Introduction to Emotional Eating

Welcome back, everybody. So today we are talking to Tricia Nelson. You're going to be really excited about what we're talking about. I'm going to tell you in a second.

So, first of all, thank you for joining us. Oh, I'm so happy to be here. So she's going to tell you how to break up with two people at the same time. They're their names. Are Ben and Gerry both gone from your life disappearing.

And we're explaining what that all means. So Tricia has a pretty amazing story about weight loss and the one thing she found that she got stuck on, and that was her emotional eating.

And this is such a common thing, whether it's in your awareness or not, some people don't even know, you know. But we're going to dove deep into what it is, how to identify and how to fix it.

All that beautiful stuff. And you've written a book about this as well, so people can go find that. We'll talk about this. But again, thanks for joining us.

It's going to be a great conversation. So tell us your story. How did the how do you get to this place? Yeah, well, not without a lot of pain. So I promise you that I think I was obsessed with food from way back when.

I love to eat. I love to cook. I love to go out to dinner with family. It was just a great obsession for me, which, you know, there's lots of cities in the world that wouldn't have been bad.

But the bad thing was that I gained weight really easily, and by age 21 I was £50 overweight and that was really from binge eating. So I wasn't just a foodie, I was a binge eater, and I would have pretty wild binges late at night on the sofa in front of the TV.

And I wouldn't intend to eat as much as I did, but I would I would go overboard and eat eat the whole pint of ice cream. The Ben and Jerry's. I would eat.

I have to have salty with your sweet. So I would have chips and I would have cereal and then another bowl of cereal and then another bowl of cereal. So it just was endless until the end was when I felt totally sick.

And for those who have seen my TEDx talk, I talk about garbage eating, which is when you reach that point of feeling totally disgusted and you basically pass out on the couch and think, well, you basically think to yourself, I'm never going to eat that again.

And you throw the remains out and then you pass out on the couch. But when you wake up or the next morning, you reconsider that decision and you basically go back to the garbage because, you know, there's cookies still in there and go back and get them.

And I would do that many times or at least a handful of times. And I just thought I was the worst person in the world.

Tricia's Binge Eating Story

This O-M-G, I just eat out of the garbage, just fished food out of the garbage and ate it. And and I cannot tell you how many times I've heard this from other people like, oh my God, I've done that.

And in my TEDx talk, I have thousands and thousands of comments that that very thing of that same nature, like, wow, I thought I was the only one. So that's kind of how it went for me.

It was very private, it was very shameful. And because I had tried so many diets, I thought I was hopeless. I thought, Wow, this is going to be the rest of my life up and down the scale because I could lose weight.

You know, you go on a new diet, you have new diets syndrome, like you were doing it, you know, and it lasts for maybe a couple of weeks or months, but then it gets really hard.

And the question is, why does it get so hard? Like, why isn't is easy at the beginning, you know, later. And my experience is it's because when we take away all of our fancy yummy foods and we we're just eating diet food, if you will, all the stuff we all the emotions come to the surface, all the things that we had kept at bay with food and excess weight come to the surface, and diets don't give us tools for dealing with those emotions.

So all of a sudden you're just feeling crappy. You don't know why you're like, This diet is not fun. Bring me bring on my old foods that brought me comfort.

And so that was my cycle over and over. And it wasn't until I learned about the fact that that's why I felt so crappy weeks into a diet. It wasn't till I learned about that and the fact that that that was part of the cycle of the emotional eater.

And I started learning how to address those emotions that would come to the surface. That's when I was able to keep the weight off finally and and have a new life.

Because when you deal with those emotions, they aren't letting you down and all kinds of things in your life get better. Even the way you described your story, it sounds like remove the food from it for a second and replace it with something else.

That's like a substance abuse story, you know? It just happens to be food. It could have been anything but and people get into those problems for similar reasons, right.

They need something to lean on. But I think the habits don't exactly the same. You know, and that is that's so right on because, you know, you talked about breaking up with Ben and Jerry.

It's an abusive relationship. You know, it is an abuse of relationship. It's not like Ben and Jerry were so great to us. You know, it's it's in the moment.

It feels great. It brings comfort. But there is a harsh backlash from it, which is the weight gain, which is the gut issues which, you know, autoimmune issues, yo yo dieting syndrome, you know, feeling, feeling bad in your body, feeling like you're not lovable or attractive, you know, shutting down in the bedroom.

I mean, there's so many effects that come from that that seemingly innocuous pint of Ben and Jerry's. And so that's really that's what I'm doing here is it got so painful that I had to find a better way.

And I it was not through diet. And I'm grateful that I found that. And then just to kind of finish up the story for the past several decades, I've been showing people my step by step process for doing just that and finding freedom.

Yeah. And you mentioned something earlier about, you know, you kind of set it breaking the cycle. Like that's the thing. Like how do you get out? Because everyone knows you're feeling it.

You know, it's a problem. Your hands are in the garbage and pulling the cookies out there. How do you then what's that trigger? And I maybe thought one thing you just said that there's several steps, but actually getting out of the cycle that you're stuck in and not diving back in.

Yeah, well, so my experience is we dove back in when we have this buildup of pressure and that pressure is something I call the compulsion to eat. And so that's that's a lot of it's not talked about like why do we go back?

Why do we self-sabotage? In my experiences, what happens in our gut of somebody who who has this pattern?

And I like to use the term emotional eating.

It's not a precise term, but to me it's any kind of disordered eating. It's any kind of, you know, constant relationship of food that feels dysfunctional, that doesn't feel healthy, and it is emotionally driven.

So whether it's under eating or overeating or binge eating or bingeing and purging or whatever it is, restriction, whatever it is, it's driven by our emotions.

Like, we wouldn't be doing this if we didn't have some emotional component to it. And that's really why we sabotage it, because that's what's not getting addressed.

So the compulsion to eat is what usually drives us back to the food and nobody's really talking about this. And what I mean by compulsion is that you feel compelled to eat like you are like crawling the walls and you can't stop yourself.

It feels like a tsunami that you cannot stop. And my experience is that's made up of three things. Okay? It's made up definitely of varied emotions. When we have things that happen to us and we're like, Oh, I'm fine emotionally.

There's always saying, I'm fine, I'm fine, which actually stands up. I'm just going to say this it stands for f up, insecure, neurotic and emotional. So it's obvious you're saying you're fine a lot.

We know what you really mean. Yeah. So so basically the compulsion comes from being fine all the time, which means we're suppressing emotions.

Compulsion, Stress, and Habit

Okay, so the the buried emotions is a big part of it. And you never you never say, Oh, I want chocolate so I can bury my emotions. Like it's not a conscious thing.

I'm just trying to bring your attention, you know, the people listening, the attention to the fact that there is something going on that's deeper than I like chocolate.

Like I just thought I liked food until I started digging into this. I'm like, No, there is an emotional connection there. Not always, but when we bury emotions as a habit, which is another part of the compulsion, it's a knee jerk reaction and there is something going on.

We're just not necessarily aware of it. So so the the emotion, the buried emotions also stress a lot of times are that that you can call this tsunami, you can call it a monster inside.

Like we have this monster that's just growling and growling. And finally, we just have to feed it. You know, that compulsion, it's like building inside or magic of magma in a volcano is down underneath, you know, deep into the volcano.

But at some point it blows. So that's what this compulsion feels like for the emotional eater. It's just like you cannot stop it. And it's so demoralizing and sad.

And and of course, people blame themselves like, what's wrong with me? I have no willpower, but we have to unpack this compulsion. So emotions, stress and habit, like for most people, this has been a lifelong habit from way back when this was a coping mechanism that we used and it worked.

When we're kids, it works. It's a lifelong habit. So it's really important that we unpack those three things the emotions, the stress, and find new ways of coping, you know, instead of using the food.

And I'm happy to unpack each of those with you if we have time. Yeah, we will. And that's it's really exciting to hear, especially the firsthand experience like you've been through this.

And I wanted to comment on one thing because you reminded me of some research we did. So we run genetic testing and we understand functional pathways of the body and what we learn.

And it just so aligned with what you're saying, right? What we learn is people that are dysregulated in their serotonin pathway. So serotonin is that happy.

You know, let me respond as appropriate for whatever is going on. My mood is balanced. People that are disregulated tend to lean on coping mechanisms.

So the body kind of as a call it a protective measure to not get stressed and not have a cortisol response would point you towards food, make me happy.

Right? Then we have people that clear their dopamine and neurochemicals a little slower. So the the protein activity to get rid of and bring you back to default.

Right. I'm no longer in that reward seeking moment. People like clear, slow tend to get stuck in pleasure. So you're enjoying something and you can't stop and you end up bingeing, right?

And if you put these two together, the combination serotonin, dysregulated seeking coping mechanisms and when I finally get it, I can't get out of it.

Yeah, right. That becomes who you are and it becomes the tool that you use. And we see this over and over again. It would be interesting. We're going to run your genetics.

We're going to figure this out and see if if you're wired the same way, you know that experiment, you could be a guinea pig. But we've seen this over and over again.

Yeah, I love that. And it's so true. There's no question there's a lot going on. I'm not a scientist, so I don't I don't approach it from that place. I approach it from the emotional eater's experience.

But there's no question that serotonin plays a part in that dopamine hit of the bingeing and how it brings relief so quickly. And we get hooked on that relief.

I definitely lived that. You know, and I wanted to ask you something just from personal experience. We're going to get into what you said. Like let's start unpacking this and break in fixing it.

But one thing that you mentioned earlier, who I experience is do the nighttime eating. Why does this happen at night consistently for people? My experience again from the lay person, binge eaters, hopeless food addicts experience so so my experience is that, you know, we because we don't deal with our feelings very effectively.

First of all, oh, there's so much here. First of all, the emotional eater as a personality profile. Okay. So we you know, emotional eating isn't just digging into Ben and Jerry's when you feel upset, okay?

It's not it's not that simple. It's not eating cookies because your grandma made you cookies when you were a kid and you're nostalgic, right? It's so much deeper than that.

And one of the things I've identified in my book, which you mentioned, which is that Heal Your Hunger is seven simple steps of can we it's hard to see that, doesn't it?

Anyway, it's my book is called Heal Your Hunger Seven Simple Steps and Emotionally Now. And in my book, I identify 24 personality traits of the Emotional Eater. And these are traits that have nothing to do with food.

And this is related to the stress that causes the compulsion, and that is that we tend to we tend to do things that are habitual and they're habitual coping mechanisms like we talked about.

And so we, for example, as emotional eaters, we tend to people please and we tend to people please and that runs us into trouble because we think we're going to get all kinds of kudos when we people please.

And so we knock ourselves out for this external affirmation, this external validation. So the traits of the emotional eater are ways that we coped as kids, maybe in dysfunctional homes.

Dysfunction and trauma are no strangers to emotional eaters. Definitely a coping mechanism as kids. It was for me, you know, sexual abuse, eating to deal with dysfunction in my family.

And so what happens is these coping tools that once didn't work like they saved our lives. Perhaps we bring them with us into our adulthood and then they don't work.

So we knock ourselves out, we exhaust our adrenals, we end up running ourselves ragged, overdoing. And so overdoing is a big problem for emotional eaters because we are on that hamster wheel of seeking validation that we don't have for ourselves.

And so when we overdo with expectation of validation, not only we're exhausted, but we're also resentful, which is another one of the traits of the anatomy.

And also either so between, you know, running yourself ragged and feeling kind of pissed off like, hey, after all I did for you, thank you. That's it.

Like, like, where's the where's the parade? You press the fanfare and it just reinforces that. Screw it. I have to do. I have to do this for myself. I have to reward myself.

And so we go and have the I deserve it. And you know, like they don't appreciate me. I'll I'll take matters into my own hands. And so that's part of what creates the stress, that creates the compulsion.

Okay. I remember I said it's emotions drives and and habit. So a lot of times it's our personality traits that create that stress. And that's to me, that's really where the solution lies.

I mean, my experience is people who yo yo diet, people who are always trying to find a solution to their weight issues. They've done a lot of studying, they've done a lot of reading.

They know a lot like they might be able to write a book themselves. And the problem is that even though they know a lot, they can't follow through on what they know.

And it's this it's these personality traits that are in the Gap book. And so I often will tell clients it's a living problem, not an eating problem, like, you know what to eat, you're not left there.

What you don't know is how to follow through on what you know. Because when you have this compulsion creating all this pressure to eat and you can't stop it, that's why you don't follow through on what you know.

And I completely forget how we got there. I forget what your question was. Yeah. We were talking about the you were getting into the different personality traits, which is really cool because with the eye opening thought for me is that when you think about emotional eating or any condition, it's kind of like I have it or I don't have it right.

It's me or it's not me, that's somebody else's problem. But the way you're describing it, there's many profiles or avatars that equal this end outcome. Right?

And it's not one particular thing. It's not something you have per se. It's a mixture of here's my personality, here's what drives me and makes me go crazy.

Personality Traits Behind Emotional Eating

And now put me in this context and all of a sudden I'm going to end up this may be where I end up right? And so it's important for people to understand it's not a me or them question.

It's like, why would this happen to me? There's probably a reason why this would happen to me in those 24 states, right? Yes. And, you know, my clients find it so illuminating, like when they when they start delving into those traits and starting to make changes for people pleasing, it's putting boundaries on your time is learning to say no it's really working out like as all this effort is breaking my back worth the validation like wouldn't it be better if I had the validation for my self right and put boundaries on my time and said no, my plate's too full.

I'm sorry, I can't take on that task, which is not a lie. So, so basically we have to change and I think that's what's missing often in the weight loss conversation is we have to change how we're living.

I mean, it's not a sexy message. It's like, no, I want a quick fix. Like Fix me now. But it's not realistic. And this is why there is no quick fix. This is why people will struggle for decades with food and weight and never, never get to the solution because they're on the hamster wheel of looking at the symptom of food and weight and not diving deeper into how we created this in the first place.

And I'll just throw out a couple other traits of the anatomy of the muscle eater, because there are 24 and we're obviously not going to do all 24 now.

But some of the highlights is, of course people pleasing, but also having a racing mind. So in this I know you can give me the science behind this, but that racing mind, that overthinking everything.

What did he mean by that? Why wasn't I invited? You know, I suck, you know, like I can't do anything right? We're so good at beating up on ourselves. But these this racing mind also drives the overeating and that that need for serotonin, because we've got to calm it down, and we don't yet have effective tools for doing that.

And so we turn to carbs. You know, carbs will quiet it down really quickly, carbs and sugar. And that's one way to deal with it. But there are healthier ways like meditation, writing out your thoughts and feelings, talking, letting the squirrel out of the cage, you know, things that can be constructive and have the same effect and a long term effect than a quick carb binge.

Yeah, that's so cool because you again, you mentioned there may be some science here and there is and you're speaking like you're applying what's kind of understood scientifically in the real world in a real context of why can't this person?

So I've been reading or emotionally eating, so the person who spins are wheels and over things. Brain drive nootropic factor determines neuroplasticity how well you develop neural pathways in your brain and people that aren't doing well, they're tend to experience a sort of shell shock where they can't stop thinking and ruminating about the problem.

And I shouldn't have said this. I should have shut up 5 minutes earlier. Why did I do this? You know, oh, god, this guy screwed me and it really hurts.

But it's also true for the positive, right? That they just give things a lot of meaning, whether it's positive or negative. And then that leads to the shellshock greatest rate of spinning.

And then yeah, well one of the potential outcomes is I need something to make me feel better. You know, and I deserve it. I deserve it today. It's a treat, right? Yeah.

Because we make ourselves feel bad. And I think that's what's really important for people to know is this isn't happening to us, you know, it's happening through us, which means we have agency to change it.

And I think so much of the time I felt like a victim. I just felt like everything was overwhelming and I suck at everything and I'm never going to be happy, you know?

And that's part of that, that overthinking, right? That was the that was my narrative. And I didn't realize that I wasn't actually a victim. That's like I can act my way into right thinking.

And I think that's so, so important for people to know is it doesn't happen to us, it happens through us, which means we can make changes and we must make changes again.

You know what to eat. If so, now let's work on the stress. Let's, let's have some effective tools for dealing with stress. Let's work on the habits by getting support to create new habits.

You know, one of the things that's so important is having a morning routine, having a way to set our brains on the right path first thing in the morning because if we get up and we're on our phone and we're all of a sudden just off to the races, you know, attending to every stressful situation in our lives, we won't have built in that foundation.

I call it putting money in your spiritual bank account. So we need a morning as emotional leaders. We need a morning routine. We need to just get still and quiet and grounded.

Remember, I talked about seeking validation from outside ourselves. We're very outward focused because having had trauma and dysfunction as kids, we didn't learn how to find this within ourselves.

It wasn't nobody was modeling that for us. Like get it within from with our in ourselves and our culture doesn't model that for us in our culture. Like get this quick fix every commercial you see, take a pill, you know, eat something, go drink whatever.

And so, so a relationship will fix you. So it's all outward focused. And what we need to learn is how to seek this from within. And I do believe that if we invest time in building that inner resource on a daily basis, remember, we're changing our habits here.

So, you know, James Clear from atomic habits. From atomic atomic habits said we we change our habits through repetition, not perfection, which I love that and the repetition of every day having.

And it doesn't have to be a lot of time. But, you know, I meditate in the morning, I read spiritual literature, I, I kind of shore up first thing in the morning with putting money in my spiritual bank account.

So so I basically, I'm not in the red. So later in the day, I think I know where I'm headed now because I had lost my way. We're getting back to the nighttime eating question.

So later in the day, when we start feeling cravings, which 75% of the time happens after 4 p.m., right? Okay. So emotional eaters do the nighttime eating or the evening eating because they haven't put money in their spiritual bank account.

They're in the red and they are stressed out from the stress of the day, the accumulated stress. They also have pushed away things that didn't go so well.

They didn't process the emotions because they're moving too fast, because they're over doors. You know, there's no time. There's no time to deal, you know?

And so that all accumulates. And late in the day, we are, you know, all of a sudden and when you're at home and you no longer have this laundry list of things to do and things are getting quiet and the kids aren't fed, you know, and all those, you know, pushed aside, emotions start trickling up and you start realizing that you are upset about what somebody did or said or you are sad that you got this news.

So all of a sudden it's coming to the surface again without the tools to properly deal with that. We're like, Where's the chocolate? Where's the ice cream?

You know, let me let me start with some cereal. And that's where the nighttime eating happens, is we haven't

properly gotten grounded, put money in our spiritual bank account that we can take withdrawals from later in the day when that stress catches up to us.

And so I'm a big fan of having a morning routine, morning routine that can help me feel still and grounded and connect with your divine spirit and whatever that means to you.

You know, we have an inner resource. We have an inner resource of love, you know, let it be love. But it's hard to connect with a love if we don't take time to do that.

The love doesn't always happen when we're stressed out and moving too fast. All we feels, feels irritation. So we have to invest time in dipping in and getting grounded in who we really are, not who we think we should be.

That's, you know. So you just said something that was like a an aha moment for me because this happened to me yesterday, literally timing wise, serendipitous where I was deep into a work project and kept going right, right until time to sleep.

And then as I closed up, everything, got ready to sleep. I realized, wait a second, I didn't eat like I ate my dinner, I didn't snack, I didn't graze.

I didn't look for like, hey, what kind of treats are available, right? And it is a challenge for me and I have no problem fasting until dinner time, skipping lunch, skipping breakfast, skipping everything.

It's night is my challenge. And then I realized, Oh, it's because I didn't have that escapism of turning on Netflix or I wasn't in that zone. I was in a very different reward seeking zone of this great work that was happening, and I just never even thought about it.

So I wasn't. It's not that I was hungry, I wasn't craving right. So it's right there. And even me as an individual, the days where I'm craving, I need to watch a movie and I don't know what's driving that.

I'm also loading the couch up with things to snack on right? And then food is where I'm not doing other things or I just don't want to turn the TV on or watch a video where I want to work and I want to exercise and I want to and I'm not hungry.

Yeah, yeah. It's, it's we have to have outlets.

Nighttime Eating and Stress Relief

I mean, the bottom line is we have to have outlets and TV or a good show wouldn't be a bad outlet except we have we associate associate eating with watching, sitting on the couch and watching.

So it's really important to know that our brains need to relax. I like I have a bar class I go to at the end of the day and I can go in the morning, but I go at the end of the day because I need to throw off stress.

And I do meditate in the afternoon also with stress, but I love that exercise at the end of the day, because I do it's not hard exercise. I'm not into beating myself up with exercise, but I watch a lot of emotion.

Leaders do right to compensate for binges, which I highly don't recommend. So finding gentle exercise where you can throw off stress and you are doing something healthy for your body to just tone your body, you know, throw off stress, the stress, go for a walk.

You know, I call I like to walk and pray. So I call it my walk. Pray, you know, do things that can just help you calm down and de-stress. Because at the end of the day, we have accumulated that stress and we use food at the end of the day to de-stress because we are sitting there chewing and standing still.

You do throw off stress. You know it does. It does. The spin slows down as we're eating. A lot of people smoke for

that reason as they're taking a drag on a cigaret, they're finally breathing, you know, they're finally doing some deep breathing.

So finding healthier ways to stop the spin is so, so critical because life is stressful and that stress does absolutely create that pressure that we feel inside that creates that compulsion.

So we've got to have new ways to do that. So people so you're talking a lot about like what to do in terms of which is all amazing. If if someone were to implement it, then there's going to be some people that it's outside of their awareness.

They don't even know that this is an issue. Right. So what's a step to identify that? Yeah, I am an emotional eater, I am binge eating, are like, how do I know what's normal?

What's not normal? So I'll give you some questions. I have a quiz on my website which helps people know if they're an emotional or even a food addict.

And my experience is it's a continuum. So, you know, I feel like, honestly, that we're all emotional eaters. Like, I feel like we are hardwired to have an emotional connection with food.

So we'll eat, you know, so we'll eat, so we'll subsist as a species. But I'll give you some questions that come from that quiz. That quiz on my website, and one of them is about our thoughts has nothing to do with actual eating, but it has to do with our thoughts.

You know, do we obsess about food like is food on our mind 24 seven or is weight on our mind 24 seven So my experiences emotional eaters and food addicts, and it's a continuum.

So it's a matter of how far up the scale you go in that continuum. But obsession with food and weight is definitely a telltale sign going overboard when you don't mean to like.

So the two things that qualify where somebody is on that spectrum to make it simpler are one, the number, the level of control someone has, and the other is the number of consequences someone has.

So that's what determines if you take that quiz, that determines where you end up on the spectrum. And the high end of the spectrum is food addiction.

Okay. And like we talked in in the first part of this talk that it is we are talking addictive habit here. And I am 100%, you know, recovering from food addiction.

So but the point is control and consequences are the two things. So to explain this, let's say you go on a cruise and you pre-paid. So you're you're like, I'm going to have the wine.

I'm going to have the desserts I've paid for this. After all, it's a big mistake. So we pay for any of these trips because you feel like obligated to get your money's worth.

But anyway, that's what you do. That's kind of what you were hoping for. So you do it up, but you come home, your pants are snug. Let's say you gained £5, you game £5, you're not feeling great, you feel a little doughy.

And so then what you're you're you say to yourself, okay, no more sugar this month and I'm going to jog an extra five miles this week if you're a jogger or I'm going to go to the gym or whatever your thing is.

So, so here you are. You're increasing your exercise. You're cutting out sweets, carbs, whatever, whatever you decide. And boom, within 2 to 4 weeks, those £5 are off.

So that's somebody with a good measure of control, right? They can course. Correct. So and and they didn't have a lot of consequences. £5 from a cruise.

Not huge. So that's somebody with a good level of control and very few consequences. They're on the low end of the emotional eating spectrum versus somebody like me who if I went on that cruise and I started eating, I'd come home.

If I felt gross, it might turn me it might make me feel depressed. And then what do I do as I comfort myself with food? Okay. So I would be like, Oh, I feel gross.

I don't want to go out with my girlfriends. So I stop being social and then I fall down this rabbit hole of of a cycle of binge eating and promising. I'm going to get back on track, but I don't.

Or it could be months, you know, that somebody and not only that, my body's inflamed. I've got health issues starting to increase if I'm a sugar addict, which I was, you know, I my joints hurt, you know, and and this cycle increases creates a lot of consequences, like physical consequences.

Maybe I stop wanting to have sex. Okay, so I'm shutting down in the bedroom because I feel gross. I don't want to be touched. Like the sex is the last thing I want.

I'm lacking energy that affects my job. I don't want to go out with the kids and go for a bike ride because I just want to sit on the couch, watch TV.

There are mounting consequences when this is your pattern and so that the more consequences you have physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, the more consequences you have, the higher up you tend to be on the spectrum.

You can't course correct. You fall down the rabbit hole and it takes weeks or months to come. You have a lot of different things starting to break down in your body.

You're in a slump. You go to the doctor and doctor gives you anti-depressants because they don't know. They're not like, how much sugar are you eating?

Are you binge eating? They don't know to ask those questions. But that's what we have to look at, is what are our habits with food? How are they affecting us?

But that's basically those are some of the questions you want to ask. You know, how much control do I have to course correct and how much of an effect on my life is this really happening?

People don't know. It comes from our eating. You know, if you're a drug user, they can say, oh, she's tweaking or she's you know, she something's not right about her.

But with food, you can mask it because well, not physically, of course, it shows up if you've gained weight is like, but at least mental and emotional you can still do your job.

You're not slurring your words, you know. And so there's an element of of real secrecy which only compounds the shame and the isolation which only perpetuates the problem.

But these are some I've just sort of I've thrown out a bunch of different symptoms of emotional eating that I think people can relate to if, if they're somewhere on that spectrum.

Yeah. And yeah. You don't have the twitching and the nausea and all the other things, but it is, it's metabolic health. Like you're putting your body into a state where that is not designed for and you may feel gross and not feel ill.

But the the disease that comes out of your metabolic health, you name a chronic disease, they all do, right? Yeah. Yeah. And so I remember speaking to Dr.

Tom O'Brien and he was saying that it's like the root of of 12 or something of the top 15 killers today, you know, is

all rooted in metabolic dysfunction.

Yeah. And when I'm listening to you thinking about this actual journey, like picturing somebody going through this and trying to fix things and I picture, you know, being around family, being around your kids, like you said, and, you know, knowing the stressors or probably it's not just you.

Recognizing Emotional Eating Patterns

There's there's people are things in your life that are, you know, the triggers. So how do you it sounds like to me this has to be part of the journey.

How do you involve the other people? How do you make it so it's not that your secret shame you know where you're hiding it, but I don't see your solution unless the household is involved, you know?

Yes, it's it's tricky because our relationship with food affects everything, affects our mood. It affects our energy, both our how we show up in life, our aura, but also obviously are stamina.

And so everybody's affected like it is like the family is affected much like an alcohol. It will affect the family's life, our families affected. If we're hating on our bodies, they feel that energy kids will pick picks.

Kids aren't stupid. They pick up on it. You know, our spouse, you know, if we've been doing the yo yo dieting thing, the spouse is exhausted from our promises that we're going to do something and then we blow it.

They they don't. Spouses generally, most spouses don't care. They love you for who you are. But if you don't love yourself, they're affected. You know, if you don't love yourself, they're affected by our being in the doldrums.

And I'm telling you, many of us emotional eaters are like a Jekyll and Hyde. Like when we're eating healthy, we're clear. Our thinking is clear, we're energetic, we're happy, we feel good.

But once we fall down that rabbit hole into binge eating, we go dark, we go dark. Negative. Everything's a challenge. All of a sudden, you know, life is hard.

You know, our comments are more negatively laced. And so our family goes on this trip with us, and that's why it's so important that we get help because it's affecting everything.

It's not about fitting into your bikini like it is affecting your life and your job and your income. One of the one of the top things I hear women tell me regarding their relationship with food that is dysfunctional is they lack self-confidence.

And what part of our life isn't affected by a lack of self-confidence? Yeah. Right. And so the family absolutely can play a role in being supportive. But I think understanding that that we do suffer from a condition, let's call it a condition, you could call it a disease from the 12 step kind of model.

But but it's I like to call it a condition, and it's hard for people to accept that they have a problem like emotional eating. Like some people will say, oh, I don't want to label myself as an emotional eater, but if you have diabetes, you'd better label yourself diabetic, right?

If you want to get a treatment. And so I find the label useful in that. Then if you know what your problem is, there's a solution. You know, again, so many women who are emotional eaters are taking antidepressants because they're depressed and and anxious or they're an anxiety medication.

When so much of that comes from their habits with food that makes them feel terrible. So it's really a misdiagnosis. And so I think when our families can understand this is a real person, we have to accept it. This is a real condition.

And again, if you take that quiz, you'll you'll see where you are. There's there's four different quadrants in results.

And if food addiction is in the fourth quadrant, so anywhere in the third or fourth quadrant, you have this condition.

And and the good news is, there's a solution for us. You don't have to worry about the label. All the label does is tell you you need you need the solution.

You know, that's it. And then when you do the solution, you don't have to live like that anymore. But the family, knowing that we have a condition, is useful because they scratch their heads at us.

And people who don't have this condition, people give us advice, both family members and friends, doctors. They give us well-meaning advice like just moderate, like just, you know, eat less, exercise more mindfully, eat intuitively, eat.

And these are all concepts that are sound. If someone is not an emotional eater, if they don't have this condition in the third or fourth quadrant, let's say, you know, and that advice is it's not actionable if you have this problem.

So all it does is make you feel more alienated. You know, when somebody said to me, you know, just moderate, have one cookie, I couldn't do that. Like I couldn't eat one cookie.

Once I start, I can't stop. It is very much like the alcoholic with the drink. And so it would make me feel like a loser that I couldn't just moderate or someone would say intuitively, check in with yourself and follow your intuition.

Like my signals were off. You know, I've been binge eating for so long, my signals were off. I would intuit that I should eat all the time. But that's, you know, so as emotional eaters, we're like, that doesn't really help mindful eating.

We're mindful that we're bingeing and out of control, you know? So those concepts which are very useful for some people, end up falling on deaf ears. If you're if you're an emotional eater, if you have this condition again, which only exacerbates our feelings of otherness, you know, like like there's something wrong with me.

And so that's why it's important for, like, you can explain that to family members because they they don't know what it's like to be us. You know? And so they will try to help, but they'll give us solutions that aren't helpful, you know, and they will look at us like we're crazy because we just declared we are going on a new diet.

And like within weeks we're eating ice cream and they're like, isn't this ice cream sort of off the diet, you know? So so they don't understand. And this is this is definitely one of the reasons why if somebody wants to heal from emotional eating, they must get community with other emotional eaters.

You know, I do all my programs in in community because there's so much healing that comes when you're not the only one. Finally, when you're not, it's not just you doing these crazy things with other people scratching your head thinking it's just kind of crazy.

You know, when you're with other people who have had this condition for so long and felt so alone, alone and isolated, it brings a great measure of relief and comfort.

Like finally, finally, I'm with people who have done the same, you know, and that that identification and comfort is part of the healing, you know, part of the healing to realize it is a condition.

And I'm going to get help from somebody who's actually had it and overcome it versus trying to listen to my spouse who just keeps giving me suggestions that will not work because they don't know what it's like.

You know, and they're solving the problem. And you yeah, everything you're saying is it's like the pillars of functional medicine, which is. And you just put it into a problem or context that people don't think about, which is you're identifying a root cause.

I don't know, weight problem. I don't have an eating problem. I have an emotional problem. Yeah, but the symptom

is the eating. And it's just like everything else we talk about in public medicine.

I don't have diabetes, I don't have cardiovascular disease, I have insulin resistance or I have, you know, inflammation or what what's the actual thing I can do to unwind and reverse this?

And be like yourself? You're thriving and you don't have the problem. It's not something you have to manage. If you treat it at the symptom level of, I can't stop eating, I'm depressed, you're just going to keep managing those things, right?

So absolutely. Yeah.

Family Support and Root-Cause Healing

And I never I never heard somebody talk about this issue in that context. What's the mood? It's right. And we can't actually deal with it. No question.

We have to go deeper. We absolutely have to. Otherwise it's we will feel it will will blame ourselves. You know, that's another issue with emotional eaters, is we tend to blame ourselves, you know, and and people who have been on the yo yo dieting syndrome and hamster wheel, they think there's something wrong with them.

But what I tell them is it's not their fault because those diets couldn't of knowing that now that they're on the diet couldn't have helped them without this deeper journey.

It just couldn't. So it's not their fault that it didn't work. It wasn't it wasn't something that could serve them, considering the fact that they have this condition.

Yeah, well, this is certainly eye opening. I like I relate to it myself. You know, I don't think I have a weight issue, but I definitely will. They'll be bingeing here and there.

And I can see clearly how it's tied to not the food itself, because it's not every day, all the time, you know, it's periodic when there's a reason there and there's a trigger.

Right. You know, and I'm going to take your advice and we're going to I'm actually going to go take your quiz. What is the website helping people use?

That was it's at healyourhunger.com, h e a l heal your hunger.com. And it's right there on the home page, the free quiz and they can get my podcast on there, a link to my book.

Everything's they're. Amazing. And the book is also called Heal Your Hunger. Yes. Yeah. Okay, great. Cool. Well, this is, like I said, eye opening because you're giving us a tool to use for a problem where you didn't know this tool existed.

One is working on the calories, on the treadmill, when maybe there's some other big red flag that's been completely ignored that would make it so much easier to solve the problem.

You no question. You know, and the truth is, too, that if you when you go and deal with the root cause, it affects everything. But your whole life gets better, everything gets better.

And the diet can't do that for you. It can't fix everything. Whereas healing the root cause, healing that lack of self-confidence, healing those emotions that have been buried for decades.

Learning self-care, learning to put yourself first, learning to put boundaries on your time. All these living problem things that you start addressing make everything in your life better relationships, energy, you know, your outlook on life, your ability to follow through, your dreams.

Everything gets better. Yeah. Amazing. Thank you so much. Everybody should run to the website, take the quiz, find out where you rank on the scale, you know, and start working on it.

Because it's not just this problem that will get resolved, but so many others, as you just said. So thank you again. Eye opening. Thank you so much for having me.

I'm so grateful you included me in this amazing summit that you're putting on. Congratulations and really, you know, all the best to you and to everybody listening.

Thank you so much.