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

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

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

Terri [00:01:19] Hi, everybody. Welcome back to a new episode of The Fasting Method podcast. This is Dr. Terri Lance. Today, I am doing a solo bitesize episode, which is going to be a shorter format that we're sampling to see if that works well for everyone.

[00:01:37] Today, I wanted to start talking a little bit about emotional eating. Emotional eating as a topic that I could talk about probably every time I come to you and we would never exhaust it completely. But I want to go back through an example of a time when I experienced an emotional eating decision, and some of you who are already in The Fasting Method Community have heard me tell this story probably a number of times, but I think it's one that kind of exemplifies what emotional eating is like for many of us.

[00:02:13] A few years ago I was living in Hawaii because I was running fasting retreats for TFM there and I decided to move back to the mainland; I moved to San Diego. In the last week before I was moving, I had a lot of things that I was getting ready. I was packing, I was selling things, I was shipping my car, and shipping things because I couldn't take them across the ocean myself, so I had to line them up with a moving company to be shipped over. I was still working and I was figuring out how I was going to get my dogs across the island onto airplanes and to the mainland. So on a Friday, I was having internet problems. I had had internet problems for quite a while because I lived in the jungle of Hawaii, but this day was particularly problematic and I had Zoom meetings for TFM (my work with clients and Community meetings), and so I thought, "Well, I can't really work at home today." So I decided to go to Starbucks. And when I got to Starbucks, I got my coffee and I sat down. I was working all day having my client sessions and it started to get a little too loud inside Starbucks so I decided I would take my laptop and sit outside (it was a nice day out) and I would meet with my clients while sitting outside. A little while later, I decided to go back inside, went in, sat down, got working again, and I decided I wanted to get another coffee. And as I grabbed for my wallet/purse-like thing that I had hanging on me, I realized I didn't have it. And then it dawned on me that I had left it outside while I was sitting out there and had forgotten to bring it back in. I had hung it on the chair. So quickly a lot of panic and upset ran through my body. I had \$400 in cash in my wallet. I had a credit card. I had my debit card and my driver's license - all things that I really needed for those next couple of days to make my move, to get to the airport, to pay the person taking us to the

airport, to rent a car when I got to San Diego. Everything I needed was right there and I had lost it.

[00:04:43] So I was disappointed and frustrated with myself. I was angry that someone would do this. I was scared. I also thought I had lost my landlord's pickup truck key. I had borrowed her car because I had already shipped my car, so I was panicked about, "What am I going to do if I lost her car?" I was just having all of these emotional responses. So the first thing I thought of while standing in Starbucks is, of course, cake pops! "I'm going to go eat a couple of cake pops, then I'll feel okay. Everything will work out. Everything will be fine." So I got in line and I was standing there for a few minutes. Fortunately for me, the line was a little long and I waited for a little bit and I started thinking about what I was doing and why I was doing it. And so I asked myself, "Terri, what are you feeling?" And I went back through the emotions that I just shared with you. "I'm angry, I'm disappointed, I'm scared, I'm frustrated, I'm nervous, I'm panicky." So I had like five or six uncomfortable emotions going through me. And I thought, "Okay, when you get those cake pops and you eat them, what of these difficult feelings will be made better? Which of these will stop? Which of these will be resolved?" And I couldn't think of any of them that were going to feel any better. I was just going to enjoy eating cake pops for five seconds, but I wasn't going to actually resolve any of those emotions. And then I asked myself, "How will you feel after you eat them?" And then I had to think about, "Well, in a little while, I have a Community meeting for TFM. I'm going to be meeting with a lot of people and I'm going to talk with them about how they manage their food choices and their fasting and their emotional eating. I'm probably going to feel kind of hypocritical if I've just mowed down some cake pops to get out of my difficult emotional moment." And I thought, "You know, I'm also going to feel kind of guilty because I know what that does to my glucose levels and my insulin levels, and I'm really working on my health," so I didn't want to do that.

[00:07:05] So then I started to realize not only am I going to maintain those five or six uncomfortable, difficult emotions, I was going to add a couple more difficult emotions to this scenario. So I stepped out of line, I sat down, and I refocused. I went to the Community meeting. I told them what was going on because I needed to be interrupted during the meeting when the police arrived. And I got through the meeting and everything was fine. After I talked with the police, I was getting ready to leave and I had the thought again because there was a diner next door and I knew they had a dessert there, and I thought, "I could go get that now." And I had to walk through once again. "How are you feeling? What are the emotions? What's the emotional need right now?" And, "How is that going to be resolved? How is that going to be better if you go eat that dessert?" And once again, I walked through it in my mind, had a little internal conversation, and reminded myself that nothing was going to feel better. I was going to be distracted for a few seconds, maybe a minute, but I was still going to have all of those uncomfortable emotions to deal with.

[00:08:23] And so what I decided to do instead, I got in the car (fortunately, I did find the car key or the key to the landlord's truck), I got in the car and I drove home. And I just started walking through, "What do I need to do to take care of the chaos that is unfolding? How will I get some money? Can I go to the bank? How can I get some cash? How will I pay the driver? What will I do about travel? Can they take my passport?" I just had to start thinking about all the problem-solving things that I needed to do in those next few days. And then the emotions were resolved because I moved forward and I worked through them. I realized that eating the cake pops or eating the other dessert that I really wanted in the moment wasn't going to actually resolve the complicated emotional stuff that I was experiencing.

[00:09:18] So what I encourage you to do after listening to this story is to start walking yourself through a similar process when you recognize that you're wanting to eat. Check in - "How am I feeling? What am I needing?"

[00:09:33] "I'm feeling frustrated." "I'm angry." "I'm sad." "I'm lonely."

[00:09:38] "Is eating what I want to eat right now actually going to resolve that uncomfortable feeling or a number of uncomfortable feelings that I'm dealing with? Will it add any more uncomfortable feelings or any additional tension?" And then kind of re-ask yourself, "Do I still want to follow through with his behavior?" So, again, as I did, walking yourself through it can help you make a different decision rather than just moving forward really quickly and eating the food or breaking your fast or whatever it is.

[00:10:13] One of the reasons I think this is important is that I consider myself a fairly emotionally aware person. I'm a psychologist by training. I believe in doing a lot of insight work, but I was still tied to my old emotional eating habits in that moment of crisis. I had done years of fasting. I was a coach and I still struggled with the emotional urge to eat. So please be kind to yourself when you're having that urge, but walk through, you know, kind of interrupt yourself in the process. Walk through, "What emotional needs do I have right now? Will that emotional need actually be met by making this behavior happen?" And if not, how can I put it aside and do something else that will resolve my emotional need?"

[00:11:10] I hope that helps you. I look forward to coming back to you in a couple of weeks with another bitesize episode. Take good care, everybody.