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Megan [00:00:06] Hey, everyone, it's Megan Ramos here, along with my lovely co-host, Dr. Nadia Pateguana, for this week's episode of The Fasting Method podcast. We're really fortunate today to have our colleague, Dr. Terri Lance, join us today. This is going to be part two of our initial interview, which we'll link in the show notes where we talked with Terri about her area of expertise within The Fasting Method domain. Terri is our clinical psychology guru, and she helps our members really unpack all of the issues around mindset, healthy habit development, and overcoming a lot of those more mental hang-ups when it comes to making fasting and healthy eating sustainable changes. So welcome to the podcast, Terri. How are you doing today?

Terri [00:00:57] I'm good. Thanks for having me back. It's exciting.

Megan [00:01:01] I think, Nadia and I, we could have talked to you for hours last time. Right, Nadia?

Nadia [00:01:04] That's right. I definitely think people will appreciate part two, and possibly part three. [laughter]

Megan [00:01:12] We might have to make this a regular episode with Terri because people find the information that she shares just to be so transformative for them - their fasting journey and eating relationships. And I think, Nadia, you and I are just constantly studying everything, every aspect that Terri does to share information that she specializes in with our Community.

Nadia [00:01:40] Terri, do you know that Megan has been making fun of me at every opportunity that she gets because she's like, "What's Nadia talking about growth mindset, and, you know, the self-coach and...?" [laughter] She never thought that she would see the day, but it happens every single day, in every single one of my meetings. Even today in one of my meetings, I said, and I say this often, that you coming into our program, I think, was, it created this switch in this very important sort of mindset shift for me. And then, of course, if we as coaches learn this and are able to help our clients... It's not that, I always say it's not that, I don't have the skills to help people in that regard, but it's helped me tremendously in my life learning every single day from you and, as a community, I think this has made a significant change. And somebody mentioned it today, so, again, every single day I am talking about something that you have taught me, Terri, and so Megan now makes fun of me all the time. [laughter]

Megan [00:02:46] Well, we've just evolved so much. Nadia, Jason, and I were sort of the original trio of experts here at The Fasting Method, and we all very much served that information, authority role - "Just fast. Just don't eat sugar." And we just, as everybody's doctor and sort of regular traditional health care worker does, and Nadia, Jason, and I all have sort of really different backgrounds. I was based in the clinic every day watching people live or die. So that made it really easy for me every fasting day to commit to my fasts, or every eating day to walk away from the cookie jar, you know, that was sitting in the staff lounge because I was literally watching people around me die every day from diabetes. So I had a really unusual set of circumstances that was constantly fueling me. Jason was the same. Now, Jason didn't have metabolic disease, he's never really had any weight that he's needed to lose, but he's just been sort of overwhelmed with this huge epidemic of diabetic-related kidney disease. And so, for him, these patients, you know, are suffering so much. And then, Nadia, you likewise as Jason, as a healthcare provider,

seeing people struggle with disease all of the time in their fertility journey. And there is nothing--- as a woman who's just starting my fertility journey, and having always wanted to be a mom, like, talk about what a light under one's rear end to get them to show up for their fasting and eating habits. It's pretty wild, this drive.

[00:04:27] So we just preached all the stuff - do this, do that - and then, you know, people were struggling so hard to implement it. And I think all three of us have learned, oh my gosh, you know, there are so many things in the environment that people have, all of this stuff, this emotional stuff, that needs to be unpacked. And that's what we really want to dive into with Terri today is--- because we've sort of got these two big things that are colliding right now. The first one is sort of this end of the COVID isolation. Now, I'm going to very cautiously say we're entering this endemic phase of COVID, or at least it's getting to that point, and it's safe for us to resume doing things again. And you know, I've been living in California now for the last year and my life's been relatively normal since May 2021, but thinking of all my friends and family at home. There's just been this sudden shift from lockdown to no lockdown, from wearing masks everywhere to not wearing masks, from being encouraged to isolate to encourage to socialize. Like, back in my hometown of Toronto, they literally just ripped the Band-Aid off and said, "You're free." And we're seeing people in our Community who have had this isolation, suffered from the anxiety and depression of all the fear mongering, and just genuine concern for their health, and the safety of their loved ones, have all these social events, and they're not quite sure how to navigate it. And this is sort of also colliding with the fact that summer's coming and summer is usually this bit of a social disaster. Kids are home from school, there's vacations, people are visiting. There's so many different hurdles. So I thought maybe going into this season (and since Terri, Nadia and I are each leading an upcoming Masterclass on really helping people do a deep dive into a lot of these aspects to have a successful summer, not put their weight loss on hold, but to actually make really good health progress), that we could maybe dive into some of these issues.

Terri [00:06:40] Megan, as I was listening to you and I just think there are so many things that we could address in just this area alone, about summer and coming out of isolation and things. I think one of the important trends or themes that's been coming up a lot for me with clients and in the Community that ties in with this, is seeing our eating behaviors as, thinking of them as, a reward, a treat, or something we deserve. And I think both of these things - "It's summertime, it's OK to kick back and reward myself," or, "Have some treats," or, "I've been in isolation for two years. I deserve this." And I just hear people really backslide when they start using those terms because it's that conflict of the knowledge that they have about the impact of eating frequently, the impact of certain foods, with this mindset that, "This is a way to take care of myself," based on these environmental factors. So I really try to encourage people to think about, what are you actually treating yourself to when you do this? How are you rewarding yourself and what are you rewarding yourself with? And what do you actually deserve?

[00:08:00] So I just had a client earlier today say, "You know, I went and had my blood tested and then I went to a coffee shop and I saw those sweet things and I thought, 'Well, I deserve a treat.'" And I thought, "Really what you're saying to yourself is, 'I deserve more insulin resistance. I deserve to stay on all of my medications, and I deserve for my insulin resistance to get worse.'" Now, that wasn't what she was actually saying to herself. She was thinking this was a nice thing to do because she had just gone through something that was challenging or difficult or unpleasant.

[00:08:31] So I think when we look at coming out of isolation, it is very tempting to see it as, "This is OK, I deserve this. My gosh, I've been so restricted for so long." And I just really caution people to think about what those rewards and treats and what this 'deserving' actually means and what the implications of it are. What do you actually deserve? "I deserve a summer of lower blood sugar." "I deserve a summer of not gaining weight." That's what I want to hear people describe, and that's not possible if they're using rewards and treats to do self-care.

Megan [00:09:13] That gave me chills. Like, when you just shifted the mindset of what this lady was saying to you this morning and you say, "Well, you deserve insulin resistance." I'm like, oh my gosh. [laughter] Like, it's what a way to frame it. This is a very different way of looking at these foods than so many of us have had. I'm, you know, someone, I was a pasta addict. Like, I haven't touched it in seven years now, and I just don't ever, know if I'll ever feel comfortable having a bite of it again because it was like crack to me in my past life. It helped me - I would eat it at seven a.m., if I was bored watching cartoons as a kid. Like, it was, pasta was my best friend and in an unhealthy way. So I look at those foods now, and I realize that they're going to cause inflammation and these unwanted issues, and I don't really want to have to deal with it anymore. I want to be healthy and I know that eating something like a steak, or some Brussels sprouts with bacon, those things are going to keep me healthy.

[00:10:23] But how do we work with individuals, or how can people who are listening, start to transition from that mindset of, you know, "I deserve this cookie," "I deserve this ice cream cone," "I deserve to have this cake at my family barbecue." Or, "Heck, this is my first time getting together with all of my sisters after COVID, I'm going to have that fancy sugary drink and I'm going to eat dessert with them." How do we even begin the process of shifting our mindset from thinking of, you know, "I deserve this reward," versus, "These are the things that it's going to do to me and I deserve insulin resistance. I deserve obesity. I deserve these disease processes." How do we get from one place to the other?

Terri [00:11:10] So you just highlighted something about this that I think is a really important piece for a lot of people. Sometimes when people think of the negative, the fear, the scary thing like, "Oh my gosh, I *deserve* more insulin resistance? That sounds crazy." They just push away from that. So some people can't even look at it that way. They need to look at, "What do I actually *want* to create? What positive thing do I deserve? If I don't deserve a brownie, what positive thing do I deserve?" What about, "I deserve to have a great time with my sisters and feel reconnected *and* take care of my health? I deserve to feel well after this gathering. I deserve to wake up tomorrow feeling great about my choices." So either the, "Do I need to look at what I want to avoid?" Like, "I don't want increased insulin resistance." "I don't want higher blood sugar after this event." "I don't want my pants to be tighter after this weekend." Or can they look at, "What positive things do I want as a result of this?" Because some of us respond to the fear and the negative, and that's motivating. And for others of us, that's defeating and we need to focus more on, "What are the good outcomes I'm pushing myself to achieve?" So hopefully that makes sense.

Nadia [00:12:27] So Megan, I'm going to shock you again with one of my Terri terminology [laughter] that I've learned along the way, but this is one that comes up all the time for me in my head when I question myself about my actions, and I've learned from Terri that this is called 'self-sabotage'. And this is exactly what we are talking about. But my question Terri, and I know this is a lot of people's question, is why do we as humans, why does this seem to come so naturally? Shouldn't we be doing only the things that are going to cause the

best survival and the, you know, 'survival of the fittest' type of thing? Why do we engage in these actions that, you know, that are self-sabotaging?

Terri [00:13:06] Mm-Hmm. I think if you go back to kind of developmentally how our brains even developed, and I talk a lot about this in the Community, but the lower brain is our instinctive brain, and it's not very well developed as far as thinking through issues. It just responds immediately to threat and it is geared for survival. So if I'm feeling some kind of threat, this part of my brain jumps in and causes action. Now, this was great thousands of years ago when I needed to avoid being eaten by a bear or mauled by a lion. But now, the stressors are, "I have to get my kids to soccer practice and this one to dancing lessons, and I have five more emails I haven't gotten to respond to from work." So it's a different kind of threat and we have different mechanisms of coping that we didn't have back then. We didn't live in an age of abundance, of highly palatable, problematic foods. We didn't even have food available. We had to wait a few more days until we could go hunting or harvest something. So that brain mechanism worked great in that environment. And nowadays we have learned, since early in our life, to manage any of those affective or emotional threats through food.

[00:14:37] So let's say I'm 53. That's like 53 years of a habit that has supposedly worked for me. I knew how to use it, I implemented it all the time, and now I'm working on changing it. So I'm actually fighting against a biological function that says, "Ooo, stress? Do this." Just like back in the day, "Ooo, bear? Run away." But now it's, "Ooo, discomfort from those emails and dragging kids around? Have a muffin." It's so programmed into us.

[00:15:15] And I think it's why it's so important that people are working on this stuff because we are not broken or flawed because we do that. And I always hear people say, "I'm so frustrated with myself because I know better." The three of us know better. That doesn't mean we don't sometimes still make those choices because we're working against, kind of, biological programming and years of reinforcing it. And we've got to get connected with that other part of our brain that can say, "Yes, that would give me immediate relief from this. However, 20 minutes from now, I'm going to need to lay down because I'm going to be tired. Tomorrow I'm going to have a headache because the sugar gives me migraines." Our other part of our brain can think more rationally and can come up with other solutions. That lower brain, that instinctive brain, won't come up with other solutions. And so we're in this little bit of a battle until we really make this shift.

Nadia [00:16:16] And so this shift, right, again, in all seriousness now, mindset paradigm-shifting that you often talk about, and I'm learning quite a bit about, this shift comes when we start to learn more of this positive self-talk that you were just talking about. So the more that we practice this, the better we then... Can you fill in the blanks for me?

Terri [00:16:40] I think the positive self-talk and all of that is super important as far as kind of bolstering our ability to manage. But probably even more important is a mechanism of slowing down and recognizing, "What is our actual need in this moment?" I guarantee you the need in a stressful moment is not to have a muffin, but that is what we've learned to do. So understanding, "What do I need? Oh, I need to feel less stressed about this. I need some downtime in this moment. How can I do that?"

Megan [00:17:16] At the beginning of my journey, obviously, Jason was trying to work with our colleagues to be able to fast patients, and it was controversial, but I wasn't a patient, so I could fast. And, you know, we were constantly having all kinds of discussions and

passing by and sharing resources. And Jason's wife had read this book, it was really popular at the time, about habit formation, and Jason then picked it up, downloaded it on Audible and was listening to it during his commute, and he's like, "You need to read this book." So he got the hard copy from his wife and gave it to me, and it talked about habit loop formation. And this book sort of described it as there's, in a habit loop, in this book, it was defined by sort of three markers. There is a cue, there's a response to the cue, and there's a reward. So the cue might be driving home from work, and the reward might be wanting to relax after a long day. And then the response to the cue to get to the reward, for me, was always eating or indulging in a particular food type. So I was just so intrigued by this and they actually had some workspace, a worksheet space, within this particular book. I'm going to have to dig it up. I do have, I have like three copies of it somewhere in my house, but we moved and bookshelves are back-ordered until, you know, 2050 at this point. [laughter] So I'm not quite sure where anything is. But I went through and I realized, like, you know, all of these things around food really sort of evolved around relaxation, and that I needed to make decisions, and it really sparked me. I would walk into the pharmacy next to the clinic to get something for the clinic, or maybe I cut my finger and needed a Band-Aid, whatever, I needed to go to the pharmacy for something. And this happened often and we would also go pick up supplies for patients and whatnot. And there's all kinds of junk food at a pharmacy, right? And I would see these particular foods, and I would then sort of go into my habit loop, you know, of, "I'm here, I'm stressed out. I'm looking to unwind. OK, you know, coming into the pharmacy, I'm not here to get the chocolate-covered peanuts." [laughs] I would eat chocolate-covered peanuts. "Maybe before I go back to the clinic, I just need to do a walk around the block to bring down my cortisol levels." And that was just such a transformational resource for me.

[00:19:53] Something else that really helped me was I was listening to a podcast and I forget which one, Jason had recommended again at the time, and this person said, "Just stop and have a conversation with your food before you eat it, even for 30 seconds." And I can't tell you how many potato chips this stopped me from eating. You know, I would just pause for 30 seconds and look at it and go, "OK, Mr. Potato Chip, so how are you going to make me feel in 15 minutes, in two hours, before bed, the next morning?" And, other than the 15-minute mark, nothing was positive. Then I would be like, "Oh, Mr. Potato Chip, well, you suck [laughs] and you are not coming into my body." And then, "Oh, Mr. Brussels Sprout, oh, you're going to make me feel full in 15 minutes, and in two hours I'm still going to feel full and feel great. And then I'm going to sleep well and I'm going to wake up in the morning with lots of energy. So you, Mr. Brussels Sprout, are my friend." And it took me so long [laughs] because I would have all these conversations with my food, but it's really changed the way of how I look at my foods, taking that moment and pausing and sort of processing the after-effects of putting anything in my body. And I've talked to people about this and they just kind of look at me like, I'm crazy. What, you talk to your broccoli?" "Yes, I do. We have deep conversations about how they make me feel!" [laughter]

Terri [00:21:18] I think this is a great way to think of this strategy. I love that, Megan. And kind of going back to your question, Nadia, why do we do these things even though we know better? And someone I've been listening to talks about this. The importance of thinking of our future self and working on where we're headed rather than where we haven't gotten to yet. And one of the things he described is that we make better decisions when we are focused on our future self rather than our past self or even our current self. Because current self is going to make the decision that gets the dopamine right now, that's going to be the driving force. So eating those potato chips was a quick dopamine response, or those chocolate-covered peanuts. That was a quick dopamine response. So current self wanted that relief. But if we can align with our future selves - "OK, I want to not

be diabetic in the future, I want to be more mobile in the future." And the more we can visualize it and have it really clear in our mind, the easier it is to make a decision that's better for our future self and kind of sacrificing what current self wants. It's kind of that delayed gratification.

[00:22:35] I've been talking about this a lot in my groups lately because I had a client bring this up to me, she said, "I love that concept, but I can't picture my future self. I've been overweight for 40 years. I've been struggling with weight loss and weight gain all of this time. I can't picture myself in a different place." And so I really, you know, I worked with her a little bit on how to do some of that, but then also recognized that thinking of your future self is like what Megan was just saying, it doesn't have to be, "How are these chips going to affect me 10 years from now?" We're going to come up with all ways to justify that. But instead, "How will I feel later? How will I feel tonight? How will I sleep? How will I wake up tomorrow? How will I psychologically, emotionally, feel about the decision?" That's helping us not just make decisions based on that instinctive need for relief right now, but more to align with that future self. Not respond just to the want for the dopamine hit right now, but be moving toward the growth of the future.

Megan [00:23:47] So what the heck is dopamine? Why do we want hits of it? And what can we do about it? Because it sounds pretty, pretty technical there. [laughter]

Terri [00:23:56] Yeah. So one of the things about dopamine that I find fascinating is almost everyone knows about it, but mostly they only know about it as it's a feel-good chemical. And it is, but really what it is is a reinforcement to get us to act and do that rewarding thing again. It's a motivation technique. So one study that they've done with rats because they're trying to figure out, is it just the enjoyment of food that was motivating them to eat this highly palatable food? So they took out their dopamine response. And they found that the rats, if given the food, still enjoyed the food. So the dopamine being removed did not mean they couldn't enjoy the food, but what it did mean is they would not move to go get the food. They lost the drive to seek the thing.

[00:24:51] So dopamine very much motivates us toward pleasure and motivates us to avoid pain. And that's a really complicated teeter-totter balancing act. Because if I eat something, let's say a sweet snack, and I eat two of them, I'm pushing that teeter-totter toward the positive. But then I get a comedown from that, which feels negative. And now, in order to get that to stop, that pain to stop, I need more of them. And you can see we just keep kind of teetering back and forth between the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain.

[00:25:34] So some of us, you know, we might be able to see this even more clearly if we think about drug addiction or alcohol addiction or something like that. When you remove the substance, the pain response of the withdrawal is so great that the desire to use again increases for a while. And many of us experience that with food. We're seeking that feel-good pathway to be activated. And then we're seeking to avoid the pain of it not being activated. So it keeps that cycle going for us.

Nadia [00:26:10] I talk about, from what I've learned in your, well, not just your masterclass, at this point, from watching many of your videos and, you know, just being around you. But I talk about dopamine now all the time in my meetings because at the beginning of our meetings, we encourage, we learned this from you, we encourage our clients to celebrate their victories along the way. I think we talked about this in the last podcast, right? We talked about how celebrating your victories, big or small, they're all

huge because, when you celebrate your victories, it causes this release in dopamine, which then motivates you to continue to take part in these very healthy, positive behaviors and actions, right? So there's, we also produce dopamine when we are celebrating our achievements. Can you tell us a little bit more about that, again? [laughter]

Terri [00:27:03] Yes, you're getting that positive, chemical response from highlighting the good things you're doing. And this goes back to the book Megan's referring to also, that you're reinforcing the steps you're taking, not just the outcome. So you get some reward for taking the steps. We also get dopamine from deciding to do something. So if I say I'm going to eat this food, I've already gotten the dopamine hit. And then sometimes I may find I eat that food, and I don't feel as much of a response. Because now it didn't meet the expectation, I already had the dopamine, so now I'm going to have to eat more of it to try to get the response.

Nadia [00:27:48] Can we go back a little bit to the conversation that you guys were just having about... Because I think it tied two things in for me. I am naturally a pretty impulsive person, so I do things, you know, very sort of rushed, rash sort of decisions. And of course, that applies to many of us in food. And one of the things that I learned from you, which ties into the conversation you guys were just having just before this one about dopamine, is that you said in one of your many videos that when you're about to go into the kitchen and grab something or do something to just place your hand on the corner of the counter or the table and pause. And you were saying that a little earlier today to just slow down when I was asking you about, you know, self-sabotage and why we do this. And sort of like to slow down. And so Megan was talking about how she talks to her food and her broccoli. And it's funny because ever since you said that, and how much this can apply to other things in our lives, and I shared with you that my husband said this, right, about one of your videos. He said, "This is so relevant to so many things in our lives." So, again, just breaking that impulsive, rash decision-making, just putting your hand on the corner of the counter just before you go to grab something to eat and taking that pause and thinking about it. And maybe then going on to talking to your broccoli, like Megan said, or your potato chips. [laughter] But can we talk a little bit about that, about that strategy?

Terri [00:29:17] Absolutely. I think the important thing is it gets you out of the automatic loop. It gets you functioning less out of that impulsive lower brain and more connected with your prefrontal cortex that's making better decisions. It can think about your future self. It can think about outcomes that primitive brain doesn't, it just wants relief right now. So slowing it down can break you out of that automatic thought process. And my hope for people when they take that pause is that they do it not in a blaming and shaming way, but in a supportive way. It's kind of like that self-coach idea - you check in. "Hey, Terri, you're heading into the kitchen right now. What do you need?" "Well, I'm going to get this." "OK, well, what's that for right now?" Because I know in my logical kind of adult brain it's not mealtime. "So, what are you doing?" And then I can just say, "Oh, well, I need it because I'm really annoyed right now." "Oh, OK. So actually, you don't need that food right now. You need to work through this feeling of annoyance. Let's go for a walk. Let's go back into the living room and listen to a podcast, or listen to some music, or meditate, or something else," because, again, the food isn't what I need to deal with that annoyance, but it's what I've learned to use to deal with the annoyance. So my hope is that when people start using something to slow them down, they can have this assessment conversation. "Is this really meeting my actual need?"

Megan [00:30:55] I think this is so important at any time of year, but especially going into this particular time of the year. You know, these strategies for making like, "I deserved this,

you know, dessert with my girlfriends," or, "I am on vacation and I haven't been able to leave the country in two years. And I deserve this." Or the stress response of having relatives and house guests return. I think this is something Nadia has more experience with than I do, but I moved to California at the end of 2020. Canada was locked down, 2021, and I have actually had to say to friends and family, now that things are opening up, travel's a lot easier to and from Canada, that the Ramos household is maxed out. No one else can come visit in the next, you know, summer [laughs], the next few months. Like, we are maxed out. I am sorry, we really appreciate it. I don't know if people just genuinely miss us, or they're just so eager to get the heck out of lockdown [laughter], but we are at capacity. Like, I don't know if I'm going to be able to host all of these people. So it's super exciting because I haven't been able to see many of them for so long, but it's also going to be stressful. And as safe as the foods in our household traditionally are because my husband and I are both on the same dietary plan for the most part, he eats a lot more animal-heavy than, unfortunately, I'm able to do because I would love to eat that animal-heavy, but it doesn't agree with my physiology. So these people are going to be having food around. Right now, it's not stressful. My brother is actually visiting. He's got his foods - they're his foods, they're not my foods - but I don't actually find my brother to be quite stressful, and he's the first houseguest. But, you know, let's talk about Labor Day weekend and check in with my stress level then after a summertime of it, it's going to be hectic. So taking this pause and reflecting, "Do you really need to eat?" versus, you know, "Am I just looking for an outlet?" Because, you know, we talk so much in our Community, too, about stress is not always negative. Stress can be as wonderful as having your friends and family come and visit and stay with you.

[00:33:16] But what are some other hurdles, Terri, that you see during this time of year when the family flocks in or people are going to visit loved ones? There can be the risk of a lot of controversy among family members and friends about your fasting and if it's safe, and your eating habits and are they safe? How do you usually help people navigate these types of conflicts that might arise with houseguests?

Terri [00:33:42] First thing I always joke about is, you know, the first rule of fasting is don't talk about fasting! [laughter], but I think the importance is how you present it and how you present yourself about it. If I'm sitting there watching people eat certain food that I'm no longer eating or I'm not engaging with with them and I'm drooling and eyeing it, you know, like I could steal at any moment saying, "Gosh, I wish I could eat that." They're going to say, "Well, you can. Here, have some." Versus if I present as, "I'm good, I'm feeling good right now. I'm enjoying talking with you." If I don't focus on me not eating, or me not eating that particular food, they don't need to focus on it quite as much. So we can set a tone in our own way of presenting what it's like to be in that moment.

[00:34:31] I know a lot of people talk about getting feedback from people in their family or friends that are concerned they're doing something that they think is going to be dangerous for their health. I encourage you to talk about the fact that this is actually medically sound. "I've done my research. Here, if you'd like to read this book, I'd be happy to talk about your concerns about that." Give them the knowledge and let them come back and have the discussion with you so that you don't have to feel like you're defending it all the time.

[00:34:59] I just did a weekly challenge in our Community about this recently, and I call this kind of 'pulling out the big guns' at the end if you still can't get them to recognize your boundary and stop the conversation. I then bring up something that will stop the conversation. So let's say someone brings out the brownies at the end of the meal and

they say, "Terri, you really need to have a brownie." I'm like, "Oh, no, thank you. They look great, that's so sweet of you. I'm not eating brownies right now." "Oh no, come on, these are really good. They're really healthy, I used healthy ingredients." If it keeps going, I might pull out the big guns and say something like, "You know, I would love to, but the diarrhea that I get when I eat those is so rough, I just don't want to experience that." [laughter] Because then if they're still pushing it, oh my gosh, there's something wrong with that person. No one wants to push that on you. So sometimes I will come out with a little bit more of a shocking statement if I need to push people off of the topic.

[00:35:58] I think of it kind of the way I learned about - you don't ask people about their religion, you don't ask people about their income and you don't ask them who they voted for. These are topics that we don't talk about at the table, or something like that. And so I might even just have to say that like, "Look, this is similar to religion. I don't debate with you your beliefs about religion, whether you go to church or not, and which church, that's your decision. Same thing with my health. I'm not open to debating my approach to my health. I appreciate it if it's coming from a place of concern, but it's not open for our discussion." So really, working on setting those boundaries.

[00:36:38] Prior to that, many of you can avoid it, though, by you acting comfortable with how it's going. If I'm at a family get-together and everyone's drinking and I'm having a sparkling water with lime, I'm good. If they say, "Oh, come on, have a drink." It's like, "Oh my gosh, I love this, I'm enjoying my drink. Look at those kids playing volleyball. That's so cool." And I just move away from it. They have less reason to keep going with it. So a lot of it, again, how we present it, setting boundaries around it. And if you really get in a bind, use a game stopper for them. Shut the conversation down with something that's going to make them uncomfortable enough.

Nadia [00:37:20] I brought out the big guns this week, you just reminded me, because I had houseguests (like Megan knows I always have houseguests). [laughter] It was amazing. We truly enjoyed being around my cousin and her two amazing boys. Wow! It was just an experience, but this came up all the time. And what I do is, there's just no point, even though she's very close to me, I just don't want to engage in this conversation over and over. It's taxing, it's, you know... And so, at certain times, and one of the situations is we were at the mall and she walked by, she loves cakes, sweets, cakes. I mean, she is very thin, not diabetic. Her grandmother was a diabetic. My grandmother was the non-diabetic, yet somehow it switched the genes here. Our two grandmothers were sisters, so we're very, very close. But anyhow, it switched - the genes got switched around here. But anyway, she passes by every single place, cake store, she wants some cakes, every time. And so she'll go and buy them and then she's... And I said, "Hold on a second, let me go..." because my kids were trying to go into the Apple store and I'm like, "This is perfect, I'm just going to go into the Apple store." But she didn't stop at that. She was like, "No, no, you're not going to make your cousin sit here and eat cakes by myself. Come, come." And so, you know, I thought I was avoiding it by just quickly going with my kids to the Apple store. I had to pull out the big guns. So in a very joking way, and it was actually very cool how it... I was like, "Well, would you like your cousin to have diabetes again?" And then I turned to the clerk, the lady, the young lady, and I said, "Do you have any diabetic stuff?" And of course, I mean, ew, that I actually cringed thinking, "They may pull out something and somehow tell me that this is going to be good for diabetics," but she was actually like, "No, we actually do not. We've talked about it, but there is nothing that we can make that would work for diabetics." And that kind of ended the conversation. I mean, it was a little bit uncomfortable, to be totally honest, for a second, but it's what it took to end that conversation in that particular moment.

Terri [00:39:22] I think it's a great strategy. Mine was a little more obnoxious, but you know, it's kind of like saying, "Look, I have a peanut allergy and someone wants me to have a bite of their Snickers bar." Once you acknowledge, "Hey, this food has this physiological consequence for me, is that really what you'd want for me?" Most of the time people are going to back off. "No, I don't want this loved one to have diabetes." "OK." Or, "No, I don't want you to go into anaphylactic shock. So, of course, don't, I'm going to take my Snickers bar *away* from you." So just highlighting it again, highlighting the consequence for you. You don't have to make it a judgment about their choice to have it, that usually just creates a lot of chaos, but, "For me, this food doesn't work. I don't feel well. My blood sugar goes crazy," whatever you need to talk about.

[00:40:11] The other thing that I think is so important, and you highlighted this, Nadia, is in these moments where you're really grappling with, "I'm having company," or, "I'm going to someone's house," or, "I'm with friends," I encourage you to really focus on, "What is the point of that shared time together?" And many of us might still be a little bit caught up on, "It's about these amazing foods we're going to make." I know when my family got together, it was about who's going to make this, and who's going to make this thing, and who's going... It was about, "How can we have all of the most decadent foods that we don't normally eat?" And I've had to shift. For me, it is now, I really have to focus on I am there for the connection, for the laughter, for the memories. I'm not there because of the food that's there. I'm going to eat my normal food or I'm going to fast or whatever it is. I even had to do that when it comes to movie theaters. I used to go to a movie theater. I really didn't care that much about the movie. I really loved the popcorn. And then I stopped eating popcorn and my friend said, "Hey, do you want to go to a movie?" And it really dawned on me, like, yeah, I kind of don't, because I'm not going to eat the popcorn. And I had to refocus. I'm going to a movie because it was a way to spend time with them. They had a six-year-old son at the time, so I got to go to a Disney movie with them. It was a way to spend time with their family. It wasn't about the popcorn anymore. So to really think about vacations, time with family and friends, making it more about the sights you're seeing, the excursions you're doing, the interactions you're having, the bonds you're making, versus the food that's available.

Megan [00:41:52] You don't really have to have these awkward conversations, too, with friends and family. I was actually just talking about this exact topic of, you know, us coming together with our various communities always around food, and why does it always have to be around food, and how, you know, we don't want to be this disruptor, you know, in our group and cause tension all of the time. And you don't really need to, you can just simply make other suggestions. And this is something that my husband and I have done. So in terms of family baking with our grandmother growing up over the holidays, that was a thing. My grandmother is not with us anymore, but I'm the oldest cousin and I now get my cousins together and we do games. I mean, obviously, it stopped happening with COVID, but we would have this big games night at our house. And it was not about food, it was about playing games and connecting and laughing and catching up with one another. And doing, like, we enjoyed playing those games and just totally shifted the whole focus away from eating the sugar. Now, I'm really fortunate and my family, especially with my cousins, they so totally get it. You know, they are very conscientious of eating real foods, and minimizing sugar and processed and refined fats. And like me, they've seen so many people in our family just struggle, like you wouldn't believe, with diabetes and Alzheimer's dementia that they're quite conscientious. So, you know, it's just, but we didn't really have to have a conversation about it. "Hey, guys, this year I'm going to be hosting game night." I didn't even say, "...instead of baking." I just said, "We're going to be, like, let's do a cousin

game night this year. Like, let's change it up." Or something that my husband and I often do with friends is we'll say, "Hey, you know, come over for board games," or, "Hey, can we go for a hike?" or, "Hey, you know, let's meet at the beach." Like, we're doing these other things that aren't, "Hey, let's go for a lunch," "Hey, let's go for a dinner." We're taking advantage of these other things that we like to do and that we can do with other people and really enjoy and still have conversations. Like, we'll go on hikes with friends on the weekend. We'll have great connection, amazing conversation. None of it's around food. And we're out in nature, it's suppressing our cortisol, it's improving our gut microbiome. Like, there are so many great benefits to it. Same thing with the beach. The beach is literally like nature's pharmacy, and you can just hang out there and it doesn't need to be food-centric. And we don't talk to our friends about this. Like, I don't even know if they put two and two together that Angel and I fast and that we're asking them to do something that isn't food related. It's just, "Hey, guys, let's do this," or, "...let's do that," or "...do you want to meet us at this park for the afternoon?" And it doesn't need to be about food at all is need to be a discussion there. But just taking the initiative to start to build some of these rituals. And we have this ritual with this one couple now that we often hang out with and it's like hiking, you know, it's like, "Where are we going to hike next?" It's no longer, "What restaurant are we going to next?" It's, "What park are we going to go to next? You guys want to do this, you guys want to do that?" And without having one conversation about it, our entire relationship has changed with these individuals. And it's just really cool, you know, to be able to connect socially without always having to worry about these hang-ups, or having food hang-ups and food conversations or, you know, having to have awkward conversations like, let's not always make our social time together about food, let's make it about other things. And there are so many things that we can do with our communities and with our friends that doesn't have to be around eating as well.

Terri [00:45:39] Absolutely. I love that. Shifting it away from it being about the food and not even having to actually address it with them, but just to start implementing it.

[00:45:50] One last thing I wanted to say about the summer and why I think this is difficult for people. A lot of people who are working on weight loss as their goal, often think about their goal of something in the summertime. They have a wedding they're going to go to, they have vacation that they're going to do, they're going to go to the beach, or they're going to wear a bathing suit. So they have a goal in like February or March that they're working toward, and then they get to summer and perhaps they've not reached their goal. That self-sabotage brain, that inner gremlin, says, "Well, don't bother now." And so it's even easier to give in to not following through on your eating plans and your fasting plans. Engaging in, you know, overindulging in certain foods, or whatever, because that part of your brain is telling you, "It doesn't matter now, you're already here, you'll work on it again over the winter. You can wait. You can work on this in September or in October."

[00:46:47] I just really want to encourage people to think about it's always the day to think about your health and taking care of you. Don't wait until September or October, even though you're maybe not going to lose 40 pounds this summer. It's OK. Do the behaviors, do the habits, build that now so that you see the progress over the next few months and the next year. So don't let that slippery-slope brain kind of get in the way and tell you, "Oh, it doesn't matter, you're already here. Just enjoy it now."

Megan [00:47:21] Thank you so much for joining us today, Terri. We always learn so much and really appreciate these conversations because they're the ones that really lead to sustainable change. And that's what we're all looking for, is to be able to get healthy and stay healthy and really thrive. But there are hurdles and ones that we're not even aware of.

These habits that we have are so ingrained on a subconscious level, but we appreciate the discussion.

[00:47:47] And for everybody who's interested in learning more about our conversation today, Dr. Terri Lance has a special masterclass. It's a two-week course. It starts on Monday, April the 18th. So this is the last week for registration and spots are limited, but she's going to be doing a deep dive into all of these topics. And then we'll be following up with that with a special course with Nadia - a masterclass on women and fasting - where Nadia really tackles all of those very specific, female hormonal health issues. And then we'll be wrapping it up in June with a weight loss, fasting, and eating boot camp from me.

[00:48:26] So head over to our website - thefastingmethod.com - and check out our masterclasses to learn more.

[00:48:32] Thanks, ladies, and we'll see you again next time. Bye for now, everyone.

Nadia [00:48:36] Bye, everyone.

Terri [00:48:37] Bye-bye. Thank you.

Megan [00:48:38] Thanks, Terri.