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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.

[00:00:42] The use of any other products or services purchased by you as a result of this podcast does not create a healthcare provider-patient relationship between you and any of the experts affiliated with this podcast. Any information and statements regarding dietary supplements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. All right. And now we'll get started with today's episode.

[00:01:19] Hi, everyone. It's Megan Ramos here with another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. Today, I'm joined by my co-host, Dr. Terri Lance, and we're going to be discussing the importance of community. Terri, how are you doing today?

Terri [00:01:34] I'm doing well, Megan. I'm feeling connected to my community, so that helps, but doing well.

Megan [00:01:40] That's great. I think it is a busy time of year for us in our Fasting Method Community. People are back from all of their holidays, kids and grandkids are back at school, everyone's getting into a routine, so it's an action-packed time for us because people want to make the most of this particular month, especially, leading into the holiday season.

Terri [00:02:07] I think that's one of the reasons why you and I discussed, you know, what other things have we not talked about yet about how to support people during this time. And I think community is one of the biggest ways. So when we talked about, you know, people having connection with community, I think of two really broad general things. One is your own community, whether that means a partner, spouse, kids, siblings, colleagues, friends. How do you stay connected to your community in ways that help support you? And then the other being The Fasting Method Community. And so I was hoping that today we could talk about those two areas of community connection.

Megan [00:02:50] There are a lot of people in my personal, non-fasting, nutrition, professional life that were really surprised that, as part of a career and a business, I launched a community. I've always been someone who's been a very independent worker, been a lone-wolf type of person. I love being social, but I'm largely an introvert when it comes to things around my health and lifestyle and whatnot. So a lot of people were really shocked.

[00:03:24] A lot of what we do now at The Fasting Method really stems from my personal journey. When I first started fasting, I didn't have anybody. I had Jason, of course, but he had not struggled with PCOS, he had not struggled with type two diabetes, he had not struggled with obesity, or any of the fabulous female hormonal issues like PCOS that I had. And while, of course, he's always a great support, it just-- I just didn't have anyone to

connect with at the time. And then trying to share this with anyone in my personal life, it was just a train wreck. They didn't understand. They thought I had an eating disorder. "Oh, here Megan goes on some wild tirade with fasting." [laughs] It was just complicated. So I really felt alone and very isolated.

[00:04:21] And then we were able to start our clinic in Toronto, and we started our clinic by seeing four patients in small groups every hour on the hour. And these patients became my community. It was just kind of crazy to me how much I realized I needed them. I know I supported them and provided them with education, but they inspired me so much. They helped hold me accountable because I wanted to come back after the holidays and prove to all of them that you can do this. Like it might not be easy the first round of holidays or the second round of holidays but, eventually, at some point, it gets easier. And these people, you know, I just fell in love with so many of them, and they celebrated our successes. They celebrated me getting married. They became like family. And the one thing that we all had in common-- I mean, Toronto is the most diverse city in the world. And I'll tell you, this clinic group of patients we worked with was completely diverse - from 22-year-olds to 92-year-olds, to every gender, race, background, ethnicity, religion, you name it. We were a very diverse group, but we all came together over lifestyle and this desire to be better through nutrition and fasting. They were some of the closest people I had in my entire life at the time. And whenever anyone asked how I was able to maintain, I attributed it my patient community that I had throughout all of this.

[00:05:59] And then when we wrapped up the clinic (because at that point I was just traveling too much, trying to educate other doctors and healthcare practitioners on fasting), it became challenging for me. I actually gained a few pounds, some of my habits slipped, and I just realized how important it was to surround myself with these like-minded individuals. And my husband's great. You know, we have conversations like, "When are we eating this week?" And, you know, "What is our diet right now? Are we prioritizing fat or protein? What are we doing?" He just does whatever I do. He's very supportive in that sense. But you need, sometimes, more than just your your spouse or your partner to help support you. And it was really that that launched The Fasting Method Community, because what I would see, too, with my patients is I was seeing them every day, but they were coming in for their monthly appointment and then they were going back out into the wild, the non-fasting, constantly-eating, sugar-driven and fueled wild. And how much they actually needed that constant connection that I was getting. So we were able to formulate what was first the IDM Community and now The Fasting Method Community.

Terri [00:07:14] And it's neat to get to hear the background, the kind of evolution of this, because I came in as we were on the end of IDM into The Fasting Method, as far as branding. And since that time, what we provide or what we offer in the Community has grown significantly. And I remember the first summer I was with the program, we started doing live Community meetings every week and there were just-- you know, each coach maybe did a couple, and now the Community has between 30 to 35 live meetings a week that people can attend. And it just shocks me how much we've built that from that point. A few groups into this, almost any day of the week, there's something going on that you can attend live for that support, for that inspiration. Like you mentioned with the in-clinic patients, you felt inspired and encouraged by them. You wanted to share good results with them and celebrate things. And I think that's what people find so powerful about these Community groups is they feel inspired. They feel, kind of-- their experiences get normalized when they attend a group and hear that other people struggle with some of the same things they struggle with, or someone has already navigated the thing that they're now navigating and they have some suggestions or ways that they went through it. So I

find that for many of the people in The Fasting Method Community, those live meetings are worth their weight in gold as far as what people get from them.

Megan [00:08:58] When we first launched, Jason and I had no idea really what people needed other than that connection outside of our clinic. For our patient population, especially as the clinic was winding down, we tried a whole bunch of things and, you know, we constantly hear feedback, too, from our communities, whether it's The Fasting Method, Facebook about some of the other groups out there, a lot of this app-based stuff. Digital healthcare. It's 2023 and we're all about AI and digital healthcare and this and that. You know, clicking through a survey once a day is not enough. It's not really what people need. It's not the accountability and support. And all this technology is super cool, sure. I'm amazed by it. You know, I download some of these apps and sign up for some of these programs just to kind of see what other people are doing and what's neat. But you're still isolated, you're still alone and, you know, I'm chatting with Jason and I'm like, "This stuff all looks cool-- and of course, you know, there are people, very powerful people, who are interested in our work, too, and offer, you know, "Do you guys want this crazy AI app thing? And you can in-- like, it's all quiz-based," and all this digital coaching and all this kind of stuff. And that's just not what people need more out of. We'd rather do things a little bit more old-school in that sense and give people actually what they need, which is that human connection.

[00:10:35] So we started to pivot that way before COVID, a few years before COVID when you joined with us, Terri, and then I think all that we learned throughout this crazy pandemic was just how important human connection is. Wherever you sit politically, medically, on the pandemic situation, human connection was the the biggest thing that we all suffered from and realized, hey, we actually need that. Hey, we actually need some in-person collaboration. We can't just do everything online. We can't just live in a digital world in an app with these AI characters. It's been really great to see people embrace coming to Community meetings who were like I used to be - this lone wolf trying to navigate it all on my own - versus being open to saying, "Okay, it's-- you know, I might not need to participate, I might not feel comfortable yet, but hearing all these other experiences really validates everything I'm going through," or, "It's just so nice to hear that I'm not the only one."

[00:11:40] So I think our live meetings are really important and I think our webinars are important too. So at The Fasting Method, we don't just have the live group meetings, but we do a series of webinars every month, focused on a variety of different topics. Like our cohost Nadia, Dr. Pateguana, she does a women's health one. Terri, you have your own focus, and I do these sort of functional and integrative health hot topics and always try to tie it back into fasting. So some recent ones we've had have been about fasting and osteoporosis, or fasting with thyroid disorder, where we get to do a deep dive with our members and provide them with the right education and the right resources, and some tangible resources to take. Like when we, this past summer, did an insulin resistance one - we went through all of the tests and why you need certain tests and what tests to make sure you're asking for. And I think that that education is so powerful. You know, they say 'knowledge is power', but knowledge really enables action, and that action is very powerful. So that's another live component.

[00:12:52] We do record our webinars because they can't always reach everyone in our Community because of time zones, but it's really nice that people can come live and ask their questions and engage, and then it's great for our members to be able to go back and watch them, too, after they've aired to relisten to certain things, or if they had to miss it, or

if they weren't able to attend but someone else asked their burning question and they got to hear that answer on the subject.

Terri [00:13:22] I think that's one of the major benefits of something like the webinars is you can do them live and get your questions answered, as you said, but I know people go back and watch them a number of times and really dig into the materials, and so having those on our website available for them is really useful.

[00:13:42] I'm also thinking of another live thing we do that is recorded so people can watch it if they can't attend, and that is the Town Hall meetings. I host those each month and usually bring in one or two Community members. Some have also done coaching, but all of them are part of The Fasting Method Community, and really just ask them to share their story. You know, where have they been health and weight wise, whatever goals they're working on, and what does that journey look like since coming to TFM? And what are the resources within the Community that really help them? And I find that these are really inspirational for people to go back and listen to their fellow Community members who are, you know, working their way through their journey, to get to hear their stories, their suggestions and tips. And we even leave a little bit of time in the end in case anyone wants to ask the panelists some questions. So again, it's a live format, but we do have those saved onto the resources and so people can go back and watch them whenever it suits them.

Megan [00:14:46] Something else that I started in the Community was taking over our group challenges. I did this during COVID. We would do different weekly challenges for our members and I would provide these weekly lessons so people had something to focus on. They had information that they could apply a new skill to their fasting protocol. And then as we exited sort of the lockdown COVID situation, we went to monthly challenges because it gave people more time to focus on them. And if they had weeks where there was a family emergency or vacation or just a crazy work week, they could skip a week but still participate in the monthly challenge. So every Monday I release a new lesson video on the focus of that particular challenge. So at the time that we're recording this podcast, we're doing a fat fasting challenge for those who want to participate.

[00:15:49] And what we try to do with these challenges is make them attainable for everybody, whether you're brand new to fasting or whether you're doing advanced fasting. So we always pick a topic or a theme that people can apply the strategies to whatever fasting protocol they're doing. So with the month of fat fasting, if you are brand new to fasting, you are dealing with ravenous hunger, maybe leptin resistance where you don't really know if you experience satiation or not, you know, you're dealing with a lot of sugar cravings, there's applications for fat fasting to help you balance your hormones, especially your insulin, and enable you to stretch out the time inbetween your meals and start doing these shorter fasts, and then eventually lengthen your fasts. And then we also use fat fasting in the application of just being an additional dietary strategy you can combine with any fasting protocol. So if someone comes to me and they say, "Oh, you know, I feel like I'm really white-knuckling these 42-hour fasts. I can do the 24s, I can do them so easily, I've kind of bottomed out with the results I can get with them. I know I need to do the 42s, but it's just, you know, a little bit too challenging." We can combine that with fat fasting. It helps strengthen ones fasting muscle and it can make those 42s easier. Or we might have a few people that are doing this particular month's challenge or are trying to do some extended fasts. Well, doing fat fasting before can help make the ease and transition into an extended fast more easy. So we go through all of these different applications of it in the lesson videos and give everybody strategies. And just because someone's starting off with

fasting who's brand new doesn't mean that they're not going to graduate to 42s. They might need those strategies. Or someone who's doing 42s might want to try a longer fast down the road and can say, "Hey, you know, I remember this information and how it helps people get in some extended fasting."

[00:18:04] So we really try to provide a lot of education in these challenges that's applicable for everybody, regardless of where they are in their journey, and teach them skills that they can come back to as their fasting journey evolves or changes over time. So I just love doing them. You know, we have the lesson video that everyone can watch and go back and rewatch as many times as they like. That goes live on Mondays. And then mid-week we do a group check in and people have their chance to come and share with myself and their peers that are participating in the challenge. They can come and share how it's going for them, any hurdles they might be facing. They can share tips and strategies amongst each other. They can ask me questions about the content in the lesson video and get clarification on some of those things. So they're not just out there trying to navigate this on their own or saying to themselves, "I **think** that's what Megan meant in the video." They actually get a chance to ask me and clarify with me in person, which I think is really neat.

[00:19:09] And then we do have our Community Forum and there's a thread for support. So everyone who is participating in that challenge can connect, can share their updates, can ask each other questions, can do some check-ins with me during that particular time as well. So for me, it's one of the things I enjoy about work the most is being able to come and connect. And you get to learn so much about people and the troubleshooting and navigating with these challenges. And I love that people are always learning new tools that they can add to their toolbox when it comes to fasting and nutrition. So we don't do some of the traditional challenges you might expect in a fasting community. Like this week, everybody's doing a 72 or this week everybody's focused on 24s. We really let people in the Community do what they need to do, but we really focus on honing these skills that are really important for their journey.

Terri [00:20:09] I really like the way that that group challenges have evolved over these past couple of years. There's also a Book Club, everyone, in The Fasting Method. Coach Lisa meets weekly with people focused on a specific book. Lisa is really good at highlighting important things, important messages to be pulling from those books, and she does a pretty wide variety of topics. She might do one that's a metabolic one, or one month it was The Case for Keto, and she also (close to my heart) does a lot of mindset and behavior-focused books that I think are really interesting for people.

[00:20:48] So let's say, for example, I'm struggling with emotional eating while I'm working on my fasting journey. Lisa might cover the book When Food Is Comfort, and then we get to actually talk about how to address emotional meeting. And so I think the Book Club serves is a great content for people fasting-related, health-related and mindset and behavior-related. So I definitely find a lot of people really enjoy the Book Club meetings as well.

Megan [00:21:19] Yeah. Some of the things I see people ask about, in regards to the Book Club, on social media is whether or not we just keep recycling through our own books. And, well, we all know at this point, Jason's written, like, I don't know, a dozen? [laughs] It always feels like he's got a new book coming out or a couple of books. But we don't just focus on that in the Book Club. Whenever we have a new book, Lisa will do a Book Club with that. We did a Book Club for my Intermittent Fasting for Women that came out this

summer, and every now and then we'll recycle through a book of Jason's when it's appropriate. But because Lisa is a functional health practitioner, she's got such a vast range of knowledge, and we have a lot of other peers and experts who we find to be very inspiring and educational, and Lisa does a great job in navigating that content that really aligns with our values and opening up our Community to other experts and other perspectives of looking at the same thing, like insulin resistance, but through a different lens. And that sometimes can be really helpful to a member who maybe didn't understand a concept the way Jason had explained it in *The Obesity Code*, but hearing how Robert Lustig explained it in one of his books might make something click and stick. So I really love that. She goes out there and sources all of this information that's so aligned with us, and from these really great experts as well.

Terri [00:22:56] So Megan, you mentioned earlier when you were talking about the monthly group challenges that there is the Forum that people can go to. And I find this is another strength of the Community in that people can stay in touch with us and stay in touch with each other. And I find that the-- you know, the whole thing that you started with around the need for community is so significant. And for many people that maybe can't make it to some of the live meetings or just needs something that's kind of more on their own time schedule, the Forum really helps with that. So they can reach out, they can put some questions out there, or some needs, or just sharing and getting that human connection. There's one thread in the Forum that's-- I think it's called the Fasting Turtles [laughter] and I have just watched them. They know each other. If they're in a larger meeting, they'll reference something because they are so connected through that Forum thread. They know what's going on in each other's lives. They know when someone's having a really rough week. They follow up with them the following week and say, you know, "How did that turn out for you?" or, "I'm glad to see you're back in the meetings this week." So it's it's also like keeping a pulse on people that you start to know. They follow up with each other. They know when you're having some challenges. They know when you have some celebrations. And it just really fosters that sense of 'you are not in this alone'. So I think the Forum is a great place to connect with other members in the Community, like I said, more on your own timeline. You don't have to do it only in a live meeting.

Megan [00:24:37] It's a great way, too, to connect with us, the experts, as well. You know, we can't keep up on social media at all. As wonderful as a tool some of these groups on, say, Facebook are, it's really difficult. I've been accused of being an imposter, myself. "Oh, Megan Ramos would never say that. You must be an imposter account." Jason's had that happen numerous times, too. And it's just a lot. It ends up being kind of like the wild, wild West. And with our Community, we've got such a great group of people who really have come together, regardless of backgrounds, but have come together because they just want to help support each other on this health journey. And it's just-- it's really a safe place for everybody and, as a result, it makes it really easy to go in there and connect with them, like as myself or some of our other coaches and just share things and resources that we like. Coach Larry is the king of sharing resources in there. If I find an article or a podcast or a book that really inspires me, I go in there and I let people know. It's just a really good way to connect with a community that's very supportive and I feel really inspired every time I go in there and check, just seeing how incredible and just human and open and kind people are with one another. And it's a great way for me also to connect, see what people are talking about, see what they have questions on. It's where we get inspiration for the topics for the group meetings, the webinars, the challenges. We can really interact and make sure that our members are getting the support and resources that they need. So it's a really civilized, fun, friendly place. And also what you've pointed out, Terri, it's a great place to make friends and to form some accountability partners as well. Our Community

actually has people from all over the world. So almost at any given point through the day, there is someone in there being active and being able to offer support, which is really fantastic. It's been such a cool experience for me to learn so much about the world through our members and, you know, just being in Toronto or San Francisco, but being able to connect with, you know, Canadians living in Qatar, or Americans living in New Zealand, or New Zealanders living in America. We get to learn and meet all of these really great humans from all over the place and the Forum, as a result, ends up being a pretty active zone 24/7.

Terri [00:27:26] Absolutely.

Megan [00:27:27] All right. Well, everyone, we hope to see you in the Community this fall. Terri and I will be there. Well, I will be there till this baby comes [laughs] but I will only be taking a short hiatus. You'll likely find me in the Forum at all hours of the day because everyone tells me you don't sleep any more once you have a child. [laughs] So you'll definitely be able to connect with me in there and the rest of our team and the Community as well.

Terri [00:27:58] Take good care, everybody.

Megan [00:27:59] Bye for now.