

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**[®]
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 87: How to Stop Emotional Eating (From A
Nutritionist Who Lost 100 Pounds!)

Katie: This podcast is brought to you by Four Sigmatic. If you follow me on Instagram, you've probably seen me mention them because I have been using and loving and Instagramming their products for years. They have an amazing instant mushroom coffee. Hear me out before you think it's weird. I know, mushroom coffee doesn't sound good. It's not only the best instant coffee I've ever tried, it's also pretty high up on the list of best coffee I've tried. It's cheaper than coffee shop coffee and it's so convenient because it's so portable and it tastes so much better. But it isn't just ordinary coffee. It has super food mushrooms like Lion's Mane, Cordyceps, and Chaga mushrooms. And these mushrooms have some big health benefits, and especially immune benefits. I personally, especially love them for the energy and the mental clarity without the jitters from traditional coffee. And did I mention how good it tastes? So I always take these instant coffee packets with me when I travel, and I also always drink it at home these days now that they have a big tin that lasts about a month so I don't have to open a little packet every day.

Some friends of ours recently traveled for three months carrying only the backpacks on their backs, and they brought an entire three months supply of this instant coffee in their bag that had limited space. In other words, this coffee beat out a pair of jeans for how important it was to make it in the bag. It's that good. And, of course, if you aren't a caffeine person, they also have a variety of mushroom tea and other products that don't have the coffee so you can get the benefits without the caffeine. And I love them so much that I reached out and they agreed to give a discount to my listeners. So go to foursigmatic.com/wellnessmama and use the code "WELLNESSMAMA" to get 10% off. That's Four Sigmatic, F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/wellnessmama.

If you're like me, and you live in an area where it's sometimes hard to find any kind of specialty ingredients, especially if you're talking about organic ingredients, gluten-free foods or allergy-friendly foods, I highly recommend that you check out Thrive Market. So Thrive is like a combination of Costco, Amazon and Whole Foods and here's why I say that.

So like Costco, they have a yearly membership fee and this lets you access all of their special pricing and deals. Like Amazon, they're online and they also have very fast shipping and it's usually free with most orders. And then, like Whole Foods, they carry high quality foods and specialty ingredients, and especially focus on GMO-free and organic foods. So it's really been helpful to me and I know that you're going to love it too. You can also get a free jar of coconut oil with your first order. So check them out. Go to thrivemarket.com/wellnessmama.

Katie: Welcome to The Healthy Moms Podcast. I am Katie from wellnessmama.com, and it's gonna be such a fun hour chatting with today's guest. Stephanie Dodier is a clinical nutritionist, a weight loss, and emotional eating expert, an author, a speaker, and host of "The Beyond Food Show". Her integrated and comprehensive approach to nutrition focuses on finding root causes and aligning your body and mind.

The thing I love most about her story is she's been there too. Her own health journey began six years ago. She was working as a senior executive in a Fortune 500 corporation, and she started having panic attacks. And so, this led her on a journey of health, eventually completely transformed her life, regained her health, and now she's on a mission to help others do the same. In the process of her own transformation, she lost a 100 pounds and resolved a lot of her health conditions, and of course is now passionate about helping others do the same. So Stephanie, welcome. Thank you for being here.

Stephanie: Thank you for having me on your show. It's such an honor.

Katie: I'm glad to have you here. I think your story is gonna be really inspiring to a lot of people, and you have some

awesome resources. So like I mentioned, you have a really powerful story and your life was pretty dramatically changed about six years ago. So can you tell that story? What was your own personal journey, both from weight loss and from health?

Stephanie: Absolutely. So I'm gonna actually get you back in time till I was about 11 years old, when my family moved from one end of town to the other. And at that age, as you probably know, you're not driving a car, so I lost all my friends. And so, it was pretty traumatic to me and I turned to food. I love cooking and baking. My mama taught me how to cook and I just started expressing this feeling of loneliness through food, and I began my relationship to food at that young age. That led me towards my first diet, which actually was at the age of 15.

I went to weight watcher and I lost a bunch of weight being on that typical low-fat, low-calorie restriction and I gained a whole bunch of friends. And that's when my body image was kind of challenged at that point, because I associated being lean with having a friend and being good, and being weight challenged with having like low self-esteem. I continued on in my life with that mindset, and that led me to work in the corporate world.

So at the age of 25, I started working for a corporation known as Hudson's Bay Company in Canada. By the time I was 35, I was an executive vice-president. So you can only imagine how much of a workaholic behavior I had towards work at that point. So now, you're combining an emotional relationship to food and working way too much. You end up having a lot of health condition, and as you mentioned earlier, my health collapsed. So at 35, I was laying on in a hospital bed thinking I had a heart attack.

I woke up from that place and was told that actually it wasn't a heart attack. The doctor didn't know how my heart was really healthy, although I was significantly overweight and smoked half-pack a day of cigarette at that point, and I had panic attack. That led me to my doctor who prescribed me anti-depression and anti-anxiety medication. Coming out of that office with that prescription slip in my hand, that's when I had like what I call now a ah-ha moment. It's like I physically remember everything that happened, how the hallway look like and I was walking down holding that prescription and I'm like, "I have a choice to make."

If I go down the path of prescription, then my life will take a turn. And if I don't, it will be a better experience. So I decided not to take the medication and that's when my world changed. I actually went and hired a health coach to help me gain health, which a by-product of that was losing weight. But my first objective was to eliminate my panic attack. And in his world and his view, he actually helped me lose the weight because he knew that was at the root cause of...part of the root cause of my panic attack.

So I went down this path of healing myself, but the trigger was actually that panic attack. When I dig down as to why I was having panic attack, it was really like my health and my belief around myself. That's why I brought you back at the beginning, to the time I was 11. This whole belief in myself, combined with overworking and poor nutrition led me to the world of panic attacks. So that's a very condensed version of my story, Katie.

Katie: Yeah. I'm sure probably people listening here echoes the things that they struggle with in your story as well. So you mentioned that that was the pivot moment for you.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Katie: So what was the very first thing that you changed on your own journey, and how did that kind of spark the rest of the journey?

Stephanie: So that's a very good question. Because I at that point, the very first thing I wanted to change was my weight. Given my whole life-long relationship with my weight and how I believe that being overweight or having too much weight on your body was a bad thing and I had this negative relationship with it. When this trouble happened to me, the

very first thing I turned to was my weight. I thought strictly by losing the weight, I would feel better, no longer have panic attack and be able to continue on my corporate journey and my fulfillment towards my career.

So that was the very first thing I wanted to do, and to do that, like I said, I hired a coach to help me. And what we did, we changed food and we input it into my life movement. So the gentleman I worked with at the time, actually put me on a paleo diet and at the time I perceived that as a diet. So I went into this paleo lifestyle, starting to eat real food. He was big about eating real food. We changed the breakfast. We changed the lunch.

And then, I went on to live this life of eating a ton of vegetables, average amount of proteins and a little bit of healthy fat. I went on to lose 100 pounds. Here is the cool thing, for any of you who've been experiencing the paleo lifestyle, you don't feel hungry. That to me was an absolute revelation. Because all the diets that I had been on before, and God forbid I had been on all of them, all made me hungry and I had to suffer through hunger, and the paleo lifestyle allowed me to eat and not be hungry. Therefore, I didn't have to count any calories.

So my tagline to people is I lost 100 pounds without counting calories, and they're like they can't understand because that's not what the diet world teaches us online. But it is possible to be done and that's what I did. And surprising to me, not only my anxiety and my panic attack subsided, but my diagnosis of pre-diabetes, cholesterol, panic attack and also skin condition actually all went away. And to me after a year of going through this lifestyle change, I was absolutely blown away by that because that's not what I expected. All I wanted was to stop the panic attack and be able to continue to work. So it was actually a very interesting process.

Katie: That is really interesting and I am curious. First of all, how long did it take you to lose a 100 pounds? And also, like I feel like so many women have this kind of panaceaic idea of weight loss. And if they lose weight, they'll have a better body image and feel better about themselves immediately... So I'm curious. Was that your experience or did you still have to kind of struggle through that as well?

Stephanie: So to answer your first question, it took me about 12 months, so a year to lose 100 pounds. However, to answer your second question. I was exactly like all your listener or most of your listener thinking that when I lost the weight, my life would be perfect, and that's actually not what happened. I remember again a pivotal moment, as you said earlier in my life, one was the prescription coming out of my doctor office.

But the second one was almost 13 months into this journey, I lost a 100 pounds. I'm sitting behind my desk at work. My assistant is leaving my office and she's closing the door behind her, and I have this like light-bulb moment, "Oh my God. You're not happy." This is not what life should feel like when you lose a 100 pounds. You should be happier and I remember very vividly realizing that I wasn't happy, that weight did not equal happiness.

I still overworked, still had a very low social encounter with people, because my behavior that got me sick, did not all change. Yes, I changed the food and I started exercising more. But my mindset was still challenging and it led me to not feel good about myself. So I was where most people are today, believing that weight was there. But to have gone through it, I now know that it's not the case.

Now, I wanna preface this by saying most of my patients and the people I worked with online wanna lose weight. And you should begin the process of losing weight through addressing the food component of your life but don't dismiss the other aspect, which is emotional, psychological, psychosomatic aspect of your health, because weight alone will not get you to that place of happiness that most of us bottom line were looking for. Weight is just a tool to get there but what we really want is to feel good, happy, blessed, and joyful in our life.

Katie: Absolutely. So you're mentioned now your clients that you work with. So let's talk about your transition. Because not only did you change your health, but you changed careers too. When did this happen or what was the spark for changing from a corporate career, to now what you do with helping others? And also, how did the emotions play into

that? Like at what point did you address that emotional aspect, where you still weren't happy?

Stephanie: Absolutely. So the spark was that moment sitting in my office, realizing that I wasn't happy. And the universe or God, whoever you believe in, worked his magic at the same time. I want to say to people, everything happens for a reason and that's the critical component to seeing that story. About 10 days after me having this light-bulb moment, I met a new person in my life, a new friend of mine, who actually gave me a book, a book called the "Anatomy of the Spirit" by Dr. Caroline Myss.

I read it through a weekend and it just blew me away, because what Dr. Myss is explaining to the readers is that the connection between what goes on in your head, your mind and the physical body, and the actual science behind how your thoughts affect your physiology in your body, and that to me, that was a revelation. I never heard of that before. I still remember reading the book and like, "Oh my God. This is me." This is the reason why I'm not happy. Although I lost 100 pounds, I have challenging thought patterns in my head all the time.

So that led me down the rabbit hole of the whole mind-body connection, and once I realized that and I realized the power of having a better input in your head through your thoughts and a better input through your food that you eat and what it can do to your body, I could not stay doing what I did. I had to come back to my roots, which was actually science education. I have a health degree in science, and I wanted to share that message.

The other element of this is that just like you said to me, my story is very inspirational. People kept telling me all along the way that I had a lot of power in my story and I could not keep it down. I needed to share it to people. So combined that with what I had discovered, I went back to school. I left my job and that was a very, very scary choice, but I left my job and I went back to school. I engaged myself in a program of nutrition and alternative medicine school. I graduated and I launched a business, a clinic. I opened a clinic locally in the Toronto area. And now, I have transitioned that business to working online, strictly online, with mainly just women.

Katie: Got you. That's a cool story of how you... I feel like a lot of us had those moments as well. Like when you kind of learn new information and it makes it impossible to keep doing what you're doing anymore. And you've mentioned that emotional connections several times. So talk about how emotions can fill cravings and how you kind of dialed into this yourself and realized what was going on.

Stephanie: So that's a very good piece of education and I believe that we need to take our responsibility in healing, all of us out there. Nobody will come and save us. We actually need to learn to stuff ourselves. So here is a little piece of education for you about homeostasis, which is when we talk about Homeostasis, we talk about a state of balance and that's what our body wants to achieve.

The ultimate goal of our body and our mind, it's actually to achieve the state of homeostasis, both physically and emotionally and socially, where we are balanced, healthy, and happy. When our body detect a lack of balance, a.k.a. a lack of homeostasis in their body, it will activate alarm bell, alarm system or what we know in medical today, symptoms. So everybody is familiar with headaches, with inflammation or pain.

Those are mechanism of alarm that our body is out of balance somewhere. It could be psychologically. It could be emotionally. But our body is out of balance. So what the body is trying to do through the symptom is actually get our attention so we can change either our input of food, input of thoughts, lifestyle, behavior. So we can come back and balance and continue to live our happy life. What I discovered and what is already known in the world of science, is that cravings are actually just another set of symptoms.

So when we crave food, we're actually creating an alarm bell that something is imbalanced, and that can be either physical imbalance, it could be social imbalance. It could be an emotional imbalance. And through my own journey, and again working mainly with women, I have discovered and also observed clinically that the vast majority of our craving,

once we figured out the basic of the diet, are actually emotional. That's kind of to be expected when we understand what a woman is, right? We are emotional being. We are caring being. We create life. We raise children. We are emotional being.

So if we don't self-regulate our emotion properly, we will either want to medicate our emotion through an addiction behavior, whatever, be it alcohol or drugs or sex, whatever the addiction of choice is, or can be food as well, so we want to make our self feel better. We wanna medicate, we wanna numb, because our emotion are not in alignment with that state of homeostasis, a state of balance and happiness that I referred to earlier. And that unfortunately is not known, neither did I knew that. Because most of the information we get about craving or emotional eating is directed by the diet in the fitness industry.

The message that we are receiving consistently is that our craving are our enemy. Our body is betraying us. We are weak. We lack will power. If we can only have more mental strength, all of that would go away. But I'm here to tell you that is not. Because our craving are only a symptom of something else going on inside of you. And until we make that shift, we make that shift of seeing our food craving as our friend and not our enemies, we will battle them for the rest of our life. We will never be at peace with our food relationship. So long way around to explain that to you, Katie.

Katie: Yeah. No, exactly. I definitely agree with what you're saying. So what are some of the practical ways that you work with people to master their food cravings and to move past those symptoms?

Stephanie: Good question. Understanding that it's a state of balance and our craving are only symptoms, there is two big categories, physical, emotional, psycho-spiritual or psychological behavior. What we need to understand is what causes those triggers. So if I can quickly go through that with the listener here, physical craving. The main root cause of physical craving is blood sugar dysregulation, nutritional deficiency, hormonal dysregulation. And in that, we can pack in insulin resistance, leptin resistance, and female hormone dysregulation.

Which by the way a quick tip that I just learned today, a quick piece of information. The reason why we crave food, closer to our periods, like closer to the bleeding section of our period, is because our estrogen levels are lower. Research is showing that women towards the end of their period, actually eat anywhere between 200 and 600 calories more. Isn't it interesting? So physical is a big component.

The cool thing about this whole process is that if we regulate food, if we go to a real food diet, we lower our intake of processed food and sugar, we allow the body to regulate its blood sugar. We allow the body to regulate hormones. We allow the body to regulate our microbiome. The physical craving will heal itself very, very quickly. Then we will be left with this emotional pool of craving, which is where we numb our emotion, where actually not only numb, but in some cases, people that have very low engagement with their social circle that provides them joy and happiness will actually seek food as a way of giving themselves that happiness through the prime example of that to sugar craving. Because sugar will actually stimulate the reward center and release dopamine in the body, which is the happy feel good neurotransmitter.

So if there is not enough natural stimulant of that dopamine release, of that happiness in our environment and our relationship, we actually can seek that through our food. So all of those elements combine our emotions. So what we need to do for all of you listening, who want to start diving into this, is actually understanding how and what it looks like. So in my Crave Cure Guide, which is a free guide that I give on the Internet, if you go to stephaniedodier.com/cravecureguide, totally free, I actually dissect everyone of those in a much greater length. But I also teach you about seven signs of emotional hunger versus seven signs of physical hunger. What I teach people first is to differentiate both.

You need to start tuning into your body and trying to defer what your body is trying to send you for messages. So the very first sign...and we'll dive into emotional craving first for you to understand that piece and it's gonna be very easy.

Emotional hunger, the number one sign, it's a sudden. By that, you'll see sitting at your desk, you're quietly doing your emails on your laptop and all over sudden, boom, that picture of that chocolate bar is coming into your head and all you can think about is going for that piece of chocolate you have in the cupboard, Or going to buy that treat bar at the cafeteria in the office.

So you are suddenly having an urge for food and it's for a specific food. That's a major three of emotional eating. It is specific, urgent, and sudden. Now, as you become more acquainted with your emotion, what will happen when you do this exercise, it will realize that this urge of eating this one food, very sudden, is also paired with an emotion of some type. It could be an emotion of stress. It could be an emotion of stress. It could be an emotion of joy as well.

So we have this connection between our emotion, this trigger that came in and very often women will tell me, as they're working at their computer, they'll see an email come in in their mailbox that they've been worried about or they've been fearing an email come in, likely from their boss. It comes in and then within two minutes, the craving for the chocolate or the treat will come in. So what it tells us is that when we feel this emotional stress or fear, our body does not want to feel this emotion. So it makes you wanna go to that piece of chocolate or that sugary treat as a mean of not feeling the emotion that just got triggered.

So if I recap, an emotional craving or an emotional hunger is sudden. It is food specific. It's urgent. It's paired with some kind of emotion. The last three sign is actually when you eat, when you finally get to that treat or that chocolate bar, you will eat not being present, what we call absent-minded eating. Meaning that you will put that chocolate bar in your mouth and first thing you'll know, the chocolate bar is completely consumed and you're only left with the wrapper in your hand. That's absent-minded eating. We don't notice fullness.

And that's when many women will tell me, "I over eat," because they just eat and eat and eat and eat and eat, and actually never feel fullness in themselves. Because really, when you think about it, if we're trying to numb or not feel an emotion through food, it's never gonna work. So we're gonna eat and eat and eat and eat, never achieving what we desire, which is not to feel the emotion. And the last sign, any time you eat and you feel guilty about eating, that is a primary sign of emotional eating. Because food should never indo shame, guilt, or negative thoughts about ourselves. If we're eating from a place of nourishment, there is no emotional equation at the end.

So to answer your question, that's where we start, Katie. We start by understanding emotional eating/craving, versus physical craving that are rooted in wanting to nourish our body.

Katie: So on a practical level, you are encouraging a kind of a low-carb real food approach, which is like you mentioned as a paleo approach. So I'd love for you to explain like why you chose this specific approach, and then what benefits you've seen both in yourself and also in your clients.

Stephanie: Good question. I get this a lot for people coming in, in my world. So one thing that I want everyone to know is that number one, "The American Journal of Nutrition" has defined guideline for low carbohydrate diet. So I'm gonna take you through the three different types of low carbohydrate diet, and then we'll get into why I chose those. So moderate low carbohydrate is actually between 130 gram to 225 grams of carbohydrate a day. That's typically a paleo template, minus the bread-like recipe, or the cake, or the cookies. Like I'm talking about a real-food nourishing paleo template, which is eat three meals a day and lots of vegetables, moderate amounts of protein and healthy fats, and not trying to mimic the North American diet in which we make a lot of bread recipes, and a lot of treats and so forth.

So what I call more of a therapeutic paleo lifestyle, so that's a 130 gram to 200 grams a day, and that's a moderate low carbohydrate. So you can actually put paleo in the world of low-carb. The next layer is what we call low carbohydrate diet and that's between 50 grams to 130 grams of carbohydrate. And then the last one is very low-carb/ketogenic, which is anywhere between 50 to 20 gram of carbohydrate.

What I want the listener to know is that ketogenic diet or very low-carb diet are actually what we deem in the world of nutrition as therapeutic diets. So diets that are designed to help relieve a specific condition. So a therapeutic adjunct to a treatment of a condition. So ketogenic or very low-carb diet is not where I recommend most people to start, unless you have been diagnosed with a condition that will actually require you to go on a very low-carbohydrates/ketogenic diet.

Very interestingly, I was just interviewing Dr. Wahls recently on my podcast. And she does the same recommendation. She has three types of Wahls protocol diet and the very last one is a ketogenic diet and that is not where she starts people, and that's the same thing for me. So my recommendation is not to start with keto, it's actually to start with a low-carbohydrate diet. Because most of your physical craving, what we talked about earlier as being your blood sugar dysregulation, nutritional deficiency, hormonal imbalance, or microbiome issue, will actually, for a vast majority of the ladies out there, will get relief with a low-carb to moderate low-carb diet.

The simple fact that we're changing from processed diet to real food will eliminate a vast majority of those physical craving. That's why I chose to work with low-carbohydrate diet. But one thing that many people more and more are asking is, because ketogenic diet is the new buzz word in the world of nutrition, there is more and more people talking about it. So people right away will put together a low-carb with ketogenic, and that's not the case.

So recommendation is a moderate to low-carb/real food paleo diet is the best option. Remember, we're all different. So we all have a bio-individuality. Meaning that for some people, having a higher level of carbohydrate will do better for their body. And for others, it will be a ketogenic approach. Because based on their health history, that's the better choice for their body to thrive in. That's where we wanna get to. We want to get to a place where we can feel what's going on in our body, so we can make the best decision for our body and our health, not be dictated by someone else, by a website, by a book, what we should be doing.

That is very difficult particularly for people that have an emotional relationship to food. So people who struggle with emotional craving or an emotional eating, they're having a difficult time making a decision that centered around what they feel in their body, because their relationship to food has always been one that they've avoided actually connecting with their body through their relationship to food.

So now, I'm asking them to feel how they're doing with a certain profile of micro nutrient and developing that intimate relationship to feeling. That's something that people that have an emotional relationship to food are completely in fact to do, and that's the challenge. That's the beauty of the whole program, is actually to develop those habits so you can reconnect with your body, feel what's going on in your body. And that will not only allow you to select the right lifestyle for yourself, but it will in the long-term heal your emotional relationship to food because you will feel what goes on in your body.

Katie: Yeah, exactly. I think you're right. There is a very individualized approach. I know for me right now, like for instance, because I have Hashimoto, so I feel best on no flours at all, not even like the "paleo ones," not almond flour, coconut flour, any of those, and not sweeteners, so even the natural ones. But I am eating still low-ish-carb, but like things like sweet potatoes and just other forms of natural carbs. I feel like my thyroid does better in that range.

But I'm curious if... So obviously, everyone is individual. But have you had any issues with anyone having thyroid or adrenal problems? I know that that's a controversial topic in the paleo community with them, should you eat low-carb as a woman or not?

Stephanie: Absolutely. That's what we call a touchy subject. So let's divide those two categories. So adrenal fatigue, also non-functional medicine at HPA dysregulation. So if you heard both terms or if you've been quoted by your practitioner as both term, that's what we call adrenal fatigue for the context of this question today. So can a ketogenic diet cause adrenal fatigue, the answer is no. It's not the causal effect of adrenal fatigue.

What we know with adrenal fatigue, what causes adrenal fatigue is in vast majority psychosomatic. Meaning by that is our stress reaction, our perception to stress in our life, which is mainly what happen in our head, is actually dysregulated and it's commending different reaction in our body to happen. And one of them is the dysregulation of our cortisol hormones which will lead to what we call adrenal fatigue.

Now, will a low-carbohydrate help you heal from adrenal fatigue? Yes. Can a ketogenic help you heal from adrenal fatigue? Yes. However, remember what I said from the beginning, this is not the starting point for most people. So if you have been diagnosed or told that you have adrenal fatigue, don't go to a ketogenic. And the reason is it's a stressor to the body. Restricting the carbohydrate to less than 20 grams a day is a drastic step. And for some people, based on their condition, they have no choice but to do that to heal their condition.

But if that's not you and you simply have mismanagement of stress in your body, going through a ketogenic diet is not the answer. Going to a real food low-carbohydrate is likely the answer nutritionally. But be aware that your adrenal fatigue is not strictly being healed through food. There is a lot of lifestyle, behavior, thought process that needs to be addressed for you to heal from that condition. So that's my point of view on adrenal.

Now thyroid, Katie, that's totally something that is very discussable at this point because the research is very minimal. Now, there is research and there is literature showing that a very low-carb/ketogenic diet, less than 20 grams a day, lower your T3. For the listener, if you have a condition that's related to thyroid, we're gonna measure a different component of your thyroid hormones. So TSH, T3 and T4, Reverse T3 and T4, will also be measured. But for the context of today, we'll stay within TSH, T3 and T4.

So what has been shown is that a ketogenic/very low-carb diet lowers T3. It does not affect T4, it does not TSH, but it lowers T3. What the misunderstanding is, for the general population, is that a hypothyroid condition, so a lower functioning thyroid gland is not effective. For some people, they think it's strictly T3. But it's an ensemble, it's the three hormones playing together. So T3, in the context of the ketogenic diet and being lowered, will not automatically equal hypothyroidism. It's a combination of element to get that, I don't wanna call it a disease, but that name of that condition.

So if you have a thyroid condition, based on what we know in lowering T3, we still don't know if that's a bad thing or a good thing, because other literature or rather study will show that low T3 is actually a sign of longevity. So a population that live very, very long have actually a lower T3 level. Again, there is no definite study showing yes or no.

But I will not, in the case of a thyroid condition, refer you to a very low-carb diet. I would refer you to what you're doing, Katie, which is a low-carb diet, which is mainly real food with an abundance of vegetables and an abundance of protein and healthy fat, and to help you in a context of your thyroid condition. So I hope that answered your question.

Katie: It does. And to switch gears a little bit...also I wanted to touch on this, I feel it will be really relevant for a lot of listeners. So from what I read, you are also a GAPS practitioner and you train directly under Dr. Natasha McBride-Campbell. And there are very few of these in North America. So I'd love for you to talk about how you got into the GAPS world and then what kind of result you're seeing with clients especially on GAPS.

Stephanie: Absolutely. So in my world of connecting the mind and the body, it also took me down the rabbit hole of the microbiome. So in starting to read a lot on the bacteria in our gut, I came across Dr. Natasha McBride-Campbell, and coincidentally within a few weeks, that's what we were being taught in school about the GAPS protocol. So I looked her up, she was in New York giving a class. So I ended up sitting with her for four days, I think the training was. And to this day, the GAPS protocol is still, not in the entirety, but the fundamental principle of it is still what I apply in all my protocol.

The work and the research and the passion behind this woman is absolutely phenomenal. And healing the gut to me is

the root of all disease. So I'm not a functional medicine practitioner, because I haven't finished my degree in that. However, I abide by all the principle and all disease are rooted in the gut. I firmly believe that the protocol that Dr. McBride-Campbell or the GAPS protocol is actually the fundamental of what we should apply to heal the guts. And that is a lot of bone broth, a lot of reduction in certain type of carbohydrate, that actually activates certain types of bacteria into your gut and help you re-balance your gut.

So absolute fan of it, apply it in almost all of my protocol and it will help you with cravings as well. Because we know that a good proportion of your sugar craving are actually directed directly from your microbiome. On my podcast again, I did an interview with Dr. Will Cole. I did an entire series, which some of your listener might benefit from if you're into this food craving search, as a way of achieving your health goal. I did a crave cure series.

So the whole month of May, 2017, I actually interviewed 10 health experts and 10 reasons why we crave. And Dr. Will Cole came onto the podcast to talk about the interaction between our microbiome and our craving. And one of the evident information that he brought to us was yeast overgrowth, which is an element of the GAPS protocol is seeking to heal. One of them is the yeast overgrowth.

So there is a clear correlation between yeast overgrowth and sugar craving, because those little buggers needs to be nourished and fed with sugar. So yeast overgrowth and sugar craving, and that's what the GAPS protocol in part will help you heal, so definite combination between the two.

Katie: That's great. That's really helpful.

This podcast is brought to you by Four Sigmatic. If you follow me on Instagram, you've probably seen me mention them because I have been using and loving and Instagramming their products for years. They have an amazing instant mushroom coffee. Hear me out before you think it's weird. I know, mushroom coffee doesn't sound good. It's not only the best instant coffee I've ever tried, it's also pretty high up on the list of best coffee I've tried. It's cheaper than coffee shop coffee and it's so convenient because it's so portable and it tastes so much better. But it isn't just ordinary coffee. It has super food mushrooms like Lion's Mane, Cordyceps, and Chaga mushrooms. And these mushrooms have some big health benefits, and especially immune benefits. I personally, especially love them for the energy and the mental clarity without the jitters from traditional coffee. And did I mention how good it tastes? So I always take these instant coffee packets with me when I travel, and I also always drink it at home these days now that they have a big tin that lasts about a month so I don't have to open a little packet every day.

Some friends of ours recently traveled for three months carrying only the backpacks on their backs, and they brought an entire three months supply of this instant coffee in their bag that had limited space. In other words, this coffee beat out a pair of jeans for how important it was to make it in the bag. It's that good. And, of course, if you aren't a caffeine person, they also have a variety of mushroom tea and other products that don't have the coffee so you can get the benefits without the caffeine. And I love them so much that I reached out and they agreed to give a discount to my listeners. So go to foursigmatic.com/wellnessmama and use the code "WELLNESSMAMA" to get 10% off. That's Four Sigmatic, F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/wellnessmama.

If you're like me, and you live in an area where it's sometimes hard to find any kind of specialty ingredients, especially if you're talking about organic ingredients, gluten-free foods or allergy-friendly foods, I highly recommend that you check out Thrive Market. So Thrive is like a combination of Costco, Amazon and Whole Foods and here's why I say that.

So like Costco, they have a yearly membership fee and this lets you access all of their special pricing and deals. Like Amazon, they're online and they also have very fast shipping and it's usually free with most orders. And then, like Whole

Foods, they carry high quality foods and specialty ingredients, and especially focus on GMO-free and organic foods. So it's really been helpful to me and I know that you're going to love it too. You can also get a free jar of coconut oil with your first order. So check them out. Go to thrivemarket.com/wellnessmama.

Katie: I'd love for you to really address like what do you think are some of the biggest obstacles that people, and especially women, are having to being healthy right now? All of us who work in this world now a lot of these problems are on the rise. So from your work, what do you see is the biggest reasons for this?

Stephanie: I would say the number one reason is disconnection from our body. So we are in a phase of medicine right now and healing, which the scientific awareness and the knowledge that we have is taking us to a type of choice and behavior that disconnect us from our body. And by that, I mean we're letting ourselves be dictated particularly for eating behavior what we should eat. Are we paleo? Are we keto? Are we vegan? Are we raw vegan? I mean there's all kinds of label on the way we eat.

And when we are absorbed by that, we are not connected to what our body needs. Science is great and I'm a big science buff and I love reading studies. However, this is only a part of the picture. So we wanna be mindful of the amounts of information we're taking in, versus the amount of connection we have in feeling what's going on in our body.

Again, particularly when it comes to women's health, being that we are more emotional, if we disregard this element of our being, it will likely not take us where we want to be ultimately. Because we're ignoring 50% of who we are, which is this emotional being. So to me, that is the biggest challenge and I see it all the time, when people come into my community and they start their program. They are strictly focused on which food should they eat and how much should they eat, and what's the rules about this and what's the rules about that. And as they're going through the program, then you're starting seeing those ladies just chilling out and actually asking themselves what is the right answer to what their body needs.

Trust me, ladies, we have those answer inside of us. So to me, that is the biggest challenge that we have, is that connection between what's going on up in our head, in our body, and cultivating that connection. Interestingly enough, one of the best way of connecting our mind and the body is, yes, meditation. We've all heard the benefit of it. We know that. But it's also through our relationship to food.

Because if we no longer respond to rules and regulations about food, and we let ourselves be fed by our intuitive hunger, meaning that we are going inside of ourselves and asking, "Am I hungry? What am I hungry for? Why am I craving chocolate cake? Why am I feeling that I'm not satiated enough?" When we're asking ourselves that question, we are cultivating that relationship between the mind and the body, and that's very challenging for most of us to do.

I know for me, that was by far and it is still to this day my number one work, as far as my health is concerned, is connecting my mind and my body. I choose to do that, yes, through meditation. But I still do it into the way I feed myself and that's what I teach, is I teach women to look at their food relationship and you can call it a spiritual way.

Katie: That makes perfect sense and it's great to see... I've looked at your website. I know that a lot of women seem to have really seen changes from that. And I think that's an important aspect, that you're right. That we sometimes miss when we just talk about diet and macros and percentages and rules. We missed the important aspect of listening to ourselves and the bio-individuality of every person.

So to wrap up, a question that I would love to ask are, what are a few things that people don't seem to know or understand about your area of expertise or research? And how do you clear up that confusion for them?

Stephanie: For me, it's emotional eating. So the relationship between not wanting to feel emotion in our eating behavior. It takes a lot of courage to want to look at that, and many people in the science world will deny that. They will say, strictly by adhering to rules and eating less carbohydrate and doing this, you will be able to subside all your craving. It might be true for a percentage of the population. But for another percentage of the population, which is what I call my peeps, that's not the case. And that's leads to a lot of frustration, a lot of shame, a lot of guilt, a lot of negative thoughts in our head, because we just can't make it work for us.

So that is the biggest confusion that I see and I have people coming to me, particularly from some of the more stricter community, either Vegan or either Keto, they're coming saying, "Well, I've tried everything and I've worked so hard and it didn't work for me. I'm such a bad person. What's wrong with me?" There is actually nothing wrong with you. You're just not connected to your emotion, and you're actually using food as a way of disconnecting yourself. So to me, Katie, the number one element is the whole mind-body connection, and that can have such a huge impact on our health and our happiness.

Katie: I agree. And I love that you're spreading this message to people, and definitely wish you continued success with all your work. I will have links in the show notes for everyone who, if they want to find you and your work, about your website. Can you let everybody know where to find you?

Stephanie: Absolutely. So if you want my guide, my Crave Cure Guide, which is the overall approach, so www.stephaniedodier/cravecure and that's my website. You'll get to that space where you can give me your email and I send you the guide. My website is stephaniedodier.com and you can also find me on social media. I'm very present on Facebook. I have a private Facebook group for women. Because it's very emotional what I do, so we segregated that into a private Facebook group. I'm also present on Instagram. I share my personal life on Instagram.

Katie: Awesome. I will make sure that those are all linked in the show notes so that people can find you. But thank you for taking the time and for all of your work that you do and helping others on the same journey that you yourself made it through. So thank you so much.

Stephanie: Thank you, Katie.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening. I'll see you next time on The Healthy Moms Podcast.

If you're enjoying these interviews, would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means even more moms and families could benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time, and thanks as always for listening.