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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.

[00:01:19] Hi, everyone. It's Megan Ramos here, and we're back with another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. Today, I'm joined by my lovely co-hosts, Dr. Terri Lance and Dr. Nadia Pateguana. Ladies, how are you doing today?

Terri [00:01:33] I'm good, Megan. Thanks for asking.

Nadia [00:01:35] Doing great.

Megan [00:01:37] We are thick into the holiday season right now, and in today's episode, we want to discuss that the holiday season is not a write-off.

[00:01:48] It's funny because we've been chatting about this a bit and I had no idea that this story that I shared stuck so much with my team. Several years ago, I had one patient come in in September, at the clinic, and I asked him what his fasting plan was from August. I hadn't seen him for the entire month, and he said that he couldn't fast in August. I asked him why and he said he had three weddings. So I inquired about these weddings. I was about to get married myself, so I was interested and I said, "Oh, did you travel for them?"

[00:02:19] "No. They were all in Toronto."

[00:02:22] "Okay. Were they multi-day weddings?"

[00:02:26] "No. They were all on Saturdays."

[00:02:29] "Okay."

[00:02:29] So now my fasting coach has become present again and my wedding planning has gone to the back of my brain. And I was like, "Well, why couldn't you have fasted?"

[00:02:39] "Well, I had three weddings in the course of August." [laughs]

[00:02:43] And I said, "But did you have a wedding on a Tuesday?"

[00:02:46] "No."

[00:02:47] "Well, why couldn't you have fasted on a Tuesday?"

[00:02:49] And apparently sharing this has stuck with my team [laughter] over the course of the years. But there's always Tuesday.

[00:02:58] And I think something that we want to talk about today is that you just can't let the next couple of weeks fall to the wayside, or several weeks fall to the wayside because we've got some holiday parties.

Terri [00:03:10] Megan, your story has stuck with me so much [laughter] that I tell it repeatedly, but I have embellished it a bit. It's that the person couldn't fast all summer. [laughter] I've just really stoked up the story a little bit.

[00:03:25] But I hear this all the time when people say things, even if it's not holiday related, just that, you know, "July is a busy month for me. I have two weekends when I'm traveling." And I pause, kind of thinking back to your story, and I think, "But that's maybe 6 days out of 30. What about those other 24 days?" And so I have really been talking about this a lot with my clients lately, that this season, this month, this week, it's not a write-off.

Nadia [00:03:54] It's funny because Terri just kind of dropped this topic on us 30 seconds before we hit record, so I haven't had a lot of time to think about this, but I thought this is such an amazing topic to talk about because, you know, there's sort of a running joke that it's not what happens between Christmas and New Year's, it's what happens between New Year's and Christmas. And so, you know, if you want to write off the week between Christmas and New Year's, I mean, it's not so bad. I wouldn't do it. I like to get, you know, December 26th is like one of those days where I need a break from food, from people, from everything. But, you know, it's fine, I think, if you're writing things off between Christmas and New Year's. But it really, I think, like the two of you guys, it really hits me when I get people going, "Well, you know, the summer was a write-off because of ABC," and then September is everyone's favorite sort of New-Year's-resolution month where they do really well. But then it's like October 1st happens and people start thinking about Halloween already. So it's like write-off, the whole month is a write-off. And then after Halloween, it's like, "Oh, why even bother?" because Thanksgiving is coming and then Christmas and then New Year's, and it's like, "But, whoa, whoa! Wait a second." There's just so much time in there, in between. You know, even if you are super busy, I think that it's time for us to talk about this topic, finally, and to create some more of a mindset sort of strategy. So more of a Terri-type of conversation because, practically, I think we all can figure out what to do between holidays.

Megan [00:05:30] There's just so much focus on what you can't do rather than what you can do. We see this all the time with people who are new to changing their diet. There's focus on what they *can't* eat and then there's panic about, well, what's left to eat? And if you talk to these people and you look at their regular diets that they had before this moment, they're boring. There's a piece of toast every morning, there's a side of rice every dinner. It is boring. Your diet's boring. All of our diets are boring. They are boring. We're just asking you to change from that boring diet to try things that are new, and new is scary. So there's a lot of focus on what you can't do.

[00:06:12] So people, you know, I hear, "I can't do my 42s and I can't do my 48s because it's too busy." Okay. And I think there are so many people that are immersed in this fasting community and they hear us, right? I know where it comes from. You know, "The gold standard for postmenopausal women for weight loss is striving to do those 42 to 48-hour fasts two to three times a week. I mean, they come from my mouth [laughs] and yours as well. But we often forget about the power of just time-restricted eating. And I know we've dedicated some time on this podcast recently to really tackling that it is what, Nadia, you call the 'Beyoncé of the show', right? It is the core foundation of everything.

[00:06:56] If most people really mastered TRE, we wouldn't always need to do a lot of these longer intermittent fasts, either. It's complicated. TRE is hard. It's easier sometimes to go for a couple of days without eating than to focus on the TRE. But the TRE's that powerful, and this is a great time of the year to practice that.

[00:07:15] And then there's just this complete disregard for 24-hour fasts, I think, that we see so much. And sure, okay, we do a week with some 24-hour fasts and the inches don't melt off like here in the middle of Arizona in July. That's not going to happen with the 24s, but there's shrinkage happening, there's fat loss happening, there's insulin reduction happening, there's improvement in blood sugar levels happening. We all started with the 24s. We all saw so many results with the 24s that inspired us to do longer fasts.

[00:07:49] And I hear this from people all of the time, "Oh, I didn't really do any fasting. I just did some 24s." Okay, do a self-check-in with yourself right now. Three years ago, if you heard yourself say, "I just did a bunch of 24-hour fasts," you would have thought that was impossible. Like, that would have been a huge, crazy thing to do, a monumental achievement in the fasting space. There's still value. So you're not melting like a popsicle in Sedona in the summer, but you are still making progress. It's better to inch forwards throughout the holiday season than it is to slide backwards, you know, 15 or 20 steps.

Nadia [00:08:30] I think that the big reason why TRE is so important for me and why talk about it so much, has to do with my own journey, right? Megan and I have known each other for many, many years and, at this point, Terri and I have as well, but I had so much trouble. I wanted to fast. I wanted to do extended fasting so badly, like everybody else. My husband's very first fast was a 12-day fast so, of course, I wanted to do a long fast. But I had so much trouble with extended fasting that I had to sort of hang on to TRE and just 24-hour fasts in my own journey. And then I was like, "Whoa, why do I have so much success with reversing conditions and even losing weight? Shouldn't I be struggling to lose weight or shouldn't I be struggling to reverse diabetes and PCOS?"

[00:09:17] Because, you know, I think that you're right, people do find extended fasting to be a lot easier sometimes than eating. And I had to focus on my relationship with food. I had to focus on TRE and eating earlier and doing all these other things because I had this weird kidney concern that didn't really make it easy for me to fast longer and I dehydrated very, very quickly on even 36-hour fasts. So I was kind of forced to focus on TRE and to go, "Whoa, this stuff is pretty good," and had so much success with that.

[00:09:50] So maybe, you know, I know this isn't a topic... We've talked enough about TRE, especially Terri and I, in the last few podcasts, but it's still a great reminder of that. And so I call that, often, especially when we're talking about periods of time where you, because of social reasons, holidays, and whatnot, doing some longer fasts is more challenging, I call that a holding pattern. And so maybe that's something that people can think about and maybe use that terminology for themselves. It really is a great time to

focus on, "OK, what's a good holding pattern for me?" especially between, for example, Christmas and New Year's. But for these longer periods of time, like between Halloween and New Year's, I think that there's an opportunity to do a whole bunch of fasts.

[00:10:37] So, again, I think this is really about thinking about mindset. Like, why aren't you doing (if that's what you want to do) longer fasts, alternate-day fasts, or whatever it is that you want to do during this three-month period? What's going on in your mind that maybe we need to talk about and help switch?

Terri [00:10:57] I think that the biggest mindset piece that I really hear people struggle with, around this topic, is that holidays, vacations, stressful times at work, whatever it is, that they require, then, a lot of navigating difficult decisions. "What do I do that that food is available?" "What do I do with this meeting when it's on a fasting day?" So we encounter a lot of decision making and that feels kind of daunting, and so we just write it off. We say, "Look, I can't make all those decisions. I'm just not going to do anything. I'll pick it up again on the other side."

[00:11:34] And then we also have this part of our brain that tempts us with these more problematic behaviors. It wants the easy, quick-relief kind of behavior. So eating when we could be fasting, eating more problematic foods. So we head into a time like the holidays and we write it off. We say "It's too much. I can't think about it."

[00:11:56] So what I encourage people to do (and this is not usual for me because I'm not a checklist person by nature, I'm not a calendar person by nature), during these holidays, is get out a calendar. Get out a calendar that you actually can write on or mark up in some way. Look at the days or meals that are kind of offline for you (They are commitments, they are times when you have a work commitment or a family commitment.), and then look at how much of that calendar is still left for you to then navigate in those 18/6, 24s, 42s. I think once you make it concrete and see, "Yes, I've got a lot going on in December," but when you see a whole bunch of blank days, you can now see, "I have plenty of space to fit in my health. I have plenty of space to focus on this."

[00:12:56] And, going back to the idea of kind of decision fatigue, if you make the decisions once - maybe even once a week, plan your week - you don't have a lot of decision fatigue. "This week I'm fasting Monday, Wednesday, Friday." I don't have many decisions to make outside of that. It actually simplifies my decision making. So instead of feeling daunted by, "Oh, I'm going to have to make so many choices," plan it out. See where your choices are already kind of set for you, and then see where you have flexibility.

Megan [00:13:34] We do this and we have done this, and I did this before I even met my husband because I'd just sort of reversed everything when I met him. But I had to. Like, life is busy with travel, there's events, we've got in-laws coming in for X, Y, and Z holidays. My husband suddenly has to fly to Canada to become a Canadian. Like, all these weird things happen, right? So we go to the farmer's market every Saturday morning where we do 80% of our grocery shopping. And we sit down. We wake up, we do our things. He gets his coffee, I get my tea and we sit down. What does our week look like? What is set in stone in terms of eating engagements? Like right now in our household, we're eating breakfast and lunch and we're doing breakfast-to-breakfast fasting. That's a unique thing that we're experimenting with right now for various reasons. But next week, my mother-in-law is going to be here. She is not going to eat a steak or beef ribs at 6 a.m. [laughs] It's just not going to happen. So we have to pivot our schedule. Okay. So we're going to go back to the lunch and dinner kind of party or the brunch and early dinner kind of scenario. And we just

have these conversations. It literally takes us less than 5 minutes to have, you know, "What does our week look like?" And I have a calendar (it's just a paper calendar), it's on the fridge. So there's like a pad of 100 pages and we just kind of plan out every week. And then we talk about certain things that we want to have. You know, and my husband will say, "Oh, I defrosted that tri-tip, so I'm going to smoke it tomorrow night, tomorrow afternoon," or whatever. Then we just plan out what we need to get and then that way we only buy what we need. We don't have any food waste and it's a win-win. We've got a plan that takes us 5 minutes every week to organize. We go shopping and buy just what we need so we don't have all this extra food. We have no guilt most of the time because we don't have to get rid of it. And we've been doing this, we've been married seven years now in January. Mind you, we didn't live with each other that first year of our marriage, but it's the only way for us to kind of navigate our lives because we just have truly bizarre and really hectic lives. And it works. And, you know, when we first started, like when it was just me, it took a while. I would spend, you know, more than five minutes figuring it out. And then when he joined the relationship and we were living together, it took some time. But now, it's no more than five minutes, ever. Saturday morning, that's it. Like, we go through it and then we finish our tea and coffee.

Nadia [00:16:12] Megan, you just mentioned the word that I was thinking of before you started talking, and I wanted to ask you guys about 'pivot'. In my meetings, we talk about pivoting all the time. Nobody's journey is linear. I always talk about this. Life gets in the way, blah, blah, blah. There's all these expressions. We have to learn how to pivot. Or I'll say things like, "Nobody's journey is linear. Everybody's life is nice and fun and wavy and you need to learn how to surf." But pivot is a word that's come up quite a bit in our meetings and it's become sort of a fun word because of the show Friends, when they were going, "Pivot, pivot." [laughter] So it's the idea that once you learn how to pivot... You know, again, mindset. So I wanted to kind of ask both of you, but Terri particularly, do you find that people just have a hard time pivoting? Because I think that when people decide to fast, they decide, "Okay, I'm going to do TRE," or, "I'm in the TRE team." We have this a lot in our Community and in the forum. Or, "I'm in the 66 group," or, "I'm in the rolling 42s group," or whatever it is. And some people, I think, haven't quite figured out that it's important to learn how to pivot because not every week is going to be the same, right? And maybe those are the kind of people that are having a hard time with the holiday season because they're okay with doing rolling 42s every week, as long as nothing gets in the way. Because what happens if there is a wedding or a holiday in the midst of one of those 42s? And I think that some people just feel like, "Oh, no!" Sort of, "Everything's finished now," and have a very all-or-nothing sort of mentality. So I'm glad you mentioned the word 'pivot' because I think we all have to kind of learn that for ourselves. And once you realize that, okay, it's sort of week by week, right? What fasting schedule are you're going to do? Well, that depends on your week. What does your week look like? And you need to learn how to pivot.

Terri [00:18:10] And I think even learning to pivot midweek. You know, some of us are really good with deciding a plan for the week or the month (people do different lengths of time), but recognizing on a Tuesday night when a curveball is thrown at you in life (a big stressor, a family emergency), your same fasting plan that you already created this week may not fit and that you do need to alter your plans.

[00:18:37] And I think it's important (you both know that I talk a lot about the fasting dial of intensity) that you turn it up sometimes and you turn it down sometimes. If my week changes drastically and suddenly that 42-hour fast doesn't fit for some reason, I don't just turn off the dial and walk away. I adjust the dial. I roll it back to a 24 or I roll it back to an

18/6 and I focus on the quality of my food. Maybe I say, "Wow, it's so much easier right now to not have to worry about eating. I'm going to actually extend it."

[00:19:13] But giving ourselves that pivot point of turning the intensity down, turning the intensity up, but never letting go of the core value of what we're working on. And I think that kind of goes back to the whole 'it's not a write-off' if you keep focus on your overall goal and value of what you're working on. "I'm working on improving my insulin sensitivity," "...getting rid of insulin resistance," "...losing excess body fat." That doesn't change just because something happened. It doesn't change because you've got four social engagements coming up.

[00:19:55] I sometimes equate it to this, and I know sometimes people get frustrated by these examples because there are all these exceptions, but, you know, a lion eats what a lion eats any day of the week. It doesn't matter if it's Christmas, it doesn't matter what just happened, it doesn't matter if there was a birth in the family or whatnot. It eats what is available. It eats the food that it eats. My dogs - they eat the same food every day. Maybe they get a different variety of meat one day and a different, you know, type of meat the other day, but they don't require being entertained by a variety of food.

[00:20:32] And oftentimes I think we get caught up in that. This is why we write it off. "I can't make these decisions over the holiday, so I'm just not going to do anything." Go back to what Megan said. Simplify it, plan it, have it set up, and then, with what you said, Nadia, have the ability to pivot when you need to. But don't take those challenges or those social engagements as reasons to not focus on your core value of taking care of you.

Nadia [00:21:05] I think another important thing that people face (so a little bit switching the conversation a bit from mindset to more practical and hormonal, physiological, you know, how you feel sort of thing) is that after a holiday, it's very likely (depending on how you ate and what you ate and just the stress of it) that you're in a hormonal state, a hyperinsulinemic state, right? You're in a higher-insulin state. And I often joke, even though it's no joke, that everything sucks when insulin is high. And we all know what this means, right? So after a holiday or after a stressful period or after an illness, your insulin is high. I talk about the insulin beast all the time, right? And everything sucks. Your husband sucks, your job sucks, your kids suck, choosing food sucks, dieting sucks, having to fast sucks - everything sucks. But just realizing that you're in this hormonal state, also known as hyperinsulinemia, right?

[00:22:04] So it's very normal that after a holiday, after a stressful period, or after an illness, or during PMS, or any other hyperinsulinemic state, you feel this way. So first of all, just being aware of it, accepting it, "Oh, everything sucks, including fasting, including eating better foods because my insulin is high." So of course after Halloween you might feel this way. And then of course you want to write it all off, but it's because you're in that hyperinsulinemic state.

[00:22:32] So having a bit of a recovery plan is something that's been very useful for me. I know that after any holiday, after any of these events or stressful periods, I need to fast for a couple of days. I know because I know the insulin beast in the house. I often joke with our clients in the Community, "Oh, the insulin beast has moved in." All right, so let's tame the insulin beast. So after fast fasting for a couple of days, I feel much better. The insulin is lower, right, the hormonal state is different and now I'm able to make better food choices and better, you know, creating a better fasting schedule for myself if that's what I want to do. But it's just realizing that that's going to happen after every holiday, after every

wedding, after every event, after every whatever. So expecting it. If you've gone through this, you know, if you've been around for a while, then, you know, to expect this. If you haven't, if this is your first year of fasting, these are your first holidays as a faster, then this might sort of catch you off guard and you might not know what to do.

Megan [00:23:35] You know, every winter people get really deep into fasting, for the most part. January can often be a struggle. I always joke that by the lunar new year, people are really charging ahead with the post-holiday reset and we get a ton of intense fasting, intense fasting, intense fasting. And then plateau season is what happens like in April. Easter and plateaus. The plateau comes up for Easter. It's not usually the cause of the plateau. And then May comes and people start vacationing. Kids are coming out of school in the United States and people will go away for a weekend and they'll eat and they'll be like, "Hey, I lost weight. What the heck? I just had this, like, three-week-long plateau." Well, you changed it up, right?

[00:24:21] So every single day, I bet the three of us are asked ten times, "How do I avoid a plateau and how do I change it up?" "How do we change it up?" "Tell me a plan." "Week one, I'm going to do three 24s. Week two, I'm going to do three 42s. Week three, I'm going to do two 48s. Week four, I'm going to do a five-day fast." I think that's what people expect us to say, but life usually changes it up for us. And, you know, we talk sometimes about sometimes you do need to force the fasting dial in a more intense direction, but sometimes the answer to breaking through a plateau and seeing more weight loss and improvement is to turn the fasting dial down to a lesser intensity.

[00:25:07] And in these holiday periods, you know, you've got a solid month, month and a half of being able to embrace this 'change it up' - something that you all ask us so much about. You know, each week is going to be a different fasting protocol, maybe, because of your events. That's really cool. You get to practice this change-up. You might learn some strategies that really work for you.

[00:25:31] And you shouldn't necessarily always be afraid about eating more. I'll hear this. "Oh, my goodness," you know, "I can't have two days in a row of two meals," but sometimes doing that can actually help benefit your weight loss. You know, I think there's a lot of fear because of the lack of structure or consistent structure at this time of the year, but it's really a chance for you to practice all of the change-it-up strategies. Take a look and see the different protocols and see how they might fit in and try something new. Maybe you'll be really surprised and you'll find something that works so much better for you, for your lifestyle, that gives you results that you can do on a more consistent basis, too, in the New Year.

Terri [00:26:18] I love that. And you made me think of a client I worked with several years ago, Megan, and she called it her Tetris plan. [laughter] If you remember the video game, Tetris, where you have to manipulate the pieces and fit them together to clear the screen. And so she would come up with... Hers was about fasting and food choices because she wanted some days or some meals where she felt safe to be a little more liberal with some of her foods, and some days that she was going to be more careful with foods and where that was going to fit with her fasting. And so she would send me her plan. And so it was like, "This week, my fasting schedule looks like this. These meals look like this. This will be my more liberal day or meal." And she loved that she came up with a new Tetris plan a week, two weeks, three weeks at a time, because it really gave her the command of all of the skills and just to apply what she needed at what time, rather than feel like maybe she was in a rut doing the exact same thing every week until you just can't because something

happens. So that might be something for people to think about - using that kind of a Tetris plan. Thinking of not scheduling, maybe, "I'm going to do three 42s, or rolling 42s, for the next 12 months," versus, "What am I going to do this week, next week, the following week?" Create some alternative plans so that you don't get bored with your fasting routine and that you keep changing it up so that your body keeps responding.

Megan [00:27:56] We try to help people in various ways in the Community do this throughout the year too. I remember, I think it was last year before September, we did fasting bingo. I don't know if you remember that, for a month? The goal was to experiment and you would have to take your bingo card of experimenting with the different protocols just to get, you know, people pivoting a bit, even though it was a more structured pivot. September tends to be a lot more predictable month and it gets them to experiment with some new things that they maybe hadn't tried because we tend to see, "Oh, that works for someone," or you know, "Nadia or Megan said this is her favorite thing to do and I need to do that," just because it works really well.

[00:28:44] We had a masterclass recently wrap up, and this one woman, she was trying to push some longer intermittent fasts and we find that they often do work fairly decently for postmenopausal women and weight loss. Not this woman. It just was not serving her thyroid and her adrenals. Those two glands were not optimal and I think it was causing more stress for her system. So we scaled things back for one week and she showed up to the masterclass check-in and she was like, "Hey, I scaled back and I've lost weight and I feel good and I'm not overwhelmed and I'm not stressing out. And, oh my gosh, I have radically changed in a week what I've been trying to fix for the last seven months," just by scaling it back and trying something. She was like, "I heard about this thing. I heard it was really successful, and I just kept trying to force it, but I have to let go of the fact that, okay, because it was really good for someone else doesn't necessarily mean it's good for me."

[00:29:43] So we fall into these mindset patterns throughout the year and, you know, sometimes we try something that someone else does and it works great for us and sometimes it doesn't work great for us. So I love like the fasting bingo concept or, like, this time of the year when, you know, if you do... You know, pivoting's a skill and there is a bit of an art to it, and I think it takes time and a lot of energy to focus on. You know, just like when you're cutting out sugar and carbs, you have to put energy and focus on, you know, the foods that you're going to eat. Or when we're fasting and we have hunger cravings, you know, we have to do laundry, go for a walk, call a friend, have a bath. But we have to plan to do those things so we don't fall into our old habits. And then over time, these become new habits. "Oh, I'm feeling hungry on my fasting day," you automatically, you know, fill a bathtub up with Epsom salts and you go to relax rather than having to think about those strategies.

[00:30:41] So in the holiday time, you know, pivoting is not second nature to us. So it's going to take practice and it's not going to always be perfect. And, you know, we just have to remember that nothing's a failure, everything's a lesson when you learn from it. And the next week we have a chance, the next day we have a chance, to pivot and practice again as life throws curveballs at us.

[00:31:03] But yeah, it's a great time to try to change things up and experiment because you might find that something works even better for you, especially if you've kind of hit a roadblock the last few months.

Nadia [00:31:13] I think it's important (I mentioned it briefly just a little while ago) for us to address how to deal with, "Okay, so I understand that I have to pivot. I understand that I have to create a new plan for this week. I understand that if I have to go out tomorrow and not fast, that I can always fast the next day or the day after that." But what happens when you end up having this off-plan sort of day, in that maybe during that off-plan day, whether it's a holiday, a wedding or something else, you end up eating things that you wish you didn't or eating later than you normally do. And then the day after, when you want to fast, your fasting day seems really challenging. Or you wake up with higher blood sugars, or you wake up craving carbs or craving junk, or whatever it is, you know, then what? You know what if, "I have decided to pivot. I'm okay with having eaten yesterday when it was supposed to be a fasting day, and today is supposed to be my fasting day, but it feels really, really challenging."

[00:32:22] So I mentioned that I normally have a recovery plan for those days and I fast instead. So again, another version of pivoting. So even if today is supposed to be a fasting day, I end up deciding to do something else. So for me, I know that fat fasting is the way to go. I know my husband is a prime example of somebody who just white-knuckles through a fast. If he's decided that today is going to be a fasting day, he's going to fast because he's just a white-knuckler. I'm not great at white-knuckling because I don't feel well. I end up feeling like I'm craving or I just feel dehydrated. All of these things happen if I decide to fast in my, you know, if I've eaten later yesterday or eaten things I wish I didn't.

[00:33:05] What do you guys do or what do you recommend to people when it's, "Okay, I've pivoted. Yesterday was an eating day and today is going to be my fasting day, but I'm just finding it really hard." And so then they write it off. They just say, "Well, I guess this week is just a write-off. I'm not going to be able to do it all week."

Terri [00:33:23] I always tell a story that, probably a year ago now, I was doing three 42-hour fasts a week for a few weeks in a row. I was pretty consistently doing it and I started one of my fasts on Monday and I got to about noon and I was done. I was just done. And there was nothing wrong. I wasn't feeling sick, I just was not in it. And I struggled. What do I do? How do I adjust? So I said, "Okay, we're going to pivot here. This is going to be a 22-hour fast. I'm going to eat this meal. I'm going to eat another meal in a little while and then I'm going to fast tomorrow." So I did that. Tuesday rolls around, gets to about noon, and I said, "Nope, not doing it, can't do it." I just wasn't in it. So I said, "Okay, I'm going to do the same thing." I think that day I maybe made it to a 24. I then realized I was off. Something was going on, maybe something I wasn't even aware of, but this really wasn't the best week for me to be doing these 42-hour fasts. So I changed my plan and I said, "For the rest of the week..." (because it's Tuesday now). I said, "For the rest of the week, I'm going to do at least 20 hours a day, up to 24." So I knew I was either going to have two meals or one meal. And I just sailed through the rest of the week, got through my weekend of two meals each day, and on Monday, I went right back to my planned three 42s. I just needed that break that week to kind of regroup and not blame myself, not kick myself for it. But, kind of what you just alluded to, Nadia, is I didn't just turn the dials off. I didn't walk away. I didn't write it off. That was still a good week. I focused on good meals. I got at least 18. I got 20, 22, 24 hours. It was a great week - nothing to be ashamed of - and it helped me to get back on track.

Megan [00:35:34] Sometimes I've worked with individuals and I'm like, "Let's write out a list." The very basic thing we can do is just not eat processed and refined foods - that's one. Two is we can fast as a strategy. Three is we can focus on TRE and do that. You know, four is we can do 14-hour fasts. You know, 16, 18 that's more TRE. Five, you know,

doing 24s. And then we've got sort of where we get into more people's base fasts or desired fasts that they do for weight loss.

[00:36:06] So if you're having an off time, you've got to have some boundaries. I think something Nadia has said is, "There's got to be a plan," (She's got a post-holiday plan.) but it's always good to have a plan for when you run into these roadblocks.

[00:36:19] So, you know, when we're working with clients and individuals, it's like trying to help them figure out, okay, if this sent your eating out the window or if this sent you off plan, or this is triggering you, what can we learn about it? And what kind of plan can we put in place? How can we help you prepare for when this happens next time? So, you know, for those weeks where it's just sort of more unpredictable pivoting because you're not feeling well, there's acute stress, there's a medical emergency that happens, you know, having some of these plans and what feels good. And so long as I stick in this range of things - what feels good - and something that I always work with people, and even in my own personal life, is just what Terri said - that limit of a week. Like, there needs to be some reflection because you don't want it to drag on. "Okay, this week, I'm going to pick one of these things each day that feels good so I have some boundaries. So I'm still doing it. I'm doing something that's keeping me moving forwards and not sliding back." And then it's just doing sort of a self check-in, "Okay, you know, what's going on?" Is it just the stress, is it poor sleep, is it that time of the cycle? You know, when are things going to get better? You know, "Am I feeling better now after having a few days of not trying to fit into a certain box that I'm aiming for"? If I am feeling better, "Okay, you know, let's get back into the groove with the 42s," like Terri said that she did.

[00:37:46] So I think it's important to have some... It doesn't have to be super defined, but we are an organization and we have standard operating procedures, right? Whatever business you work at, you have standard operating procedures you need to follow. And this way when something arises, you know to go to that operating procedure. And when we don't have them, which happened to us this week about something, [laughs] then all hell breaks loose, right, and chaos ensues, which we experienced yesterday morning. [laughs] So what did we do? Okay, we recognized that there wasn't a plan. It causes chaos. Okay, we get a plan. So our operations manager put together a plan. Now we've got a plan to go to when that comes up again.

[00:38:33] So that's exactly what we're trying to do when we're working with individuals with the fasting at this time of year. I mean, there is a time, too, to push through a bit and there's a time not to push through. You know, I'll always ask people, "Okay, are we pushing through because we're trying to seek some emotional comfort from food and nurturing from food?" Do we want that to be our relationship with food long term? Most of the time they say, "No." They recognize that we need to find other things. A lot of times, too, people in those moments will jump to more challenging tasks like meditation or breathing. Those are great. We need to get there. You know, those are so far off from our skill set. We just need to do things like going for a walk, calling a friend, buying a new pair of shoes. You know, doing some woodworking, things that we already know bring us a great amount of joy and relief and comfort. So we need to practice there.

[00:39:27] So when you're having these moments, do you white-knuckle it or not and stick to a plan? You know, am I looking for being nurtured through food? Do I really want that? Or do I physically feel like I'm going to crash and burn? I've ended a whole bunch of fasts because I got dehydrated when I was working in the hospital and the clinic. It's so easy to do, running around seeing 70 patients in the span of four hours. And you have some

balances and checks in place to try to prevent that, but you're not perfect. And so that fasting day ends very quickly before you try to force it and it becomes disastrous and you end up in a fast-food drive-thru. Because you don't want that to happen.

[00:40:06] So I think there's a bit of an art to it, and you've got to really sort of look at, you know, what is the cause of you feeling like you're white-knuckling it in this moment?

Nadia [00:40:15] I think an important part about the mindset of all of this is just realizing and being okay with the fact that going back to TRE, going back to eating as opposed to fasting, even if that was your plan, is never a step back, especially if you're going back to TRE and especially if you make the decision to just choose your foods wisely after a holiday. It's never a step back. It's always a huge leap forward. So it's just telling yourself this as many times as you need to. I'm a big fan of repetition, so even if you're just repeating this to yourself because you just have got into the mindset that more is better. So fasting longer is better. And so if you've planned on fasting and now you're deciding to focus on food and TRE, then you're automatically assuming that it's a step back. But it's always a huge leap forward because, again, not writing off the holiday season, not writing off this entire week is a huge gain. It's a huge step forward because you're, instead, focusing on TRE and eating better.

Terri [00:41:22] Absolutely. Ladies, I think we have covered this and covered all of our angles. I hope that people walk away after listening to today's episode and can really connect to, "I'm not going to write this off. I have the ability to pivot, to plan effectively about all of the upcoming commitments and occasions coming up and I can still focus on my goals and my core values. Taking care of me still matters, even though all of these social things and events and family gatherings and whatnot are happening."

[00:42:03] So I hope that everyone leaves this episode with some kind of hands-on things that they can focus on to help them not write this time off so that when we meet at the beginning of next month, everyone's ready for that next phase and it's not feeling like a restart, a reboot, because they've been so off track.

Megan [00:42:24] I think we covered a real mixed bag of tools. [laughter] I know I contributed to the mish-mash, too, but the holiday seasons can feel a little bit challenging, you know, your first rodeo or two, but we promise that they do bring you joy and we get to that joy by working through sort of the ups and downs of the holiday season and taking the experiences that we have and learning from them.

[00:42:50] So hopefully some of these tools today can help you, well equip you, and can provide you with some thoughtful points when you're reflecting on your decisions this season.

[00:43:01] Well, everyone, we'll see you back here next week with another episode of The Fasting Method podcast.

Terri [00:43:07] Take good care.

Nadia [00:43:08] Bye, everyone.