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Megan [00:00:06] Before we get started with today's episode, I would like to quickly read you our podcast disclaimer.

[00:00:13] This podcast is for educational purposes only, and it is not a substitute for professional care by a doctor or other qualified medical professional. You should always speak with your physician or other healthcare professionals before doing any fasting, changing your diet in any way, taking or adjusting any medications or supplements, or adopting any treatment plan for a health problem.

[00:00:42] The use of any other products or services purchased by you as a result of this podcast does not create a healthcare provider-patient relationship between you and any of the experts affiliated with this podcast. Any information and statements regarding dietary supplements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. All right. And now we'll get started with today's episode.

Terri [00:01:19] Welcome back, everyone, to another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. This is Dr. Terri Lance, and I am joined by one of my co-hosts, Dr. Nadia Pateguana. Nadia, how are you?

Nadia [00:01:32] I'm good. How are you, Terri?

Terri [00:01:34] Good. So good to get to see you. I recorded recently an episode by myself, and I know you've been recording by yourself, so it's great to be in here at the same time.

Nadia [00:01:43] I know I always say that at the beginning of the podcast. I hope I don't depress anyone when I'm like, "It's not as much fun when it's just me." [laughter]

Terri [00:01:52] You and I were talking as we were getting started today, trying to think about what do people need right now? What are we seeing happen or what do we know tends to happen this time of year? And we are coming into the homestretch for many of our listeners throughout a holiday season. We have recently passed Canadian Thanksgiving and U.S. Thanksgiving and Halloween. And for many of us, we're heading into some more holidays soon. So you and I were talking about talking about mindset around how to get through this time of year, making the commitments to ourselves, sticking with our plans. And I think you and I could probably talk about this for days and still have more to say about it, but I'm curious to hear from you, Nadia, what have you kind of learned through your own experience and watching in our Community and with your clients? What are the most important things that stand out to you at this time of year?

Nadia [00:02:57] Oh, I totally agree with you that this is a topic that we could talk about forever, and we have talked about it. We were joking that we've talked about this so many times, but I'm a big fan of repetition. I'm going to keep saying that because I think it's key. I think that there's quite a few things that we're going to have to talk about today, again, but what most stands out to me is that as a coach, right, you and I are both health coaches-- and so as a coach, I think the most frustrating thing is looking at people that are trying to commit-- you know, 'trying to commit' - that sounds like an oxymoron, right? [laughs] Because you either try or you do it, right? We've talked about it before, but, you know, that have committed.

[00:03:38] For example, September, a couple of months ago, we came back from the summer. I had my coaching call. September was a great month because it was so easy to get-- I always say it's a great time of the year. It's like physiologically and mentally we're ready. You know, it's a change of season. We're ready. So it's such a great time in September to get people to commit. And we actually, in our Community, created this little group, that turned out to be a pretty large group, of people that committed to 100 days of ADF - alternate day challenge, which basically went from September till the end of the year. And people were just on a roll. You know, throughout the month, even throughout October, there was still some activity in there. Then the holidays start to hit, right?

[00:04:21] And so remember that-- we've said this many times so as to not confuse people. Remember that if you are committing to a therapeutic journey, right, which you and I, Terri, and Megan and our other coaches, we work with people that have serious health concerns, right, and they're looking for help, right, therapeutic help, healing help. So they come to us, either within the Community or in our coaching (one-on-one sessions or group sessions), and they're looking to reverse serious health concerns. They've tried every diet, they've tried the pills, they've tried, you know, every medicine out there, and it hasn't worked. So they found fasting and, even just dabbling with fasting, I think most people are like, "Okay, this is someth-- there's something here," right? And so because people struggle-- anybody would struggle-- I struggle going to the gym by myself. I struggle with-- if I have to do physiotherapy by myself-- you know, they look for the professionals. So they come and they find us, and we're like, "All right, great. Here's the plan."

[00:05:18] And most people's therapeutic journey is three to six months. That's my experience. You know, I had a great call today. A young woman, in her early twenties, she had what she thought was complete amenorrhea. I actually want to invite her to the podcast. So complete-- no period, right? At 21 or 22 or 23 years old. I mean, that's no bueno, right? Since she was like 12 or 13, she's had like a handful of periods her entire life. Terrible. Great mom. The mom is like, "I know what you gotta do." Comes into the program, starts working with me. Of course, this is my area of expertise. And I say to her, I'm like-- she's like, "You know, complete amenorrhea. Don't have a period. I maybe have one a year, not even." So they've diagnosed her with complete amenorrhea. We're certain - myself, the mom, herself. We're certain (she's read The PCOS Plan) that this is related to insulin resistance. Okay. She's like, "How long do you think it's going to take?" I say, honestly, I always say this, "Three months. I think three months of a therapeutic journey." Today I spoke with her. She's like, "Three months." And it's like, gosh, it's not like I have a crystal ball. I don't. But this is what our experience has been.

[00:06:29] Megan and Jason did a case study - three guys. All three of them reversed diabetes in three months. Like, this is just over and over again. You know, we have examples of people who have lost a significant amount of weight in reverse health concerns in three to six months. They committed-- this is what we call a therapeutic journey. I'm talking about this so extensively because I want for you to see the big picture here. We're not talking about lifestyle. We're not talking about, "Oh, you know, I do intermittent fasting." You hear all your neighbors and everybody at church and everybody else talking about intermittent fasting. That is not what I'm talking about. I'm not even talking about people who have chosen to eat real food or low carb. I'm talking about, in the midst of this short, three to six-month therapeutic journey that you've committed to with a coach or with a community or just with your own, you know, research and tools that you've collected. If you're doing this properly, you're committing to three to six months of reversing

a health concern. Maybe it's PCOS, maybe it's diabetes, or something else related to this. People commit. Hopefully, they do really well.

[00:07:34] We talked about this in the last time-- the last time you and I-- I think it was episode 105, Terri. We talked about why do some people-- 'when desire is not enough' I think it's called, right? So we figure that out. We got to tackle a few steps here. There is a reason why people, some people, manage to work on their limiting beliefs, their confidence, their plan, etc. and they do this, right, but they struggle at certain times of the year. It's not just falling off the horse, it's when they've fallen off the horse and they feel like it's pointless to get back on. All because, "It was Thanksgiving and I ate poorly and soon it's going to be Christmas." First of all, it feels like it's soon, but there's a big gap between Thanksgiving and Christmas. In fact-- you know, I understand when people struggle between Christmas and New Year's because it's so close together. But even there, there is a big gap that, if you're doing a therapeutic journey, you should not ignore.

[00:08:34] Megan has said this, and I'm going to repeat it because this is how seriously I want people to look at this. If they don't look at this seriously, as you said before, Terri, if there isn't a big value involved in what they're doing here, they're just not going to show up. So there's a big, big value here. So I want you to think about this. People that you know in your life, maybe yourself, have had to deal with cancer and chemotherapy and radiotherapy. You wouldn't miss a session, no matter what, right? You would show up, you would do it. And not to say that you can't celebrate Christmas, you can't celebrate New Year's, you can't celebrate Thanksgiving, but you wouldn't go, "Oh, guess what chemotherapist. I'm not coming between Halloween and January 2024." You wouldn't do that. You wouldn't take three months off of your chemo because, "Oh, there's just going to be too many holidays." So that's what we're talking about here, much more so than the strategies, which I think we will talk about. But I just want people to look at this big picture.

[00:09:31] So if you're committing to this therapeutic journey (three to six months) and you reverse your health concerns (which I am very confident that you will and you can, and we can help you do that), then the next phase is a totally different phase. Then we're talking about maintenance. Then, yes, we're talking about lifestyle. And how you choose to live your lifestyle, that's a different situation. I plan on doing a masterclass on this, even next year, you know, about TRE. And I'm always talking about TRE, but time-restricted eating, maybe that's what your maintenance looks like. And TRE means exactly that - time-restricted eating. It means eating in a-- you, Terri, are the one that actually taught me to rephrase this-- not in an eating window, but eating meals. And meals include Christmas meals and Thanksgiving meals, Hanukkah meals, and whatever other meal that you celebrate that are important. What you choose to put in that meal, again, is a choice. We're not talking about that. We're talking about this three to six-month therapeutic journey, which means that if you're going to possibly miss a couple of holidays this year, so what! You know, is your life, your health not worth it? But we're not even saying that. I think, Terri, you started by saying, "Let's talk about how to recover quickly from these holidays, how to get back on to your commitment before the next holiday," right?

Terri [00:10:54] Absolutely. And as I was listening to you, Nadia, it reminded me of my-- beginning of my healthier journey, because prior to 2014, I was really struggling with my diabetes and my weight and I was eating horribly all day, every day. And I started by doing a Whole30. But I knew really quickly that I needed some pretty drastic changes and not just for 30 days. So I committed to 100 days. I started this on March 1st in 2014 and my birthday is in March, and it didn't even dawn on me. And then all of a sudden, a few days in, I panicked because I thought, "What am I going to do? My birthday is during this time."

And I'm actually so glad that I started it the month of my birthday because it challenged me to think differently about how I celebrate my birthday. My birthday did not need to be decadent food that harms me. I had a beautiful birthday. I had a beautiful birthday meal. So I'm so glad that it started then.

[00:12:06] And I've been working with a lot of clients recently who have started to take on a more therapeutic approach at this time of year. And I actually had an intake with someone saying they want to get started, but they were debating whether they should wait until January. And I said, "No, I love that you're willing to start now. What better time. There is not going to be a better time to learn, 'I have to adjust how I think about this. I have to change my mindset. If this is my commitment to have this health or, you know, a certain amount of weight loss that I'm working on, it doesn't matter that it's a holiday. I have to figure out where to put my fasts, what food to eat so that I stay in that therapeutic plan throughout these holidays.'" As you said, you know, there's one holiday here and then one in a few weeks or a month or something. There's so many opportunities in between there where I can do great things for my body and then maybe I need to shift. So, for example, Thanksgiving might fall on a day that some people would fast. Okay, that week just change your fasting schedule (which days it is). But to go into it knowing I am still committed to this therapeutic plan that I'm working. We don't have to throw that out because of the holiday or a birthday or-- I have a client who-- I think six people in her family have a birthday within one month and so every few days they're celebrating another birthday. How do you stay in your therapeutic level of fasting and eating appropriately despite that?

[00:13:56] And I think it's super important. I, of course, go back to the story (I've already said this in a podcast episode) where Megan talked about her client who had attended a few weddings and said that he had been unable to fast. Three weddings in the month of August. That's 27 other days where you could still fast. So I think about the holiday schedule that may be coming up for some of us. Two holidays, three holidays, maybe it's a week of holiday. How does that fit with your therapeutic plan for the month, or for these three months, as you said? We don't need to throw that away because we have holidays coming.

Nadia [00:14:39] It goes back to-- I think you and I were chatting about this offline a little bit earlier. It goes back to what you taught us about limiting beliefs, right? It's because we tell ourselves, "There's no way I can do this during the holidays." Like, the whole three-month period you can't do this? Like you said, even if you have three weddings in August, you have 27 other days to fast. In our family, we have one birthday after the other, too, it's one of those-- but again, my husband always finds a way to fast in between, you know, because he is definitely the faster in our family. This is exactly it. For those of you (and there are many of you), even if it's not as consistently as you wish-- but for those of you that are more committed, which is what we're looking for here, right - commitment. Those of you who are more committed to your exercise and to your muscle building-- which is something that I'm trying to really-- I'm trying, again. You can see I'm not there yet, but it is something that-- for me, it's a little bit harder, right? But I ask-- those of you that are stronger at this than I am, I know that you don't take a whole month or two off of going to the gym, even if you have to change the schedule around. Maybe you even change your exercise around. I have no idea but you always figure out a way to show up. You know, I was talking to somebody yesterday at lunch about this. You know, she's somebody-- a couple who's retired and they live here in Portugal near us. And she was telling me how she makes it work. You know, if it's raining, she goes to the gym, and if it's sunny out (because we do live in a really nice sunny place), she goes outside. You know,

whatever. It's been raining a lot the last couple of weeks so she's had to adjust. But she'll always show up. She will always show up because she-- and she enjoys it.

[00:16:17] And I know a lot of you guys in the Community can attest to this. Those of you-- Terri, talked about birthdays, but those of you that are really committed and are in the midst of it (not looking at it from the outside, but in the midst of your therapeutic journey), maybe you're doing one of the rolling 42s, which seems to be this 'nail and hammer', as Coach Andrea calls it. You know, this rhythm that feels easier and easier and better and better as you actually go. It doesn't get harder and harder. You know, you're looking forward to your fasting days and then you're looking forward to your eating days. I have heard so many people in the Community (You know, the ones that are really committed, in the midst of it. You can see when somebody's like in the midst of it.) talking about gifting themselves a day of fasting on their birthday. Like, wow, mind blowing. They'll never forget that one birthday, for sure. And again, it's not every birthday for the rest of your life. Or maybe it is. Maybe they love it so much that they would rather fast than eat all of the junk, and maybe that's the way that they want to celebrate themselves.

[00:17:15] Again, there are many ways of doing this. But what we're trying to talk about here-- you know, it's a hard conversation. As Terri has often said, "We're here to do hard things," but they're worth it. Everything that comes with it is worth it. So how do we do this? How do we tackle these limiting beliefs? Because instead of saying, "There's no way I can fast during the holidays," it's, "Okay, how can I fast?" This is what Terri talked about last time. How can I fast? How can I change the schedule? How can I make this work? That's what we're trying to do here.

Terri [00:17:47] How much fasting do I want to get in during this time? And then, where can I put it? You know, so many people are really good at figuring out how to get their kids to soccer practice and pick them up to take them to their flute lesson and do this. It's all just maneuvering things, moving when we're going to do this and when we're going to do this. So looking at your calendar for the month of November, for the month of December, for January, whatever you're in, and really look at, like you said, not, "Can I or can I not? Is it black and white?" but, "Where? Where do I put those fasts in? How will it work for me?" Most of us don't generally have surprise parties coming up during a holiday season. We know. We've got this one December 5th, we've got this one December 17th, we've got the family ones on these days. You can plan around those. And I think what's really important here is that you start to work on the limiting belief. It's not, "Whether I can or not," it's, "Where will I do that? How will I make it part of my holidays?" And see that as a positive part of your holidays. "I used recovery strategies around the holidays," rather than, "I felt horrible for three weeks straight." But to really just look at, "Where can I put them in? How will I shift things?"

[00:19:14] You probably know this about me, Nadia, and anyone who listens to Monday Mindset knows this, but I like to listen to a lot of podcasts. And I listen to podcasts about a lot of different things - entrepreneurs, you know, people changing their lives, businesses, all these things. So many of them talk about something that I think is really important for all of us in this, and that is if they work on a strategy of something that they're going to do every day-- so let's say, for example, they have a morning routine. And in their morning routine they meditate for 15 minutes, they do 30 minutes of writing, and then they do something else for 15 minutes. That's their morning routine. Well, you have to know that every once in a while they're not going to do that in the morning. There's a reason why - there's a special occasion, they have to get up and meet with people first thing in the morning and they can't do their morning routine. What most of them talk about is that they

hold themselves to, "I don't miss this more than once." Some I've heard say twice. So let's say that's my morning routine, and it's a Sunday morning and I'm with family and I can't do my routine. Okay, that's one. But Monday morning, it is for sure going to happen then.

[00:20:34] And so I encourage people to think about that when it comes to their strategies, their recovery strategy, their eating plan, their fasting. "I'm not going to be off for more than one meal or one day." So even if you take that holiday and you say, 'Look, I am not going to fast on this holiday. All right, Nadia, I'll give you TRE but I am not gonna fast on this holiday.' That's okay, because there's opportunity the day after or the day before. You don't let that go more than one day in a row, because otherwise we start to get further and further away from it. Now, it's been four days since I did it, and now it's been seven days since I did it. And now it's so much harder to get back in there. So to use that as a kind of mechanism to help during this time, that you don't go off your plan for more than one day in a row. It's quick, right back on track.

Nadia [00:21:36] I hope you guys are writing this down because I think that's a brilliant strategy. My experience, with myself and with my coaching clients, has been that when you miss more than one day or one meal, it's so much harder. It actually feels impossible. I actually wrote a blog post about this. 'Everything Sucks when Insulin is High' - that's the title of my blog post. Because my blog posts and my own personal website - it's actually my journal. So every single blog post that I've written, there are thoughts and things that I discover about myself. And then I just, you know, realize that we're not all that different. So if I go more than one day, more than one meal of eating certain things, or more than one day of not sleeping properly, that raises those insulin levels, you know, the food, the not sleeping. It's my Five Pillars all over again, You know, not doing TRE, eating late at night, more than one day in a row - that raises my insulin. After more than a day, whether it's two days, three days, a week - worse, a month - terrible, your insulin is so high that everything sucks. And it's just-- it's worse than Everest. It's unclimbable. It feels unclimbable.

[00:22:46] So, although I do have a strategy for that, I still think it's so much easier. So why not do it that way, right? Don't have more than one meal, don't skip more than your one day of fasting, etc. etc.. So write that down, guys. I really think that that is probably the best strategy, especially in the midst of-- I actually think that in the midst of your maintenance journey too. Getting off track more than one day-- you know, maybe you allow yourself more days off here and there because it just fits in with your maintenance strategy, your lifestyle. But two days in a row, it's going to not only feel horrible, but it's just the mindset and physiologically to get back on track-- the cravings, the insulin beast, everything just gets so hard. So because of that, I've been learning that, I realize that, for me, a recovery plan is a very important tool. It's like a first aid, for sure, after a trip, for example, because sometimes during trips it's really hard and you might find yourself going off for more than a day.

[00:23:52] And so after a trip, after a very stressful period, or an illness, or something, I think that it's important to have that first aid, right, the recovery plan. And it's no secret; I talk about this all the time. For me, it's fat fasting, which is a fast-mimicking diet. It's choosing very, very-- in fact, there are foods that have an insignificant insulin response and you can choose those out of my food pyramid, and eating those repetitively for a couple of days really drops that insulin. It's a fast-mimicking approach because it puts you in that high-energy, low-insulin mode that people rave about quicker. So, again, it's not easy to do a recovery plan because, to start that, you have to commit to that and you have to start eating foods that you're probably not craving, right? You're probably craving-- especially if you've gone off for a couple of days, your insulin is higher. You know,

everything sucks when insulin is high, but you also know exactly what you crave and what you feel like eating when insulin is high. But again, you want to have a strategy for coming off of that, right? You don't want to stay in that mode forever. You know what that was like before, right, before you started this?

Terri [00:25:00] For me, another strategy of recovery is that I look at, "Where am I right now? How off track or how close am I tethered to where my plan was?" and then just start narrowing it from there. So let's say, in my mind, I've really fallen off in that I'm not even doing TRE. Like, I'm struggling, I'm just eating whatever.

Nadia [00:25:26] How dare you, Terri?

Terri [00:25:27] I know! [laughter] It has happened once or twice. But then what I look at is, "Great. So being on track is getting back to just meals. I'm not even going to look at a fasting protocol yet. I'm going to focus on the meals first." I might even stretch to three meals a day, even though I'm generally someone who does two. As I'm recovering, the three might be helpful. And then, as I get more back on track, I can go three/two, three/two, two/one, two/one. Now I'm back to 24-hour fasts. Maybe I alter my schedule so that I've got a 30-hour going in there.

[00:26:12] Often what I see people do is when they get off track, they want to jump back on track. And I encourage you to jump back at the lowest level where you are able to stretch yourself rather than try to jump back into the furthest place on the continuum. So, for me, that means refocusing on TRE, number of meals (might even need to be three for a day or two, then two, then one), and I just get right back into it. I don't start-- if I'm off track, I don't start with a 48-hour fast. It's too challenging and then I know what happens - I'm going to feel defeated when I struggle. So I find that level where I'll be pushed a little bit without too much struggle. And that way I build back into my momentum.

Nadia [00:27:06] It's so awesome how-- even though I love to hear you speak because I learn so much about the mindset and the behavioral side of this, which is definitely not my strength-- it's so awesome how in sync our thoughts are. Because, you know, I mentioned before that I write these blog posts, right, they're like my journal. And I wrote about that and I call that 'Back to Basics'. When you're recovering, trying to go back, I call it 'back to basics' because that's exactly what I mean. If you were doing 48-hour fasts-- and I say this in there - don't skip steps. I am a big believer in a step-by-step approach. So going back to step one, which is TRE, and then, you know, is it three meals? Great. I'm all for that. And then going to, what I call in the fasting schedules, the 'Start Here' program, which is-- so step one is TRE and step two is the first alternate-day pattern, which is the two meal/one meal.

[00:28:02] And so going back to basics, I think is-- it was an article that I actually wrote a couple of years ago after I had that horrible kidney infection that led to a long hospital stay. And I came out of the hospital just feeling like-- and I was calling the doctor and, you know, I was totally-- had an out-of-body experience because I wanted people to explain to me why I was craving, why I couldn't do TRE, why I just wanted to eat pasta. It was just a totally different experience. And I didn't even have the rationale (because I was so in it) to realize-- you know, I was on a drip for over ten days, you know? A sugar drip. And so my insulin was super high, not to mention the infection and everything else that came with it. But 'back to basics' for me it was, you know? And 'back to basics' meant exactly that.

[00:28:51] And then this idea that you can't skip steps. You know, you can't go from that to doing 48-hour fasts, or whatever it was that I thought I should be doing, because, not only was I not in a great insulin place, my blood sugars were very high. My blood pressure went up again during that hospital stay and I gained a ton of weight, right? It was a lot of retention from that drip. And that wasn't-- I don't know that I was too concerned about the weight. I probably was, to be totally honest, right, because we tend to focus on that. But looking back now, it was about everything else. You know, I was in such a bad place. So 'back to basics', recovery plans, you know, putting all of this together. I love that you said that about the three meals. I love that you said, you know, "And then you go to the three meal/two meal, and then you go two meal/one meal. That's exactly how you do it.

Terri [00:29:37] Well, Nadia, it seems like you and I, again, are on the same page, in that, one, really focusing on making that commitment, keep your therapeutic level of fasting going throughout the holidays. If you're into maintenance, keep your maintenance plan going. We talked about figuring out where your fasting is going to fit so that you can keep that going through the holidays. We talked some about the limiting beliefs, working on getting rid of those limiting beliefs that it's not possible for you to do well by your body during these holidays. And then really strategizing - if you are off track at all, first of all, trying to keep that limited to one meal or one day, but even if you're a little more off track than that, going back to the basics.

[00:30:25] So I hope that these are things that people will really keep fresh in their mind during this busy time of year for so many people.

Nadia [00:30:33] That's it. That was great. I really hope that, if you need to, guys, you can always play back and listen to this over and over again, right? Because, right now, you might be in such a good place that you're like, "Oh, these are really great points, but I don't really need it." Maybe in a couple of weeks, maybe come back and listen to this again, okay?

Terri [00:30:50] All right, Nadia, it's so good to get to see you again. I hope everyone does well out there. Happy fasting and take good care.

Nadia [00:30:58] Bye, everyone.