

The Fasting Method #161 - Meet the New TFM Coaches: Amy Medling

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 back to another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. This is your host today, Dr. Terri Lance, Coach Terri, and I am super excited. I am not sure what order these things are coming out in, so I'm just kind of letting you know each time that, at TFM, we are very excited that we have some new faces, and we want those of you in our listening audience to get to know our new coaches. And today, I'm very excited to have one of our new coaches with us, to help you know her background and what she brings to our community. And you will get to hear her again in future episodes as well. But let me go ahead and quickly introduce and get started here. So, today, I am very fortunate to have with me our new coach, Amy Medling. She brings to us a background that is so much going to help round us out and offer so much to you listeners, and to those of you who are in our community and who want to do coaching with her. And we'll talk later in this episode a little bit more about what will be coming up in the future. So, without any further ado, Amy, welcome. How are you today?

Amy [00:02:33] Oh, I'm great, and I'm just so happy to be here and to be a part of The Fasting Method Community. And thanks for having me on your podcast.

Terri [00:02:42] Absolutely. Super excited to get to have you here. And I know this is not your first rodeo with podcast episodes, so I'm sure you'll share some about that with us as you go. So, Amy, I wondered if you could really start by just sharing with us your background, how you got here, what you've been doing that led you to TFM in this role. Just fill us in so that we can get to know you.

Amy [00:03:06] Sure. So I've been a certified health coach for 15 years now and I am the founder of PCOS Diva (it's an online platform for women with polycystic ovary syndrome), the author of Healing PCOS (it's a 21-day guide to taking control of your PCOS), as well as I started the PCOS Diva podcast. You know, when I was coaching women with PCOS and women with hormonal issues, I would often hear how frustrated [they were] and how they had lost all hope because the only advice that they were given from their doctors was to lose weight, take a few pills, and, you know, essentially, live with your symptoms. And I was really one of those women as early as age 14. And, thinking back, I think even earlier than that, you know, 11 and 12, I can now see signs of insulin resistance with reactive hypoglycemia. And then, as I became an older teen, really struggling with an array of what

I now know are PCOS symptoms, things like fatigue, acne, hair loss, irregular cycles, anxiety, depression - this array of what really are metabolically-driven symptoms. I kind of thought that this was just my fate because the women in my family all dealt with these symptoms. My mother, you know, I look back and, you know, and my paternal grandmother, my maternal grandmother, they all dealt with these symptoms. And I just felt like it was probably the genetic fate of women in my family. And then, moving on to college, I found myself in an exam room and had not had my period in many months. And the doctor just kind of looked at me and said, "You know, one day we're going to have to jump through hoops to get you pregnant," and handed me a prescription for the birth control pill. And, you know, at that point, I felt-- I was 17, I felt really hopeless and helpless. And she didn't really address, you know, my other concerns, which was the acne and the hair loss and the uncontrollable sugar cravings, which I know a lot of listeners can probably relate to those.

[00:05:41] I came of age during that snack-well, fat-free era where TCBY fat-free, frozen yogurt was a health food. My diet consisted of lots of fat-free foods. You know, it was kind of the hip thing to be vegetarian at the time. So my diet consisted of a huge amount of carbohydrates, low fat, low protein, and I just could not control these sugar cravings. And I remember feeling like I am a smart young woman, I have control over so many areas of my life. You know, I was doing well at school, I had good relationships, I was happy overall with life, but why was it that I couldn't control these sugar cravings? And it really, really drove me crazy.

[00:06:32] And that was much of my 20s until I got married and then was trying to get pregnant. And that prediction of jumping through hoops really came back to haunt me. I did have fertility treatments and was able to get pregnant with my first child, but then really struggled with getting pregnant with my second child. And that was when I started tracking my cycles and finally went to a reproductive endocrinologist who, at 31, diagnosed me with PCOS. So I went for 15 years undiagnosed. And that's very common for women with PCOS. The statistics show that 50% of women are undiagnosed, so there's probably members of the TFM Community that may be able to kind of relate to some of these symptoms, but now are older and really never received that PCOS diagnosis. But I was able to get to have two beautiful boys with the help of ovulation-inducing drugs, and was the first time I ever was put on Metformin. Metformin, for me, made me just very, very sick with GI issues, and I kind of swore that, once I got pregnant and, you know, I was kind of out of the woods for gestational diabetes, that, you know, I would never touch that medication again. So that left me with a baby and a three-year-old and a wonderful husband, but I could not take care of them in the way that I wanted to. I had been listening to mainstream medical advice. That was the period of time when you were supposed to be constantly fueling your metabolism with all these mini meals during the day, and that just was not really working for me. I needed to find another way to take care of myself. The drugs that they offered made me really-- I felt sick and tired of feeling sick and tired, and way too young, at that point (you know, in my early 30s), to feel so old.

[00:08:44] And, you know, that's really when I moved from this victim mentality, where I just wanted somebody to fix it. I wanted the magic pill, I wanted the doctors just to tell me what to do and make everything better, but that just wasn't happening. But I was motivated with a big WHY. You know, I wanted to be the best mom and wife that I could be, and that really drove me to look outside of, you know, mainstream. I had to be creative. I had to really dig deep to get the knowledge so that I could make some shifts in my life. And this was back in the early 2000s, when PCOS wasn't as well known, and researched, and with so many online places to learn, and communities to be a part of. So I was really alone. I was

reading the few books that were out there (a lot of them were medical textbooks) and looking on PubMed to try to find research of more holistic ways of managing my health. And that's when I started piecing together a protocol that was working for me so much that my reproductive endocrinologist was really flustered by the bloodwork that was coming back. She started kind of saying, you know, "Would you mind if this patient that I have that also can't tolerate metformin could give you a call and you could kind of tell them what's working for you?". So that's how I started this journey to finding an online community for women with PCOS. I started blogging, you know, recipes and different lifestyle tips just for a creative outlet, and I ended up having different women reaching out to me wanting to do coaching. So that's when I went back and got my coaching certificate.

[00:10:34] During this whole process, my husband started really seeing a shift in the way I was advocating for myself. There's this one episode that stands out in my mind where we had taken the boys to a steakhouse for dinner, and when I was going to order, you know, I was becoming very particular about how I wanted-- how I was cooking my food and how I wanted to eat. So, you know, I asked for steak and I wanted to know if they put margarine on the steak or, you know, I really wanted butter. I wanted the broccoli with butter and not any type of seed oils. And then could I have a sweet potato instead of a regular potato and, you know, no, I don't want cinnamon sugar on top of that sweet potato. So I was really articulating to the waitress, in a very nice way, you know, how I wanted my meal prepared. And when she walked away from the table, my husband looked at me and said, "Gosh, when have you become such a diva?" And that was such an aha moment for me because I thought, you know, "Yeah, I would never have done that before," asked for what I wanted in a specific way around food. And, now that I was, that was a real part of the healing process. In order to be my best and give my best to my family, I did have to be a diva.

Terri [00:11:55] I love that shift, Amy, that, like you said, going from more, kind of, that victim mentality of, "This is just something, unfortunately, that's happening to me and I hope someone can fix it," to really advocating for yourself and finding your own way, becoming a resource that your doctor was referring people to. That's an amazing shift.

Amy [00:12:17] Well, and as I was making these shifts, you know, doctors were telling me, you know, "You don't have to worry about getting pregnant again because you're not fertile. You're not going to have another baby. You don't have to worry about getting pregnant again. And if you want to, come see us and we'll go through the fertility treatments." So, you know, I just continued to really shift my lifestyle, and, lo and behold, at 37, my husband and I had one of the biggest surprises of our life - we were pregnant with my daughter. And so having a girl who has, you know, this genetic-- the epigenetics of, you know, a grandmother, potentially great grandmother, mother who had PCOS, if her genetics were going to express in that way, you know, I wanted her to know that PCOS wasn't the end of the world (which I thought it was when I was diagnosed), that it's not a less-than life that you have to live, that it's really an opportunity to live life like a diva. She's now 15, and I am just super proud that she's making such better decisions about nutrition, based on how food makes her feel. And that was something that I really had to learn. She's not eating hostess crumb cakes for breakfast, like I did at her age, or potato chips and a Sprite for lunch. It's such a joy to heal yourself, and, in the process, you end up healing your family, which I think a lot of members of the TFM Community can see that happening.

[00:13:58] And so I really want women, the women that I worked with with PCOS, to know that they're not a victim, and you can apply this to insulin resistance, too (insulin

resistance, PCOS - it's not your fate), that there is no magic pill, but you can thrive when you embrace the power of knowledge. And I think TFM does such a phenomenal job with knowledge, so you understand the choices you make and how that affects your body. So with the power of knowledge, diet, and lifestyle, you can really change your life.

Terri [00:14:35] One of the thoughts I had as you were sharing, Amy, is that when a medical professional basically said to you, "Well, you know, this isn't a problem anymore because, you know, you're done having babies," how, also, limiting that was, that PCOS wasn't only a fertility issue for you, it was a host of symptoms like you were describing, and things that affect your daily life, not just fertility. And, again, kind of sad to me that it was minimized to only kind of seeing it that way, even from a medical perspective, and not really acknowledging how much you were managing it, dealing with symptoms and things all of the time. And I think that's just another unfortunate limitation in the general knowledge of PCOS. And so I love that you have really found a way to share your knowledge, based on your experience and a lot of research that you've done, so that women don't experience it that way, that they don't get kind of put in the corner of, "This is only a fertility thing," but there are so many ways that it was affecting your daily life. I think that's really powerful.

Amy [00:15:48] And I think it's it's hard because the paradigm, still, is treating the symptoms. So you're sent to a dermatologist for the acne or the hair loss, and the endocrinologist for the thyroid or the hair growth, and then, you know, the ObGyn. So we're not really looking at the the root cause and insulin resistance. It's the, I think, number one, root cause of PCOS. When you can get that under control, all those other symptoms start to become under control. So that's true. And then I think that idea that PCOS is just a reproductive-years disorder, that's really a misnomer. PCOS is a lifelong condition that needs to be managed, through perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause. And women with PCOS are just at much higher risks for those metabolic diseases, four to seven times higher risk of heart attack, three times more likely to develop endometrial cancer, 50% more likely to become diabetic by age 40. So it's something that needs to be managed beyond the reproductive years, as well, to avoid all those risk factors.

Terri [00:17:07] Absolutely. Well, Amy, I think you already touched on this a bit in what you shared about your work and how you see TFM helping people, but I'm curious to hear you talk a little bit about just what made you decide to come to us at this point.

Amy [00:17:24] Well, getting back to that big WHY that I have, that really hasn't changed. You know, I really focus on my health in order to be the best mom and wife that I can be. And running a business is really stressful, especially as it grew as large as PCOS Diva did. And, combined with that, I was sort of sandwiched between a mom that was aging and really needed my support, and a young, teenage daughter that really needed more of my support. So I was finding that, you know, my health was slipping because, as we all know, with stress, you find increased cortisol, sleep suffers, and then, before you know it, you're kind of back into that insulin-resistant state. And so I needed to put my oxygen mask on, and I had to move-- you know, take a step back from PCOS Diva. And I did that back in late 2022, early 2023. And, you know, I took some time to take care of my health and take care of my family. And I emerged from that realizing how much I miss working with people on their health and helping to empower them to make good choices for themselves. So I started thinking, you know, what is it that I would like to do? How can I take my knowledge base and continue to help people? And I did see that The Fasting Method was looking for coaches, and I was just thrilled because I'm a huge fan of Dr. Fung and Megan Ramos' work. It's very much aligned with how I live my life and what I think is the best way for

people to heal insulin resistance, and so it just seemed like a great fit and a great place for me to share what I've learned in my journey, and continue to help women with hormonal issues and insulin resistance.

Terri [00:19:33] That's great. I'm curious, Amy, as you think about your work in the Community, obviously, you'll be doing Community meetings and working with many, many, many people in the Community, but then also specifically one-on-one and in small-group with clients. What are some of the things that you really look forward to seeing that you're going to be able to kind of bring to them? How are you going to create this change, this help, this support that, you know, you've been doing and do it now differently here?

Amy [00:20:07] Well, I think that a huge key to making big lifestyle change, as many people are doing with The Fasting Method-- I mean, fasting is a huge-- especially the extended fast, it's a huge lifestyle shift. I always would say that you can't eat like a diva until you start thinking like a diva. And I think a huge shift for people that I-- you know, I hope that I can help them, is with these little mindset shifts. And I think realizing that you can heal and feel good again, that you can do extended fasts, or do the fasting protocol that you need to do, and it can be enjoyable. I think that's a huge piece, is that eating healthy and fasting doesn't mean a less-than life. It's something that can really add so much richness to your life in ways that, you know, you can't even imagine at this point.

[00:21:08] So I think making those mindset shifts is something that really excites me, because I see what a huge difference that makes and sustainability for, you know, making these big lifestyle changes that I think we're asking people to do. When you're coming from a standard American diet and eating many times a day to keep kind of that metabolism burning, as, you know, a lot of practitioners feel like that's what you need to do, it's hard to make these shifts. So we have to-- you know, and Terri does a great job with the mindset. And I like to just, you know, help people with mindset.

[00:21:44] And then, also, being a mom of three kids, I know what it's like to juggle a family and all of those activities and responsibilities. And so, you know, helping families make good choices and helping parents be able to make these lifestyle changes with a busy lifestyle. I think I have a lot that I can help coach folks around in that area, as well.

Terri [00:22:12] I love it. Some people in our community joke sometimes that they're going to get a T-shirt and have some sayings from TFM, and I think we need to add to that T-shirt, "You can't eat like a diva until you think like a diva." I think that mindset piece that you highlighted, Amy, I'm so looking forward to you coming and adding that into our community, because I think it's so common that people are in that more sense of, you know, "This fasting isn't fair. It's not fair that I'm not eating," and this, you know, feeling put out by it rather than, "I'm thriving with this. I'm taking control of my health and my weight, and I'm thriving with this and I enjoy it." So I'm very excited by this mindset piece that you bring. I'm so glad you shared that and it's going on the T-shirt. [laughter] That's very exciting.

[00:23:07] And I love that part that you just share to about families, because so often people come to us, people listen to our podcast thinking about their health, but, as you mentioned earlier, like with your daughter, how much addressing your health also affects other people in your life, affects your family, affects the food that's in your home, affects how they learn to make choices, and that you can navigate this as part of a busy family. It's not like, well, you know, you're going to get those three weeks out of the year where you can really focus on you, that you have to work on, "How do I do this in an ongoing way and

work with what we're all doing for our health?" So, you know, different food choices for everyone in the family, at times, and different patterns and things. So I just think you are already talking about so many important things. I can't wait to hear how our community is benefiting in their work with you.

Amy [00:24:11] I love this, and it's for the T-shirt as well, but-- and I think I mentioned it earlier in my story, but we need to understand that there is a true magic pill, and it isn't Metformin or the birth control pill, but that the magic pill is you, and it's the changes that you're making. I think so many of us look for that magic pill to fix it all, but it's really these lifestyle changes that you're making through The Fasting Method that's the magic pill.

Terri [00:24:40] Absolutely. And I'm thinking, as we're talking about it, it may make it sound to people like we think it's really easy. Like, "Oh yeah, you just do all of these things," but it is amazing to me, years later, how much you and I, it seems like, both experience that it isn't as hard as we once, maybe, would have thought to really integrate these healthy approaches in our lives. And it's easier than navigating the symptoms that you were navigating. It's easier than running up against all of the barriers that we were running up against, but it did take a big shift. It took a lot of going against what we had been taught, going against what is the norm. I'm guessing you went to family gatherings and you and your kids maybe ate differently than everyone else, but it's not this limitation on life, that it's actually a way to expand your life and live more fully.

Amy [00:25:41] Yeah, absolutely. It's not that less-than life. And I think, also, that the mindset shift that I had to make is to feel like I deserve it. You know, I deserve to spend the time, the extra effort, oftentimes, the extra expense to take care of myself because I'm worth it and I deserve it. So that was the huge shift for me to make, in order to make these lifestyle changes and in order to advocate for myself, and, you know, bring the side dish salad to a family event that I wasn't asked to bring, but I'm bringing it anyway because that's what I know that I can eat with whatever protein is there. So it's just really making myself and what I need a priority, which I think so many of us are so-- we think that self-sacrifice is so-- and in a lot of ways it is. As moms, we do self-sacrifice, but we have to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of our families. And this lifestyle is how I do that.

Terri [00:26:47] I love it. Well, Amy, I feel like you and I could talk about this forever because not only do you have great knowledge in the technical aspects of it, but also this mindset piece that I think is so integral to change. So thank you so much for being here today and sharing all this. I can't wait to really get to work with you more and keep learning more from you. I just want to mention real quickly, as I kind of touched on earlier, what's going to be happening over these next few weeks is, those of you in the Community, you're going to be seeing Coach Amy more and more, and you're going to get to attend meetings with her. And if you're interested in doing coaching with her, there will be intake assessments available, both for listeners and Community members. So any of you who are interested in getting to spend more time with her, you're able to do that. And of course, as I mentioned, you're getting her on some future podcast episodes and get to see her more and more within the TFM Community. Well, Amy, again, thank you so much for being here.

Amy [00:27:56] Well, thank you, Terri, and I'm so excited to to get to meet Community members in the groups and on the forums. And I just I'm very excited to get started.

Terri [00:28:08] Very good. All right. Well, listeners, remember, one way to have more people benefit from hearing this is, if you enjoyed it, share it with someone. Give us a review. Let people know that we're here because this is how people find us. When you leave a review, people are more likely to-- for this to pop up, and they'll start listening and they'll learn the things that you're learning with us as well. Until I come back to you with another new coach, take good care and happy fasting.