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**Megan** [00:00:06] Hey, everyone. It's Megan Ramos, and we're back with another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. I'm joined today by my lovely co-host, Dr. Nadia Pateguana. Nadia, how are you doing today?

**Nadia** [00:00:17] Doing great. How are you doing, Megan?

**Megan** [00:00:19] I'm doing well, thank you. And I'm really excited about today's episode. We have our co-founder of The Fasting Method joining us today - Dr. Jason Fung. Jason, Welcome. How are you doing?

**Jason** [00:00:31] I'm good. Thanks for having me here. It's great to be here.

**Megan** [00:00:34] It's long overdue. [laughter] We're starting to go through the TFM team on our guest episodes and so many incredible stories from all of our team members. But in today's episode, we want to talk a little bit about what it is that our team does, and why it's so important. So we're going to dive into the hot topics of health coaching and community support.

[00:00:59] So, this is something we have been working tirelessly on for a long time now. When Jason and I first started in the clinic, we were seeing patients every four to six weeks just because that's all we could do. There were so many people that needed help, and we only had so much bandwidth. But it just wasn't enough support and we quickly learned that we just can't prescribe a fasting plan. There's more tools and resources needed to actually help people implement fasting and stay consistent with it, as well as the importance of accountability. So, Jason, why don't I throw it over for you to chat about what we've been working on, in terms of coaching.

**Jason** [00:01:37] Yeah, thanks. And I think this is actually a hugely important topic and one that probably isn't covered enough in terms of like the whole diets and stuff. I mean, there's a lot of talk about diets and fasting and stuff, but trying to lose weight is actually about far more than that, which you quickly realize as soon as you start getting into the weeds, working with patients, because it's not just about sort of knowing what to do. And this is reflected in what we talk about at The Fasting Method, which is that that's only one of the pillars. Knowledge is sort of just one of the pillars of doing it.

[00:02:14] And you can make an analogy, for example, for exercise. Like, I don't think anybody denies that doing more exercise is good for you. Yes, so we all know it, nobody denies it, but getting people to do it [laughs] is a whole other problem because we're busy, we don't want to do it, and stuff, so people don't do it. So it's not the knowledge that's missing, but it's the other things that are there. And those are the two other things that we talk a lot about are the sort of systems that you put into place and the emotions, including the support that you get.

[00:02:49] What we mean by this - the systems - is sort of those automatic things, those environmental things that make it easy for you to sustain it. So if you think about exercise, for example, like my kids, they play hockey, for example, but you'll never catch them really going outside and just working on their skills. But if you set a sort of one-hour practice every few days, they'll go to it. But they won't do it by themselves and that's because

you've set up that automatic system where it's like, "Hey, Monday nights, at this time, you go for practice. Tuesday..." And it's not just you're out there by yourself, you're in there with friends, you've got a coach, you know, you've got people to keep you accountable. And those are those environmental things. So it's the same person, it's the same drills that you're doing, but, all of a sudden, it's not hard to go.

[00:03:41] Fasting is, and diets are, much the same. So if you are just trying to do it yourself, yeah, you can do it, but it's sort of a relatively unusual person that can do it. But all of a sudden, you make it a schedule, you make it a part of a system, it's incorporated into this whole other thing for---so for hockey or basketball, for example, it's not only the practices but you've got a game scheduled, this and that. For fasting, you think about things like religions where it's all part of a system. So not only are you going for that religion, but as part of the religion, you have certain times that you're going to fast. And different religions have different times and different schedules, but it's all part of that system that makes it easy for you to do it. Same thing with meals. If your system is eight-times-a-day eating, it's hard to go down to two because your system is set at eight and it's a long way from two. So redoing that system is so important. That's really important.

[00:04:38] And then the third part is the emotions. Like, there are so many different things that go into eating. So for COVID, for example, we see this all the time. A lot of people have gained weight over COVID, that's not a surprise, because if you take away everything that is enjoyable about life except for eating, people are going to eat. So everybody, myself included and my kids and everybody I knew, was eating so much more junk food over that period of time when everything was completely locked down. Why? Because we couldn't do the things that we normally enjoyed doing: we couldn't go out, we couldn't meet with friends, we couldn't see family, we couldn't do this, we couldn't do that. Everything was closed. So what's left to you? Go to the grocery store, get yourself something bad, like ice cream, because that's what you do to enjoy yourself. So you're basically medicating yourself. And that's just because we're human, right? It wasn't like that everybody in the world all of a sudden lost willpower. It was that external condition where you took away that. But that's an emotional thing.

[00:05:38] Food addiction - same thing, it's an emotional thing. So even if you know that you shouldn't be eating certain foods, or you should be fasting, or whatever. If you have a problem with addiction, if you have a problem with this sort of dysthymia where you really don't enjoy yourself so you eat to sort of give yourself a boost, well, you need to deal with that. Not learned that, "Hey, cookies are bad for you," right? Like, nobody needs to know that. [laughs] We all know that already.

[00:06:06] So that's the sort of important stuff. Like the knowledge is one thing, but how to deal with your systems, how to deal with your emotions is actually sort of like 80% of the issues. And that's where the coaching is sort of super, super important because you can't just watch a YouTube video, you can't just read a book and say, "Oh, that's my problem. I don't have a proper system. I don't have... My environment is not set up for me to succeed. I'm actually doing eating because of my emotional issues and not because I don't know that, 'Hey, carbs are bad,' or, 'Fat is good,'" or whatever it is that you want to argue because it changes all the time, obviously. You can't just read a book because somebody has to work with you through that, and that's where the coaching is so much more important.

[00:06:55] And again, if you throw it back to exercise, if you think about exercise, like why do people pay personal trainers? Because that's exactly what they work with you on. Like, I can find a program, a training program, like, say, CrossFit. I mean, CrossFit is great. Why? Because it sets up that system, and has the classes, it has that structure that you can go to, it has the emotional support where you have friends. I can find the exact same program online and do it myself, but I won't. Neither will anybody else. [laughs] That's why they have a multi-million dollar business, because it's actually how you get people to do it. But if I had to, like, do I know that exercise is good for me? Yes. Do I know I should be doing this exercise and this exercise? There's a million programs out there. I can find them for free online in two seconds, but I won't do it. That's the problem - I don't have those systems, I don't have that emotional support. And that's where the coaching is really so critical. So people keep the entire fitness industry, personal trainer industry, in business because that's what they provide. Not the knowledge. You can exercise, I can exercise, anybody can exercise. It's super easy - you go out and run, no problem. Will you do it? Yeah, that's the problem. That's why. The coach is there to keep you accountable.

[00:08:18] And that's why the weight-loss coaches are there too, because it's like, it's just such an important thing in our lives. Like, we acknowledge that for, you know, for business, for schools, for fitness, we'll have a coach. But for something like weight loss, which is ultimately so important for your health, nobody does it, right? But [laughs] it's probably more important, at certain stages of your life, than anything else. If you have type 2 diabetes and you're overweight, yes, you need to lose that weight. So you need to get somebody to help you. And if you can't do it yourself, which, again, it's not a weakness, it's just because we're human. That's what you need somebody there for.

[00:09:04] Now, in the past, of course, people were different. In the 70s and 60s and stuff the systems were set up for you to succeed. Nobody ate out. Nobody was eating a lot of junk food. There was none of this, "Snacking is really good for you." People didn't eat snacks, right? So, you know, you didn't have the same problems. It's not like you would walk down into the lobby and find a Tim Hortons or Starbucks where, hey, you went to get coffee, but look, there's a huge array of pastries here. So then you get one, right? That's the environment that's set up for you to fail. You go to the office, you go to the meeting, somebody orders a plate of cookies. That's not your problem. That's the environment that has set you up to fail. You walk down the, you know, the office and somebody has, you know, a birthday party with cake, an office party or whatever. That's the environment that's set up for you to fail. Like, you didn't have that in the 70s. Nobody celebrated their birthday and had cake in the office, right? Yes, it's fun and all that, but, at the same time, it's an environment that's set up for you to fail.

[00:10:11] What you have to do is start to recognize, hey, this is an environmental problem. You have to either figure that out or you work with somebody to figure that out for you, right? And that's what the coaches are really important for, is to say, "Hey, look. OK, what can you do? If you know that you go and get yourself a coffee and you see those donuts and you get a donut. Well, the problem is not the coffee, the problem is the donut." So then you say, "How can I change that environment so that I don't?" Maybe you don't go and buy coffee. Maybe you bring the coffee, maybe you switch over and not have a coffee break at all and just work through it, or something, right? You can now, once you identify it, now you can take steps to say, "Hey, I know that if I go to the coffee shop, I'm going to be tempted to get a cookie, so I'm not going to do that," right? Or, you know, maybe you don't walk, you walk a certain way so that you don't pass by the Tim Hortons. Like, there's a reason

they stick these things in the lobby because so many people pass by. There's a reason why Cinnabon drifts its smell all over the mall, right?

[00:11:14] These are all things that people know, but it's sort of subconscious. Once you identify them, you can say, "Okay, well, that's my weakness. That's where I'm going to go around." But it's not a knowledge thing. It's not a willpower thing. Everybody thinks it's all about just knowing the perfect diet and having the willpower to stick with it. So, "Eat a low-fat diet. And if you can't do it, it's all willpower." It's not. That's like 10%, 20% of the actual problem. And you know that because in the 70s, people were very slim. Or you go to Japan and everybody is slim. Why? Because the portions are puny, right? [laughs] So the environment is set up for you not to gain weight because you either eat what you eat or you pay double to get the North-American-sized portion. [laughs] And you don't want to pay like a hundred bucks for a couple of pieces of sushi. So you just say, "OK, well, I'm not hungry anymore, so I'm done. I'm just going to stop." And Europe's the same, right? Europe's a lot better than the United States, for example, like the portions are just smaller. I remember I used to go to Orlando and the portions were massive. It's like, I'm not used to it. Even Canada is a little bit different.

[00:12:19] So those are those things. So the environments, the systems, the emotions - those are the things that are really important to people. And that's what you have to work on in the groups because, again, talking about it is helpful. The emotional support, having the friends who are going to do it with you and work it out. And that's why I think it's really so important that we sort of focus on those bigger issues rather than discuss for like the 10 millionth time. Is it the calories? Is it the carbs? Is it this? Is it that? That's just the knowledge piece of it.

**Megan** [00:12:54] Well, in general, I think, because of mainstream media and the standard of care when it comes to weight loss, just things where it should be so easy, you know - calories in, calories out, eat less, move more. And people come across fasting, they listen to our stuff, read our books, read our blogs and they realize, "OK, you know, I've been told to do the wrong thing all along," but they still think, you know, "It's got to be easy." But so much to your point, too, about all of our systems, like drastically radically changing, you know, since the 1970s.

[00:13:26] I don't know if you remember this. We were, you and I, working on 'Life in the Fasting Lane' with Eve, and I had just moved to an older part of Toronto, a part where a lot of people were retiring and moving into retirement residences and a lot of younger professionals were moving in. That area of Toronto was designed in 1950. And that day at the clinic, we had a kidney patient that had died that I had known since I was a teenager and first started working at the clinic, so I was heartbroken. So I drove home and I thought, "I'm going to get some junk food. Like, today has sucked." You know, I was so sad to hear about this guy's passing. But the community was built in 1950; it hadn't really changed. It was just starting to change once I had moved in. And I couldn't find anything. You know, there weren't Tim Hortons, there were mom and pop coffee shops, and they all closed at like seven p.m. There weren't junk food stores, there weren't convenience stores, there weren't fast-food restaurants and I ended up just driving home. And I remember parking in the driveway; it was a frustrating day, and I checked my email and I just thought, "This is crazy." Like, this is how my grandparents grew up. This is how my great grandparents grow up and the communities that they lived in. And this is definitely not how I grew up. You know, I grew up in more modern communities and lived in downtown Toronto with every amenity under the sun. And I just remember seeing an email in my inbox and letting

you know about my revelation about my new neighborhood. And you said, "You've got to include that in your chapters for 'Life in the Fasting Lane' because the systems have changed so, so much. For an entire year. I learned I could not go into a Starbucks to get a tea or I was going to leave with a chocolate chip cookie. So if the drive-thru was open, I would get my tea and if not, I wouldn't. And then eventually I just learned I needed to bring my own tea to work with me every day.

[00:15:20] Now, I know Nadia and I, we come from different paths. I was always working in clinical research, but Nadia was serving the expert role as a naturopath. And we both had learning curves when it came to working with individuals under a coaching capacity because we would provide the knowledge and then they would struggle. So I went on and I got some health educator certifications and then some health coaching certifications, and realized telling people what to do is not going to help them, it's not going to empower them. Nadia, do you want to share a little bit about your journey from this expert role to this health coach role, which you have mastered [laughs], but it's been a journey.

**Nadia** [00:16:01] Without saying it, right, Megan? I think you hit the nail... Like, you know exactly what my journey has been like and I'm very self-aware of that was the missing piece in my practice. I was very top-down, sort of a, trained as a clinician and speaking to clients as a doctor, right? And patients at the time. And that top-down sort of thing did not work. And the funny thing is that I was trained that way and I was so set in my way. I had such a fixed mindset because I've always, you know, for the last 20 years, I've always worked in this realm - nutrition, diet, weight loss, metabolic syndrome - prescribing diets to people, telling people, "This is what you do." Sort of 'do as I say', and we've been doing this over and over again.

[00:16:46] I'm actually, I'm in awe of you guys, as you know, not only for the opportunity of working with you, but the fact that at some point you guys figured out that we needed to switch to this coaching, health coaching, community setting. And funny enough, even though I was, I think, the most set in my way of just 'do as I say' because the information is good and the information is there, I actually have a funny story. I don't know if Jason remembers this. I know you do, Megan, because I talk about it all the time. The very first video that my husband watched of Jason Fung, the very first time he watched a YouTube video on fasting, he closed his laptop and he said, "This is it. This is what I have to do. This is brilliant," and he did his very first 12-day fast. Obviously not planned. This is the very first time my husband ever fasted in his life, ever skipped a meal. He did a 12-day fast because the information was that good and it made that much sense. The last seven years, though, have been the struggle. Not, you know, doing that first fast. It's how we live this in this world, right, that we live in nowadays that you guys were just talking about, that Jason was just describing how much things have changed.

[00:17:53] We come from a, obviously, very different culture than you, Megan, and even you, Jason, right? My husband and I come from Africa, from Mozambique. I come from a long line of very healthy, fortunately, women, very healthy, long, long lives, right? My grandmother just passed away; she was 95 (my maternal grandmother). My paternal grandmother is 93 at this point. So very long lives, very healthy, but they have totally different habits than I do. I was raised in Canada. My mother and I went to Canada when I was a little girl and even though my mother is now in her 60s, she is extremely healthy, has amazing habits. She eats fish and vegetables every single day, not because she has to or she's on a diet, but because she continued on these very healthy habits since childhood. Whereas I was raised in Canada and all I wanted, the minute that I first tasted

that processed food that was everywhere, I was never able to eat real food until well into my 30s, as you know, right, Megan? So this is so---and then I developed hypertension, diabetes, PCOS, all these things that the women in my family do not have. It is amazing how much lifestyle...

[00:19:02] And so, being part of this community when we as a team, right, when you guys decided to switch to more of a community setting, this coaching versus in-office, 'do as I say' sort of thing, that had a major impact on me. I now have a community that I belong to, of like-minded individuals in my real life that eat real food, that fast. You know, my husband and I are fortunate, of course, to do this together, but that's the impact that it's had on us and why I think our Community is so successful.

**Jason** [00:19:32] I think that it's really important what you said because, you know, there's a huge difference between, sort of, the top-down, you know, "I'm the expert. I'll tell you what to do." And that sort of peer support group, which is a completely different dynamic that, "I'm doing this, but here is somebody else who is just like me, also struggling, has the same troubles, has the same, you know, trying to understand, trying to do right." It's that peer support group that's really, really important. And this is the thing that we have always known it's very powerful. In school, it's called 'peer pressure' but, you know, as adults, you don't generally have that pressure, it's more peer support that you're looking for.

[00:20:15] And we know that it works because other groups do it, you know, Alcoholics Anonymous. I mean, there's no secret thing. The secret is the peer support, right? Weight Watchers - same thing. It's the biggest company in weight loss, not because their diet is great. Like, you can find that diet anywhere on the internet in less than two seconds. Can you follow it? Well, that's where you need the peer support. So it's not somebody telling you, "Hey, do this, do this." It's that peer support and, you know, just telling people to, "Do this and lose weight," that's, ultimately, it's like telling somebody, "Cheer up," which has like cheered up nobody ever, right? Or, "Don't worry," has not made anybody worry less, ever. [laughter] You can't just say these things, right? You actually have to put in the hard work to do it. So if you want somebody to cheer up, you have to do something to cheer them up. You can't just say, "Cheer up," just like you can't say, "You need to lose weight," or, "You need to count your calories." I mean, that, actually, I think is just bad advice, truthfully. But, you know, even if you give good advice, you're still only part of the way there and it is exactly what you say, Nadia, those environments that make it easy or make it difficult. We've made it difficult, you know, in North America, like really, it's difficult not to gain weight, especially in the United States compared to Canada.

[00:21:36] And I think one of the things that is the most illustrative of this is that if you study obesity, it actually spreads like a virus, which is super, super interesting because it's obviously not transmissible. But if you look at the patterns of obesity, they clearly track in the same way that a virus tracks, that is, if your friends are overweight, you are more likely to be overweight. If your family is overweight, you're more likely to be overweight. That's why it's important to surround yourself with people who are trying to do better, who are, you know, because you will automatically adopt some of their systems, just like if you eat fish and vegetables every day and you don't snack because that's the way your mother is, or your grandmother is. You know, if all of your family and all of your friends are like that - "We eat fish and vegetables every day and we don't snack" - then you're just naturally going to fall into that, "I eat natural food that I buy in the market fresh every day." And this is what they do in Hong Kong and places like this too, right, where they have not much storage room. You know, "I'm going to eat fresh food every day and not eat processed food

and not eat snacks because that's just the way I live, and that's how all my friends are, and that's how all my family are." Guess what? All of a sudden you are going to do that naturally and you're going to be able to maintain that weight. And that's just because of your environment, your systems that you've put in place that you've adopted. And that's why obesity tends to spread as a virus because as soon as somebody starts having unhealthy habits, "Oh, I eat junk food all the time. Oh, I snack all the time." Well, then if you're friends with those people, you may adopt those habits, and that's how it goes. So, you know, the science is very clear that there's a huge component of weight loss that is not about calories, or even diets, or fasting. Even though diets and fasting are important, it's not the only thing and, in fact, there's a much, much more important thing that we have to deal with.

[00:23:41] And that's what we have to do is build that community. And that's where I think it's valuable what we're trying to do here at The Fasting Method because if we can build a big community, then people can come into that community and be successful because trying to do it yourself is like impossible.

[00:23:56] You look at people who do fasting from a religious standpoint. Is it fun? No, it's not fun, but you literally have billions of people who do it regularly all the time. Why? Because it's part of that community, it's part of your system, it's part of your environment, you've got the emotional support of everybody around you to do it so you can do it. Not fun, nobody likes to do it, but everybody does anyway.

[00:24:22] So that's the sort of power that we're trying to create within it. And we see the success, of course, all the time. Like, honestly, sometimes you guys give me these stories and I'm like, "Holy crap," like, it's amazing. And it's like, literally every week, it's like, I'm always like, "Holy crap," like, "Look at this guy," or "Look at this girl," like, they're doing so amazingly well. And the last one I was looking at was for three years they've kept it off. It's like, that's practically unheard of. If you look at any study, any study of diets in the scientific literature, you just don't see that. And it's like, why? Because they have focused very narrowly on some of these other issues, right? They do a study on low fat versus low carb. At the end of two years, of course, every single person has gained back that weight because they didn't worry about all those other issues - the support, the community, and all that. And I get it. It's very difficult to study that from a scientific standpoint, but it doesn't matter. Like, as a person, we're not in studies. Like, we're just trying to help people. If it helps people, and we know it helps people, we know that there's good evidence in science that these things are important - environments, and you know---then that's what we're trying to build here. So, you know, certainly, it's been very successful for some of the people.

**Nadia** [00:25:43] I actually have two things, based on what you just said, Jason, that I'd like... First of all, I wholeheartedly agree with you about this, not just about our Community. One of the things I, of course, am from, as I said, Mozambique, and 50% of our population is Muslim, right? So they do Ramadan every year. So a lot of our friends, family, because it is almost 50/50, sort of, Muslim/Christian country, it's very common that during that month, half the people that you know are participating. And you never, ever hear because there's such a big community, right, there's so much of a community focus, not just from a religious point of view, because not all these people are highly religious, right, it's just part of their community to fast for the month of Ramadan. And I have never, even though I worked in the diet field there and I still saw people during the month of Ramadan, I have never heard somebody complain about how hard it is to fast during Ramadan because

they're doing it as a community. Never. I have never heard not a man, not a woman. Children don't fast for Ramadan. I mean, teenagers do funny enough. But that point about community. The other thing is our Community has been around now for over five years, and we still have active members that have been there for five years that have lost over 100 pounds and are still there for the community aspect of it. They have lost the weight, they've kept it off. So what you say is 100% true and anyone---this is, I think, what amazes people the most about our Community because not only do we focus a whole lot on, of course, healing, right, that's our main focus, but at this point, we have to focus a lot on maintenance because so many of our members are there already.

**Jason** [00:27:18] Yeah. That's the hard part, right? The maintenance is actually... Like, everybody thinks losing weight is hard. Losing weight is not hard. If you look at the studies, again, you look at any diet study, lots of people lose weight, if you look at average weight loss, whatever. Any standard study of calorie-reduced diets, the average weight goes down. So that means most people in that study are losing weight. So it's not hard. Like, it's expected - you follow a diet, you lose weight. The problem is the maintenance. [laughs] Like, 90% plus of those people regain that weight in a couple of years, which does you no good from a health standpoint, right? So if you lose 100 pounds, then you gain it back two years later, yes, you're a little bit better off than if you had never lost the weight, but only marginally because you then have this diabetes and weight problem for the next 20 years. So that two years gain you very, very little. So it is the maintenance that is ultimately the much, much harder part. And that is where you really have to, you really have to rely on a community of people to help you, right? It's like that, you know, 'it takes a village' sort of thing.

[00:28:30] It's really very true and it's so difficult to fast, for example, if everybody's telling you, "You must eat, you must eat." "Oh, you have to eat breakfast." "Oh, you have to have a snack." "Oh, here's a snack for you." Well, all of a sudden it's like, well, you can't go because your environment has set you up to fail. If you're constantly hearing how bad it is to fast and that's just people who don't know that, you know, hey, the whole thinking on this has changed in the last sort of five years, right, then you're going to have that in your ear all the time. Whereas if you're in the Community which is supporting you and stuff, then it's like, yeah, that's usually the difference between success and failure.

[00:29:14] And it's true, unfortunately, people used to have this community around them all the time, right? I mean, "Oh, you shouldn't eat cookies." "Oh, you shouldn't snack." "Oh, you're gaining weight. Try and cut out some of the fattening foods, like the starchy foods and the cookies." You don't get that anymore because there's this sort of idea that all calories are equal, so you just count calories, so you can eat your cookie and don't eat your broccoli and you're OK because it's the same calories. I'm like, "That's dumb!" Like, you know, anybody would recognize that that's a terrible tradeoff. And then they say, "Oh, it's because of the vitamins." It's not because of the vitamins. It's because the foods, some foods, are more fattening than other foods.

[00:29:53] Like it's pretty simple, but being surrounded by that is really what's important and I think that that's, you know, that's the hard part and, unfortunately, we have to sort of almost create it because the wider community in the United States, in Canada, has become such a trap for obesity, honestly. Like, the whole place, like you were saying, Megan, that, you know, how you couldn't find a Tim Hortons, the whole system is set up for people to fail. I mean, goodness, like, you go to school, they tell you to snack, they give you cookies. Then you go and you go to, you know, you go to work and, all of a sudden,



you're walking past like, you know, the Starbucks and the Tim Hortons and all that sort of thing. Then you go out into the office and somebody orders cookies for the meeting, right? And then somebody else is having a birthday party in the office, and it's like the whole system is just set up for you to fail, right? So, you know, that's where it's really important to sort of be able to navigate it with the help of somebody, or if you know, then you can do it yourself, but that's where it's really important. That's why I'm always constantly amazed at how much success people are having. It's because that's what we focus on.

**Nadia** [00:31:12] You know, this week on Tuesday, sorry, Megan, I know you probably have something important to ask or say, but this week on Tuesday was Nutrition Day at my kid's school, for the senior school (my oldest is already in senior school), and so the funniest thing... They were told what to pack to eat: packed lunch - a sandwich, as opposed to, specifically, no thermos food, which is still the habit in Portugal. People still do the knife and fork meals. Even kids do sit-down, cafeteria, knife-and-fork type homemade meals, but that particular day was an activity, and so they were told to pack a sandwich and the snacks and whatnot. And then the whole day was about---and she was sharing with me like the food pyramid that they were sharing, which is not a pyramid anymore, it's like a different setup, but it was still like all carbs and very little of meats and all of that. And so of course, she now, she's conflicted, I think because she hears from us one thing, she's from the school already at such an early age hearing something else. And it's funny that you said that, you know, in the 70s, people were like, it was just common sense, you know, "Don't eat too many cookies, eat more of the real stuff." And now it's like, "Don't eat the eggs and meat because it's really bad for you, but it's totally fine to eat as many cookies as you want." This is the message that my kids are getting at school.

**Megan** [00:32:29] One of the things I wanted to comment on, in regards to community, is before the pandemic, we did our very first two fasting retreats. They were facilitated by Dr. Terri Lance (on our team) and they were in Hawaii. We didn't use a hotel or a resort. We got a private house near the beach and Terri planned wonderful activities every day where people could connect that weren't over food. And their evenings weren't spent in front of the TV watching, you know, commercial after commercial about this garbage food and that junk food; they were spent playing board games, doing puzzles, really connecting with their community away from food. And everybody, not one person, went on either of these retreats and didn't get amazing results because they were all doing it together. The environment was set up for success and it was just mind-blowing. And I would Zoom in because I was in Toronto at the time and they were taking place in Hawaii, and I would Zoom in to check in on everyone throughout it, and they were just so amazed. You know, "I've been struggling with trying to start fasting for the last year. You know, this is my last hope - coming to this retreat. And here I am. I'm on day four of what is going to be a five-day fast and it hasn't been difficult at all." The environment, the systems, the community, the emotional support from your peers is so important. And now today, they're some of our most active members within our Community.

[00:34:01] And I'm really fortunate; in our household here, the Ramos household, everybody follows the same dietary trend, but not everyone is like that and you can't be going on retreats all of the time. As much as we love our Community, we can't, can't pick up and relocate to Hawaii permanently. [laughs] So our online Community - you can be literally anywhere in the world, you can be at work, you can be at home, and you can always connect with like-minded people that are going to support you and understand. So you don't necessarily need to have the perfect household or the perfect environment around you because you can literally connect wherever you are. And we've been working

so hard on trying to make the Community access even easier for you. We've recently relaunched our Community app, which I think is great because now that life is starting to open up again after the last couple of years of nonstop lockdowns, you can really take the Community on the go with you.

[00:35:01] But I think to everything Jason and Nadia said, accountability is really important. And I know even from my own journey, I'm working with so many of you listeners out there, that you have motivation at the beginning and that helps you, helps you really shed some weight. It helps you kick that disease to the curb. I remember just thinking I was invincible, you know, when I saw the great number on the scale and the great lab test results. But it happened after that, you know, really when that fear of diabetes wasn't there, really actually figuring out how to deal with the systems, how to deal with the emotions is so critical. Jason and I co-wrote a book with our good friend Eve Mayer - Life in the Fast Lane - and Eve in it talks about how she didn't realize food was her best friend. Food picked her up when she was sad. Food celebrated with her when she had succeeded at something. She hung out with food when she was bored. And there's so many more of those emotional aspects. And I think the accountability part is just critical for maintenance, which is why in January we launched a maintenance program for our coaches, which is small groups that you can join monthly, a couple of times a month, weekly if you need the additional support, where you can come in, check in with other individuals who are at the same place as you are and have one of the coaches help you navigate these systems and these emotions. Jason, do you want to speak a little bit to the maintenance coaching that we're doing?

**Jason** [00:36:32] Yeah, absolutely. And that was sort of the idea that really it's somebody to keep an eye out for you. And we know it's all very important. I mean, the accountability role used to be like your mother, right? She'd say, "Hey, don't eat too many cookies and stuff." Then you go to college and you get the freshman 15 because, all of a sudden, you can eat the cookies, and you can drink the beer, and all that stuff, right? But that's really a very important part because when the motivation goes away, then you have something that somebody is going to be like, "Hey, you know, let's do this. Let's do this together," right?

[00:37:08] And everything's so much less scary and less difficult when you're doing it together. So we've always sort of built that into the sort of program. And then the maintenance package is really just the effort to sort of make sure, hey, you know, maybe you don't need to be seen all the time, but at least check in so that somebody is there you know. You know, it's just like if you know you don't have a test, you don't study. That's just human nature, right? Like, we're not here to deny human nature. If nobody's looking over you and saying, "Hey, you know, you're not doing it right," or putting a test or something, then you're going to slip on it. So somebody who's going to say, "Hey, this is your weight, this is your thing. Let's just look at this for a second," and they don't need to nag you or anything, but it is that person that is going to say, "Look, you need to think about this," and that's really so important. And it's like, we have to, you know, for the people who are ill, who have diseases, who have weight to lose, or just want to look good really, that's really critical for their success.

[00:38:12] Like, you want to be able to invest in yourself. I mean, we spend so much money on other things, but people need to invest in themselves. And this is one of the things. I mean, in so many fields, we know it's important. Like business coaching, there's a huge market for business coaching. There's a huge market for fitness coaching. Like, even

Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, they all have coaches. They play better than anybody else in the world. They still want somebody to keep them accountable to say, "Hey, come out and practice, do your running, do this, do that." Why? They could do it themselves, but they won't. So every single athlete who's a, you know, uses a coach. College athletes do it, high school athletes do it, you know, every field has it and so that's why it's really important.

[00:39:01] If you're going to invest in yourself, if you're going to invest in your health, then yeah, it's certainly worth it. And this sort of online Community is really important. I mean, I've been very happy with the new platform that it's easier because it was not that easy before to connect. And now it's, of course, with the new platform it's much better. There's chat features for the coaches. And then we had been talking previously about in-person meetings before the pandemic. I mean, this is years ago when we had been talking about the retreats and stuff. We had also been starting to think about, you know, in certain cities where we have a lot of people and stuff, yeah, we could do in-person meetings and stuff, and that might be something we might be able to do. But certainly, we had discussed all this before COVID, you know, which obviously changed a lot of patterns and stuff. But yeah, it's such an important thing.

[00:39:56] I think we're moving in the right direction towards making sure that we focus in on the psychology. There's actually a ton of great tools, I mean, when we were looking at it, there's so many great tools that people have developed in terms of like a couple of things that we talk about, like mindfulness, positive psychology, cognitive-behavioral therapy. Like, there's tools that have been developed through this whole field of cognitive-behavioral therapy that are just waiting to be used to help people. Like, you don't have to be in therapy to use it. Like, anybody can use these tools. And that's some of the things that we've introduced into our coaching are these tools because, yes, we can go there and talk about carbs and fasting, but people know how to fast, you just don't eat. Yes, there is some knowledge base that you can gain, and you can get that from books, you can get that from videos, you can get that free truthfully, if you want, you just look it up online. But, it's those other things that are going to be valuable in the end that are going to help you keep and stay in that. And it's not just help for yourself, you need those other people too.

[00:41:07] So that's, I think, where we really are heading towards which I'm very happy about because I don't see that a lot of people are doing that. Like, you look on, you know---because, obviously, they don't have to come through us. I mean, I'm happy if people lose weight anyway, but I can only do so much by giving people knowledge. It's like, yes, people will debate back and forth and there's trends and, you know, calories and carbs and insulin. And there's debate all about that. That's fine, that's for the scientists. But at the end of the day, there's just not that many places. Like, if you think about it, if you want to get better, you can go to join--- like if you want to get fit, you can go join your running group, or you can join CrossFit, or you can join your gym, or you can do yoga, like, there's great places that you can go to help yourself get fit, right? I'm going to join the tennis club, right? It's great. There's no similar place like that for weight loss. Like, yes, there's Weight Watchers, but it's very sort of regimented in a certain way. You know, they have some of the things that we talk about like communities and stuff, but, you know, we're talking more about actually individualized coaching along with the Community and bringing in some of these powerful tools, from cognitive-behavioral therapy, right? And I don't think they do that. And then it's like, who else? Where else are you going to go? It's not like, OK, you know, if you have a gym, you can go to this gym, or you can go to CrossFit, or you can

go to the rack club, or you can go running, or you can join the, you know, the Y and go swimming. Like, you have choice to fit where you are. Like, where else are you going to go? You go to Jenny Craig, which is another big company, right? And they're all about calories and prepackaged food. Well, that's not what I want, so where are people going to get help from, right?

[00:43:02] And that's the problem that I have is that there is nobody else so, if there's nowhere else, that's what we're trying to build, and that's what I hope we can build and, you know, introduce some of these other concepts that I think are actually critically important, but because you don't do a study on it, people say, "Well, you know, it's not important," but it is. It is. It's just human nature. Like, we don't, we're not trying to reinvent anything. We're simply taking stuff that's shown, that's proven, that's been used for thousands of years, like communities and all this sort of stuff and we're trying to bring it into the modern world. That's all it is.

**Megan** [00:43:40] Well, thank you so much for joining us today, Jason. For everybody listening today who'd like to learn more about coaching? Head over to our website - [thefastingmethod.com](http://thefastingmethod.com). From there, you can learn about all of the different ways to work with us. And for our coaching program, we offer complimentary discovery calls so you can meet with a coach, share information about what your goals are, and see if it's a great fit for you. And every coaching package comes with free access to our Community, which you can download at the iOS store and the Google Play Store on any smart devices, as well as access from the Web.

[00:44:16] Well, thank you, Jason, thank you, Nadia. And Nadia and I will be back next week with a Q&A episode. So if you've got questions, send them our way. You can reach us at [podcast@thefastingmethod.com](mailto:podcast@thefastingmethod.com).

[00:44:27] Bye for now, everyone.

**Nadia** [00:44:29] See you next week, guys.