Introduction to Emotional Eating

We use food to cope with life, you know, and life's challenges. If I heard if I got paid a dollar for every time I heard I was doing great until the pandemic hit, right, I was doing great until I lost my job.

I was doing great until my husband died. Emotionally. Eaters just live from one catastrophe to another, and that's that's usually the times when they went off the rails.

The eating is emotionally driven. This is doctor talks. Hi everyone. Welcome to the Reversing Type two Diabetes Summit 2.0 edition. I am your host, Doctor Beverly Yates, and for this episode, we'll be talking to the fabulous Tricia Nelson, an expert, and what it is, it drives us when we have hunger issues and things around overeating and emotional eating and getting insights into that.

I do know that in my clinical work that that is sometimes part of the story for people who have diabetes, and it's important to recognize if emotional eating is driving your issue.

So without further delay. Welcome, Tricia. Thank you. Good to be here. It's wonderful to have you be a part of our summit. Thank you for sharing your expertise and your time with our audience.

You know, one of the things I'm always curious about is knowing what is my speaker's background and sharing the things that will be relevant so the audience knows you are completely qualified to talk to them about this topic.

So I'd say my best qualification is that I was an emotional eater to the extent of, eating out of the garbage. So it's not exactly a clinical qualification.

I talk about it in my Ted talk. I have a Ted talk that so far has gotten over 1.5 million views. And I start my Ted talk with talking about bingeing and throwing out the rest of my binge foods, and then going back later to get them out of the trash when I had a little bit more room in my stomach.

So, you know, when I have people ask me what my qualifications are to me having had this problem, like being really food addicted, but certainly an emotional eater, I think there's, you know, there's crossover there.

But having that problem obviously is what drove me to do the work that I do. But having the problem and having a solution for having found a solution, I lost 50 pounds and kept it off for for several decades.

Now, you know, that has qualified me more than anything. Of course. I mean, I've I've been blessed to work with over 1000 people to help them heal their relationship with food.

Tricia Nelsonu2019s Background and Recovery

I have a bestselling book, Heal Your Hunger seven Simple Steps and Emotional Eating. Now. And you know, I have programs that help people really get off the diet track and start really understanding why they feel driven to go to the refrigerator.

Time and time again, like I was, and how they can find a peaceful relationship with food where it doesn't, you know, drive, binge eating or they don't have to do crazy machinations, you know, around dieting and starving and all this.

They can literally coexist with food without having it own them. So I'm very grateful. I've been doing this work for over 30 years now, and Heal Your Hunger has been my latest, you know, version of the work that I do.

And I do it online with people. And I have, healing hunger has been, you know, around for about seven years now.

All right. This is so great to know. Thank you.

You know, you and I are both really experienced that the work that we do, we for 30 plus years in the saddle, so to speak, and in the work of helping others to uncover what their root cause issues are and address them, we also sometimes will find that central to that is understanding our inner world, our emotional world, our spiritual world, and what it is that we're actually trying to address when we do the things that we know aren't helpful to ourselves, but we're just kind of stuck, right?

So you've just shared with us some parts of your journey with emotional eating. And how did this lead to you to start Heal Your Hunger. It's one thing to go on a journey to help yourself.

What led you to decide you wanted to help other people? Yeah. Well, personally helped me many moons ago. I started helping him help others after I found, you know, after he was able to help me, after I found, you know, basically.

And so we worked together for many years. And then I started Heal Your Hunger about seven years ago. And it's really we used to work with all addictions, frankly, you know, so it's always about the underlying causes and it, you know, whatever addiction it was, it was the deeper root cause.

But to me, I feel like there's there's the least amount of understanding around people who eat to excess, you know, and are addicted to, you know, ultra processed foods and carbs and sugars.

And so I just feel like my experience was so phenomenal. And I taught others for so long that what I now do is I I've codified that process, you know, the way I healed and I've taught it to other people online in a format you know, with modules and that kind of thing that makes it most accessible to people wherever they are in the world.

And so it's just it's a pleasure to do that. I have a podcast as well. And, you know, I just find that taking the guesswork out of it, you know, you hear things like intuitive eating, eating in moderation and these kinds of things, self-love, like we hear a lot of terms in the healings, sort of, you know, arena of, of healing oneself.

But I really needed step by step practical steps to heal. Like, I couldn't just love. Like, what is love self-love mean anyway? You know? And for me, it means actually boots on the ground loving.

Like having loving, caring, self caring actions throughout your day. So just sort of getting it into a step by step process to take the guesswork or the nebulous ness out of it has made all the difference in the world.

And that's, you know, that's why I love sharing it with other people, because it's like like I don't have to diet and I can still lose weight. I don't have to diet, and I can be peaceful with sugar, you know, without bingeing. Yes, the answer's yes.

And it's just a pleasure to be able to share that with other people. Excellent, excellent. I know many people are on that journey, on that quest, really to find peace with food and to be able to nourish themselves and eat and enjoy life without going to excess.

And in today's world, we have so many more, pushes and pulls and triggers around this, that's for sure. So please share with us. How does someone know if they are an emotional eater or a food addict?

Yeah, I feel like it's a spectrum. Okay, so I feel like we all are hardwired to have an emotional connection with food. Otherwise we just blow off eating.

You know? We'd be like, I don't feel like it. But, you know, we, you know, I feel like, you know, good spirit gives us, you know, an emotional experience with food, starting with breast feeding, where it can be a nurturing, loving experience.

Right? Connecting, bonding experience. And so there's nothing wrong with that. It's what keeps us going, keeps us

nourished and seeking good nutrition.

So I feel like we all can have an emotional experience with food. And it's not a bad thing, right? It's a good thing.

What Emotional Eating Looks Like

It's just one. It takes us to places that aren't healthy. And so I consider it really to be a spectrum on the low end would be just, you know, you go overboard once in a while, not really a big deal to the high end of the spectrum, which is more in the food addiction arena where you have symptoms that are, you know, classic addictive symptoms where you eat more than you can handle.

There are negative consequences. There's negative health consequences. There's warnings from your doctor, right? Your diabetic, you can't eat sugar like that, you know.

And so that's when when we do it to our peril, that's when you're more in the addictive range, when it affects your finances, like because you're buying binge foods or you're buying different size clothes.

I had like five different side of the pants in my closet because I was up and down the scale of a yoyo diet, or so you know. That's when it's more of an addiction is where it's really costing you.

And so I, I qualify that Beverly as control and consequences. Like, what's your level of control. Can you pull back? Like maybe you go on a cruise, you know, it's all you can eat and you, you take advantage of that.

You know, I spent the money and I will take advantage of it. And your pants are tight when you get home, you've gained 5 pounds, but you jog extra. You cut out sweets and boom, those 5 pounds are off.

And you. And it's like it was a good trip, you know, that's somebody on the low end of the spectrum versus the high end of the spectrum, where once you kind of blow your diet, it could be months before you feel like you're back on track.

You know, that's somebody who can't course correct. They don't have a lot of control. You know, once they start eating, they binge. And also the level of consequences, you know, 5 pounds and tight jeans is a lot different than diabetes or pre-diabetes and gut issues and joint pain or God forbid, having limbs, you know, removed because of it.

That's a high number of consequences. And the longer we have this behavior of emotional eating or food addiction, the higher the the cost. Absolutely.

All that damage over time and accumulates. Right. So this leads me to ask you this next question with the thought, we hear all kinds of data and numbers around the idea that diets fail people.

In fact, we hear numbers like 98% of all diets wind up with the person who's on it failing. They're not able to continue weight. It's not sustainable.

Maybe it wasn't the right fit, whatever it might be. So why do you think it is that 98% of all diets fail? Yeah, it's an abysmal statistic. It's pretty accurate.

You know, 98, 97, 95. We don't know for sure. But point is, it's an abysmal statistic that nobody would put their money behind if they were, you know, abetting a betting person.

Right. They'd be like, those are really crappy odds. And yet we do like we keep spending the money on the diet and, you know, and it comes from desperation.

I mean, I've been in that place where you're like, my house on fire. I need to put the fire out. I know, I know, diets don't work, but I'm going to do it this time, right?

Like, we just sort of like, I'm gonna do it this time because we're just so desperate. But the thing is, I really feel like what's missing in the weight loss conversation, in the health conversation is this emotional eating piece, you know, people, they want to improve their health, but they don't realize how emotionally connected they are to the unhealthy foods that they eat.

They don't realize that these foods are kind of keeping them afloat, you know? And I have people tell me, like, what? What would I do for fun? Like, if you get you take away my chocolate.

Like, what's the point of life, you know? And so it's sort of an indication that something's wrong. You know, it's like our form of entertainment. It's our form of companionship, you know, it's what we do on a Friday night for for good times.

It comforts us, you know, it's like we are so emotionally connected to food, especially the unhealthy look, the comfort food. We call it comfort food, you know, emotionally comforts us and it does soften the edges of life.

Life is not easy, right? And especially now more than ever, there's so much pain in the world, you know, and our yummy sweet foods, they comfort us. And so we have to work on that, like finding new forms of comfort, obviously, and realizing that it might be comfortable at the beginning.

But when you can't fit in your pants and you have health issues, how comfortable is that? You know, so we have to do a reframe on that because it's, you know, to me, diets are failing because we're not realizing that you can't just stop eating your favorite foods.

And one of the reasons for this also is that, you know, if food is our main coping tool, if every time life gets hard, we open the refrigerator, it's like, what can I eat?

Every time we get off a painful phone call or a tough phone call, or about to make a hard phone call, and we're like, what can I like? I'm hungry all of a sudden.

That's an emotional hunger. And so we have to address that and find new ways to bolster ourselves, strengthen, you know, strengthen ourselves or just get comfort so that it's not food as our primary coping tool.

Why Diets Fail

Because if you take those foods away, you know, if you go on a diet, you don't get to eat your, you know, your favorite yummy carby, you know, processed foods, right?

So, so the doctor takes all those foods away from you. What are you going to do to cope? You know, and we all have new diet syndrome. Like when I'm doing it, you know, new diet.

I'm feeling good looking good, pans getting looser. But then after a couple weeks, for me at least, it took about two weeks. It would get really hard and I'd be like, I just got to have popcorn, you know, or some whatever.

And to me it gets hard because we don't have the push of the new diet syndrome, and we also have all the feelings that are coming up that we were stuffing with food. And we just don't.

There's like, we don't count account for that. When we're dieting. We don't have new coping diets on given new coping tools. They just take away our coping tool and it's like, you know, go get em, tiger.

Not enough. I love the way you express this. You know, that's true. Diets are often about restriction, and they are not giving people guidance about what to add back in and what to be aware of.

And especially this emotional eating piece, because I think it's a huge issue for a lot of people. I think it's one of the reasons why some of the prescription medicines are having such a element of success, because it's helping people to deal with some of the physiology behind the emotional eating, too, right?

Whether it's food, noise, whatever it might be, as long as people can find a way to do it in a sustainable without tearing up the rest of their body, this is a good thing.

So okay, so please tell me your thoughts about this. Is there more to emotional eating than simply eating too much or eating for emotional reasons? I'm imagining there might be some more complexity to this.

There is. And in my book I talk about something called The Anatomy of the Emotional Eater. And it's a play on words, of course. And what this is, is 24 personality traits that make up the emotional eaters personality.

So we think emotional eating is like, you know, getting a pint of Ben and Jerry's when you know, somebody breaks up with us or, you know, we have a loss at work or, you know, job change, whatever.

And my experience is it's really not about that as much as it is on a deeper level, the way we deal with life, you know, obviously we use food to cope with life, you know, and life's challenges.

And I mean, if I had if I got paid a dollar for every time I heard I was doing great until the pandemic hit. Right? Like I was doing great until I lost my job.

I was doing great until my husband died. And it's like emotional eaters just live from one catastrophe to another. And that's that's usually the times when they went off the rails, which just again proves the point.

It's an emotional the eating is emotionally driven. But the thing is, beyond that, my experience is we have a personality profile, we have a personality composite that that when we start to address that, it changes us in our relationship with food.

And I'll tell you what I mean by that, by giving you the the top personality trait of an emotional eater. Drumroll please. Don't it? And, so what it is, it's people pleasing.

So the top trait I have in my research, I've discovered, is no of emotional eaters has nothing to as food. But it has to do with our need for validation through our works, through trying to please people.

Other traits are like caretaking. We're big take care takers. We also have racing minds where our minds just don't stop thinking. And we often use food and bread and, you know, carbs to give us that, that serotonin comfort, you know?

And so there are traits that make up the emotion of personality. And to me, instead of just trying to diet or making it a food solution or diet solution, if we start dealing with the life problem that we have, which is, you know, people pleasing is a problem for us because when we are seeking validation through trying to, you know, like do the extra project at work or you know, but not only that, we're resentful because nobody's ever as pleased as we imagined they were going to be when we went the extra mile.

And it's the perfect storm. Like for the I deserve it binge. Like, screw them. Like I stayed up. I put an all nighter for that project and they're like, oh, thanks.

Like thanks. That's it. Right. And so it's sort of a common narrative for us that it's it's like our life problem is causing our eating problem. And to me that's where there's real solutions.

Just trying to have a death grip on your food, it's not going to work. Because when you have your life stuff happening where you're overworking, you know you're taking care of other people doing their work for them.

You know, it's very common for us to be caretakers, nurses and therapists and, you know, this kind of thing. And it comes from our childhood. It comes from trauma. You grew up with alcoholism.

You grow up with some kind of dysfunction in your family. You know, oftentimes you grow up too fast. You're you are you like, you're the parent as your child, you know, as the child.

You're actually taking a parental role. And then you take that into your adult life.

The Personality Traits Behind Emotional Eating

You marry an alcoholic, you know, you take care of, you do way too much for your kids. You don't let them grow up and bruise, bruise their knees or whatever.

And so these are habits for us that cause overworking, overdoing or rescheduling. Feeling overwhelmed. And what do we do when we're feeling all those things as we use food to get through it?

And so this is just an example, Beverly, of how we do have to dig into it. We do have to see that we have a living problem that's causing our eating problem, because that's where we can make changes.

We can start saying, no, right? People ask us to do things are used to us just saying yes, no, learn the word no. Two letters. No. You know, and the thing is, putting boundaries on our time, stopping, overdoing, saying like I have a limit.

Like I could do everything for everybody so long as I didn't mind over eating. But once I wanted to like, stop the overeating, I had to go back to and see that I can't afford to do everything for everybody.

I need time for myself. I need to meditate in the morning. I need to have, you know, some relaxation at night that doesn't involve, you know, being out until 9 p.m.

before I get home and just go into the kitchen to become a zombie. You know, with the ice cream, like, these are these are real changes we can make, but they will impact our eating.

And that's why I think that's that. To me, that's the gap that we need to start addressing. Absolutely. You know, one of the things I have shared with my patients over the years is the whole idea around the use of that word no, at the word no is a complete sense.

Yeah. And I say it's important that people have boundaries. And many people who have type two diabetes, prediabetes tend to be the rock of their community.

They tend to be that go to problem solver person who gets it done, and they carry others on their shoulders that the problem is that over time they just wear out, they break down.

And because they're often in those first responder superhero caregiver roles, like you're saying, Tricia, it is too much. I hear you. Okay. All right.

So how does someone differentiate between emotional hunger and physical hunger? Yeah, it's a great question. You know, I find it really useful to have a regular.

Well, I'll what I call it a cut to the chase. I call it three mile magic, which is eating three meals with nothing in between. And this is this is how I recommend people eat, you know, and not just from a diet standpoint, right, from a dietary standpoint, but also because typically emotional eaters are used to snacking throughout the day.

Just a constant graze, grabbing some nuts, grabbing some Hershey's Kisses from the bowl, whatever. And and when we do that, we're not aware of what emotions we have.

So I'll have people say, I'm not an emotional eater, but they probably are because they you know, my experience is people who chronically struggle with food in weight probably have some emotional eating in the mix, you know?

But the thing is, it works to keep us numb to our emotions. So if you have three meals day, nothing in between, you start to get acquainted with some hunger, you know, which is scary at first, like it's like a hunger pangs.

Oh my God. Like, what do I do now? You know, danger, danger. But it's good to acclimate to some hunger and realize you're not going to die. And if you are on a regular schedule of meals, you can kind of talk talk that panic down by saying, no, we're going to have lunch like a couple more hours, we're going to have lunch, you know, and it's we sort of train yourselves to realize we're going to take care of ourselves.

We're not going to eat erratically. We're not going to do big starvation and then binges. That's not healthy. And I often say to people, you know, eat, eat or think about if you had a daughter like a sweet daughter, would you be like, you're going to go 16 hours without eating so that you can drop a few pounds?

Never, never. So so eat. The way you feel is most caring is if you had a daughter and you were recommended to her. I'm not saying intermittent fasting is a bad thing, it's just we have to take every all the, all the information in.

And it can be hard for emotional eaters who have used food to save their lives once upon a time, as children, you know, having traumatic situations, we need to be loving and caring and not give ourselves that panic or the extremes.

Right? So I like I I'll intermittent fast by doing 12 hours between my dinner and my breakfast, but knowing I'm going to get breakfast takes me out of that.

That very high hunger mode and that panic kind of emotional, like very deep, deep lying panic that somehow I'm going to starve to death. And it's true.

I still have that trigger. Like it's just if I get too hungry, I'm just I'm hangry and I'm not the best person to be around, you know, because I just have that panic.

And so I just I like feeding myself three meals. I find it very like nurturing and loving. And I also it enables me to identify when I am having feelings.

I have feelings like I have feelings, you know, I just lost somebody really close to me. And, you know, and I have all kinds of grief, but I know what grief is because I'm not eating through it now.

Like, I can identify, this is great. I'll sit down and have a cry when the pressure, you know, the grief gets so big. I sit down and I cry and it's so healing.

And then I'm lighter in and so. But if I was grazing all day long, I wouldn't even know I had grief. So becoming like friends with our emotions and realizing they're not bad, you know, and working through them in a healthy way.

This is how we heal. Absolutely. You know, I think it's so essential that we have the idea and understanding that our feelings are exactly that. They're our feelings, and we don't have to act on them by eating.

We can just understand their our feelings and be okay with how ever we're feeling, whether we're joyful, whether we're feeling stressed, we're feeling grief, whatever it is.

It's so interesting that interplay, you know. So Trisha, now let's go on to our next thing. Why is it in particular that people will crave sweets and carbohydrate rich snacks and foods and that sort of thing when the going gets rough?

Yeah, I certainly did a big carb, you know, chips, popcorn, you know, bread, muffins. I was a big carb eater. And of course a sugar eater as well. I mean, I just I just love sugar and so and carbs do and of course, you you and I'm sure you've taught all your clients how carbs metabolizes sugar in our bodies.

So it's we're really talking about the same thing, right? Like carbs and sugar are sugar. So I loved all that stuff though, because what it did is it put a blanket on my emotions.

You know, when I was having a hard day, I did not crave asparagus. Okay. So I'm happy. Great. Wonderful. Bring it. You know. So so the thing is, I didn't crave light, watery, you know, plant foods because they didn't like I still kept

feeling, you know, and so I wanted heavy carb foods because it put a blanket on my emotions.

It deadened my emotions. So something I think is really useful for people because people are like, not an emotional eater. Like, I don't know what that girl talking about.

So the thing is, I like the pep formula is what I love to teach people.

Physical vs Emotional Hunger

Pep is an acronym Pep. And so we all know what know what heavy carby foods do to us, right? We gain weight, we get diabetes. You know it. It caused a lot of problems.

But what we don't think about is what it does for us, okay. Especially when we're addicted. So Pep is an acronym. The first P stands for painkiller. So we use food as a painkiller.

Like I said, it deadens our emotions. It's like anesthetize us when we're in pain. What kind of pain will any kind of pain take your pick. It could be physical pain, but usually it's emotional and life has plenty of emotional pain to deliver.

Again, I had a a death in my family. I'm sad. I feel intense pain. Like I'd much rather not feel it. But it's life, right? Life is like I have to accept this person's gone.

That's hard and it's painful. If I weren't healing from eating, I'd be eating through it. But I'm not. I'm going through the painful feelings, but pain killers.

A big reason why we eat it just deadens us. We feel no pain temporarily, of course, but the second, letter E and pap is escape. We use food for an escape.

And escape from what? From our very busy minds. Okay, so, like, racing minds is very typical for emotional eaters. Like we overthink everything. Like, what did he mean by that? Why does she look at me that way?

Why did I get the promotion? Like, why are they standing there talking by the the bubbler like they must hate me, right? Like we're just like we just our minds don't shut up.

But when we eat, it calms our minds like it gives us that. Those carbs give us the serotonin hit. We feel more comforted and calm, you know? But there's better ways to calm your mind.

Like meditation, prayer, writing, thoughts in a journal, talking to a buddy. Right? So. But food is that quick fix that gives us an escape. I used to get all my goodies sit in front of a TV and I was like, you know, later life.

Like, I'm going to go into my little escape here. And so it gives us an escape temporarily. The last PE and Pep stands for punishment, which is somewhat counterintuitive because we think of food as reward.

Like, I'm going to reward myself with this little binge in front of my favorite TV show. But if you overeat, like if you go like, you should overshoot the mark, right?

You don't just eat some ice cream and some cereal, you eat the whole thing of ice cream and the whole box of cereal. Then you feel terrible. Done this. Too many times to count.

I feel terrible. And then the problem is, I don't feel like I rewarded myself. It feels like a punishment the next day. I'm bloated. I can't fit in my jeans.

I don't want to, like, get together with my girlfriends because my face is, you know, puffy. And so it does begs the question, like, why would I do that?

Like, why would I? You hurt myself, why would I, why would I eat foods that give me gut issues or, you know, help me tip the scales from pre-diabetes to diabetes like, why would I do that?

But the thing is, with emotional eaters, there is a mechanism where we over feel as well. So we feel guilty about everything. It's very common, like we beat ourselves up mercilessly.

And so food is a way that we abuse ourselves and we don't think about it that way because it's like, no, I'm rewarding myself. It's so nice and fun. But there is a built in punishment, you know, when when we're hurting our bodies that way.

And so it just we have to take a look at that. So pep is a way people can start, you know, digging into the emotional eating conversation. If you think I'm kind of full of it, take the pep test next time you're going in the refrigerator and you're just staring.

I would do this like five, five times a night. I just stare on the refrigerator like, there's got to be something that will fix me, you know? But next time you're doing that, just kind of stop, close the refrigerator and say it is there.

Is there something I'm uncomfortable with? Like what happened during my day? Is there something that happened that I'm like, I haven't really addressed?

It's just feeling uncomfortable for me, you know, was there a conversation that didn't go well, you know, or am I just feeling like I have to get away from it all?

There's too many obligations or too many responsibilities? Or am I feeling bad about something literally that I can maybe address or write about? Or pick up the phone, call the phone, and get some perspective on.

There are emotions underneath our cravings. We're just not trained to think about that. So it's not a new language to think about emotional eating, to think, is there something else going on?

Why Cravings Hit at Night

You know, and it doesn't have to mean that you were abused as a kid or hit or any, you know, some people had charming lives, but they still use food for comfort, still use food to kind of soften the edges of life, get through tough times, and we just have to start being a little bit more in relation to that so that we can put an end to a really pernicious habit, you know, that has been hurting us and causing our health challenges.

Absolutely. You know, these are the things I'm quite sure the people listening will resonate with just as part of their own lived experience. You know, if we just take that moment to reflect and go, I can recognize that in myself, you know?

Or maybe you see that in a family member or friend and you go, oh, that's what's going on, right? It's really great to have these insights. So why is it in particular, people tend to have food binges at night or something otherwise called nighttime eating.

Yeah, that was a big thing for me. I'd say about 75% of them, mostly eaters are nighttime eaters. Like that's when it's hardest. Like after 4 p.m. or so.

You know, my experience is very practical experience is that, you know, at nighttime, that's when we're not as distracted from our emotions. Okay? So you don't have all these people pulling at you.

You don't have tasks to do. I mean, we love to be busy, we emotional eaters. And the thing is, at the end of the day, things quiet down. People in the family go to bed, you know, and then it's quiet.

And that's sometimes where we get uncomfortable. But if we're eating all night, we don't feel anything right, feeling no pain. And so that can be part of it.

And also it's hard sport for a lot of those leaders. It's hard to go to bed. That's a self-care thing that we we deny ourselves. Like just literally going to bed.

So we stay up too late. We push through our tiredness to the next, you know, kind of with a ramp up again. We're on Facebook. We're watching, you know, or binge watching Netflix, but we all do it with food by our side.

And the thing is, is it's hard for us to go to bed and and again, partly it's because when you get quiet and still, then you start thinking and you start thinking and you start feeling guilty, and then you start beating yourself up and it's just hard for us to be to be with ourselves, with our thoughts, with our emotions.

And I just find that that's that happens at night and our willpower is the lowest at night as well. You know, first thing in the morning we've got some then, then bigger.

But by the end of the day, we're tired. Just a lot of it too. We're just tired and we're eating for energy or we're eating for, you know, reward. I did so much today, I'm going to reward myself.

But I find it's also just hard because we're with ourselves more and we're not distracted. Absolutely. You know, I think the time of day and what affects us when and where, depending on how we live, can give us some really good clues about where we might have an opportunity to explore and really get a handle on things.

You know, if you're looking to reverse type two diabetes, being willing to be open and to consider that there are other things there might be a factor that could be helpful is just really, really useful, right?

It's powerful. It's very personal. So what's one of the biggest causes of self-sabotage? Oh, that's a big one for us. Oh gosh. You know doing doing good and then blowing it right.

So that that's a big problem. And I think part of it is just not realizing that sheer willpower isn't going to do the trick. You know, we have to have more than that.

In my experience, not realizing that we do have to, you know, deal with our emotions.

Self-Sabotage and Self-Care

We do have to, you know, have a self-care routine that helps us. So I recommend something to my clients called the six Self-care Success Secrets, which are writing or journaling about your feelings meditation, prayer, reading spiritual literature, talking like getting feelings out by talking and walking.

So these are the six self-care secrets. And these are kind of the magic formula I find to help us put legs underneath our resolve. You know, we all want to get healthier.

We all want to, you know, stop eating sugar so we can lose weight, lose the bloat, you know, get get off, you know, move, move away from type two diabetes.

But the thing is it's, you know, that's we can't just do it on sheer willpower. So my experience is if we put money, I call it putting money in our spiritual bank account first thing in the morning, all right.

With some kind of self-care routine. Doesn't have to be the things I mentioned. It could be breathing exercises, could be a walk in the woods. You know, it's just something.

Yoga, stretching. We need that quiet time, that time to just be with ourselves. Because God, if you if spiritual, you know, if you're spiritual, read spiritual literature like put money in your bank account.

And that way later in the day you can take withdrawals. But if you don't start your day making deposits, you have nothing to withdraw from your in the red.

When the stress builds up, you're in the red and it's food that you're going to turn to. Coffee and chocolate. It's like the quick fix foods that give you energy.

You know you can get that same energy if you've done that work first thing in the morning. And too often we we bolt out of bed. We're on our phone checking text and emails before we've just gotten grounded.

You know, writing, journaling can be such a good way to get grounded. And also connecting with spirit. Like, I'm a strong believer and just having a higher power that can support you.

It'll be there for you, you know, and that can come in many different ways for people. You know, I'm not religious per se, but I but I really believe that it's not going to be by our own personal light that we're going to turn the ship around because we're talking about big changes that might be lifelong habits, you know, and it doesn't it takes longer than 21 days to change a habit when it's been, you know, emotional eating, something you've been doing for 30, 40 years.

Absolutely. You know, this all makes sense. We're all human and we have our strengths and weaknesses and everyone needs and deserve support. And that's one of the things that usually needs to have some improvement when someone has type two diabetes, prediabetes, type one diabetes, type 1.5, any kind of blood sugar issue, it sometimes can highlight that there may be some overwhelm where the person just needs more support, more information, more resources, maybe better nutrition.

Access to the same places to exercise, you know, information on meal timing, understanding how to recognize their own stress and ways to improve their sleep.

You know, those five pillars that are so sensitive for blood sugar control. And so I can see how all of this is intertwined with the idea of emotional eating and then people's lived experience with this.

Okay, so two more questions as we go to wrap up our wonderful interview here. And I thank you for this episode and your time for sharing your expertise.

What are three things that you recommend that a person do to end emotional eating? Now? Yeah, well, I would start with really taking an honest look at your schedule.

You know, overeaters are over doers. And we talked about this earlier. Like we've got to put boundaries on our time because we can't be super people. You know, we've got to put boundaries, boundaries in our time.

We need to delegate to other people. So take a look at your look at your schedule. Like are you taking on other people's problems, you know, are you doing are there things in your calendar that could be offloaded through delegation or through saying, you know, I've done I've been on this board for five years.

It's time for me to circle off, you know, can you start limiting all your civic duties? You know, you don't have to be superwoman. Like, it's really important to start taking a sleep because we will run ourselves ragged and our bodies can't take it, our bodies can't take it, and we deserve better.

So I think that, you know, getting real about our schedule and giving ourselves time to rest, time for self-care, time for, you know, preparing healthy meals, that's all.

Time for sleep. That's all really, really important. So that's one thing we can do. But also like you just mentioned, getting proper support. You know, my experiences, again, if you're changing a life long addictive habit, chances are you're not going to be able to do it alone.

So having community with other emotional eaters is vital because my experiences for so long I felt like a pariah. You know, a story I told at the beginning about eating out of the garbage.

You know, I think I was the only one who had done that. And then I put it on YouTube in my TEDx talk.

Three Steps to End Emotional Eating

And like, there's all these, like thousands of comments, like, I've done that too. Like, I thought I was the only one. Right. And so it does help so much to have community.

We can kind of laugh about these crazy behaviors with food when we realize it's we're not so strange or different. We're not terrible people, you know, we're people who had a, you know, a habit that started early on.

And it just stuck to us, you know, what are we going to do now to get rid of it? So community is so comforting and so helpful. And then also, I would say getting back to the three meal magic, making sure you're feeding yourself, making sure you're getting those meals, and because going too long and having erratic ways of eating just perpetuates the whole problem.

And we just we don't deserve that. Absolutely. I agree with you about this so much. I've noticed over the years that a lot of people, type two diabetes, have erratic eating habits, and often because they are so busy and overscheduled and have such demanding lives, they usually skip lunch and that usually leads to catastrophes at dinner time.

So you said it truthfully. Thank you, Tricia, for making that point. Absolutely. All right. If people would like to connect with you, where can they get more information?

What's your website? All that good stuff. Yeah, my website is Heal Your hunger, heal, healyourhunger.com. My podcast is the Heal Your Hunger show. My book is called To Heal Your Hunger.

And then I do have a pretty fun Instagram channel, which is Tricia Nelson underscore underscore at the end of Nelson. And I have kind of vignettes and videos around emotional eating and different scenarios that lead to emotional eating that are there all me like my my partner.

Every night when we're cooking dinner, I'm like, take a video. And so we have picture, you know, videos of me cooking and eating and, and all that kind of thing.

So TriciaNelson_underscore. All right. Great. Thank you so much for being a guest here. All right, friends, you know what to do. You know, these episodes, the people have been so kind to share with us their expertise and their time.

Please share this with others who could benefit from this information as we all link arms together, I'm still on the path to have the goal realized of 3 million or more people who are helped directly by this work.

Reversing type two diabetes, prediabetes, getting better handle on blood sugar issues. Because this rising tide of illness, we've got to turn it around and it's going to take each of us to do our part.

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