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Megan [00:00:06] Hi everyone. It's Megan Ramos here with another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. Today, I have the good fortune of being joined by two incredible women. First, my co-host, Dr. Nadia Pateguana, and a special guest - TFM Community member, now turned team member, Melinda. Melinda is here to share her story from 'Sick Melinda' to 'Healthy Melinda'. As we were getting set to record this episode today, I heard that Melinda has some really exciting news that verifies her 'Healthy Melinda' status that I missed this morning being all the way in the Pacific Time zone. So we are going to get started. First, we're going to check in with Nadia. How are you doing today?

Nadia [00:00:49] Doing great. Can't wait to talk to Melinda.

Megan [00:00:53] All right. So, let's get the party started because she has a heck of a story. Melinda, welcome.

Melinda [00:00:59] Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

Nadia [00:01:01] So, Melinda, I can't even quite remember when we met. As Megan said, you have been a very big part of our Community. So much so that I often joke that I have to remind people very often that you're human and not an alien because of how your journey has gone, but we're going to get to hear a little bit about that. And today you told us some amazing news after going to your doctor's office. So we're going to get to hear that, too. But I can't even quite remember when you joined our Community. To me, it feels like it was ages ago.

Melinda [00:01:36] May 12th of 2021, I joined The Fasting Method Community after having read Dr. Fung's books which were recommended to me by my doctor. Actually, he wasn't my doctor at the time, he was filling in for my doctor, but I thank him for pointing me in the right direction. So May 12th.

Nadia [00:01:58] That's right. I remember that because I remember celebrating your one-year anniversary not too long ago. Okay, great. One year with us as a Community member. And it's interesting that you talk about this doctor because this seems to be a recurrent theme that, you know, an angel comes our way, crosses our path, and sort of leads us in the right direction. I remember other members talking about, you know, remembering this one person who led them to either a book or a YouTube video or something like that. So you read the book and then what? Do you mind, Melinda, going through and telling us a little bit about how your journey started and then we can talk a little bit more?

Melinda [00:02:40] Well, it started actually back in March of 2021. I got some annual blood work done and my doctor at the time emailed me and said, "Your numbers are kind of high, try to eat less sugar." And then I had an earache and I called the office to get an appointment with my doctor and she wasn't available, a new doctor was available. And I said, "Okay, I'll meet the new doctor." And the nurse said, "Oh, by the way, I see you're diagnosed with type two diabetes." And I lost it. I was like, "First of all, I've never been told that I have type two diabetes. And second of all, that's not me. I'm not going to be a type two diabetic."

[00:03:25] So this poor doctor, the new doctor, when I went in for my appointment, he said, "This is what I think's wrong with your ear. Is there anything else I can help you with?" And

I said, "Oh, boy, you just opened up a can of worms." You know, I told him my frustration with the lack of communication from my doctor and my shock at being diagnosed. And I was like, "I don't want one more diagnosis on my list of diagnoses. I do not want to be a type two diabetic." And he said, first he asked me what I was reading which I thought was wonderful because he was trying to find out what information I already had. And I told him, you know, the usual American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association. Then he said, "Well, you know, I'm not your doctor and I'm not prescribing, but you might want to check out Dr. Jason Fung's books and you might want to check into intermittent fasting. But I'm not prescribing because I'm not your doctor." Well, thank goodness he took that leap. And even though he wasn't my doctor at the time and he wasn't prescribing, he told me about Dr. Fung's books.

[00:04:28] I went home, downloaded them, and I read both The Obesity Code and The Diabetes Code that day, read through the night. And I was like, "Wow!" Now, I consider myself a fairly intelligent, well-informed person, but everything I had read about and learned about good nutrition, good diet, good lifestyle was obviously misguided, old information because when I read Dr. Fung's book, it just made so much sense to me. And I was like, "Wow, this is powerful information. This is wonderful information. Now, how am I going to do it? How am I going to put this all into practice?" And I don't exactly remember how I started searching for The Fasting Method online, but I did. And I found it and I was like, "Okay, I'm going to join because I want to know how everybody else has been able to do this." So May 12th was the day that I pushed the subscribe button and handed in my credit card and started with The Fasting Method.

[00:05:42] And I truly did not want to be a type two diabetic. First of all, I had multiple other medical issues and had throughout my life. I had been diagnosed with epilepsy, with A-Fib, juvenile arthritis. I have had multiple back surgeries. I've had knee surgery. I've had my carotid artery cleaned out. So just a multitude of issues. And I truly always was the sick one. There are six kids in my family and I was the one who was in a wheelchair when we were going trick or treating. I was the one who missed three months of school and had to have a tutor come to the house. So I was always the sick one. And I honestly, at first I thought, "I just don't want to be a diabetic on top of everything else. I don't want that to be a part of my story." My husband's also a type two diabetic. His mother died and was a type two diabetic and had all sorts of complications. My parents died of heart disease. I just knew I did not want to be a diabetic.

[00:06:54] I'm an educator and, as an educator, I knew that I wanted to donate my body to a medical school because I want to continue teaching beyond the grave. I found out that you have to be a certain weight for them to accept your body into medical school. So that was another thing is I wanted to lose weight so that I could donate my body to science.

[00:07:16] So coming in with these two whys, as far as *why* I wanted to do the program, *why* I wanted to reduce my blood sugar, *why* I wanted to lose weight, not knowing that once I began and once I started to learn and I started to implement and I started to share that I would get so much more. I am not a type two diabetic. By August of 2021, my A1C was down to 5.4 from a 7 in March.

Nadia [00:08:00] Wow.

Melinda [00:08:01] Yeah. And I was down below 200 pounds, you know, hitting that Onederland. And I was 15 pounds below where I need to be to be able to donate my body to science. And all sorts of other things started happening. My blood pressure started

dropping. I had to back off on my medication because my blood pressure was getting low. My A-fib - they had to reduce my A-fib medication and the doctor said, "It is as though you've had a remodel of your heart." I have a spinal cord nerve stimulator implanted because of all the pain from my back issues. I haven't turned that on for a year because the pain is gone. I used to not be able to walk to the outside of the grocery store and stand in line. I can walk 5 to 6 miles a day now. I'm just floored by the comprehensive nature of the healing that has happened, not to mention the healing of my spirit. Because when you see yourself as the sick one, you just naturally have less energy and vitality and just desire or passion. And that has begun healing, too. I have a passion for life that I didn't have before. I mean, I could go on and on about the benefits and the fact that those all came along with my whys. It's just been amazing.

Nadia [00:09:44] You're amazing. This is the one thing that is pretty obvious and has become real obvious in our Community and why you've become such a huge part of our Community and why I often joke that sometimes we have to make sure that people realize that you're human and not an alien because your journey seems so, seemingly so, easy, quote-unquote and so linear, but we both know (I know you very well) that that is not true. You've had, you know, life has gotten in the way and somehow you've managed, even with having the same stresses as every other human and living a real life. It's not easy, but you've done it. We want to hear, we definitely want to hear, a bit more about this. I think it's amazing. I think with the help of your, well, you being an educator and always being so interested in learning and also with the help of, I think in particular, Coach Terri, Dr. Terri Lance, and the things that we, as a community, are working on together, right? With this growth mindset, building a new identity, I think it's so amazing because you explain this so well how, you know, your identity, you've created a new identity for yourself, unexpectedly and seemingly so easy. So let's talk about this because I know it wasn't easy. It's simple, as you and I often talk about, but it's not necessarily easy. But how did you do it, Melinda? So from joining us in May, and then in August, having completely reversed type two diabetes, getting off hypertension medications, and then just becoming, in the last few months, this new, right, healthier version of yourself. How? Tell us in practical terms, what does your fasting day look like? What does your eating day look like? You know, when life gets in the way and things get a bit tougher, what do you do? I would like to hear a little bit more in detail.

Melinda [00:11:37] Okay. Well, my fasting protocol switches around, whether I'm doing 48s or rolling 42s, it switches around. I always try to do a... I don't try, I do. I do a 72-hour fast once a month and a five-day fast once a quarter for that deeper healing. Then we have a life and I've reframed it from 'life getting in the way' to my 'living life healthier' because life is why I've gone on this journey - to live life. Stress is a part of life. There are always things that are going to be stressful. So when stress has gotten in the way, I have learned to go to a holding pattern and to use a holding pattern.

[00:12:31] So I have to go back to a day that I was driving in the countryside in rural Ohio, and I was listening to one of the Zoom calls. Actually, I was on one of the Zoom calls and I joined the conversation to say how, you know, "I had this stressful thing happen, but I'm going to, you know, I'm going to power through. I'm going to do my 48." And then, Nadia, you spoke up and you said, "You know, it might not be very productive for you to try that 48. Your cortisol might be a little bit too high and you might add to that cortisol by trying to do a 48. You might need to go into a holding pattern." And I was thinking, "Nadia is crazy. What is she talking about? I can deal with the death of a family member and still fast. I'm Superwoman. I'm a grief recovery specialist. I've been trained in grief recovery. I can handle grief and just fast right through it." Somebody else chimed in. One of the

Community members chimed in and talked about a difficult situation they had had and how going to a holding pattern rather than trying to push the longer fast is what really worked for her.

[00:13:48] Nadia is knowledgeable and Nadia is a great coach, and sometimes we have to hear it more than once, and sometimes we have to hear it from somebody who, you know, is really just, they're saying the words and speaking to our heart. And I heard it from that Community member, and I realized it was okay for me to struggle with stressors in life, like losing a close family member. It was okay to do that. What was not okay was for me to go back to old habits to deal with it. And it was not okay for me to expect myself to be superhuman and to be able to, you know, keep up this rigorous, ambitious fasting protocol while I was dealing with grief and with pain. That's when I began to learn to be compassionate with myself and learned that going to a holding pattern is not a step back, it is a step forward. For me, it's a step forward because I began to learn tools and ways to have a holding pattern through those stressful times and not just, you know, chuck it all out the window because I'm having a bad day. That there were actual tools to use.

[00:15:19] And then we went into the holiday season and I joked in the Community with my first time as a faster (because I do identify myself as a faster), "This is my first time as a faster through the holiday season." I think I had this challenge, as many people have, with the social gatherings and things like that. I kept coming back to meetings and hearing everybody else's struggles and their tips and their suggestions, and it just kept reminding me that there are tools, that there are things that I can do, there are things that will help. And that I'm human and, yeah, if I ate off plan during that social gathering, it wasn't the end of the world. I have compassion with myself and get back on track.

[00:16:05] Then this past spring, my daughter (and I asked her if I had permission to share this, and she told me I did) went through a significant, well, we all have gone through a significant life change. She has come out as being gay. I love my daughter and I accept her for who she is and I'm so proud of her for coming out to live her authentic life. She was married and has a two-year-old son who is the joy of my life and a big reason why I'm so happy to be healthy. It hit me. It hit me emotionally. And, again, I was driving. I was driving home from my daughter's. And I think Nadia almost had a heart attack because I was talking and crying at the same time and she was afraid I was going to wreck the car [laughs] as I was driving. But I told the Community...

Nadia [00:17:02] You did pull over, okay, give yourself... Because I was dying, you're right.

Melinda [00:17:07] I did.

Nadia [00:17:09] You pulled over and then you continued to talk with us.

Melinda [00:17:12] Yeah, it's safety first in fasting and talking in the Community. Safety first. [laughs] But, I pulled over and I told the Community I told people that I had become friendly with and who I saw as a part of my family. I told them that I was feeling bad about this, but I felt bad for feeling bad. And the wisdom from a Community member who spoke to me, words that I typically speak to people who are grieving. She said, "You're grieving lost hopes, dreams and aspirations. Your daughter's life isn't going to be what you thought it was going to be. Not that it's going to be something bad, but it's going to be different than what you thought." And she said, "You're allowed to grieve." I have never been a part of a--- and I've been a part of several different weight-loss programs and groups. I have never been a part of a community, even outside of weight loss, where the care and

concern extends to me as a whole being. Not just care and concern about my weight loss or my blood sugar numbers, but about me as a whole person. I felt so much better after just saying that out loud. And I don't know what this past spring would have looked like if I did not have the Community because there was nowhere else that I felt comfortable just saying it out loud.

Nadia [00:18:46] That day, Melinda, I have to tell you, that day will forever be etched in my mind and in my heart. The interaction between you and that particular Community member that I just cannot speak... But really just the feedback that you got from everybody. I am the biggest fan of our Community, for sure, but I am so thankful to you for just allowing us to be that much a part of your life and journey. I know that these, as you've described, only a few things, but significant things, significant life-changing events that you've gone through in the last few months, and right in the midst of this transformation and this journey. And I know what that was like, but I think it was such an important part of not just your journey, but of our Community to watch and to be able to be a part of that. Because you have taught us and you've shown us that, yes, you can reverse all of these health concerns, you can become a healthier version of yourself, even when going through all of these things. Those moments, I think, were key in our Community in making us realize that Melinda is not an alien, after all, she's human. And if Melinda can do this, maybe I can do it, too.

Melinda [00:19:58] You know, I think that I felt very much like an alien when I was sick. I truly felt like I had been cursed or something. I felt like there was nobody else who could identify with feeling sick. I mean, when I was younger, I had some orthopedic issues where I was confined to bed and I had to ask for somebody to bring me a bedpan. That was erm... You know, I thought, "Nope, no other ten-year-old has to do this. No other 12-year-old has to do this." And I felt like I was alone in the world. And I think I felt, you know, who at 38 years old has to get a plaque removed from the carotid artery? I felt like I must have, you know, I must have done something wrong somewhere in my life that I was cursed with being so sick.

[00:21:00] Joining the Community, I truly have found people who make me feel human because everybody has struggles. A lot of us are dealing with growing up with parents who were trying their best but had no idea that what they were doing and how they were raising us was leading to these metabolic issues. You know, being a part of this Community, I do now feel like a human rather than like an alien. There was a point in the journey where I think when you started to talk about, "Melinda is not an alien," I began to worry, you know, about sharing because I didn't want people to say, "Oh, I can't do what Melinda's doing because, you know, it just has to be a Melinda thing." I didn't want them to feel like aliens, like they weren't able to do what this human being was doing.

[00:21:56] It's made me think a lot about, well, why was my journey so linear in the beginning? And I think it was because I was literally scared to death. I mean, besides the diabetes, I also had non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and I knew nothing about it. And when I started to read about it, I was petrified. And being scared to death about living, being living dead for the next how many years I would survive, I just could not go there. And I decided that this was not going to be my story. So the decision was there and the guidance and the support and the how-tos really came from the Community. And I think the two of those together, because without my deciding, without my strong why, none of this would have happened, but without the support of the Community and the guidance and the information, this probably would have ended.

Megan [00:23:03] Having that strong why is so important. And I think that's something that happens to people when they join the Community. A lot of people come to The Fasting Method looking to lose 40 pounds, 60 pounds, 80 pounds, 100 pounds, but that's not really what we're trying to do, right? Doing that, losing 40, 60, 80, 100 pounds, has crazy repercussions for our health that are so deeper and so much more transformative and really light the path for us to divide and conquer, as a Community, to getting to a place where we are 'Healthy Melinda' against what most traditional medicine would tell you would be against all of the odds, right? I mean, that's truly what your story is. That's truly where you're sitting today is you've defied all of the odds.

Nadia [00:23:57] So just a bit after your one-year anniversary with TFM, you've gone, I think a bit reluctantly, you shared with me, because I think we're all, once we've had so many health concerns, and many of us have, going to the doctor is such a huge source of anxiety and getting lab work and blood work, you know, has most of us going to a bit of a panic. We talked a lot about this today in a Community meeting that you were present at. And then you shared with us that you yourself, even though you've had such success and you're feeling, you're a whole new Melinda, right, but you yourself were apprehensive about going in to see your doctor for your annual checkup. We always say it's not about the weight loss. The weight loss is just the bait. This is how we get people in here, and then we get this amazing opportunity to watch you transform your life and journey and health. But people want to know, you mentioned that you hit Onderland in three months. How much weight have you lost (if you want to share that)? And then let's talk a little bit about what you found out yesterday at the doctor's office.

Melinda [00:25:05] Well, I've lost 109 pounds. I've had to get my work ID redone because the new security folks did not think that it was me. So I had to get that redone. And I had to recalibrate my iPhone (which has face recognition) because it wasn't recognizing me anymore.

Nadia [00:25:26] That is just crazy. I don't think I've heard anyone say that.

Melinda [00:25:29] Yeah. Yeah. I had to recalibrate it because it kept not recognizing me. So I called Apple and they said, "Well, have you had a significant change to the way you look?" I said, "Yeah, I lost 109 pounds." They said, "Oh, that could do it. That could do it. You'd better recalibrate." [laughs] So I did that. You know, these past couple of months, this spring, it's been difficult and I've been in a holding pattern, not doing a lot a whole lot of fasting, longer fasting. And there have been times where I have walked through the door of my daughter's home and gone right to the refrigerator and started eating toddler food. So I was really nervous that my A1C was going to be higher than the 5.2 that it was the last time I had gone. I had actually canceled the first annual physical appointment, which was in May, and they called me and said, "You know, you've got to get in." So I went for my appointment yesterday. I also did not want to disappoint this doctor because he sent me to Dr. Fung and it's the reason why... I just didn't want to disappoint him.

[00:26:40] My A1C is down to 5. I was just amazed and elated. And it really validated that a holding pattern is not a step back because it not only kept me on track, but improved my numbers. And I said something to him about, "You know, all the cool kids in The Fasting Method have a CGM. Do you think you could get me one of those?" He goes, "Well, unfortunately, your insurance won't pay for it because you're not a diabetic."

Nadia [00:27:16] So he officially... This, to me, is a big one. And I think it's a big one for you, too, Melinda. Because we, many of us, most of us, are still under the impression that

diabetes, type two diabetes, is a chronic, progressive disease. So at some point, you were diagnosed with type two diabetes, your A1C was 7 and you just weren't having it. And you were, you know, you just had something in you, and, plus, this wonderful doctor that crossed your path, you know, made you believe, and thank goodness for that, that you could reverse type two diabetes. And then you went ahead and did the work yourself. And I'm happy to say with the help of our Community, of course, but you did the work. And then officially your doctor has told you that you are no longer type two diabetic. So I would say that that's pretty good evidence that you can reverse type two diabetes.

Melinda [00:28:11] Yes, it is. It certainly is. And no fatty liver disease at all. That's all gone. Yeah, and I exercise. I mean, that wasn't me before. I exercise. My two-year-old grandson loves to go for walks, and he takes GeeGee on quite a walk. I couldn't have done that a year ago, a year and a half ago. You need something moved? My neighbor needed something moved. She asked if my husband was available. I said, "Honey, I got it. I got it. I can move that for you." Yeah, just sometimes, besides the fact that I don't look the same, I don't recognize myself.

Nadia [00:28:55] You've told me so many, myself and the Community, so many fun stories of people that cross your path now and they don't recognize you. At the pool, you know, there was a lady who walked right by you and somebody else had to tell her who you were and, you know, the security guys at your work. These are just amazing things.

[00:29:14] I don't know if we have time, but it would be really nice to talk a little bit about the fact that you've joined our team. I'm really happy about that. You, Melinda, even in just getting to know each other in the Community, you've been such a great educator to me, and I know that you know that because I've told you that. I mean, even whenever I share about my own personal life and journey, you know, if I ever talk about my kids, which is every day, or my dogs, [laughs] you always know just what to say. And I think at some point it became pretty obvious that you would be a great addition to our team.

Megan [00:29:50] Well, Melinda, we always, you know, there's a few commonalities among all of our coaching team and our whole team, from top to bottom, from the people that do all the work behind the scenes, is that we're chronic, lifelong learners. A lot of that has come up in this discussion today and just getting to know you and, I mean, immediately you became part of our family. Like, you weren't just a team member, you became part of our family, and you bonded so much with our team over that desire for continued education and for fixing the root cause of your condition.

[00:30:27] You know, most people don't realize, but in the United States, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease is in the top five underlying causes of death. And right now, the chief medical guru in the United States will tell you there is no cure for fatty, liver disease, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. How crazy is that when it's the root cause of so, so much?

[00:30:49] Anyways, with all that being said, we've bonded. You are no longer a member, you are our family, which we're so fortunate, happens quite often every day, and you've gone on to help so many other people. So we're so fortunate to have you on our team. Melinda works as a Community mentor for our program, helping to provide support, resources, encouragement, compassion, and all of the great things she's learned about things Nadia's talked about, you know, our growth mindset. Melinda mentioned she had to learn to be self-compassionate with herself, how we really sort of change course and those automatic negative thoughts that so many of Coach Terri's groups focus on and replacing them with coping thoughts and compassionate thoughts are so important.

[00:31:38] So we're so grateful to have you helping our Community, but you're also helping people navigate the benefits of fasting, particularly through them, as an intake coordinator on our team. Melinda, welcome. Thank you so much for helping us out and we really look forward to The Fasting Method and you being able to grow together.

Melinda [00:31:59] Well, I am so honored to be a part of this organization that just helps so many people. There have been a couple of times that I have reached out to the coaches and to Megan about a need that I saw with a particular Community member, and the response from The Fasting Method has just been unbelievable, such a blessing to me and to those Community members. What I think really stands this program out from so many others is that this is truly a mission for the people who work for The Fasting Method. It's a mission to help everyone to become metabolically healthy and to live their best life. And I am just honored to be part of that.

Megan [00:32:55] Thank you, Melinda. We have got a really killer family over at The Fasting Method. I think all of us show up every day, we wake up excited to jump on into the Community, jump on into groups. Because Nadia and I, every single day, you know, we see somebody's life radically change and I can tell you it, I think, still affects Nadia and I both like the very first time. We experienced it ourselves the first time, and then we saw it with patients, and then we've seen it with communities. And every time it's just so mind-blowing and so transformative.

[00:33:36] And something that we were talking about earlier is that it really just takes one person to be willing to jump on in and give it a try and then they end up becoming 'Healthy Melinda', who then goes on to inspire others. And someone inspired that doctor that you came across that day that pointed you in the direction of Jason Fung. So whoever inspired that doctor, that doctor then has gone on to inspire others, and now you're doing the same. And that's really how we make change at the grassroots level when it comes to fasting.

[00:34:13] So thank you so much for being part of the evolution, for being part of our family. We appreciate you. We value you so much. And we're so excited to continue to learn and to grow with you.

Melinda [00:34:27] Thank you. Likewise.

Megan [00:34:29] So, Melinda, whenever we have a special guest on (I know today's a bit of a Hot Topic episode, or it's supposed to be, but you're a very special guest) we always like to ask them to share their number one tip to help people either get started or to get out of a bit of a rut if they're struggling and get back on solid footing. So what would that one tip, or one strategy be for the listeners out there?

Melinda [00:34:56] My number one tip would be to always frame your experience as positively as possible. It's never, "I just," it's always, "I was able to." So it's not, "I just did a 24-hour fast," it's, "I was able to do a 24-hour fast." Really celebrating your accomplishments even when they aren't hitting your intended goal because it is all positive.

Nadia [00:35:35] That was beautiful.

Megan [00:35:36] Thank you, Melinda. Thank you, Nadia. And thank you to all of our listeners out there for joining us for today's episode. We'll be back next week. But until then, happy fasting. And Melinda, thank you for being you.

Melinda [00:35:49] Well, thank you. I'm so honored to have this opportunity.