Introduction to binge eating and fasting

This is Doctor Talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most. We are honored to have with us today, Sandra Seinbaum, who I've known for some time now, but never got to, you know, do this and interview you and dive into your knowledge.

But first of all, thank you for joining us. Thank you. I am thrilled to be here. So we, you know, so that everybody knows we know we're going to be talking about binge eating and how fasting main support that are not supportive we're going to find out from you what your thoughts are.

And this is where you know people say oh I wish I had a coach I wish I had somebody to train me. Sandra has trained hundreds or maybe thousands I got the number wrong probably thousands of coaches on how to support people and we're getting right to the you know the source now of the person who's taught all these health coaches how to do what they do and they're out there now supporting people and it all came from you which is amazing the ability to speak to you about all this and thank you for for that and what we're going to talk about today is how fasting, time-restricted eating can affect binging.

And some people don't even know that they are binging. It's really like this, first of all, called awareness moment. So what do you even consider binge eating to be?

How does someone even know that that's a problem? Sure. So first of all, there are differences between somebody who is just overeating Thanksgiving meal and they just eat a lot, they have second and third helpings, and it happens infrequently, often during special celebrations like that where we're encouraged to eat big quantities of food.

And then there are people who actually have a binge eating disorder. And this is where there's a real loss of control that once they start to eat, there's no stopping and they may eat to the point where they are stuffed.

Now it's not bulimia. When someone is bulimic, they are going to binge and then they're going to find some way of purging. But someone who is binge eating they are going to be just at that point where they might want to purge, but they don't go into that process.

But it is dysfunctional, and it can take over their lives. And I know because I was a binge eater when I was in my 20s. Actually, it started when I went away to college.

And I remember just not stopping, I would go there was a I went to Northwestern and it was in Evanston, Illinois and there were ice cream shops like Baskin Robbins and I would go to one and get an ice cream.

But that wasn't enough. That would trigger something where then I would go and I would get a second one. And then sometimes I would eat a whole pint of ice cream at a time.

And I remember things like I would eat to the point where I was so full and then I would throw it away. But then when I got that wasn't full an hour, two, three hours later, I would even be digging it out of the garbage pan.

And people who have binge eating issues would do that. So when we talk, I'm very hesitant to talk about calling something a disorder because that labels you the person.

And now it's like you have a label. I have a disorder. There's something wrong with me. Whereas we all have the capacity for self-regulation. And in this area with food, it is really challenging.

So maybe we can say no to consuming too much alcohol. We're not binge drinkers. But eating can be very

addictive. And when to stop being able to do that is really, really challenging.

What binge eating looks like

That's interesting that you separate alcohol and say that it may only happen with food because the way we understand binging at the genetic level, and this is one answer, it's not every answer, is that some people bind dopamine much more efficiently than others.

It's very easy for them to experience pleasure. and their clearance or their comped enzyme is a little slower so they get stuck so they're feeling a way up here and the clearance is so slow that they just are in this endless loop of like it's like almost they're starting the process over again while it's happening and they keep going keep going keep going but then that would apply to anything so what you're saying is that this is a separate issue that's only related to food right and so is there anything to be said about emotions and other issues or what what what drives this what's it rooted in Yeah.

Emotions can be part of it, but there's many, many reasons. So people can start to overeat and then that can shift into binge eating when they're frustrated.

They have a call. It didn't go so well. Somebody was angry with them. They're upset. They're stressed. And they could eat, but it can also be triggered by just by joy, just liking the taste of food.

And in my case, it was sweets. And many people going to binge, they're not going to binge on broccoli. They're going to binge on, on chocolate, on, on desserts and carbs.

So some people may eat that whole bag of chips and still not be satisfied. So what else can they eat? It's a habit and that's what so I was a clinical psychologist specializing in health psychology for many, many years.

And I saw a lot of people with eating issues. And sometimes it is just liking the taste and then you lose awareness of that ability to stop. In other words, it just feels good.

You're eating and you're continuing to eat because you like the taste of the food. And it might be like with, let's say ice cream. And I was notorious for like eating ice cream by the pint.

I'm not kidding. And so you just, it feels good. and it's a pleasure aspect and your ability to have that good judgment at the time to apply prudent self-regulation is just out the window.

I was never a drinker. I remember I got drunk once in college at a party and I was so sick and I remember just being sick afterwards, I think never again.

I actually don't have the gene, the enzyme that processes alcohol, but even if I did, I could say no to that. I could say no to other things as well that require self-regulation, but eating is something that is issued.

The other thing that is often considered when we talk about binge eating is that it's paired with other activities. So often if somebody had to just sit there and do nothing else but eat, they might stop sooner.

But if they're watching television or they're scrolling social media, so they're not aware that they're eating so much. And then They may not, they may finish what they're eating and they don't feel satisfied.

So then they search for something else. So that would be another aspect of it as well. Yeah, it sounds like this gray area where it's like, like you said, it's a habit formation problem.

And that's why we're so lucky to be speaking to you because health coaching is about habits. It's not so much about prescriptive or diagnostic. It's like, okay, now that we know what's going on, how do we actually change your habits and get you to be that new version of yourself?

You know, which is, you know, it's a blessing to talk to you about that. So then I would ask, How do you actually deal with this? Cause it's so great.

It's not like here's your condition. Here's your pill. Here's your treatment. It's like step one is like it's tastes awareness. It's like, how do I even, what do you do with this?

Yes. So step one is to normalize it is to felt because we tend, that's the problem with calling this a disorder and labeling it. Now you think you're damaged and you think you have this condition and it starts to define you.

and there's so much embarrassment or shame. So people who are binge eating. So I never would be a binge eater in front of other people. In fact, I would go out to dinner and I would refuse the dessert and then I'd come home and I would down three, four candy bars.

It tends to be an isolated activity. And so the first step is to make it known. to tell people that's what I love so much about time restricted eating is where you can tell people that I might open my feeding window at 10am or at 11 or whatever that might be for you.

And you've now made that announcement. And then you change the way you characterize yourself. You start to say instead of saying I have a binge eating disorder, or I'm a binge eater, which is even worse, like your whole self is that that disorder.

Triggers, habits, and solitary eating

But you say, I practice time restricted eating, I don't eat after eight o'clock at night, for example. So you are now defining yourself that way, you have a different sense of who you are.

And you're talking about that with people in that positive way. That's one. The other is it's habit change, just as you said, so, for example, a lot of people will eat in their car.

Again, this is a solitary activity. It's a solitary habit in most cases. And so you start with, well, where do you see yourself making that change? And might be that you start in the smaller, the better, it's okay.

Like I am going to stop eating at 10, an hour or half hour before I go to bed, even there. So it might not be where you ultimately end up because maybe you want to stop three to four hours before you go to sleep, but a habit builds slowly.

And so when you're a health coach and you're working with someone with these issues, I'd say, that's great. Let's focus on how are you going to do this?

What are you going to say to yourself when it, when 10 o'clock comes along or nine o'clock comes along and you've made that decision? And so you start there and the key is you celebrate.

So let's say it's nine o'clock, you stop eating. And that would be something when you do that, you celebrate. And maybe you pair it with maybe turning on alarm, or maybe it's something like every, every night at nine, I'm going to do this, I'm going to something that you enjoy doing, you pair it with something that's pleasurable, that's going to take the place of eating, or it might be that you are habit changing around eating with somebody else, or even eating sitting down.

Like every time I eat, I'm going to sit down. And when you do that, you celebrate, but you start with like one meal. Yeah, so it is a slow process of BJ Fogg talks about tiny habits.

And that's how this changes tiny habits. Yeah. You know, when I listened to you, there's one thing that kind of stood out to me. I tried to put myself in the shoes of someone solving this problem.

And you talk about the solitude and this being a habit of solitude, like me being alone. I have my little secret space

where I've been Jeet. and I think about change and not having support and not people not knowing you know and and that the advocacy of the people around me knowing that I need and want to change it's so easy to slip back into that my my little cave my hole my my you know whatever it is my bunker and hide and do my thing because nobody even knows that this challenge exists so how do you deal with that because I without support it's become so much more difficult Absolutely.

The power of community, the power of social connection. And so when you start telling people what you'll find, this is what I found. Oh, I'm like that too.

I used to do that as well. I have a friend, we have attended many events together. I think you were at some of them. And you know, at these events, they're snack tables there because people donate.

And so for me, anything that looks like a candy bar, like the, the energy bars, the, the high protein bars, I was addicted to, to those as well. Cause it, it just feels like you're eating a candy bar and they do the sweeteners.

And so. what we did and she is actually an expert in emotional eating and she went to the space, Trisha Nelson, because she was an emotional eater. And so we bonded at these conferences and we made a pledge to ourselves.

We are not going to go to that snack area and start on these bars. And so now her voice is in my head and vice versa. So we became accountability partners.

That's one of the beauties of working with a health coach. because there is no judgment, no shame, because often people won't talk about this, they're afraid, it's shameful.

And so when you have a coach, and you are feeling in the safe space that you're talking about with your coach, and nine times out of 10, your coach will have been there all as well.

they'll get you and so you are your coaches, you hear their voice in your head, right? Every time you start to go to to eat more. And that's what's wonderful about making an announcement about being a time restricted eater.

You've put it out there. You now are thinking I'm accountable. I don't want to go back on my word. And you know that there's that check-in call coming in a few days.

There's that accountability call. And progress is obvious. You know, if things haven't changed, you can't lie your way through it when you're dealing with a coach.

You can perhaps lie to yourself if you're alone, but not when you're working with someone. So that's very important. And that's why coaching is so successful for people.

And then there's community you can find. I'm sure there's Facebook groups and places you can go where there's other people that you'll see that are struggling that when you put these groups together, the support makes it so much more powerful and easier to get through.

Building awareness with time-restricted eating

So when someone's going down this road and like, okay, step one, I'm going to acknowledge this. Step two, I'm going to take action. I might bring a higher coach.

I might go to some group and start learning. Where do you see people failing and like things fall apart? I'm glad you brought that up because it is not all or nothing.

And that's where people get into trouble. They make this decision, okay, I'm gonna not binge eat. I'm gonna eat three meals a day. I'm not gonna stack.

And then they find themselves doing it. And oh, I'm devouring this bag of potato chips. And now they say to themselves, and this is why most diets fail, I blew it.

It's all over. I blew it. I'm worthless. I can't do anything right. I'll never overcome this issue of why can't I stop? And when they have that thought in their head, that is like saying, okay, I can eat more or they might say, this is a good day.

This is a bad day. This is my obeyed day where I'm binging. And so I might as well continue, or I've, I've just had company and people brought desserts and I've got all of this in the house.

So I'm just going to eat it all up and throw half of them and then I'll start fresh tomorrow. And it's that kind of thinking that is really self-sabotage.

And so I would always tell people, wherever you are you can be holding that that spoon or fork and about to eat something. And you make that decision.

No, I've had enough. And so you put it down, and then you focus on. celebrating your restraint wherever it was because we are all human, we are not robots, we are fallible, and therefore, we're going to screw up.

When you say, okay, I'm following time-restricted eating, I'm going to only eat from let's say 10 o'clock to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. And then you find you're at a dinner and it's seven, eight, nine, and you're eating and oh, I blew it.

And you get very discouraged, as opposed to I'm going to do this 99% of the time, because it took a long time to develop the bad habits didn't happen overnight.

It's gonna take a while and it's never perfect. We can't do it perfectly. And that's where often people get depressed and down on themselves. But as opposed to, let's say you are charting, like as if you were doing a research study and you're plotting or like a stock market and you're following, you're doing trend lines.

And so now you might say, oh yes, I'm on an upward trend. It's getting better. but it's never looking at, I'll have to do this 100%, no exception. I'll never eat before 10 a.m.

again, for example, because that is where you do yourself in. That made things easier for me. When I first started off saying, I don't eat sugar anymore, And I still say that about myself.

I don't eat refined sugar. That's challenging because there's events and families and birthday parties and kid stuff going on. And, you know, there's the world is still happening around you.

And, you know, last night, I'll admit it, I actually had apple pie and ice cream. Right. And I didn't care. It didn't bother me. Why? Because I know I'm on that upward trajectory, like you said, and I know that I'm doing things so well for the majority of the time that once in a while, it's almost like I'm doing things so well so that my body is ready to take that hit on the day I need to do it.

There's a wedding where I just can't say no, or I'm at my mom's house and she's forcing something down my throat. I just can't reject it. So if I do everything, if I control the majority of my time, then I'm prepared for that once in a while problem that I otherwise wouldn't have wanted and I get to enjoy things once in a while with the people I want to enjoy it with.

So I've prescribed to that myself and that makes it so much easier for me to make things happen. One other thing you said, you know, when it comes to I'm missing out on this pleasure and I'm saying no as this blue one is right here, what people have to realize is dopamine, this thing that allows you to feel the pleasure, also allows you to feel reward.

And both of those things are satisfaction. So you can actually shift gears and no longer need the pleasure if you get hooked on the reward, which is a much more positive way to experience satisfaction.

And this is what ends up happening with people. Like the last time I talked to you, you were bouncing up and down. I was like, what's going on with Shana?

And I realized you were walking on a treadmill during a Zoom call, right? And this is what ends up happening is you get hooked on reward and achievement and that becomes your new binge, which is a healthy place to be.

And you can replace sort of the bad habits you don't want with better ones because they both provide you satisfaction. You don't need to have pleasure necessarily.

So one question for you, just from listening to you again, So time-restricted eating, somebody changes their habits, there's a small eating window, they may walk into that or run towards it, or how would they get there is different for different people.

Accountability, community, and coaching support

If somebody has a history of binge eating, which seems like the relationship with food is a bit problematic, Could they then develop other problems from time-restricted eating of like, I don't eat food, like the things you were talking about earlier, the anorexia, bulimia, can it spin itself the other way?

Have you seen that happen? Certainly it can and that's where being too rigid comes in. It's so you would be you want to be really careful in what you are telling yourself the rules you are setting up and it would be that it is desirable, I want to narrow my eating window.

And then you would also, a big part of that is because you could have a narrow window, but you might be snacking all day. And so that would be then the net what you've narrowed, let's say you don't start eating to a certain time in the morning and you cut it off at night.

But what if you're eating the entire day, or what if every meal is a massive binge and so then you would address that issue and the awareness. of when your rules are too rigid, because you would be less likely that you would become anorexic.

And I do want to preface everything I'm saying, but if you are anorexic, if you are bulimic, if you are binging and then purging, you definitely want to work with a licensed mental health professional.

You want to be in therapy, you want to be getting help for that eating disorder. With binge eating, you can work with a health coach. It depends on, again, how severe the issue is, and there's always a whole spectrum.

And so we're not talking here about people who have serious binging and purging disorders or serious anorexia. What can happen is that people can become what we're now calling orthorexic, where you tend to have too many rules.

And if I'm not careful, that could be me, where I might go into a restaurant and there's nothing on order because I can see the danger and everything.

Well, the fish has mercury, it's not pasture raised, not grass-fed beef, the oils that they're using and again, at a point where you are suffering and the stress of that is probably more deleterious than if you were to eat something.

I was at a dinner recently where they didn't start serving it was called for six and by the time people sat down and then they didn't start serving until seven and so and that that was this dilemma like do I it was a whole you know roundtable of people people I had never met before and do I want to be this oddball like saying or you know it's I don't typically, I don't like to eat after six, seven o'clock.

And so here was this dilemma, as well as the food itself wasn't food that I would care to eat under normal circumstances. And so the rigidity and the issue of what if I had eaten a little bit and socialized and enjoyed the company of those other people.

So that's why it's when you set too many rules, and it's 100% of the time that you are telling yourself, I must follow these rules, no exception. That's quite stressful.

And so the pleasure of being at a social event and relaxing your restrictions a bit, you know, so it's still not, I'm still not going to have that for Sunday that they served a dessert, for example, because I know that I have blood sugar issues, which probably came from, you know, all those years of binging on sweets.

And so that's an area where I am more adamant, but in terms of just, you know, having something to eat past my feeding window is not going to be a catastrophe.

And this is where your point of Community becomes so powerful, because when you have habit changes, you have them but everybody else in your life, maybe doesn't now right and and now you have to go bring those habits into your reality and they don't fit because nobody else believes in them.

And so it doesn't mean that you need to purge your family and friends. It just means you need to have some new friends that do think the way you think and support it and people that have the same habits that you can talk to, that you can even meet up with potentially.

It makes a big difference. And you're going to evolve in that direction anyway. Anyone that purposely drives themselves towards change will often stumble across people that are on the same path.

And because that's what drives success, you know, you, you have peer, you know, peers that are doing the same and it just makes everything so so good.

So, another thought is, I'm thinking about again just practical terms, somebody binge eating and The way you suggest it, it's typically going to be like your soul food.

It's going to be ice cream and sugar and fatty stuff. And not that fat is bad, but it may be snacks like Doritos, for example. Right. So that's that wow factor flavor.

You're in it for the flavor. You're not in it for nutrition protocol. Right. So I'm assuming that it comes with its other sort of multitude of problems of gut issues and inflammation.

Avoiding all-or-nothing thinking

And, you know, there's probably other things that are coming out, you know, part and parcel of this eating style that you may not even associate because they have their own clinical labels that also get resolved.

Absolutely. Yeah. So the more you're eating, we don't binge on, again, on broccoli, but we're binging on ultra processed foods. And so, yes, you are going to have other health issues.

You're going to be in a state of inflammation. And I was able to hide, but I was doing pretty well because I was never obese. I was, I certainly was not healthy back then and I was overweight, but it wasn't so obvious.

Another issue that we haven't talked about is that the food industry wants us to be binge eaters. They want us to be, because it'll, we'll sell more products if we're a company that has these chips that you, you know, you can't just eat one.

You have to eat the whole bag. And so their whole research is on that magic combination of sugar, salt, and fat. That's going to have you eating a whole lot more of these types of foods.

Yeah. So that the flavor profile, the texture profile. that satiety of the palate is like, oh, wow, this is amazing. I can't stop. So it's literally designed to work against you.

So it's kind of like you might have to go purge the pantry. I don't know what, how, when it comes to coaching, how

do you actually do that with people?

Is that, is that actually what happens? Oh, absolutely. You would say, what foods do you want around you and what foods would be trigger foods for you.

And so you avoid them. And then really being understanding and kind to yourself to know that this does not happen in terms of getting, being in a better place and a better relationship with food.

It doesn't happen overnight. So you may start by setting up the time restricted pattern saying, I'm going to, every time I get into the car, I'm going to drive.

I'm not, and you have different habits. Every time I finished dinner, I'm going to have a cup of tea and that'll be my signal. that my reading and reading window is closing.

And something that I wanted to bring up in that is when you talked about the dopamine, the pleasure. So there is that immediate satisfaction, but the real pleasure is the, so there's the enjoyment, but the satisfaction of working towards something that is really important in your life.

And so what health coaches will do is ask those questions like, what do you want your health for? where would you like to be in five, 10 years? What is most important to live for?

And then they might say, well, you know, whatever it might be, I want to be around and see the birth of a grandchild, for example, or whatever that might be.

And that become Richard Boiaxis talks about this as a positive emotional attractor. In other words, just imagining that picturing it puts you in a really good sympathetic state.

So, and some people are motivated by negative emotional attractors. It's valid, not as strong as getting to the PEA, but the negative emotional attractor would be, I better stop eating this because I don't want to be diabetic.

I don't want to get cancer or heart disease. And so it is the negative consequence that is scaring you. And now you're going to change your behavior. And so a health coach works with people to say, which one are you?

It could be both. I know for me, I'm both, but because I will be, I was sitting at dinner with people the other night and everybody got desserts and they're saying, how can you like, you're so good.

How can you not order this or take a taste? And what I thought was, well, I know I'm wearing my CGM, my continuous glucose monitor and I know that if I went down that road of eating that dessert that would set off craving more because sugar is so addictive physically and I don't want to be pre-diabetic or diabetic and so that is a strong enough negative emotional attractor for me in combination with the positive.

I want to be energetic and I want to be strong and Want to live a long time, even though I'm 73. So I have a lot of reason to cultivate good food habits.

Yeah. I mean, you're 73 based on how many birthdays you've had, but if you compare yourself to the average American, you're running a company. Coaches are relying on you to learn.

You're innovating. You're walking on a treadmill while talking to me on Zoom. 73 is not your label at all. You're living like the average 40 year old right now.

Yeah and so you know that makes me think of that this whole thinking around what you just said about the positive versus the negative and those choices and even the awareness that these are choices like chronic disease is an option and this choice of you know how you're going to eat And it's not just about the calories and the weight, the longitudinal effect of the insulin response and the inflammation and everything else and the mood and behavior issues and the serotonin dysregulation and the gut disruption and all this stuff.

You are making a conscious choice to eat towards health or to eat towards pain, right? And that power of knowing that it's your choice when it comes to chronic disease, is this something that health coaches are able to support people with?

A hundred percent, a thousand percent. Yes. And so it's through that conversation where that person feels supported.

Risks of rigidity and eating disorder concerns

They feel heard. They feel like they are in control and coaching builds self-efficacy. And that is where you have a sense that. Yes, I do have the ability to change.

I can do this and it's not going to be linear. It's going to be all there'll be setbacks and that's accounted for, but they're excited by the idea that I don't have to be stuck in this pattern.

And I just don't, it's not like I have this disorder and I have to suffer with this and I can't change. And coaches can focus on. that times when you do have self-regulation, so if we're talking about not being able to stop eating, that's inaccurate.

There comes a point where you did stop. Maybe it was after you had two pints of ice cream and half of that chocolate cake. that point, you got the signal like, I can't eat one bite more.

And you stopped. And so now let's backtrack. Let's, let's pull back and let's shorten that window of eating and having the sense that I'm doing this. And you have this practice every day where you say, I am a time restricted eater.

I am going to enjoy my food between 10 and six. I'm going to have a great lunch, breakfast, I'm going to look forward to having something at dinner. And then there are issues.

We haven't talked about the nutritional aspects, but obviously like when I was binging on carbs, I was very getting, I was nutritionally deprived. I didn't have the right minerals.

I didn't have protein enough. And so coaches, they're not nutritionists, but they can help people make that decision to have more balanced eating in terms of the micro and macro nutrients.

And that'll help to have more self-regulation because you're feeding your brain the executive functioning ability. And so now your decisions every day will be better because when you are binging and typically people do binge on high carb foods and you are, and also foods that are loaded with bad seed oils and other, you know, and toxins.

And so all of that is hijacking your brain. And so the next day you're going to binge again, cause you don't have the right nutrients for your executive functioning.

Yeah. You know, and when you talk about, again, you mentioned time-restricted eating. So I think of it as sort of like a hack, like you're creating, call it a biohack to like force yourself to do something that gets you your goal.

And I'm thinking, well, what other hacks may there be? And I remember hearing at this lecture about this Japanese, I guess, theory around eating. And I might be getting this wrong, but I think it was called Harishibu.

where essentially means like you're somewhat full with food somewhat with water and somewhat empty space. Right. And so you can people relearn what it actually means to be full like we think full is like, I can't stuff anything else in.

my gut is puffed out and like that's full, like truly the word full in a literal sense. But what is full? Can we relearn what that is? Like how much am I actually supposed to eat where I then stop and have a little bit of water and a little bit of empty space?

Yes, that is something you can cultivate as a habit. And pausing eating slower, most people eat quickly. They eat standing up, they're rushed, and so forcing yourself to chew a lot and then eat more slowly to not multitask.

That tends to be difficult for a lot of people, and so you may start slowly. And again, it's like wherever you're going to start. So maybe I'm going to take the first few bites of food and really savor it.

There's a saying that is the the taste is in the first bite. And so often you may not realize afterwards that, well, I actually enjoyed this and you really savor it.

There's an old exercise from, it comes from Gestalt therapy. It's been used a lot in mindfulness training. And that is where you take something like a cracker or a piece of chocolate or blueberry, and you put it in your mouth and you hold it there for so long that it begins to break down the exercise with the crackers that you now start to, to taste the butter and the salt.

You're getting these different components and it's complete mindfulness of breaking that down. So that is an exercise that has traditionally been useful where people get the realization like, yeah, I'm just swallowing my food whole.

I'm not even realizing. And so it's often there's no joy in that binge eating, but there would be more joy. if you were to slow down and really savor like I'm going to take one spoonful of something of ice cream, let's say, I'm going to really taste it and or savoring the taste of sweet fruits.

So when you are binging on sugar laden foods, you're again, your taste buds are hijacked. And so you may not taste the sweetness of a carrot, for example.

Food industry, trigger foods, and habit redesign

And so when you are eliminating that or not binging, you really can savor the taste. So there's many ways that people can work with this to feel like they are in control, that the food is not controlling them.

Yeah, that's that's amazing because it can really change your perception, you know, of what it means and then change. And this is I think we're a really important place for people to start.

is to learn what they don't know about what it means to be full and what it means to satisfy themselves. And satisfaction doesn't need to be gobbling it up.

It could be, like you said, savouring it. And I've done this, you know, I've done this where, and I've done it actually with the fruit, which is, you're just reminding me of that, where it was so powerful.

I just kept chewing on and chewing on and chewing on. And then you don't need as much because you got the satisfaction, the dopamine hit just arrived in a different way, as opposed to volume.

It was through quality, right? So in terms of fasting, do you see any difference between the average man and the average woman in terms of protocol? Is there anything we said or is it just like everybody needs to be doing the same time restriction?

I think it's highly personalized. I don't think it's one size fits all. And also how men approach eating. I've taught a lot of courses in the psychology of eating, and there are gender differences.

A lot of them are culturally reinforced, but if you look at women, go out to lunch and they're going to order salads and men would see salads as more of a female kind of food.

They might like to have a big steak and potatoes. The steak houses are decorated in a more masculine way. And so we do have these food rules and patterns that are different.

And so men may, and also biologically, there may be reasons why men I do better with fasting women in terms of just really being aware of the, when you're looking at, you know, fasting, why you're doing this.

And often if somebody has been binge eating and has sugar as it has blood sugar, dysregulation, you know, going for a full fast might be difficult. You might want to do it under some medical supervision if you're so I think that what we're talking about is.

looking at a way to notice what happens when you don't eat and get used to that feeling. So I remember if I didn't have, you know, always being told you have to, you know, eat in a half hour of waking up and before I had my blood sugars under control would feel really bad before I ate and feel like I need to eat and And now, you know, I can go a much longer time without eating.

Um, but you want to, again, look at, this is personalized. You want to look at balance and sometimes you can, you can, we often think if something is good, then a lot of that must be better.

And so if fasting is good, how do you have to fast longer? If time restricted eating is good, I have to fast. I have to time restrict longer and be down to one meal a day, which by the way, might not be the best way for people with binge eating issues.

Because if you bottle it all up, and let's say you open your feeding window at four or five, and now you have one big meal, you're going to, that'll be like a Thanksgiving meal.

Oh, this is my only chance to eat and you'll keep eating and eating and eating. And so that might not be the best approach. as opposed to having two or three meals during the day.

I was just saying that's so true. We see that all the time with people that are on this one meal a day. It's like the spread that gets laid out edge to edge on the table.

It's just every animal and fruit and plant you can think of has been cooked that night. And it's because while I'm getting all my calories in, the total adds up pretty quick.

And what about for you personally, are you seven days a week or what are you doing? Yeah. So I, yeah. So my issue now at 73 is avoiding sarcopenia. And so I really are paying attention first and foremost to protein.

And I follow the suggestions comes from Dr. Gabrielle lion, a friend of mine. And she talked about one gram of protein per pound of body weight of ideal body weight.

And so for me, that is getting 90, 95 grams of protein. So I can't, I don't want to do that in just, I couldn't do that in one meal. And so I spread it out and I found it, I used to be doing two meals a day, opening my eating window around noon one and eating dinner at six.

Positive motivation, self-efficacy, and nutrition

And now I've experimented with opening that sooner and Having a lot of protein at that first meal, like 30, 40, even 50 grams of protein, and then a bigger amount at the evening meal as well.

And then a smaller amount at lunch, but having that balance because I also do a lot of physical activity. I wait, train three, four days a week, at least four days a week, actually.

And so. Because of that, I really need to make sure that I'm getting that protein for avoiding muscle wasting. Yeah. And as you age, it's so important because people don't realize it.

One of the major causes of death is just frailty. People just getting old. We think about disease and, you know, yeah, but what about the people that didn't have a disease?

How do they die? They slipped in the bathtub or they just, you know, they couldn't get around it. That's still today true. You know, it requires muscle and muscle is also where you metabolize your glucose and you avoid getting diabetic and Anyways, the benefits are obviously clear, but you need to maintain that.

What other changes did you see when you change from lesser or more condensed meals to spreading it out a little more? Did your body change at all? Did your mood change?

Yes, I was, my workouts were better. So now I always make sure that I tend to do most of in the morning, I'll do yoga and Pilates just because I like to do those on an empty stomach.

It's hard doing inversions when your stomach is full. It does not feel so good. And so I will do that, but then I will have something I'm sensitive to cow's milk.

So I will do something like goat whey protein and have that gigantic shake that is very, very high protein. And so what I have found is that when I emphasize protein first, also that carb craving has completely gone away because for many, many years in my 30s, 40s, 50s, I was vegetarian, then I was a vegan, I was a raw vegan, I'd gone through it all because that was what we thought was healthy at the time.

Especially because of the carb cravings that I had and the sweets that was still the transition from being a real binge eater on sweets in my 20s to being plant-based in midlife, that was not the best for me because I was still craving, you know, those huge meals that were, I was a carbaholic.

And so it wasn't until I went to high amounts of protein and particularly animal protein that I'm feeling like I'm satiated and I no longer have that craving.

So I can be at a restaurant with people who are all ordering desserts or pastas and knowing that I'm not going to be craving that or coming home feeling dissatisfied and eating every carbon site in the kitchen.

Amazing. Well, this has really been helpful and it's been Really, even more helpful that you opened up your personal story and told us, you know what you were able to do and achieve because that's inspiring to people to say well, if Sandra used to have her nutrition plan was a pint of ice cream every night, and she can turn that off the world I can too, you know, And it's even just the awareness of people not even knowing that they're doing it first step.

A lot of people don't from what we see. So this is awesome. And so if somebody does want to work with a coach, I know you train them. You don't necessarily run coaching per se, unless I'm getting that wrong.

But how does somebody actually find somebody to support them? Yes, they can go to functionalmedicinecoaching.org and they can go to find a coach. And many people may decide that they want to be coaches themselves, whether they, because people who may be suffering from particular conditions, now they feel a calling to serve others.

So we would welcome you because the world needs so many more health coaches with so many people metabolically unhealthy.

Protein, aging, and finding a coach

Yeah, and you're doing amazing work there and this is true that you'll find that most great coaches functional medicine practitioners came from a background of needing to solve their own problem.

And so the passion is there the belief and understanding is there because Whatever was conventional failed them, right? They did get that label. You have an eating disorder.

Good luck. Let's manage it versus no, this is, we can unwind this thing. It doesn't need to be like this. You can have a different reality. So yeah, I would urge anyone.

So is it the same website for anyone that wants to understand? Okay. Yep, they can get a coach if they're a doctor, they can hire a coach or refer to a coach, or they can become coaches themselves and you don't need a background in healthcare, which is so cool.

The best coaches often have no background as healthcare professionals. Yeah, that's amazing. Well, thank you, Sandra. This is an eye-opening conversation.

As expected, with your years of experience and having trained so many coaches yourself. And now, you know, there's somebody, I'm sure somebody listening is like, wow, I didn't know I could actually solve this problem.

So thank you so much. Thank you. It's been a pleasure. Thank you for tuning in to Doctor Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

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