not good at resisting impulses." And I say that is hokey for most of us because we don't act on impulses all day. You probably have lots of impulses throughout the day that you navigate by not doing it. Like, have you ever-- sometimes I shouldn't even admit these things, but have you ever talked to someone and they're so irritating that you just want to, like, you know, put your hand on their face to make them stop or something? But you don't because that's not socially acceptable. You would hurt their feelings, whatever. So you don't. Many people might have an impulse when they wake up in the morning, "Ugh, I don't really feel like going to work today," but you get up, you get ready, and you go. So if I can look at this impulse to have this snack food in that same way, I can hear the impulse, but I don't have to act on it. And it sounds like a really oversimplification of the process but, in some ways, it really is. I have the impulse. I choose not to act on it. So another great book. That one is 'Brain Over Binge'.

[00:17:16] And then there are a couple of books that look at it a little differently and talk about actual self-sabotage as the concept that they're covering. And one is a book by an author named Judy Ho, and that is called 'Stop Self-Sabotage'. And she actually goes through what are the reasons we self-sabotage? And almost like, Nadia, you might, primarily for this reason and this reason, but I might self-sabotage for this other reason. And so she kind of has you go through a little bit of a quiz to figure out, "What is my pattern of self-sabotage?" and then, "What can I do about that?"

[00:17:53] Well, I haven't read that book. I probably should, based on the question that I actually had here for you, which was-- I think at the beginning of this you said that-- and correct me if I'm saying this wrong because I actually want to write it down, but I think you said that we look at self-sabotage-- when we self-sabotage, we look at it as a personal flaw (I think you said that) and it's not a personal flaw. I think by that I'm assuming that you're saying that everyone at some point self-sabotages. It's not-- it's certainly human. But it seems like it and so I'm kind of asking this, but it seems like maybe some people either feel like they self-sabotage more than others, or some people actually do self-sabotage more than others. And if so, if that's true, do we have any idea why certain people self-sabotage? And so I guess what you're saying, but I want to hear it from you, of course-- I guess what you're saying is that this author has gone over that it would be very individual. Like, there's many different reasons why we self-sabotage and you can actually figure out what your-- the reason, the root cause of your own-- maybe that's important to figure out?

Terri [00:18:57] She actually talks about four. For example, one of the reasons we learn to self-sabotage is we hold on to a limiting belief. So let's say, for example, we learned (growing up from someone in our family) that everyone in our family is just overweight, it's just what happens to you. I you look at maybe a certain side of the family, everyone is very overweight and so you learn there's no stopping it. "I am going to be overweight because, look, this whole side of my family is." So you have this limiting belief that, "Healthy body weight is not available to me. My family did not get that gene and I am just cursed and I'm going to be overweight." So when I decide to join The Fasting Method and I start fasting and eating the right food, pretty simply, my brain's going to say, "Well, Terri, you know that doesn't work for you. You know that that's not what's going to work. Your family can't be at healthy body weight. Go ahead and eat that food."

[00:20:02] So that's just an example. She has four, and if you go through and do the quiz, you can kind of see, "Ah, I tend to self-sabotage because of my limiting beliefs," or, "I tend to self-sabotage for this." And then you can start identifying how it happens for you and what to do about it.

[00:20:22] And then another book in a similar vein is called 'The Self-Sabotage Behavior Workbook' by an author named Candice Seti. She talks about this as your saboteur, and I love her concept of, kind of, thinking about, there is part of your brain that is actually set up to hold you back. And lots of us think, "That makes no sense. I want to get that part removed. Why did I develop this part?" But the reality is, kind of, developmentally, our body is set up, our brain is designed for survival, not for pursuit of happiness, not for peace, love, and connection, which I value highly. It's set up for survival. And lots of things that we do move us towards survival or interfere with survival. And when we decide we want to do something different ("I'm going to start doing this,"), this part of the brain says, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no!" Change means threat. Change means potential, "We're not going to make it. Don't change that."

[00:21:32] So I thought of giving an example here. Let's say, for example (I listened to a podcast-- I actually did a podcast on this topic - people pleasing.), I say, "Oh, I know I'm a people pleaser. I really don't want to keep being a people pleaser, but, ugh, I just-- it's what I always do." So we learn about it, we get ready to change it, and the next thing someone says, "Hey, can you do this for me?" And you're like, "Sure." And then you're like, "Oh, shoot, I wasn't going to do people-pleasing behavior, but I just did it again. Why is that?"

[00:22:08] Well, way back, ancestrally, in our brain, your survival depended on being with other people. You know, if we talk about when someone had to go out and kill a beast for everyone to eat? If you got excommunicated from your tribe or your group, you weren't going to get food. You were going to die. So, not people-pleasing = threatening.

[00:22:31] Now, I'm not saying we all should become people pleasers for this reason, but if you really look at it, we have a mechanism in our brain that doesn't want us to grow and change and evolve. It wants us to stay safely stuck. And many people think, "Terri, I have carried an extra 100 pounds for 25 years. Of course, I want to change that." That part of your brain says, "Hmm, we've already learned how to do this. We're good." It doesn't think logically like, "Hmm, 100 pounds excess weight might not be good for my survival." It feels the change is too threatening, so it prevents you from changing the behavior. This is the part that says, "Huh, it's kind of uncomfortable to fast. I don't like that hunger feeling. You have to go eat." It's that instinctive, survival mechanism.

[00:23:28] In this whole thing on self-sabotage, one of the big things that we end up talking a lot about in our Community is fear of success. And usually when I say it, and I've said it before in here, people are like, "Terri, that's crazy. I, of course, want to succeed. If I say I want to lose 50 pounds, why are you saying I wouldn't want to lose 50 pounds?" Part of our brain is fearful that if we succeed, something bad could happen, like what if I'm in a family where everyone is obese and I lose all of my excess fat? Will I be accepted in my family? Will I be invited to their gatherings where we eat lots of problematic food? What if I have some negative things that I've learned about the safety of my body? And I learned that when I weigh under 200 pounds, bad things happen to me. And now at 280 pounds, I can't wait to get under 200 pounds. And as I get closer to it, I start sabotaging myself. And again, it's that question like, "Why would I do that? I'm getting close to my goal. I'm at 215." Part of our survival brain is getting scared because it's holding on to the fact that negative things happen at under 200 pounds.

[00:24:54] So if you really dig into some of these things, you're not crazy that you're sabotaging yourself. It's a protective mechanism. So we need to be able to explore, "What is my sabotage about?" And it's not going to be exactly the same. You and I sabotage for different reasons, Nadia. And being willing to explore that. The hard part is we have to *actively* explore it. Getting some of these books would be a great start. When you find yourself standing in front of the refrigerator, pause and ask, "What am I thinking? What am I feeling? What's going on inside of me?" Sometimes we don't even know what we're feeling, but if you pay attention, "Hmm. My fists are clenched and my chest is tight. Oh, I'm really tense. Huh! Is that why I'm standing here at the refrigerator?" We can start to get out of our own way and stop the sabotage behaviors.

Nadia [00:25:58] This is really interesting. You mentioned something that I find in-- so over the last 20 years, I find this to be a repetitive pattern, but now I understand that it is probably very different for each individual that I work with. But one thing that I see over and over again is this self-sabotage around the 200-pound mark. People talk a lot about the 200-pound mark, right? Getting to-- what is it, Onederland, they call it, or whatever? They talk about this a lot. So for people that are overweight, have been overweight, have been in overweight communities, this is something that-- I don't know if it's become like a Community thing - a bond, or a joke or, you know, inside joke or whatever - but this Onederland business has been talked about over and over. What I find when I'm coaching somebody one-on-one, is that I start to notice a pattern where people start to self-sabotage at around this 200-pound mark. And I used to think-- because I don't have the skills and I don't really have this background, it's all about practical recommendations

and plans and, you know, how to make it work with me. But I used to think that-- I at some point realized, through talking to you in our Community, I used to think, "Okay, people self-sabotage at around 200 pounds." And it made sense to me, at some point learning, that it was these limiting beliefs. I thought everybody self-sabotaged at around 200 pounds, or the people that did self-sabotage around 200 pounds, because they just did not believe that they would ever be in Onederland again, that they would ever weigh less than 200 pounds. They had told themselves, or somebody had told them and they believed it, limiting beliefs that they will not. But now I'm starting to see your point, is that maybe some, that's what's causing it. It's the limiting belief. They just don't believe that they're going to go-- they start to self-sabotage unconsciously, subconsciously, based on this limiting belief. "I will never be less than 200 pounds," and they start to eat whatever it is and throw TRE and therapeutic fasting out the window.

[00:28:00] But now you're telling me something else. And this I've also picked up, although it's a little bit more challenging to even think about and to deal with. A lot of people have had some trauma, some abuse, and maybe being under 200 pounds makes them feel like they will be in danger and, you know, putting on weight and this 'fat suit', as some people may call it, has been protective. And so that's only two reasons. And you're telling me there's probably four, or maybe even more, reasons why people self-sabotage and that we have to actively find what our own reason is. And maybe-- could one person have more than one reason, maybe?

Terri [00:28:42] Absolutely. Even in Judy Ho's book, 'Stop Self-Sabotage', you might do it for all four reasons that she talks about. And so it's really important just to see-- like when I took that quiz, I don't remember the other ones right now, but, like, one of them wasn't as prevalent for me. It just wasn't-- that wasn't why I get in my own way, but the other ones really rang true to me.

[00:29:04] The other thing that you brought up, Nadia, that we talk a lot about in my meetings is for many people carrying excess weight (like you described it, some people actually describe it as a 'fat suit'), it becomes an invisibility cloak. "I don't get certain attention that I don't want. I'm not noticed." So let's say, for example, I have some relationship fears. Well, if I feel like I'm wearing an invisibility cloak, I'm not worried that anyone's going to see me and want to flirt with me, or date me, or give me inappropriate comments if I'm in an invisibility cloak.

[00:29:47] So there are so many reasons and I think of this one also when you talk about the topic of fear of success. It's still a new topic for a lot of people because it kind of contradicts what they think is logical. But also, if I get there, "What pressure will be on me then?" "What else will I expect of myself?" or, "What will others expect of me?" or, "What will it take to stay there?" So some of us, and I think for a lot of people that Onederland example comes through here. "I'm a little nervous that if I get to 175, how will I stay there?" and, "I've not been able to stay there before, so I might as well stop right here at 210." So just this pressure, this concern about the stability of reaching that goal and what pressure might I feel then? So it's really about digging in. What are our limiting beliefs? Anything about reaching my goal that might feel like pressure or feel scary or threatening to me?

Nadia [00:30:54] I've also heard people say the opposite. So for sure, putting on that fat suit as protection from abuse that they've encountered in the past, but I've seen and heard the opposite. You know, those larger-than-life personalities? There are some people that I think when they were younger, maybe they were ignored or, you know, didn't have whatever it was, the attention that they needed. And so I have talked to people, I've

worked with people that feel like the bigger they become, physically, the more room they also take up, right? They come into a room and they command attention, you know, they talk louder than everyone else. And so I've seen the opposite as well - that people feel like if they get smaller, they will just become less important or less noticed or won't be taken as seriously.

Terri [00:31:44] Absolutely. And this goes back to the idea of kind of how will this change my identity? How I navigate this world? So if I think about navigating this life in a smaller body, how might that feel threatening? How might I not fit in with certain people if I'm larger? How does that affect how I navigate this life, positively or negatively, either way? I think your point is really important, Nadia. It's, "I know myself to be this way and I'm benefiting from being this way in some way." "I take up more space. That's a power thing for me," or, "I take up less space and that's a safety thing for me." And again, how does it help me with connecting with people? If this is somehow going to mean my friends don't invite me out because I no longer do the same behaviors they do, I don't want to lose that. That's threatening. So having to look at all of these underlying pieces and, obviously, we can't look at all of it at one time, but just letting our self-sabotage behavior be something that we observe, get real curious about rather than get mad at ourselves and do blaming. Just to get real curious and explore, see if we can understand it so that we can help ourselves do it differently.

Nadia [00:33:11] So, Terri, I told you I had two questions for you. I asked one. My other question [laughs], you sort of just answered because me, like everybody else, I want that magic pill, right? I want that quick fix. And so my question was-- it was the second part to my first question, which was, you know, are there some people that self-sabotage more? And if so, why? And we already know that people self-sabotage for a number of reasons - four different or maybe even more. And then the second part of the question was, can we learn how to spot why we do it or when we're doing it? Can we prevent it? Can we fix it? Can we stop this? And I think that what you're saying to us is that we all-- it's $n=1$. We all have to go on this individual sort of journey and we must actively figure this out. Actively-- you actually said we must actively explore all of this - how to identify why we self-sabotage and what to do about it. But it's possible, right?

Terri [00:34:05] Absolutely. And especially if you go back to the kind of underpinning concepts that I shared. All of those parts of our brain are kind of hidden from us. We hear this messaging or we act in a certain way without recognizing why we're doing it. And so we just assume, "Well, I'm the one thinking it or doing it so clearly it's me." But if we start to understand, "Ah, that's a lower part of my brain pushing this behavior, bullying me into this, having a particular need," we can change it then, but we're not going to change it if we never gain some understanding of, "What's its purpose?" And once I know that then I can find the workarounds and stop the behaviors and control them differently.

Nadia [00:34:54] Wow. I feel-- it's pretty amazing that you were able to do such a great job of tackling this huge topic. And not only that, leaving us with some really great resources, myself included. So good to know that Coach Lisa is doing that particular book in the book club, and so myself and those listening in can actually still catch some of that. And then she's done, actually, a couple of the books that you mentioned, but I know she's planning on redoing some as well. So the book club is a really great place to go, I think, for those that, you know, maybe don't like to read or haven't read in a long while on their own. But most of our Community are big readers. People love to read. So here's some great books for you guys.

[00:35:35] And as promised, I picked out a question that you guys have sent in. You've sent in so many questions that we are all trying to tackle as many as we can in every single episode. So sometimes the three of us answer questions, sometimes Megan and I answer questions, sometimes we answer questions solo. So today, we have time for one question. And here's the question that I picked out.

[00:35:59] "Women like me are constantly told, 'Women should not fast.' I was recently suggested to eat complex carbs and starchy vegetables a week before my cycle starts and, 'My body will thank me for it.' I'm curious why it's said that women need carbs, but men do not. Thank you for all your work."

[00:36:19] Okay. I picked this question because I think it's-- it actually tackles two big topics, right? The topic that women should not fast and the topic that women need to eat more carbs, particularly if you're in your reproductive years, the week before your cycle, the later part of the luteal phase of your cycle. So that's why I picked this question. It is a big one. We could do a whole hot topic on this, a whole episode on this. And I want you to know that I have addressed this in other places. So here's a few places where you guys can go and you can search for this in our program. So if you go in our app - under 'Programs' >> 'Previously recorded webinars' - I have addressed fasting for your menstrual cycle and it addresses this. In our Community forum, you can actually do a search for this topic - fasting for your menstrual cycles - and it will actually-- in the Community forum, I've shared my PowerPoint slides on this topic. So teaching women how to fast and how to fast for your cycle and, particularly, how to fast or how to eat that week before your period.

[00:37:23] Why is that later phase of your cycle, the later part of the luteal phase so important, so critical? Well, if you understand your menstrual cycle, you know that half of the month you're more estrogen dominant and the other half of the month you're more progesterone dominant. You may not understand this. This may be new to you but, hopefully, I can do a quick summary and explain this, and explain to you where the contradiction actually comes in.

[00:37:47] So during the first half of your cycle, between your period and ovulation, you have this amazing estrogen advantage. You may not realize this, but the more experts I hear talk about this-- I just recently listened to Dr. Jaime Seaman talk about this at Low Carb Denver. I posted about it on my Instagram. I did a few short clips of her presentation and she said it brilliantly, "There is an estrogen advantage that we must take advantage of." So while you are in your reproductive years, or in post-menopause if you choose to do hormone replacement therapy, do understand the advantage of estrogen, the hormonal advantage. So during that first half of your cycle, if you're utilizing fasting as a therapeutic, as a healing tool, you will have great benefits. You will lose weight if that's what you're looking for, you'll lower your blood sugars. It's the part of the month where you will build more muscle if you're doing resistance training. That is the half of your cycle where it's easier. Everything's easier. Making food choices is easier, exercising is easier, fasting is easier. Not only is it easier, but you're going to see the results.

[00:38:55] Then you ovulate, if you're still ovulating. Once you ovulate, your hormones change, of course, and your body starts to prepare for pregnancy. That's the only reason why this happens. It starts to produce more progesterone. So even though the first half of your cycle you're more insulin resistant [sensitive], which is a great thing, right? More insulin resistant [sensitive] means lower insulin levels, lower blood sugar levels, more fat burning, more muscle building. All of this great stuff is happening during the estrogen part of the month. Now, once you ovulate and you start to produce progesterone, not only are

you losing that, but you're actually becoming hormonally more insulin resistant. So you start to produce more insulin in response to everything, to food and everything. And the reason why this happens is because the body is preparing you for pregnancy.

[00:39:44] Now, just as Dr. Jaime Seaman said, the bad news is that women are not trying to get pregnant every month. So there is no advantage to this unless you're trying to get pregnant, right? So your body is going into storage mode, right? You're looking to not build muscle. You're looking to store, store, store, store in order to get into this pregnancy state and hold the fetus and do all the things, the wonderful things that you're supposed to do. So that would make sense that your body would do that if you're trying to get pregnant every month.

[00:40:15] But the problem is-- even with that-- and this is where I have trouble with this recommendation, is that most of the women that I work with, even the younger women that I work with that are trying to conceive, are insulin resistant. So when these women are being told that they should not fast and that they should eat more carbs during the luteal phase of their cycle, they're actually adding fuel to an already insulin-resistant state because you're already insulin resistant, naturally. Dr. Jaime Seaman actually said this in her lecture. She said, "The problem is that young women in their fertile years, in their reproductive years, already have metabolic syndrome. This wasn't supposed to happen and it didn't naturally happen until post-menopause, but now it is. So the problem is that young women have metabolic syndrome pre-conception and then they get pregnant with metabolic syndrome, whether it's through fertility or they get pregnant naturally, and then they change the epigenetics of their fetus for decades and for generations to come." And I wrote about this in my book, *The PCOS Plan*. So if you're insulin resistant, whether you're having trouble getting pregnant or not but you're planning on getting pregnant, you don't want to get pregnant in an insulin-resistant state. So if you're insulin resistant - that means if you have PCOS, if you are overweight, if you have diabetes, you do not want to not fast or to eat more carbs. You want to reverse insulin resistance, you want to do therapeutic ketosis and therapeutic fasting before you get pregnant.

[00:41:49] Now, is it harder to fast post-ovulation? Absolutely. Do you retain more? Do you have more food cravings? Absolutely. So the question now is, how do we address that? You're going to hear all the conflicting information and that, in and of itself, is going to help with the whole self-sabotage that we just talked about because when you get conflicted, you become paralyzed. If you hear Nadia say something and somebody else say something. When you're in the middle, you start to self-sabotage because you start to question everything. Do not question this. "If the problem is insulin," as Dr. Fung would say, "The solution is to lower insulin." So if you know that you're insulin resistant, a woman with PCOS trying to lose weight, reverse diabetes, or get pregnant, then you know that your primary focus is to lower insulin, reverse insulin resistance. We did do a podcast with Dr. Melissa Hague, who is a gynecologist. So if you go back to our earlier podcasts, you can listen to Dr. Melissa Hague talk about this and say that it makes no sense and you do not want to add fuel to the fire. And no matter how many good carbs, quote-unquote, you eat, you will not add to your progesterone production and become more fertile, and this and that. It is just absolutely not true. If you are insulin resistant, you must help to lower that insulin, even during this phase that's more challenging.

[00:43:06] So what's a really good strategy because I don't want to leave you without a strategy? Fat fasting to lower those insulin levels during that last week of your cycle when it is more challenging to fast and when you have more food cravings, more carb cravings. Okay? I hope this makes sense, but I do leave you with those resources for you to listen to

and then maybe come back and ask us more questions about that. All right, Terri, I am done!

Terri [00:43:31] Very good. Thank you for that, Nadia. Well, we hope everyone has enjoyed this episode and we look forward to coming to you again in future episodes. Take good care, everybody.

Nadia [00:43:43] Bye, everyone. Happy fasting.