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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.

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

Terri [00:01:19] Welcome back, everyone, to another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. This is Dr. Terri Lance and this is a Bitesize episode. I wanted to talk with you today about something that I hear a lot of people describing in The Fasting Method Community and in the client work that I do, and that is something around FOMO (fear of missing out) - missing out on meals, missing out on certain foods, missing out on old behaviors that we used to use related to foods. And I know this topic is a little less about fasting and a little more about food but, because at least half of our journey is related to how we eat and how we make choices about food, I think that this is an appropriate topic for us to talk about.

[00:02:13] So, oftentimes, I hear people describe that they aren't sure how they're going to handle a situation because the meal itself, or the food, the beverages, are what they're using to connect with people. So let's say, for example, their friend reaches out to them and asks them to go out on a Saturday for lunch, or brunch, or something like that, or Sunday. Or someone suggests that they go out for coffee and orders food. Oftentimes, what people share is that the concern is that if I don't engage with the food, if I don't eat the meal that this person is suggesting, or if I don't join in the eating of the appetizers or treats or desserts or whatever, that I'm not going to have the full experience. And I totally can relate to this because I think most of us are pretty much socialized to focus-- a lot of our social connections are related to food, and we often-- [laughs] when we think about connecting with food, we often don't think about connecting with the healthiest of foods. We think about things that, I don't know, they just have like a really high reward value for us. So they're highly palatable, they're decadent, or they're yummy, they're crunchy, whatever it is, and we fear then that if we're not using that food during this time, we're going to miss out on something.

[00:03:48] What I really want to encourage everyone to think about is shifting how they think about this. So everyone pretty much knows at this point that a lot of the work that I do is about mindset and shifting how we are thinking about things to help us to change behaviors and change our reactions to things. So if we think about dinner as a time that we have to spend with our family, with our kids, or our spouse, or our parents, or in-laws, or whomever it is, if we focus on that meal as the reason we're connecting, oftentimes, we get very connected to the thought of it being tied to the food. But if, instead, we think about

the idea that we want to connect with these important people, we want to spend time, we want to have quality time. And how we learn to do that may have been around the food, but how could we do it differently now? Instead of eating the meal with them, if it's a fasting day for us, could we arrange a walk afterward? Could we decide to play a couple of rounds of backgammon with them after they finish eating? Therefore, we're still having that connecting time, we're just not doing it with food involved. They have their meals, so their needs are met. We have our fasting, so our needs are met. But together we can still do that connecting, bonding time, just in a different way than using food in order to connect.

[00:05:20] In thinking of it this way, I think an important shift for most of us is to really think about, "What is our goal? What is it that we're seeking?" And in these environments where it's social and there's someone else involved, generally, in these times, then, what we're really focusing on is getting that connection time, getting to have a fun conversation, or getting the support that we're looking for, or being able to offer the support that they need during that time, but it's really not about the food. And it's especially not about problematic food, even though that's the way many of us have learned to think about it. So it does require shifting this, and thinking about other things. I remember in another episode, Megan Ramos talked about how she shifted from inviting people to come to meals or to join them at a restaurant, to instead invite people to join them for a walk around the lake or the park or somewhere else, or to go to an actual event, or go to see something, walk through a museum together, or do something else. So it's really about shifting the 'I still get to have this great connection with people and do something that feels rewarding to me' without it being focused on food.

[00:06:41] So I really encourage you if you're struggling with that-- I know some of us are currently in a stage of being kind of in-between some holidays and things, a lot of social things going on, and so this FOMO, this fear of missing out if 'I don't eat these meals', 'how will I do this?' And to really recognize there's so much more about this holiday season (or any time that you're getting together with people) and that it's really not about the particular foods.

[00:07:12] Another way I hear people talking about this is that they feel like if they change their food choices or change the frequency of eating, they are going to no longer be seen as the fun person. So some people come and they identify themselves as foodies and they say, "You know, everyone knows me as a foodie. If anyone's looking for something about a recommendation for a restaurant or a recipe, they come to me." Or they might say, "You know, in my family, I'm known as the person who always makes this." And now that they're changing their approach or their relationship with food, those aren't the things they're connecting with and they're afraid that they're going to lose that identity or that reputation. And I encourage you to really think about, if this is affecting you, to think about, "How else would I like people to know me?" "Rather than being known as the Dessert Queen, how else might people think about one of my strengths or one of the positive things I bring to the table, even though it's no longer that one?" I can guarantee you that the client I talked to who said that she was the aunt in her family that was well known for making a particular type of food and that's why everyone came around, when she stopped making that food, people did not stop coming around. She switched to something else that was healthier for her and then, ultimately, healthier for them. And the reality is they all came because they wanted connection with family and with her, and they were appreciative. It didn't ruin that connection.

[00:08:51] So if you are kind of identifying as someone who food plays a huge role in how you connect with other people or what you have to offer other people, I really encourage

you to start working on recognizing that you offer so much more than that recipe or that certain type of food that you often bring to the family get-together, and start focusing on that. Start focusing on the connections that you have and the fun that you have, the support that you have with other people, rather than can you 'ooh and ah' them with that food.

[00:09:25] I hope that this is helpful for some of you to think about, and I look forward to talking to you again soon in another episode. Take good care, everybody.