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Megan [00:00:06] Hi, everyone, I'm Megan Ramos.

Nadia [00:00:08] And I'm Nadia Pateguana.

[00:00:10] And welcome to The Fasting Method podcast. This is our very first episode: pilot episode, and we're so grateful to be here to be able to share our knowledge about intermittent fasting with all of you.

Nadia [00:00:23] I actually am super excited, Megan, because one of the things I often talk about in our meetings with our community is how we met, you and I, through, of course, Jason Fung.

Megan [00:00:34] It's been a wild ride these last few years, so let's take our listeners on the journey: the evolution of The Fasting Method. About 10 years ago, I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, shortly before my 27th birthday, and I was just devastated by this diagnosis. Up until that point, I had been doing clinical research in the field of nephrology (which is the study of kidney disease) and I actually started in the field in nephrology when I was 15 years old as a summer student doing data collection for a research project working with a young physician named Dr. Jason Fung. So I spent quite a long time - 15 to 27 - in nephrology and, when I was a kid starting out, there were barely any patients that required dialysis. But, as the years went on, by the time I was 27, we were dialyzing thousands of people around the clock seven days a week. And a lot of that was due to obesity and type 2 diabetes. So when I got this diagnosis of type 2 diabetes, I was devastated. Jason Fung, at the time, had been doing some research because he didn't understand why type 2 diabetes had suddenly become this big epidemic. And like me, he was getting really frustrated with the standard of care: nothing seemed to be making these patients get better. They were only making them get worse. So Jason had started doing some outside-of-the-box thinking, researching, and I heard him one day talking to a group of patients about the benefits of intermittent fasting for tackling a condition called insulin resistance, which is truly the root cause of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. And after hearing him talk that day, that was it: I started fasting and in six months I lost over 60 pounds, reversed my type 2 diabetes, fatty-liver disease that I had from childhood, and polycystic ovarian syndrome. So this is life-changing to me. I was so brokenhearted watching all of these people die from diabetic complications. And then there's me becoming diabetic and just seeing this terrible vision of my future: you know, dialysis and amputations and cardiovascular disease. So after I had some success with fasting, Jason approached our colleagues in the nephrology team and said, "Hey, we want to fast some type 2 diabetics." And we started what we called at the time, the "Intensive Dietary Management" program. Now, initially, we got shot down. Our colleagues said, "This is crazy. You guys are crazy. There's no way this is going to happen."

[00:03:17] And I took off; I went to Europe. I finally reversed a bunch of health issues. I was feeling really good and I wanted to live my life. So I went to Europe for a few weeks with some of my girlfriends. And when we were at the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris to come home, I thought, "Oh, I should probably check my email," because I really disconnected. And there was just this flurry of emails going back and forth and we had finally been given permission to do some fasting with some patients. 24 hours after I got home, we saw our very first patient in the clinic. We called ourselves Intensive Dietary

Management at the time or IDM for short. And we were exclusively seeing patients in the clinic. Jason Fung - he started a blog post on our kidney disease website, which eventually evolved into Intensive Dietary Management and now The Fasting Method. Jason was really straightforward in his blog writing; he didn't sugarcoat it, he told that just as it was, and he researched everything, everything was so well cited and it gained a lot of traction. Suddenly, Jason and I had a wait list of over two years to be seen in our clinic in Toronto, and it was just a real wild ride. These people were reaching out from all over the world. How can they come to Canada for six months and reverse their diabetes? So I started doing some online coaching because we could provide education to these individuals abroad so they wouldn't have to relocate to Canada. So it became a 7-day a week, a 14-hour-a-day job, trying to help everyone. Jason had started being invited to speak at various medical conferences about intermittent fasting, based on his blog post, and he had a book that came out - The Obesity Code - and then just word of mouth about our clinic. So he was on a flight to San Diego... So Nadia, I'll let you tell the story of how you met this man.

Nadia [00:05:24] It's so funny because I've heard this story a million times, but I still get goose bumps; every time you talk about how you guys started fasting patients and how hard it was. It was equally as hard for me to join your team with the nephrology doctors there, for different reasons. But, I'll start off by saying that, it's funny how our stories, a lot of our story, of course, mirrors each other of how both our personal and professional journey sort of collided in a very positive way. So for me, it was a very similar beginning to this story in the sense that, professionally, I actually thought I was going to go one way and I ended up going another.

[00:06:02] So I went to school in Canada; I became a naturopathic doctor, which is another long story of why I decided to go into naturopathic medicine instead of conventional medicine, even though that's what I was set to do since I was a little girl. But really, it was a little bit of frustration on my part with my own personal doctors because I had initially IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), and I did not feel like it was handled properly by my doctors. And at this point I was in university and I got so frustrated that, once I learned about naturopathic medicine, I actually thought naturopathic medicine was not only going to solve my health issues, but it was going to help me solve everybody else's health issues. The thing I like the most about naturopathic medicine was that, right from the beginning, I learned this idea of looking at a patient as a whole - as not an organ, but as a whole system in how the different organ systems interact with each other. So anyway, that's how I became a naturopath.

[00:06:54] But as life would have it I ended up, as soon as I graduated from the naturopathic college, I left Canada and went back to my home country. I was born in Mozambique, which is a Portuguese-speaking country on the southeast coast of Africa. So I went back to Mozambique, which was a childhood dream of mine, and I actually thought I was going to work in the rural communities with impoverished communities and mothers and babies and nutrition. That is exactly what I wanted to do, and I thought, "I'm going to come and maybe learn some traditional medicine and then add a bit of my nutritional background to this." But that was not possible: I could not do this as much as I tried, as hard as I tried because of a little bit of complicated politics in Mozambique. And so funny enough, I actually met the Minister of Health in Mozambique, and he was the one who encouraged me to go into, to open up a private clinic to see people about weight loss and diabetes and heart disease.

[00:07:51] And I was shocked. Number one, I was stick thin; so that's the difference between how our journeys began, Megan, right? I started off as a really thin child. I grew up into a really thin adult and it had absolutely nothing to do with my diet; it had to do with my genetics and really just my very picky, poor eating. I hated food; I only like candy from, from ever. I don't ever remember eating meat and vegetables until I was close to my 30s, funny enough. Anyway, I met the Minister of Health and he said to me, "You know, since you can't do this," (and it really was not possible for me to do what I originally wanted to do), "I suggest you open up a clinic in Maputo," (which was the capital of Mozambique), "and help people lose weight. That's what people need." And I was as shocked as you are hearing this. Like, why do people need to lose weight in Mozambique and why do they have so much diabetes?

[00:08:40] So at a very young age, and very ill-prepared for this, I had to learn how to heal people with diabetes and obesity. So that's how my story began, and I stayed in Mozambique for 10 years, and over those 10 years I learned a lot because of my clients. I learned about a low-carb diet, I learned about intermittent fasting, I learned about metabolic syndrome and insulin resistance, and how PCOS and fertility (or infertility) are all actually surprisingly related to this. And then I developed PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome), just like you Megan, and then realized that I was suffering with fertility challenges and I was in my, I guess, early-30s at the time. So I just put everything together, everything that I had learned through the help of some amazing doctors, I put it into practice into my own personal life. I started to follow a low-carb diet and intermittent fasting for myself, even though I was never obese or overweight. I did gain a small amount of weight between the time that I started trying to conceive, because of the same reason that I developed PCOS: because of insulin resistance. I started to gain some weight. I developed fatty liver. I developed hypertension. I was pre-diabetic. So all of these things that we already now know are part of the insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome spectrum. And so I started following this lifestyle myself.

[00:10:03] At some point, I left Mozambique, went back to Canada; my first child was born in Mozambique, my second one in Canada. And I, of course, learned of Megan and Dr Fung. And so I started stalking them! I started writing emails and saying, "Here's me, you know, I've got all this experience and I'm in Canada and I really want to work with you guys." And initially, I got one simple email back from Jason at some point, and he said, "We don't work with naturopaths," because he worked in a conventional medical clinic in Toronto. I mean, if anybody knows anything about conventional medicine. Then Jason and I met at a conference in San Diego, right Megan? It was Low Carb USA, San Diego.

Megan [00:10:45] Yeah, it was Jason's first time speaking there. I was kind of at my wit's end - I even forgot that he had gone to San Diego!

Nadia [00:10:53] So that we meet in San Diego. I was with, lucky for me, I was with some pretty cool people from South Africa that work with Prof. Tim Noakes. And so they introduced me to Jason Fung and it was funny because it was like this 30-second thing and he went, "I know you." He goes, "I know who you are. You're Nadia. You emailed me." And I said, "Yes!" And so by the end of this conference, he came up to me at the airport - so Megan was talking about checking her email at the airport - he came up to me at the airport and he said, "I want you to meet Megan Ramos on Monday. Can you come to our office?" And I said, "Yes."

Megan [00:11:27] It was pretty wild. I was so swamped with work (like I said just a few moments ago) I forgot Jason had even gone out of town to speak at this conference. And it was a huge deal, because this was the largest platform in North America that we had been given a voice for fasting. But I was burnt out. And Jason and I had these conversations - we need help - but we had no time to find anybody. And then even how to train somebody. It was just, thinking about it was overwhelming. I was definitely burning the candle at both ends, and Jason shot me an email and he said, "I met this woman - Nadia Pateguana. She was at Low Carb San Diego. I think that's really great, you know, she's taking the initiative to go all the way from Toronto to San Diego to be involved in this community." And he's like, "I want you want you to meet with her, see if you think she'd be a good fit and if she can help take off some of your workload so we can grow this program."

[00:12:23] So Nadia came into the clinic bright and early before, I had a full clinic book that day, and I just saw you standing outside and I wasn't sure how it was going to go. But I saw you and I just knew I was like - this is going to work, I can build this program with this woman. And there was just something about you: the way you smiled and looked at me, I was like - we're going to be good, we're going to be able to figure this out. And you came in and you sat there and you saw how we did things and you offered great feedback and you gave great support and advice to the patients. And I literally felt about 100 pounds lighter without doing any fasting: just all of the emotional baggage of burning the candle at both ends for so long. And that's how, that's how we came to be.

[00:13:10] So Nadia was the first person to join the team and we started - she hung out with me in the clinic for a while - and then we started booking patients in to see just Nadia in the clinic. We tried to open a couple of satellite clinics too, within the city, and it just wasn't, it wasn't working so well with the clinics. Toronto's a massive city. We're a megacity totaling over eight million and it's tough: traffic's tough, transit's not the best, it's difficult for people to get in to see physicians and other health care practitioners within conventional working hours because they have jobs themselves. And I just found it a lot easier to operate the online model. So we started Nadia seeing some of the clients online doing the same coaching as I was. And then we said, "OK, this is it. This is what we're going to do."

[00:14:08] So we started doing online coaching and then from there, even that was getting too much. And Nadia and I were working in the clinic and online, literally around the clock. So we decided to create an online program to help scale it up. So it wasn't just one-on-one or small groups that we were doing one to many just to help get the information out there. And at some point after launching the online program, we decided to change our name to reflect better what we do. And that is The Fasting Method because we've realized that there's so many other people out there that are now doing fasting, but we have a true method for how we do it. And it's been really successful for our participants. And usually, when we have consultations or initial intake appointments with clients or members, they think that they've been fasting or they think that they've been doing it right or they've been eating a certain way, and they're really frustrated. And we just realize immediately that, no, we need to go back to The Fasting Method principles here and get everybody going on our program, and we found that it really does help, you know, we've got a good structure in place, and I think we're really able to guide these people to success.

[00:15:27] So we then rebranded as The Fasting Method and we now have our app, which is great and makes it so much easier for people to connect. So there's a few different ways where people can join: is through our app, we have a program called The Community. And in The Community we have live and interactive meetings. We have these live stream Q&A

sessions with top experts. Of course, we have a community forum that's moderated by all of our experts on the team. And we have tons and tons of static content and that we're always adding new content to it every week on top of weekly challenges too, that we do with the group. And then we have our coaching program as well, where people can work one-on-one or in small groups or a combination of both with our clients and get some more personalized and individualized dietary advice. So it's been a real wild ride Nadia!

Nadia [00:16:23] It really has! You skipped through quite a bit there - or not skipped through, but you went over quite a few years there. I've been with you guys now for over five years; time flies when you're having fun. But those first two years in clinic, as you said, they were, they were important, but it was challenging at the same time. The very first time I came into the clinic, when you and I met, you walked me into a room full of files, from floor to ceiling. This is what I was first faced with. And so, before I even got into those files and started contacting people to create my own small groups like you were doing, I sat with you and Jason for two whole months. I don't know if you even recall this, but to have the opportunity to train without seeing clients, but to train for so many weeks daily, every day in clinic and to watch you guys and to learn from you guys. As much experience as I may have thought that I had, after 10 years of doing this on my own, it was amazing. And I know you had a lot of medical doctors come from all over the world, sit with you for a day or two or three, and then they would go back to their lives and their clinics and try to spread the word. But I got to sit through, just watching you, and that was pretty amazing, and I really appreciate that.

[00:17:40] Then I contacted all of these people, created my own groups, initially at your clinic in Scarborough, and then we had these satellite clinics right? We had two clinics in downtown Toronto, we had one satellite clinic in the cardiology unit of the Scarborough General Hospital, and, at the same time, I started doing online with you. Why did we do online? Of course, because we, you know, Jason and you became known worldwide, and that was the only way to see these people from all over the world because they couldn't come to Toronto. Our medical system doesn't allow people to be seen by medical doctors if you're not a resident of Ontario. So that's why we started the online program. So when we eventually decided to - you started the online program, I just joined - but when we eventually decided to bring everything online, it was with the intention of making this available to everyone. So we actually went through the process of helping our local clients become familiar with our online forum as well, so they were trained to then join. And then the work was to take all of that stuff that you did in clinic, because people used to have this full-day training with Megan. And I talk about this all the time because people would come in, before they had any sessions with us, they had to sit through an entire day - morning till evening - where Megan would go through the fasting basics and eating basics and how to handle your medication and whatnot. And then they would start small groups with us. We then took some time, and we have all these resources now, all these videos of Megan's of that initial training, but broken up into videos and handouts and all of this stuff that is now available to our community and our online program and our coaching program. And now we also have the opportunity, of course, to work with a lot more people because we have a much bigger team

Megan [00:19:24] Over the years, we have actually worked with nearly 20 thousand individuals. So, the Intensive Dietary Management clinic started officially on June 6, 2012, and since then we've worked with over 20 thousand individuals, which is just totally mind-blowing because I think back to that early June in 2012 and how I had to virtually twist everybody's arm to try to fast. You know, I knew. I was confident. I had saved my life

and I could save their lives too. It was just such a foreign concept to so many people. But now to have 20 thousand people come in and include fasting as part of their health journey. It's just been truly, truly remarkable. I feel so blessed every day that this is what I get to do because my whole life I just wanted to go to work and help people get better. That's why I got into the medical field and into clinical research at the start, as I wanted to help people get better. And you know, I do have a long story about my journey. I know Nadia has gone to hell and back in her own health and we'll each do separate episodes in the future for you to get to know us a bit more if you don't already know us and we'll share our stories. But we just want to continue to help as many people as we can, and I think that's a big reason why we wanted to do this podcast as well, is to really try to get proper information about fasting, because there's so much wild stuff out there - still - even for people who are proponents of fasting. I hear some crazy things like, "You can't exercise when you're in a fasted state," and then it's just like, "Oh, I want to rip out my hair!" and I want to get the right information out there. What are some of the reasons why you want to do this podcast with me? So Nadia had initially approached me, and I'm always going in ten directions at once, and I was like, "I know we need to do this," but what, what do you think the benefit of this podcast is for our listeners?

Nadia [00:21:29] Well, before I tell you that, I want to also tell you what my least favorite myths are about fasting. There's many, but there's two that are my least favorite, and this is, again, in line with why we want to do this podcast, is to help people clarify their questions, their concerns, from people who actually have the experience right? As opposed to hearing it from people who tell you that if you're a woman, you cannot fast because fasting is bad for your hormones. That is my absolute - I don't want to use a very, very negative word here, but this is my probably biggest sort of Achilles tendon when it comes to critics of fasting that speak without much knowledge, right? So fasting IS good for women BECAUSE it affects your hormones, just to make it very clear. And that's a fact. The myth is that fasting is bad for you because it is bad for your hormones.

[00:22:17] I think my second one, that is quite new that I'm hearing more and more, is that fasting is bad for you because it's going to give you some kind of heart disease. I don't even know where that stems from, how you would think that fasting could cause heart disease when fasting lowers inflammation and it improves metabolic syndrome, which is why people have heart disease. But anyhow, so those are my Achilles tendons there. But the reason why, of course, like Megan, I very much wanted to do this podcast is because I think that more than anything, of course, we help people every day, that's what we want to do, that's what most, of course, all health professionals want to do. But we learn from people every day. We are exposed to these 20 thousand, and more to come, experiences of actual people fasting clinically, and of course now through our online program. So we've learned a ton and we continue to learn and we want to share this information with people.

Megan [00:23:19] Yeah. We're lifelong students at The Fasting Method. I think that's what you find is sort of the glue that really keeps us all together on our team. As you know, I'm not afraid, and no one on our team is afraid to say, "Hey, we've learned something, and now we're doing something different because of it." We've all, at The Fasting Method, and we've all had our own journeys and we've all had to pivot and adjust and incorporate new information. And it's just so great to be able to get that information out to everybody who's listening.

[00:23:49] Now we do have a podcast format, so I want to give you some details as to what you can expect from Nadia and I on our episodes. So this is our pilot, giving you a

glimpse into Nadia and to myself and to The Fasting Method and our evolution. But we've got a format that we're going to be following. Two episodes a month, we're going to be answering your questions. They'll be two 30-minute episodes where we take the most Hot Topics, hot questions and we address them and give you our Fasting Method tried and true answers. And then once a month, we're going to interview an expert guest in the field of fasting and nutrition. And then we're going to have another episode dedicated to Hot Topics.

[00:24:34] So we'll have a Q&A episode, and next for guests, a Q&A episode, and then a Hot Topic. And if you haven't gathered by Nadia's fiery passion for debunking fasting myths, our very first Hot Topic is going to be on the topic of "Women and Fasting". So we can't wait to take you all on this journey with us.

Nadia [00:24:56] Well, I'll tell you what I'm most looking forward to: definitely answering the questions. I think questions are key and I always say this in our meetings, we get to do this within our community right? Our forum, people can tag all of our team or each individual member of our team or we're each known for something, and I'll tell you a little bit about that. But people can tag each of us individually and ask a specific question. So we, I answer questions all day long. So working online, often people think it's not work, but I'm because of I'm always with my phone I'm constantly answering questions and it's a passion. So you do it sometimes without even realizing it. But it's really important that we get to these questions. And I often say in our community that repetition is key. It's important that you hear the same thing. So even if you've heard the same question over and over, it's important that you hear the experts tell you the same thing over and over again. I think because repetition is going to be key to your success. So please send in your questions and we will very happily answer them, even if we've heard these questions a million times. And for those of you who've heard the same questions a million times, remember that repetition and the fact that it's simple is actually a really important piece of this puzzle.

[00:26:07] The other thing I'm really excited about is introducing, not just all kinds of different experts in our area of work, but introducing the members of our team. So of course, not just getting to know Megan better and Dr. Jason Fung, but getting to know our individual team members. You, of course, will get to know me and my way of doing things, which is quite different than everybody else's way of doing things. I'm known for being a very direct, I like structure, I like having a system. I'm the tough love kind of, kind of coach, or was at least. Now, as a health consultant, of course, it's the same. Everybody knows me as that, and I'm happy; it's appreciated within our community. Then we have people like Terri Lance, who is one of our coaches, who's a behavioral psychologist. And she, of course, as you can imagine, is a key component to our team and in our program. And how much that has been a huge part of the growth in our method, in our, why are program works so well and why we can help so many people. Now we have other members that have their own little way and own quirks and way of doing things. And I really think it would be a really, really fun to introduce you guys to the rest of the team.

Megan [00:27:21] We have a really great team and everybody's walked the walk and talked the talk on our team. And I think that's so important that, when you're going through your journey, it can feel really lonely and you can feel really hopeless. And to have someone be part of your community that really knows where you've been and you can tell, just even by the way that you look at each other, the way that you respond to one another, that there's deeper understanding. It really helps give you hope and we've got so many

incredible stories. Larry's got an amazing family transformation. John still looks younger and thinner every time I see him today! Lisa's had all kinds of miraculous health improvements on top of, and just incredible weight loss. So we've got all of these incredible team members, and we so look forward to introducing each of them to you as this podcast carries on.

Nadia [00:28:19] Lisa just glows. I don't know what it is: her hair glows, her face... like, everything about her glows every time that I see her, it's, there's more glow!

Megan [00:28:29] Thanks Nadia for willing to be my partner-in-crime with this new podcast. I'm really excited about it. We've got so much great information to get out there. People can get the good advice and they can realize that they're not alone and they've got us and the fasting community there behind them. But thank you all for listening to us today. It's very appreciated and we will catch you next time. Happy fasting, everyone.

Nadia [00:28:56] Bye everyone.