

The Fasting Method #157 - Hot Topic: Parallel With Quitting Addictions

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. Welcome back to The Fasting Method podcast. This is Coach Terri Lance, and I'm very excited to be talking about the topic that we're going to cover today. And I'm especially excited to be talking about this with Coach Jamie Cipriani. Jamie, how are you doing today?

Jamie [00:01:37] I'm good. Happy to be here. Thank you for inviting me.

Terri [00:01:40] Yeah, absolutely. Always excited when I get to talk with you about lots of good things. I think, in our community, I always joke if people think I'm too woo woo, whoa, just wait till they get to talk to Coach Jamie. [laughter] But you always give another perspective to so many things that I value so much.

Jamie [00:01:59] Thank you.

Terri [00:01:59] So what Jamie and I wanted to talk about today really has two kind of goals. One is specifically on the content of a book that we're going to discuss, and then the second real goal is the parallel to how this content applies for so many of us. And what I mean by that is we're going to share some information about a book. I had mentioned this on a Monday Mindset episode a while back, but the book is called *This Naked Mind: Control Alcohol: Find Freedom, Discover Happiness, and Change Your Life*. And the author is Annie Grace. And it's great book. When I first heard her on a podcast, I was really struck by how much what she was talking about in her journey with alcohol so many people in our community talk about in their journey with food. So a couple of weeks ago, Jamie, I think there was a group meeting in our community where someone was talking about alcohol, and you and I were both in the meeting and we both kind of chimed in, and you brought up this book. So I just wanted to give you a chance to kind of say a little bit about why you wanted to do this episode together and what you kind of hope to have listeners gain from this.

Jamie [00:03:24] Yeah. I was first really struck by it when you introduced the book on Monday Mindset. It really made me think, not only about how to relate with alcohol, but, of course, as you mentioned, being part of this journey and how it relates to food, and there are so many parallels to it. But one thing that really drew me to this book is the way she goes about opening our eyes to the alcohol usage in the United States (that's the only place I'm familiar with, I'm sure it's really quite global), and the glorification of the alcohol

use, the media's influence on how we see and use alcohol. It's almost one of those last taboos of addiction that people aren't really talking about because it's so accepted and prevalent and, quite frankly, do I dare say a moneymaker [laughs] for many companies in parts of America. So I just found it really interesting her thought process on it and how to view alcohol, our beliefs about alcohol. And again, it just sparked a lot of parallels to some of our beliefs that we learn about food as well in our culture.

Terri [00:04:39] Absolutely, Jamie. And so my big goal, I think, with doing this episode is that we touch on the alcohol piece because, for many of us, alcohol is also still playing a role in our health and our relationship with food and some challenges we might be having. And then also to draw that parallel to how we might use some of this book and ways that she kind of teaches us to think, to also look at our relationship with problematic food, maybe, for some of us, particularly, sugar or highly processed foods. So my hope is that, if you're listening, you might hear yourself in this episode, whether it's in the part where we're talking about alcohol use or if it's more when we talk more about the food use, but there's such a parallel here that I hope that people really get some benefit from this.

[00:05:37] Well Jamie, one of the things I wanted to say, for anyone who has not read this book-- and I will admit I don't have a paper copy of the book. I am an Audible listener and I check out books from libraries audibly, so I have listened to it twice, but, unfortunately, I don't have the pages to go back and highlight and look at in the same way, but I did write down some things. And one of the quotes that she shared early in the book stood out to me, and she said, "The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken." And that was a quote by Samuel Johnson. And I thought it was really interesting. You know, we talk a lot in our community about habits, and building habits that we want for our health journey, and eliminating habits that are interfering, the repetition, how we build habits, and, you know, the whole point of habits is that they become unconscious, we don't have to think about them, they're automatic. And yet when they become such strong habits, then they're really hard to break. And I thought about that a lot in relation to many of the things she described about our use of alcohol. And then, of course, I tied that, for many of us, to our use of food.

[00:07:00] So, Jamie, I feel like with this book and what we want to talk about, there are a thousand directions we could take.

Jamie [00:07:06] I know.

Terri [00:07:07] I'm having a hard time even knowing kind of where to start, so let's just kind of put our little mark on the map somewhere and get going from there, and then we'll draw things back.

Jamie [00:07:16] Okay. Should we start with the false beliefs?

Terri [00:07:18] Yeah.

Jamie [00:07:19] The false beliefs about alcohol.

Terri [00:07:21] Actually, even before we start about the false beliefs, let's just start with some basic information. We won't go heavy in science or anything, but just some information that we kind of think everyone needs to kind of accept as truth or none of this is even going to make sense, is alcohol is not good for us.

Jamie [00:07:39] Right.

Terri [00:07:40] She spends many pages talking about health consequences of it, danger consequences of the effects of it, you know, drunk driving accidents, number of deaths related to alcohol, severe physical consequences of drinking, ties to cancer. And not only people who drink a lot, but even one or two drinks a week can greatly affect rates of cancer, things like that. So I think, one, we're starting with the premise that just understanding it's not good for us. But then, as you said, what are all these false beliefs about why I would use a substance that is not good for me, that can fuel a car or a machine? Why would I be using that?

Jamie [00:08:32] Right.

Terri [00:08:33] So, Jamie, both you and I are aware that we get very conflicting information about lots of things, and alcohol is one of them. We have experts that we trust that say it's not such a big deal, we should imbibe if we want, and other people saying imbibing at all is detrimental to our health. So we're not going to settle that debate, today, of just how unhealthy is it for us, but I think, as we tie back to the food, maybe let's focus on what are some of the ways people have learned to justify alcohol consumption, ways we've been taught to think about it that have led us down a complicated path.

Jamie [00:09:20] And that's really an important topic, today, because I think there's so many really false beliefs that we've come to think about alcohol and the benefits that really hold for us. And part of a lot of what I think Grace talks about in this book is kind of challenging those beliefs and beyond "Is it true?" statement. And some of the things that we really are taught from a very young age, when we first become aware of something like alcohol, are things like it provides enjoyment, you know, it brings families together. I know, for me, growing up (I grew up in the 70s predominantly), that's when people still had cocktails. My parents had friends over for cocktails. As soon as my dad got home for work, they were sitting drinking cocktails. You know, my brother and I would be there in that. It was like this social, family time somewhat around the cocktail hour. So that leaves that belief of when you're young, that, "Oh, that's what you do. That's how you connect." And I think that's a real, sadly false, belief that people have about alcohol, one reason why they find that-- being drawn to it because that's the memories of it, how we imprint.

[00:10:30] And then you look at the media. How many times have we seen characters on TV shows and movies using alcohol, whether it be for that liquid courage, you know, "I'm going to take this shot before I get up on that stage and do a speech," or, "before I go talk to a girl," or, you know, really glamorizing it. So, you know, it's another belief, like, we have to have that alcohol in our life to socialize, to be more courageous, to be funnier. You know, I think we really start to believe that when we're young, and, you know, again, there's so many vehicles out there, media marketing that is telling us that from a very young age: this is the benefits and the glorification of alcohol. You know, a lot of times people think it really does relieve stress. You know, it's become such-- almost a negative-- I don't want to say connotation, but it's become this whole, "Oh, it's mommy juice." You know, "Mommy's okay, except until she gets that glass of wine." Social media has really millions of memes on that, you know, "Rosé all day for mom," and it's just the belief about it has just become everywhere. And so not only accepted, but, if you're not partaking, there's something wrong with you if you're not partaking. I really like how she really talks about that. You know, those beliefs that, as a society, we've become to accept around the use of alcohol.

Terri [00:11:59] And I guess maybe this was a missing part that didn't touch on earlier. This book really is for people who are contemplating stopping using alcohol. So it's not, you know, we need to convert everyone to think alcohol is bad or we need people to support why alcohol is good. This book, that we're talking about right now, really is for people exploring stopping their use of alcohol. And the author stopped her use of alcohol. She never set out to become an alcoholic, never set out to become addicted to alcohol, but, for all of these things that you just mentioned, found herself in really difficult situations and her life going in directions she didn't want it to be going because of alcohol. So I love that you just highlighted these things because these are the reasons why people come up with such conflicted feelings about stopping alcohol, and some of our listeners may be wondering if stopping alcohol would be beneficial for them, but many of us have resistance to doing that because of all of these things you just talked about. "But it helps me be fun at parties." "It helps me to relax at the end of a stressful day." "It's part of dinner." You know, all of these things that we've learned, or many of us have learned, about alcohol create that conflict. And really, around alcohol, and then as we talk about food, I think this is the gist of it for most of us is we have an internal conflict. "I want to be free of this thing that's causing me a challenge, but I don't believe I will be okay if I don't have it."

Jamie [00:13:53] Exactly.

Terri [00:13:54] All of these things that you just highlighted are reasons why we're taught to believe it's good for us, it has magical powers, it's harmless, it should be part of everyone's day, regularly. Why would we want to stop? Why would we want to give it up? So, again, going back to what I had said earlier, many of us want to give it up or want to change our relationship with it because it's taking over. We don't sleep well at night because we've been drinking, we're having health consequences, we're having memory issues, we're having kind of obsessive thoughts, like, we can't wait for it to become 2 p.m. where it would be okay to have a drink or something. So we want freedom from those ways in which it feels like it's kind of binding us or taking away from us, but we want that *without* having to defy any of those things that you just highlighted.

Jamie [00:14:56] Exactly. And then that's a really good point. And the way she really goes on to talk about that is the way to overcome that struggle within, so to speak, is to challenge those beliefs. And I think that's one thing that I really do like and she does really well, not only in the book, but she also has a day-by-day journal that accompanies the book. She really gives ways that you can challenge those beliefs. You know, by asking yourself, "Do I sleep better after I've had a couple glasses of wine?" And I think for most people, when they really explore those kind of questions, they come up against, "Oh wait, whoa, wait a minute. Maybe this isn't true. Maybe that wine isn't helping me sleep when I'm now awake at 3 a.m., after I've had two or three glasses of wine before bed," you know? Or, "Am I really having that much more fun at the party?" because you wake up the next morning and, depending-- you may not even remember much of that party or socially event. Is that having more fun? You know? And really challenging yourself. And I see this in our Fasting Method Community with behaviors all the time, with food behaviors and other substances. And I think this is just one other kind of aspect to look at - how the alcohol is serving you - and challenging those beliefs. I know, for me, when I really started to look at my daily, wine ritual (being transparent here), it was not serving me. And I had to ask myself, was that serving me to reach my health goals? You know, so it's asking ourselves the tough questions.

Terri [00:16:36] And one of the ways that she does this-- I don't think we've mentioned this yet. She-- I think for a while in the book, it's every other chapter, but she does one on

liminal thinking, and this was a new concept for me when I first heard her on a podcast. I think she pulls from an author named Dave Gray, who wrote a book about liminal thinking. And, really, just to simplify it, liminal thinking is kind of a way of finding or creating ways of thinking that allow us to change rather than being stuck in our old beliefs. So if my belief is, "Alcohol helps me be social," that I start to look at other ways. "Think about all the times that you engage socially, Terri, when you weren't having alcohol. Maybe it wasn't the alcohol that was doing it. Maybe you actually have personal skills that you don't give yourself credit for." So it's thinking outside of that limiting-belief way that we have kind of felt boxed in. And I don't know if you have another way of thinking about liminal-- her liminal messaging or...

Jamie [00:17:44] No. That's exactly how I interpreted it as well. And this was also my first introduction to that terminology, but I'm kind of adopting it as something I really love now, working with that liminal thinking, because I think it can be something that you can look at in so many different areas of your life. You know, you can take it to the-- we're talking now, specifically, about, you know, alcohol, maybe later the food, and you can really-- it's tangible. It's something you can really look at. "Well, this is my belief. Now how do I change that?" And I think it gives a real good action step for moving forward and releasing yourself from some of these-- I don't know if we want to call them habits or-- behaviors, maybe, correcting some of these behaviors that we fall into.

Terri [00:18:28] Well, I think, Jamie, the way you just talked about that, you're moving me toward thinking about another concept that she talks about in this book. It's a concept that I talk about fairly frequently in our community, and that is-- and, again, folks we're jumping around here a little bit just having our discussion, but-- and that is the concept of cognitive dissonance. So when I have a goal like, "I don't want to be passed out at parties anymore, maybe I need to change my relationship with alcohol." So I have this goal or this need or want, but it's in direct conflict with another belief like, "I won't have any fun if I don't have alcohol." So the challenges we experience (emotional or psychological tension or stress) when we hold two, contradictory values or ideas or beliefs, things that we want to achieve. So if I want to get rid of alcohol because it's causing me all kinds of problems, but I believe life is going to be just sucky without alcohol, that creates a lot of tension. And I think she does a great job in this book of really highlighting that throughout the whole thing, this internal conflict. And, basically, the way I first learned about cognitive dissonance in grad school, and then I have some examples from when I was a teacher, but-- when we have two conflicting views or beliefs, or a behavior and a belief, we have to change one.

[00:20:04] She goes through an example. She actually used a food example for this, so I loved this for our community. And she said, "You know, let's say it's a celebration at work and so the admin staff brings in cookies. You have just decided, 'I want to lose 50 pounds, so I'm not eating cookies anymore. Oh my gosh, now I have cognitive dissonance because there the cookies are [laughter] and it's part of the celebration, and everyone else is eating them, and they look like they're really good cookies. But I want to lose 50 pounds and I know that eating cookies interferes with me losing 50 pounds.' This is cognitive dissonance. So I have to change one of those things." And she talked about how sometimes we change the belief to justify the behavior, and we might say, "Well, you know what? Cookies aren't really that bad. And if I only eat one, it won't really matter." So we get to keep both, we keep our goal and we keep the behavior, but we're not going to make it to our goal by keeping the behavior. We might change the behavior. We might say, "You know what? I'm not going to eat those cookies. I'm not going to walk near her desk. I'm not going to talk with anyone while they're eating those cookies." We might add a new behavior and say, "Well, you know what? It's going to be okay, I'm going to eat the cookies,

but I'm going to go to the gym afterward." That way I can justify eating the cookies and think I'm still reaching my goal. Or we just deny that there's really a conflict, but we experience that internal tension.

[00:21:39] And so I think so much of, you know, her book on her journey with alcohol, and encouraging other people and exploring their journey, and then what you and I think about as far as some of us changing our relationship with food, it's a lot of cognitive dissonance in making decisions about that. We have a goal. "I want to reverse my diabetes," "I want to lose 120 pounds," and I want to do that without changing what I'm eating or letting go of foods that are in the way.

Jamie [00:22:13] And if you could figure out a way for us to do that. [laughter]

Terri [00:22:19] Well, I think the first thing is recognize that we have the internal tension. There's a conflict here. And, obviously, you know, your response reminds me that those are really tough positions to be in. We have a desired outcome, we have a goal, but the behaviors to reach the goal are not behaviors we want to do.

Jamie [00:22:42] Right. And it's really tough. I mean, it can be painful.

Terri [00:22:45] Absolutely.

Jamie [00:22:46] You know, that's really painful when you really want that desire because I think, a lot of times, to change those behaviors, you're letting go of something, something that could be really meaningful. Now, going back to some of the limiting beliefs, you may be letting go of some important family childhood memories or family memories. And we talk about this in the Community, you know, letting go of that special thing that your mom would make for you every afternoon at school, and that was the only time you'd ever bond with your mom, over this food. And for a lot of people, that is alcohol. That's that time. So it's painful. You know, what you're describing - the cognitive dissonance - getting over that. And I think that's something that's important to be realistic about. And, for everyone who's listening, to know that's-- we don't expect, shouldn't expect that, oh, you're just going to make that decision one morning, forget your beliefs, and, la de dah, you solve your issues or your need for these certain alcohol in her case. And it's a process.

Terri [00:23:55] And I think she shares some examples from her own journey that, at one point, she might have thought she was more creative (her career was in marketing or is in marketing), and kind of gave herself credit for being creative while having alcohol, and later had to learn, "My ideas are probably even better now that I'm not using alcohol in order to come up with my ideas." But letting go of that kind of safety-net belief system is scary, maybe painful. Some of us go through a grieving process, like you said, you know, certain memories, certain patterns when it comes to food. I know we talk about that a lot in our community, is people need to allow themselves time to grieve and be sad. "I miss that food." "I miss that thing that brought me comfort." "Every night when I went to bed, I would go to bed and and eat this candy. And now I know that it was doing so much damage that I stopped eating it at night, but I miss that." And I think this is where the liminal thinking is so important is, ""How else can I feel good going to bed, then? If that used to be my way to do it, but I recognize that was bringing me health consequences that I didn't want. How else can I go to bed?" You know, "Maybe I need to meditate before I go to bed and get into that connected place and feel good closing out my day, rather than doing it with Reese's Peanut Butter Cups."

Jamie [00:25:33] Exactly. Yeah. And I think that-- you know, going back to what we started with, I think that practice, and she talks about using those liminal beliefs, you know, really going through those steps, some people can really look at them and identify if that's not true. And you can correct me, because I know this was very much part of your career - things like cognitive dissonance and working with clients with that - if you can change that belief, it kind of resolves. I would think? If I'm not mistaken, that turmoil and that kind of dissonance that you're dealing with.

Terri [00:26:06] Yup. Ideally that's what has to happen. And let's use the example of a belief and a behavior that are incongruent. I have to change one. And, in these examples, I really think you're highlighting, "I need to change the underlying belief so that the behavior, the new habit, the healthier behavior that I want to build does not feel incongruent any longer."

Jamie [00:26:36] Yes.

Terri [00:26:37] We want to feel congruence. Our brain's going to work much better when we have congruence. And so learning that, for many of us, changing the underlying beliefs, is going to help facilitate better behavior change, better habit building, because we can't change a behavior if putting in this new behavior conflicts with our beliefs, or if getting rid of a behavior conflicts with our beliefs, it's not going to happen. So we have to work on, for many of these things, changing that core belief. And I think, for some of us, also, connecting different pairings of things. So for example, with the alcohol, if alcohol was paired with social times in your family, how else can you imagine spending social time with people?

Jamie [00:27:36] Yeah, I mean, things that now I'll do with my kids, my family - go on a hike. You know, just doing different things that are not related to alcohol and be eating. You know, we'll plan to play games or something else that we can do with our day. You know, last Mother's Day, that's exactly what we did. I didn't want it just based around the big brunch with the bottomless mimosas and the bottomless buffet food. So we went on a beautiful hike, you know, instead. And then we went, instead of going to the restaurant with all that, we went back to one of my kid's houses and made it a healthy meal with things that we could focus and nourish ourselves with, that wasn't just based on that. It was being with people.

Terri [00:28:20] Yeah. So, again, you change-- I think of it not just change the beliefs, but you changed the values, what you were actually seeking. Mother's Day is not about the mimosas and the waffles. Mother's Day is about being with your kids and celebrating love and connection. How else can we do that then, if we don't have those bottomless mimosas and waffles? We do this with a different activity where we focus on each other, where we focus on conversation and laughter.

Jamie [00:28:52] Exactly. And one of the big things with a belief about alcohol really is that whole social event. Going out to dinner, it's-- you know, I read, I think it was somewhere in the book someone mentioned that they didn't even want to go out to dinner anymore if they couldn't have a drink. You know, it just didn't even mean the same thing. And I find that really fascinating because also knowing in our community that's a real-- going to social events is also a real issue around the food because you think that's what it's all about. And just to highlight what you're saying, if you can change that mindset and belief that that's so not what it's about. It's about being there and having fun. And we had fun when we were kids. We weren't-- you know, we would go out with our friends way before alcohol or

certain foods were in our lives, and we just went out and had fun with our friends. I think we're-- and, you know, I have to bring this in because who would I be if I wasn't? I think that's a little bit also about, when you're making that change, thinking about being present in those social situations. The importance is being present.

[00:30:01] This woman I follow who is a meditation teacher, she taught me the most beautiful practice of that. And I think it's something that we can all think about not only with the food, but with what we do with alcohol and that is to go into situations thinking, "What if this were the very last time?" What if it's the last time that you're going to see someone, or that you're going to have this time together? And not from a morbid standpoint, but a standpoint of being really present, so you have that memory. A lot of times, obviously, when you're drinking alcohol at those occasions, you can get a little blurry. Are you really remembering it and being present? Sugar and some foods can do the exact same response in those situations. And after I read that and had a look at this book, again, I was at brunch with the kids on my daughter's birthday two months ago, and this generation is very different about alcohol, too. None of my kids really drink much. It was a brunch. No one ordered alcohol. Past life, my family, everyone would have had tons of alcohol. They all kind of follow the path now of this eating, the way we eat at The Fasting Method, so everything was healthy food on the table. And I sat back and really became present, and looked around, seeing my adult kids laughing with their partners. And I took that moment to think to myself, "This is amazing. What if this is the last time I can have this moment? I want to absorb every moment of it and not be dulled by whether it's a food substance or an alcohol substance." I just think that concept, if you take that into more of your interactions, for me, it kind of helps with that wanting the numbing and dulling. Let's be real, sugar alcohol, they both numb and dull at times. So kind of thinking, "I just want to be present and enjoy this moment."

Terri [00:31:56] I love this, and you said it even better than I would have said it. I would add one part to it. I think both alcohol or sugar or processed, highly processed food also can serve as distractions. I know for me, when I'm thinking about, "Oh, there's another piece of cake over there. Should I get it now? Would anyone notice if I went and had more? Oh, should I-- how's my [unintelligible] going to be?" I'm thinking all of these things. I'm not very present. I'm not able to really pay attention to the laughter and the being connected with the people there because I'm on this different plane focusing on the sugar or the highly processed food. For me, it's not alcohol, but there would have been times in my life when that would have been a distraction for me. And so, as you said, it dulls, it numbs, it distracts, and I think it takes a lot of courage for any of us then to say, "I want to be more present. I don't want to be numbed, dulled, or distracted at work, at play, with others, in relationships, with myself, but to really be more present." And I think some of us might believe that happens with substances like alcohol or other drugs, but might not see the ways in which food substances also interfere.

[00:33:27] This leads me to another point in the book that I found fascinating; she talked about spontaneous sobriety. She used her dad as an example, and I think she kind of said, growing up, she didn't even realize he ever had an issue with alcohol, but he had been drinking quite heavily. And the way she describes spontaneous sobriety is people who stop without a typical intervention. You know, they don't go to AA or they don't go to a treatment facility or whatnot. And the statistics on it are very interesting, that people actually do better with spontaneous sobriety than even in a traditional alcohol recovery approach. But one of the things she said about her dad-- and I happened to be listening to this book for the second time this weekend while flying on a plane. I was over the mountains, over the-- I think it was probably around the Sierra Nevadas-- looking down, and I was listening to

this book and I heard her say his words were, "Well, I got to the point where I realized it just really wasn't doing anything good for me." And I had this kind of epiphany feeling in my body because I often debate, "Where am I with sugar? And how do I have that in my life or not?" I kept saying it in my head, then, "What positive things is sugar bringing me?" And of course, going back to all of this piece with alcohol, I started thinking like, "Oh yeah, but it's nice when you're at this kind of gathering and everyone's having dessert, you get to have dessert, too," or, "You know, just, every once in a while, when you're at the store and you just want to get some sugar and it feels so good." But I kept thinking, "Are those actual positive things for me?"

Jamie [00:35:12] Right.

Terri [00:35:13] And is the small degree of positivity that brings me worth the consequences? So I had kind of an aha epiphany listening to this book. Again, it's focused on alcohol. That's not the issue on my life, at this stage, but it made me really keep thinking about my relationship with food and, particularly, my relationship with sugar, all kinds of damage that it is doing and can do. What good is it doing me? And I just found his words so powerful. And so he stopped, kind of broke through all of those limiting beliefs and said, "I don't need it."

Jamie [00:35:57] That's interesting. What I find fascinating is you never really know what's going to make that light bulb go off. You know, for you, it was being 20,000 miles in the air [laughter] listening to it again. I don't know, what does it take to get to that point?

Terri [00:36:15] Yeah, I know she touched on this at several different points in the book, Jamie, about her own journey with alcohol, and, you know, kind of when did she decide? But I think sometimes people think they have to hit a rock bottom. You know, so if I'm now thinking this about sugar, that I have to hit a rock bottom, that I have to be laying on the sidewalk with, you know, seven donuts in my hands, passed out in order for me to realize that I need to change my relationship with sugar, but that sometimes it doesn't look like rock bottom. But I think she did share that she did have a moment when she realized it was costing her more than it was giving her.

Jamie [00:36:56] Yeah, I think one of two fears that I recall her talking about was, a, the reality of-- because the way alcohol works, your tolerance level changes. And all of a sudden, after two and a half bottles of wine, she's barely feeling the effects, at least cognitively feeling the effects. And also, all of a sudden, needing it in the mornings. That was a big wake-up call when she found herself at 7:00 am ordering a drink to feel better.

Terri [00:37:26] Yeah. So not your typical rock bottom, skid row kind of nightmare experience.

Jamie [00:37:33] No, but she was still very-- she was a VP, or some high-level executive in marketing, at a company and still able to function. And she said that she noticed her behavior-- I mean, I picture, like, you know, airport bars are open 24/7, practically-- you know, because she traveled a lot. Like you're sitting in an airport bar and, all of a sudden, you see yourself ordering a drink in that mirror and it's 8 o'clock in the morning. there's gotta be a lightbulb that goes off, "What am I doing?"

Terri [00:38:01] Interesting parallel because I caught myself at the Denver airport this weekend, right before I listened to this part that I just brought up, and there was a Voodoo Donuts, the whole shop - Voodoo Donuts. It looks a little bit like Victoria's Secret. Like, it's

all pink and you get a pink box. And I watched everyone walking through the airport with their big, pink box. And I've had a Voodoo donut before, and I thought, "I should maybe get one because I'm here." I walked past it four times. That's how much power it had for me. I did not get one, but just the fact that I walked around-- and it's a huge airport, and I walked around that food court four times in order to walk by Voodoo Donuts. That really spoke to me about what was happening. It was kind of like her, maybe, ordering the drink at 7 a.m..

Jamie [00:38:53] Exactly.

Terri [00:38:54] You know, I've got a CGM on, I'm working on my health, and I walked by Voodoo Donuts four times. So I hope that people kind of are thinking about, again, whether it's their relationship with alcohol or their relationship with food, "I don't have to hit rock bottom. I don't have to have a huge health scare."

Jamie [00:39:16] Right.

Terri [00:39:17] Is it providing enough positive in my life that the consequences of it are worth it?

Jamie [00:39:24] Is it worth it? I think that's a-- and we talked about this in the Community, almost that playing it to the end, "Is it worth having this right now?" And, yes, "Is this serving me at this moment?" is sometimes how I like to think about it. "Is it serving me to hit-- I don't know, I have certain health goals. "Is it serving me to hit my health goals?"

Terri [00:39:44] That's right.

Jamie [00:39:45] That's the way I think about it.

Terri [00:39:47] So, Jamie, in listening to this book, especially the second time, I really thought a lot about some of her use of the word addiction, and, at some point, really kind of talking about is drinking a habit or is it addiction? And I remember her trying to really draw some strong parallels between habits. You know, if you had a bad habit and I told you I would give you \$500,000 if you stop that habit-- let's say your habit is you bite your fingernails and I say that I'm going to give you \$500,000 if you'll stop biting your fingernails. Would you do it?

Jamie [00:40:23] Oh yeah! [laughs]

Terri [00:40:25] But if someone said, "I'll give you \$500,000 if you don't drink ever again." Would that answer feel different to make?

Jamie [00:40:33] I remember that point, she said, "Many people-- watch yourself and you will hesitate before you answer."

Terri [00:40:39] Because, again, one of the limiting beliefs of it is that, "Oh, it's just a habit. I can stop whenever I want," because you can stop, you can work on stopping behaviors or habits but it's really hard to just willingly just stop addiction. And I think of that often in our community (and you and I talked about this a little before we got started today), that I think a lot of people, when it comes to food, have learned to use the phrase 'food addiction' or 'sugar addiction', "I'm an addict," very freely. And I know some people say, "Well, you can't address a problem that you can't admit to." So that's great that they do, but what I see people doing is saying, "I'm a sugar addict," as they're putting a donut to

their mouth. But none of us would think that's okay for someone who is a cocaine addict to keep using cocaine.

[00:41:36] And so I encourage those of you who use that language to describe your relationship with food to keep working at that. If I really believe I have a sugar addiction, what is my approach? Am I going to try moderating my addiction or do I need to completely break with the addictive substance? And maybe that looks different for different people, the difference between moderating versus abstinence. And I think you and I touched on this before we got started with recording. We're not talking about this today because we think everyone has to abstain from alcohol, necessarily, or from sugar, necessarily, but, if it's interfering with your life to the point where you are using the phrase, "I think I'm a sugar addict," or, "I think I am maybe addicted to alcohol," I think we need to take some serious look at how are we going to manage that?

Jamie [00:42:41] Yeah. I think today that word 'addiction' has so many different connotations. There's almost two camps. There's people who kind of just throw it around willy-nilly all the time and say, "I'm addicted to everything," almost, and there's people who are really afraid of that word, you know, because you think, if you're an addict in anything, you're the one-- you know, if you're an alcohol addict, you have to be the one sleeping on the sidewalk, you know, with no home, with the alcohol in the paper bag. So I think that might be somewhat-- in terms of when people are using that, I think that gets into a difficult and gray area for people. I don't know your thoughts on that.

Terri [00:43:25] I'm just so appreciative that you said that because I was totally forgetting the flip side of it is that so many of us avoid seriously looking at our relationship with a substance because we don't see ourselves, or want to see ourselves, in that stereotype of how we think of an addict. And I think she covers that really well in the book about one of her ways of justifying our use of alcohol is we keep separating ourselves out from that kind of worst picture that we could imagine of what someone who is addicted to alcohol is doing, what their life looks like. And because she was still a high-powered executive, clearly she wasn't an addict.

Jamie [00:44:13] Exactly.

Terri [00:44:14] But looking at it more honestly really helped her. And I think that's true for many of us with food, too. I think, going back to my own example with sugar, I keep thinking, "You know what? I don't really have a addiction to sugar because I go 30 days at a time without it. I'm okay," But the fact that I keep coming back to it. And she talks a lot about that in kind of the pattern of addiction, too, is that the more you move away from a substance, whether it's alcohol or sugar or cocaine, the less it's affecting you, but, as soon as you go back to it, the response is there.

[00:44:52] And other terms that we didn't even touch on today, Jamie, that I think we could talk about for six more hours, like hedonistic adaptation - the idea that it feels really good at first, but then we go right back to our same state, so that's why we use more. That happens for us. All kinds of issues with addictive substances. So I just really want to invite people to think about that from this episode. Where are you in your relationship with alcohol? Where are you in your relationship with food, particularly problematic foods for you? And might you be open to something where you change that relationship, whatever that looks like?

Jamie [00:45:38] Exactly. And I think taking some of the-- because that can be, I think, a very high-pressure concept for a lot of people, because then it does bring in, for a lot of people, whether it's sugar, unprocessed foods (pretty addictive), alcohol, saying to yourself, "I can never have something again," can almost be paralyzing. And I know that even sounds extreme, but I think it can be that extreme to some. So what I do like what she says and other health people I've heard kind of say something similar. She says, "I can choose to drink whenever I want. I choose not to." She didn't say this, but I kind of, in my mind hear her saying, "because I choose me," after that, you know? And I think that is empowering for anyone considering, "Do I do something else?" "Do I do something about motivation?" however that works. There's a whole spectrum, but, for all of these - sugar, alcohol, ultra-processed foods - that, a, it's individual, that people have to be really honest themselves where they can really land on that spectrum of pure moderation, or once a year, or whatever that is for you. But I think empowering people that you have a choice is really important. And I know you're big on languaging. You tell us that in the community often. [laughs] It just gives yourself a little more control and power. It's like, "I have the choice to choose if I'm going to partake in x, y, z." And so I just thought about that as you were talking, and like kind of where does that fit in in really trying to make these decisions on where we want to go with it, you know? I'd be interested in your thoughts on, like, reframing and all that to get to these goals that we're looking for with these problematic whatever it is for you.

Terri [00:47:28] It's interesting that you said that, and I'm so glad that you did, because my first introduction to her at all was on a podcast, and then I did a podcast on the topic, and that was the the phrase that really stuck with me, because I think she used the example in that podcast of, you know, someone might call her and say, "Oh, I forgot you can't drink." And she said, "Oh, I can drink. I can drink whenever I want. I just don't want to." I think, for many of us, that sounds like a big leap to get to a place where we would say, "I don't want to." And it doesn't mean that she didn't like alcohol, that she didn't enjoy those two bottles of wine, or that she whatever, but she didn't enjoy, overall, what it was taking away from her. And so right now she can whenever she wants, but she doesn't want to right now.

Jamie [00:48:23] Yes.

Terri [00:48:23] And I think that's also the way I've been thinking about my next step was sugar. Of course, I can have it whenever I want. I just don't want it right now. And, again, like you said, I don't know how long that will be. Will that be 30 days? Will that be 60 days? Will it be 6 years? Will be 12 years. I don't know, but I think allowing ourselves to even take that risk of experiencing and working on changing some of that messaging, I think, is really significant. And there was a quote that she shared in the book from Pema Chodron:

[00:48:58] The most fundamental harm we can do to ourselves is to remain ignorant by not having the courage and the respect to look at ourselves honestly and gently.

[00:49:12] So I hope people will hold on to that. I don't think you and I are saying anyone has to anything drastic, but I just hope people will look at themselves honestly and gently as they kind of continue to navigate this journey.

Jamie [00:49:26] That's beautiful. Well, said. Thank you for sharing that.

Terri [00:49:31] Well, Jamie, I know you also did the workbook, which I did not do, so, at any point, if, you know, people are interested, if people like this topic and want to come back to it, we could always do another episode, but I really, really appreciate you being

here with me today and being so open to talk about this. It's a complicated topic, so I really appreciate that. And, listeners, if you enjoyed what you heard today, please don't hesitate to share with a friend. Give us some feedback. It helps us to know, people following us, people giving feedback helps us to know if we're giving you what you're looking for when you come here. So from me, I just I hope that everyone takes good care of themselves and I will look forward to seeing you on a future episode.

Jamie [00:50:20] Thank you so much, Terri, for having me. That was fun, interesting. I really enjoyed that, and, yeah, I just hope the listeners got even a little tidbit that they can take away.

Terri [00:50:31] Very good. And I hope some of you will read the book. Again, whether alcohol is a concern for you or not, I think there's so much value in so many of the concepts, so I think many of us can relate, regardless. All right, everybody. Until next time, happy fasting.