

Be Your Own Bestie with Tessa Romero

## **Be Your Own Bestie with Tessa Romero**

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**0:00:02.1 Ben Raskin:** Welcome to Let's Go! With USANA. My name is Ben Raskin, and we have a great show for you. Our guest today is Tessa Romero, she's a life and fitness coach and an expert on mind body alignment. Tessa is founder of Body by Mommy coaching. And if you're not watching her fun and fresh videos on Instagram, you are totally missing out, she's a busy mother of two and encourages moms everywhere to be their own bestie. Our theme today is weight loss, more specifically why you're not losing weight, you've tried diet after diet and more exercise plans than you care to admit. They've all failed, which obviously means you failed, or at least that's what the self-talk inside your head keeps saying, it's like there's this nagging little stranger trapped in your brain that keeps pushing you down, and worst of all, you keep inviting him back in for more. This begs the question, how do you quit to self-doubt and get back on track? Well, that's what Tessa is here to talk about. She's going to offer her insights on silencing the self-hating and provide the tools that you need to become your own best friend. It's time to stop beating yourself up and take back control of your life.

**0:01:07.6 BR:** So welcome to the show Tessa Romero. Tessa, Why do we beat ourselves up?

**0:01:12.9 Tessa Romero:** Great question, Ben. And I think the answer varies from person to person, I know for me personally, I was beating myself up from past experiences that I refused to deal with and heal from, and I just carried them with me into my present and continue to do so into my future, and it wasn't until I got this big wake-up call of like, Oh my gosh, I can't stand my mindset about things, and I'm negative and I feel this anger, but I was like, "Okay, I've gotta change." but really, I think it comes from the experiences that we've been through, the models that have been example to us, and really I think social media plays a big role in this because it's just the sea of comparison and judgment and a lot of negativity.

**0:01:52.6 BR:** And social media really does put... 'Cause it's such a curated way of portraying yourself out to the world, I'm not ever gonna show a picture of myself with my love handles prominently displayed, I'm gonna crop it out so you're gonna get my best chiselled chin, even though it's kind of a fake look.

**0:02:09.1 TR:** Yeah. [chuckle]

**0:02:09.7 BR:** How do you talk to people about not taking social media so serious or not beating yourself up over that?

**0:02:15.8 TR:** Yeah, I think the best way to describe that is this wonderful reel that I came across just a couple of days ago, and I think reels are really catchy right now, I know I really enjoy making them, but I stumbled across this amazing one that was talking about embroidery, and if you compare someone's perfect aesthetic on Instagram and what you're talking about the perfect body and they show this wonderful life and they have all the things and go to all the places, imagining that as like you're looking at something that's been embroidered on a sweater or something, so on the side that you see, it's perfect. But it had... You can read it perfectly, you can see the image just as it's meant to be, but if you flipped it over and saw the other side, you would see all of this extra string all over the place.

**0:03:04.1 TR:** Like if you think about what it looks like on the other side, when you embroider something, it's messy, it's imperfect, it has a lot of flaws to make that perfect scene on the front side of it, and I love that comparison for people to visually see like "Oh my gosh, social media is not what it seems to be." and the nice thing about social media is that we do have the power to decide who we're gonna follow, who we're gonna connect with, what exactly do we wanna consume on a daily basis, so I know I personally try to keep it extremely positive, I don't follow any accounts that make me feel less thin, or if I find myself comparing, I just... I get rid of it. There's no reason to entertain that on your social media.

**0:03:46.9 BR:** Yeah, but it begs a question sometimes we do follow things that are negative without being conscious of it, how do you wake up and recognize that the things you are following just specifically on social media are bad for you?

**0:03:58.4 TR:** Yeah, and to just answer that first part of why we follow those negative things, it's comfortable and it seems relatable like, Oh, she's struggling too let me follow up her 'cause she's so relatable or Yes, cleaning my house is the worst thing, and my kids are so awful she's so relatable. Let me follow up her... So it's comfortable, it's relatable, but really, you choose what relates to you. I don't follow. I would never go across somebody's account that complains about her kids all day and say, This is so relatable, because I don't relate to that.

**0:04:33.2 BR:** Yeah.

**0:04:33.8 TR:** Now, when we say like, this is a problem. I think some people are so consumed in this numbing cycle, they're constantly triggered by something and they're looking for that relatability and they numb with social media, and it's much harder for them to realize like, this is a problem and I do have a negative mindset, and it can take a big wake-up call of just living your life out of alignment with who you wanna be, maybe arguing with your husband more or lashing out on your kids, just not being proud of yourself and loving yourself, and then the stars align and you get really lucky, and you come across an account that's like, it doesn't have to be this way. Sometimes that's the best wake up call, is just seeing someone else do it differently and saying, Well, gosh, how come I'm not like that. How come I can't be positive.

**0:05:17.2 BR:** You obviously have great energy, how did you get into this, this life of being of life coach and sort of like exploring this mind-body alignment that you've created, what was the genesis behind that?

**0:05:27.4 TR:** A lot of failure, maybe not failure is the right word, but really it was a lot of struggle and hardship...

**0:05:35.1 BR:** Maybe a lot of setbacks.

**0:05:36.6 TR:** Yeah, setbacks, struggle, challenges, hardship. That got me to saying what I was saying in the beginning of, I'm not happy, I'm just... I don't enjoy this negative mindset, I don't enjoy constantly comparing myself to other people that I'm seeing, not just on social media, but in that gym setting. I know before I had kids, I was working out one to two hours a day, usually six days a week in a gym, and constantly chasing this number on a scale, I was stronger than I'd ever been, but my body image was just in shambles on the floor, it was just... It was never good enough. I was never strong enough, and I did a live video this morning telling everybody at that point of my

life, other people's validation and approval of me was where my self-worth was tied up.

**0:06:24.2 TR:** And that was... It wasn't until I got pregnant and my body started changing like it's meant to do, that I realized, "Oh my gosh. This is not healthy. This is not helping me". So starting my own program of helping women through this is, because I've struggled with it myself. That body image, not knowing who I am. People telling me like, "Well, once you're a mom, you're gonna lose yourself", that's what the common talk is about moms. We lose ourselves. And I became very determined to not do that because it was so... Everyone was saying it and I'm like, "No, I'm not gonna do that so how do I avoid... How do I avoid that?" Well, I need clarity around who I am, I need to remove myself from that gym setting, personally, is what I needed. So, creating my program really came from my own life experiences and saying, "If I can heal me and I can put these pieces together, I can make it easier for other women to do the same thing". It doesn't have to take them years and tremendous hardship and unresolved trauma for the rest of your life in order to get to this place.

**0:07:29.0 BR:** Something I hear a lot about is that, they say like, "stash the scale". Like, "Don't judge yourself, by the weight on top of the scale". And I think a lot of times we go to it because it's an easy metric to see maybe your BMI or whatnot, but when you're talking about re-healing yourself, or like, getting into this really nice place, it sounds like you're trying to find new ways of recognizing success and that success is not found on a scale anymore. Like, how do you recognize success in your own life? And definitely talk more about, when you first started this journey, about how you were able to recognize when you were doing things correctly and you felt good about yourself?

**0:08:05.6 TR:** Yeah, so when I first started, prior to working out at home, when I was in that gym setting, I weighed myself every single day. Every single day that I walked into a gym, the first thing I did is, hit the scale. And see like, "Okay, where am I at?" And it never budged. It never budged. It was always 141.6. And I remember that there was always this number of 135. I'm like, "If I could just get to 135, I'd be happy. I know that I would feel so great, this is what I wanna look like". And my body just wouldn't do it, but really, I had so much muscle mass, where exactly was I gonna lose that six pounds? It wasn't going to happen. And once I stepped away from the gym environment, I didn't have a scale at home to weigh myself, so I got a little bit lucky there. But when I started working out from home, I started seeing my success come from just staying consistent. I was like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so proud of myself". I always thought I needed to go to the gym in order to get it done, 'cause I needed to be in that environment with that energy and it turned out I just needed to create it in my own living room.

**0:09:06.7 TR:** I knew my living room like, "This is the place that I'm gonna work out at this time, I'm gonna do this workout". And I became very committed to that and the longer I stayed consistent the... I rewarded myself with buying heavier dumbbells. And again, I was really strong beforehand, but I was like, "No, I'm not gonna go spend all this money on dumbbells if I'm not... If I can't first prove that I'll use them". So I started with just 10 pound dumbbells. And then it was a month and I was like, "Okay, I've been consistent. I'm gonna go get myself 15s".

**0:09:39.5 BR:** Upped that up there, yeah.

**0:09:40.5 TR:** I upped it up, a little bit and I was like, "I'm just gonna get 15s", and it wasn't until an entire year later that I went and got 20 pound dumbbells. And I've still maintained a tremendous

amount of my muscle mass and I do high intensity level training from home. I still focus on strength training, but I've realized it's not about the weight, so much physically, as it is the weight that you carry mentally and emotionally that's affecting your body's ability to release weight in the first place, that physical weight. So, when you're constantly feeling that stress and fear and judgment, "What about the failure?" Your body is like, I can't release weight, there's a tiger coming". Like, it's so stressed. And I always tell my clients like, "lighten the mental load, lighten the mental load". What do you need to do mentally to find that healing in order to show your body, "Hey, it's okay, we are safe, we are not in the place that we were, this many years ago or that experience", like... And it changes, it changes your entire mindset around that workout. Now, you're looking at that work out like, "Well, this is gonna help me, feel my best".

**0:10:47.5 TR:** "Oh, I've had a snack, let me go for a walk. Let me do a 20-minute work out". Or, just go jump on a trampoline with my kids. Like, you'll turn to activity more to increase your energy.

**0:10:56.5 BR:** So when you talking about lightening the load... I love this idea 'cause I always... Like, Cesar Milan, who's one of my favorite gurus. [chuckle] But he's always like, "We have fight, flight or freeze". And it seems like this is a really bad place to be when you're trying to do into like a healthy lifestyle. It's like, you don't wanna fight the process, you wanna kind of embrace it, you don't wanna freeze 'cause that's like... Entropy and you're not doing anything. And, to have the fear, that's a thing that you can personally take control of... How do you tell your clients to not be so frightful about starting a new workout routine?

**0:11:27.8 TR:** Yeah, I think recognizing what exactly you're afraid of, in the first place, is very helpful. So, if you're like, "Oh gosh, I'm just so nervous to start", "Well, why?", "Well, I'm afraid, I'm afraid that I'm just not gonna stay consistent, because I'm not consistent". Or... And that's where it goes back to my coaching of identity. If you identify, "I am", is going to your identity. If you're using, "I am" and then that word, "inconsistent", that's your identity and your mindset is saying, "You're right and look at all of these ways that we are inconsistent". And then your actions, next, is gonna be a lot more inconsistency, 'cause it's who you believe you are. So in my coaching program, we first start with identity, so that you have this crystal clear vision of, not only who you are, but who you wanna become and how to bridge that gap to get there. And now your mindset gets to say, "Okay, I am consistent because look at all of these ways that I'm consistent. I consistently take care of my kids every single day. We consistently eat dinner, we consistently feed the dogs in the morning". Like, people are incredibly consistent, but we have to stop looking at the one thing that we're doing inconsistently and taking it on as who we are.

**0:12:38.9 TR:** And it would be a lot easier to stay consistent with exercise and come over that fear of, "What if I screw it up?" If we could say, "I am consistent because look at all these ways, I'm consistent. I'm gonna take this skill set and apply it to this one thing that I would love to be more consistent at". And that would be that, "Be your own best friend" mentality too.

**0:13:00.6 BR:** So I'm glad you bring this up, it's like... So, we're talking about, "Be your own bestie", which is something that you champion, about like, being your own best friend. I mean, I think we spend a lot of time in our own heads, and I've been guilty of kind of kicking myself in the backside for not doing what I'm supposed to. How do you become better friends with yourself? How do you embrace that inner you?

**0:13:22.4 TR:** Yeah. Again, clarity around who you believe you are in the first place is extremely helpful. So recognize your identity, get familiar with it, what are you really saying on a daily basis? Is it negative? Is it positive? You just have to be honest to start. It may not be exactly where you want it to be, but you can't pretend it's not there either. That first part, recognize the identity, get familiar with your mindset, what are common things you're saying to yourself? "This is gonna be too hard," or, "I already know that I can't do this." Get familiar with that mindset. Where is it coming from? Is it coming from what someone told you in fourth grade or [laughter] common things that your dad says like, "You never follow through," or your mom saying, "Don't eat that. It's gonna make you fat." Where exactly did our relationship with ourselves get disrupted? Because babies are born loving themselves. If you look at children, they love themselves. They're so confident in their abilities, and that's been one of my greatest blessings as a mother, is to see that self-love come through my kids. I'm just like, "Oh my gosh, [chuckle] you guys love yourself so much!" And it's so beautiful to witness, but I also know that people love themselves as children until they're proven otherwise. Until someone proves to them, this is why you shouldn't love yourself because you're too loud, you are obnoxious, you're annoying, you...

**0:14:42.6 TR:** We could go on and on about what we've been told as kids, and if you think about what you're told as a child, when were you ever told, "Don't believe that! Don't listen to that! You are this." We were never taught how to do that. When you think, "Why is our relationship like this?" Look at your life. [laughter] Look at all the things you've been through.

**0:15:01.0 BR:** Well it's cool what you're doing with your kids, 'cause it's sort of like you're setting the template for them to have a sense of mindfulness, for them to really be able to look inwards, to kinda think of self and evaluation, but also analyze the world around them, and kinda see the connectivity between themselves and others. And then to almost push down the negative from folks that are coming at them. It's sort of like commit positivity.

**0:15:28.0 TR:** Yeah. And also for them to understand that when people are judging us, it comes from their own insecurity. If you look at someone that's very confident in themselves, they're not going around judging [chuckle] other people. And one of my favorite quotes is, "Someone doing more than you will never judge you for where you're at," 'cause they know how much work it takes to get where they're at, so they're just like, "Keep on going sister." [chuckle] It's so good, but if you look at the people that are unhappy with themselves, they're just pouring that onto everyone else around them. Misery loves company. But the problem with being able as a mother to tell your kids, "Don't... That's not true, that's not true. Why do you think Billy said that to you? Do you think Billy feels very confident in his ability to do the math problems? Or maybe it's an insecurity in reading, so he's dumping that on you with math!" Trying to help children understand where it comes from, mothers can't do that until they're doing it for themselves. If you weren't practicing self-love for you, how are you going to teach your kids? If you aren't prioritizing yourself, how will you teach your kids? If you aren't changing your own mindset and your own self-talk, how would you teach your kids? That's another reason why I love working with moms is because I know it helps their kids.

**0:16:43.7 BR:** I loved when you were talking about consistency in your day. Something as simple as feeding the dogs in the morning, maybe taking the pups for a walk before you kinda get into your work day and stuff. And it's like when... You were talking earlier about having things that are incongruous to what your normal schedule is, and then kind of fixing it. It sounds like a good routine is a good basis to sort of start a really healthy journey. Would you agree with that?

**0:17:07.6 TR:** Yeah. This again goes back to kids. Kids thrive with routine and structure. They love to know what's coming next. And as adults, we do so much better with routine and structure. Even if you know you're spontaneous, there are still things that you like to know. I come home to a safe house. Things function, I know that we have everything we need to cook dinner at this time, and that time goes so much further when we cook dinner at this time, back at this time. Everyone feels better with great routine and structure, but I think an issue with it as adults is getting so fixated on, "Well, I have to do my workout at five or I can't do it at all." Well, what if your kids are up all night [laughter] and you didn't get the sleep that you needed [chuckle], and all of a sudden everyone's waking up at 7:00, are you just gonna... That's the problem is we would wake up at seven and say, "Oh my gosh, I've ruined my whole day. I can't do my workout now." Why can't you? Why can't you do it later? Do we have to be so fixated on, "This time or not at all," and that's that all or nothing mentality that... It could really help someone [chuckle] or it can really, really hold them back.

**0:18:14.1 BR:** I like to look at the world in terms of musical styles. There's both classical and then jazz. With classical, it's complicated, it's structured, it has a beginning, middle and end, it's very well defined. Whereas jazz is all based upon... To improvise and stuff, and for me, personally, the best way of living your life is to have elements of both. You want that structure of the classical, which kinda falls into that routine, but when you're improvising, pardon me, I can't pronounce that word, improvisation. [laughter] But when you're improvising with stuff like, "I missed my workout at 5:00, so I'll do it at 7:00. I missed my workout at 7:00, I'll do it at night. I missed my workout today, I'll catch up tomorrow." And I think a lot of it, it goes to really cutting yourself some slack for gosh sakes. It's like, why do you think we're so hard on ourselves? And it seems like sometimes when people make one setback in a workout or a new lifestyle change, they just say, "Screw it, I'm done doing it. I'm not gonna do it anymore." How do you fight through that self-doubt that people create?

**0:19:17.0 TR:** Yeah. I think people don't believe wholeheartedly that they're doing the best they can. And when you refuse to give yourself credit for what you're already doing and recognize like, "I really am doing the best I can..." I talk to women every single day that fight me on that. They're like, "I'm not doing the best I can. I know I'm not. 'Cause I could have folded the basket of laundry instead of watching a show." And then I'll just ask and I go, "Why did you watch a show?" "Well, because my kids were finally asleep, but I just wanted to do something for myself," a lie, 'cause I don't really feel like I ever get to do anything for myself, and the TV just sounded nice. Oh, okay, [laughter] so you really wanted some time to yourself so that we don't experience the burnout or whatever would happen next.

**0:19:57.7 TR:** There's a reason why you did what you did and you really did do the best you can. When you can meet yourself and say, "I'm doing the best I can," it's a lot easier to stand back up and say, "And I'm ready to do it again. I'm ready to do that workout, I'm ready to fold that basket of laundry while I watch a show." Your mind will create a million solutions for whatever you're going through, if you would just believe that you're doing the best you can. But again, was that ever really modeled to us growing up, or was it, "You know you could try harder. You could be doing better. You're not doing your best." That's what we're constantly told as kids. We're not told, "Well, that's okay. You did the best you could. You just got a little frustrated. Let's work on that. How can you make this easier?" We're not [laughter] told that as kids.

**0:20:41.0 BR:** When you got your dumbbells, you went from 10 to 15 to 20 pounds, it's like I think you can make... Even if you had stayed consistently with those 10-pound dumbbells but were continuing working on it and you felt good about yourself, would you have been killing yourself over the fact that you didn't upgrade to 15 to 20 pounders? Can't just consistent, healthy routines everyday just be a victory into itself?

**0:21:04.9 TR:** Oh, they absolutely can. But then we have to step out of comparison. 'Cause if you're looking at someone else who's using more weight, they have the body that you'd like to have, they're stronger, whatever, if you're constantly looking at that, then you're not looking at yourself saying, "Man, I'm doing a good job! This is day 100 for me." [laughter] It doesn't get there. First, you kinda have to prove to yourself, "I am doing the best I can, and here's why." And when you have that self-love to say, "I'm doing the best I can, here's why," you can start being better. But if you're refusing to say that you're doing the best you can, you're probably shaming yourself. And if you're shaming yourself, then you are most certainly numbing with something else.

**0:21:46.4 BR:** I think people sometimes too often numb with cupcakes and [chuckle] not...

**0:21:51.5 TR:** Dude, social media, yeah.

**0:21:54.6 BR:** Yeah. And just lack of sleep. Which, the question I always bring up with people with fitness... Fitness professionals, like you is, how do you encourage people to get better rest and to start looking into their own diets?

**0:22:05.5 TR:** When I wanna help people with that, I help them see like, if you wanna start waking up early in the morning, it doesn't start in the morning, it starts in the night. We have to start looking at, what are you doing the night before? How late are you staying up? It kind of just depends on each client individually, 'cause there are reasons why we stay up late and if it's a numbing thing, then we need to figure out, well what are you numbing from? What's your trigger? What is it that you can't let go of or heal from, and we go that route so that we can release that emotion, lighten that mental load to say, "Oh my gosh, you're right! I do deserve to go to bed early, I don't deserve to be tired every morning staying up late." Change the entire mindset around it, but if you think about when you wanna wake up early the next day, you even have to limit your caffeine the whole day before. Instead of two, three cups of coffee, like stick to one because you're drinking too much caffeine and it's gonna disrupt your sleep.

**0:23:02.5 TR:** And if you're disrupting your sleep, you're not gonna be able to get up earlier. That approach is definitely helpful, and then the same thing with nutrition. "Well, why are you going to sugar so much?" "Well, I've just always had a sweet tooth, I don't know." "Well, let's look at your nutrition a little bit more." Okay, most times they're super dehydrated and not eating enough protein, so if we could just increase their water intake, that alone can help reduce sugar cravings, and then protein does the same exact thing. We feel more satisfied, it reduces sugar cravings. So instead of always focusing on the one thing that they wanna fix, we kinda have to better understand, well, why is it happening in the first place? And that is a great way to change nutrition.

**0:23:42.5 BR:** It's a lot of synergy, it's finding the balance. It's letting go inside of your head a little bit some of that self-negative talk, it's being kinder to the people around you, it's taking moments to watch your shows, when you get an opportunity, it's time... Knowing that, "Hey, it's time to go to bed," because you got a busy day the next day, and it's also... Sort of take a little more of a mindful



approach to how you eat. These are sort of these steps that you're talking about that... Where people can start finding some success while they're starting a new healthy routine.

**0:24:13.6 TR:** Yeah, absolutely. And changing your self-talk is one of the most powerful things you can do for yourself that will show you a whole new world. [laughter] Possibilities and success.

**0:24:26.4 BR:** I was joking before we were starting the show here, is that, for your Think Body by Mommy, it's like I do have a mommy and I do have a body, but I don't have kids, [chuckle] and so I'm not... For men that are, I don't know how many men there are on your program, and so but... How can you make... This is a universal program where everybody can participate in, right?

**0:24:45.8 TR:** Well, technically, I only work with moms, but because I started sharing more reels that I've made with my husband, 25% of my following is now men, whereas before it was like 5%. And the reason why, and several men have been messaging me saying that they really resonate with that self-love and identity and their mindset, they don't love themselves. Men struggle with the same things. They struggle with the same things. And all of this would still apply to a man too. You need to know who you are and your identity. If you're saying a lot of those negative "I am's", that's where your mindset and your actions are coming from. I always say identity gives you permission to be who you wanna be without fear of judgment or failure. Your mindset tells you how to do it. And a little formula is identity plus mindset equals your actions. When you think about it that way, you can look at your actions and trace it back to [chuckle] identity and mindset, or you can look at your identity mindset and predict that actions are going to come from that. But yes, men do struggle with the exact same thing and I would coach them the exact same way when it comes to lightening that mental load and having clarity around who they are.

**0:25:56.6 BR:** I talked about, at the top of the show, about how great your Instagram is, and for those... You really should follow her, they're fun videos. It's a whole family affair. I want you to talk a little bit about how you got started with these... First off, how do you even do these things? They're so funny. [chuckle] The one in particular that I really like was, "This is how papa leaves the house, this is how mama leaves the house," [chuckle] and your husband looks like Daniel Craig, and then you look like your hair is going 10 different directions while you're running out the front door like Tasmanian devil. Talk about this whole family affair that with these Instagram videos for these exercise and cooking spots that you're doing.

**0:26:35.9 TR:** Yeah, so I used to think that I can't get my whole family involved. Like, this is my business, people are interested in that, but really... I mean, that is relatable, like, it is a different...

**0:26:47.5 BR:** Incredibly relatable. [chuckle]

**0:26:49.4 TR:** Yeah. Like, a dad leaving a house, compared to a mom leaving a house, it's two different things. Like, what my husband sees in me and what I see in me, two different things. So, what I learned, it's crazy... Like, my Instagram really started growing, when I started looking at, "Well, how can I be relatable with my family and just have fun? Like, I just wanna have fun." I don't wanna do more standing in front of my camera videos saying like, "Oh, three tips", or just... I wanted it to just be fun and I think as creators, or if anyone's wanting to start making videos like that, your creativity will flourish, it will just be unstoppable. You will have the most amazing ideas come to you and the capacity to fulfill them, if you truly focus on your gratitude and your happiness. What do you have right here in front of you? Like, I've got my beautiful family. Okay,

I'm not missing anything. I don't need to compare, I've got all this. And then my happiness is just... It's unconditional. And that's something I've really learned recently is, when you make a commitment to be happy in your life, everything opens up, it's just...

**0:27:53.5 TR:** I wish I had more words for it, but it really does create... It does increase your creativity. And I think when it comes to making Reels on Instagram, you will enjoy the process so much more and say, "Okay, yeah, now let's move the camera over here. Let's do this. Yeah, Liam's crying, get that on camera". [laughter] You know it's just... Everything seems like, "Oh, I can work with that". Like, it's no longer a limitation, it's like a new avenue to explore.

**0:28:18.4 BR:** Well, it seems like now your kids are co-conspirators on the videos too. Have you noticed, as they get older, the more fun that you're having making these videos?

**0:28:27.7 TR:** Yeah. I think it's fun as a newborn too, because you just never know what kind of face... You never know what you're gonna get. But having a toddler, now he's about to be three and then a one-year old, they're both just so incredibly in-tune with my energy. So, when I feel really excited to do something, they're like, all in, "I wanna do this too". However, it also goes the other way where it can be very over-stimulating for them if I'm just like too much, they're like, "Hold on, this is too much!" And that's when they act out, but my three-year-old loves to make videos. I mean, really since he was 18 months old, he would make his own videos, like, squatting in front of the camera 'cause it's what he's seen me do since he was a baby. So, I'm excited to see what he comes up with as he gets older too.

**0:29:15.6 BR:** So, we're kind of wrapping up with the show here, it's like, I always love hearing what people's daily routines are, as sort of like a base marker and obviously you're performing a little bit higher level than some of us and so we'd like to sort of try and match you, but give us an idea of what time you get up in the morning? What kind of meals are you eating? Like, how do you sort of... How do you position yourself for success, every day, when you wake up?

**0:29:39.0 TR:** That's a really great question. And I think with kids, it's made it very easy for me to stay in a routine, 'cause I mean, they're gonna wake up at the same time every day. [laughter]

**0:29:48.1 BR:** Yeah, that's a good point.

**0:29:49.7 TR:** So, I don't really have much choice what time I wake up. I have been trying to get up before them more recently, so this morning I was up at 6:00 and I did some journaling from 6:00 to 6:15. And then, my youngest, he's one, was up about 6:20, like, right about when I got done with my journaling, he was up. So, I always get him up, I'm breastfeeding, so I nurse him. And then, we came back into the living room and my oldest, my three-year-old, didn't wake up till seven. So, from 6:30 to... He was up at 7:15. 6:30 to 7:15, I just enjoyed that one-on-one time with my little one. We, pretty much have oatmeal, for breakfast, almost daily. [chuckle] Like, hash browns with eggs is another great one that we enjoy. That's easy. But really, I wanna share that oatmeal tip, with whoever is listening, if your kids love cereal, those sugary cereals, switch... Try to get them over to viewing oatmeal with granola as cereal. We call that cereal in our house. So it's all my kids know.

**0:30:47.1 BR:** Smart!

**0:30:47.4 TR:** It's delicious. Yeah. And they love it, they know like, "Oh, this still tastes great".

And there's a brand of granola called state or state fair or safe and fair. Fair Trade. Fair Trade, they're called.

**0:30:58.5 BR:** Fair Trade!

**0:31:00.7 TR:** Yeah! Fair trade. It's so good. So, we love those, but we always eat breakfast about the same time and then if I'm gonna do a morning workout, I start that between 7:30 and 8:00. If I do an afternoon workout, it's at 2:00. If I'm doing an evening workout, it's at 4:00. So, my workout times vary, which is another reason why I love that I'm not so fixated on, "Oh, I gotta do it before the kids wake up or else, it's not gonna work". So it just varies from day to day and I work entirely from home, coaching my clients, so my schedule varies every day, with what... I'm gonna have coaching calls, but when I'm not on calls, I'm with my boys, we try to prioritize a walk every day, but I think having a successful week with nutrition, you gotta go grocery shopping. Like, when you go grocery shopping every Monday, just to make sure that we have the things that we need, I try to do snack preps on Monday, so, making hummus, if you follow me on Instagram, I have recipes saved to 'My highlights' for hummus. And we'll just...

**0:31:52.5 TR:** If I have that hummus container in my fridge, some great pretzels in my pantry, it's really easy to say, "Oh, we're ready for a snack. Okay, let's get out". Both my boys love cookie dough hummus and I love the lemon garlic, so we'll both have our hummus, we eat our pretzels and everything is just so easily ready and prepared. But with nutrition, my biggest tip is, it's a lot easier to practice 30 minutes of discipline in the grocery store, to not buy the snack-y things that are very difficult for you to stop eating, than it is to practice 24 hours of discipline in your home, not eating the chips every single time you want a snack, because...

**0:32:29.5 BR:** I love that, I absolutely love that. It's so much easier to be strong at the supermarket, than it is to be strong in the house. That's a tip, I'll take away from this. [laughter]

**0:32:40.0 TR:** Yeah. Like, you know, don't... Let yourself have those treats on the occasion that you actually want them, but how often are we eating things that we don't even really want? We're just like, "Oh yeah, I guess I'll buy these chips, 'cause we all like them," and then you find yourself snacking on them when you weren't even hungry, which means you definitely didn't really want them, and then we're not even really enjoying them.

**0:32:58.6 BR:** Yeah, you don't appreciate it, yeah.

**0:33:01.9 TR:** Exactly! But if you're out and about, or you plan a picnic with your kids and you're like, "You know what, I'm gonna stop at the gas station, get us a bag of Lays potato chips, they'll enjoy it so much more!" At that picnic, [chuckle] they'll probably eat less of it 'cause they're gonna be playing, and the temptation is not filling your home.

**0:33:17.9 BR:** Excuse me, what other tips you have about when you go grocery shopping then? 'Cause I absolutely love the idea of keeping the cupcakes away from... Keep them away from the fridge and you won't have to worry about binge-eating them when you're not paying attention.

**0:33:28.9 TR:** Or numbing with them.

**0:33:30.0 BR:** Or numbing with them. Yeah, of course.

**0:33:32.0 TR:** Yeah, so grocery shopping, always go after you've already eaten. If you go to the grocery store hungry, everything looks like you need it, [laughter] especially the processed, packaged things. Like, "Oh, this is convenient, let's just grab it," and then you're grabbing a candy bar at the check out like, "Well I'll just eat this in the car on the way home." And I've done that too, I've been there too, and I know I have got to eat meals before I go grocery shopping. Another tip that I love, and I learned this a few years ago, is stay on the outside of the aisle. That's where you're gonna buy your produce, your meat, the dairy that you'd like to pick up, the vegetables are and the fruits are right there. You don't really need what's in those convenience aisles. However, I buy a lot of canned beans, so I obviously need to go down that aisle, but I go down that aisle with intention. I don't just wander aisles. If it's helpful, obviously make a list before you go to the grocery store. I feel like we are a pretty repetitive family when it comes to nutrition.

**0:34:34.3 TR:** We know what we like, and so I buy the things to make sure I can make those and yeah, I find that it's really helpful to go after you've eaten a meal and with a list, if that's helpful for you, but stay on the outsides of the grocery store unless you're going down an aisle with intention to grab that quinoa or the canned beans or a can of pineapple or whatever it is that you need. But you really don't need anything down the candy aisle, the chips and such, you don't need that.

**0:35:02.3 BR:** All this stuff is a combination of discipline and being focused and having a plan. It's like you can't really have a healthy, good routine without actually putting a little bit of thought to what you're trying to accomplish.

**0:35:17.9 TR:** Yeah. But remember those thoughts though are gonna come from self-talk and mindset. Yeah, everyone preaches discipline, and I obviously believe in self-controlled discipline, but if your self-love is radiating off of you, you don't wanna feel like crap. I love myself so much, I don't wanna feel like crap, so I'm not about to buy that. Sure, it looks good, but I don't really even want it. It's designed to look good. It's so much easier to change everything you do when you just increase your self-love and you have this positive self-talk, everyone's gonna think... Everyone thinks I have incredible discipline. I don't. I don't really refer to myself [chuckle] as the most disciplined person, [laughter] but I do believe that I have an abundant, enormous amount of self-love that just says, "I'm worth this 30 minutes of a workout. I'm worth going to the grocery store, even though I don't really feel like it."

**0:36:10.7 TR:** I am worth the effort that I put in to myself. And if everyone, moms dads, regardless if you're parents or not, would just remember that you can't help anyone until you help yourself. It changes everything. If you're like, "Well, I wanna be more playful with my kids, they deserve this presence from me," I agree with you. But you've gotta figure out why you're numbing on your phone anyway. [chuckle] And are you really present with them if you're constantly beating yourself up mentally of all the things that you should be doing instead? You can't show up for them until you start showing up for you.

**0:36:46.2 BR:** Absolutely. Hey, where can people find you online, or how can they get a hold of you and also, let's pitch that Instagram account of yours, 'cause everyone should be watching this and subscribing to your channel.

**0:36:58.8 TR:** Yeah, I love Instagram, it's such a... We have quite the community on there, I love it. Yeah, my Instagram is @TessaRomero\_. That one's easy. I have a podcast, The Mind-Body

## Be Your Own Bestie with Tessa Romero

Alignment Podcast, so you can find more about identity, mindset, change, self-forgiveness, self-love, all those good things that I do a weekly episode on. And finding more about my coaching program if you go to [www.bodybymommy.com](http://www.bodybymommy.com), I've got lots of information on there for you. In my Instagram link in the bio, there is an application form, it's also on my website where you can apply for my coaching. It doesn't commit you to anything, it just allows you to get all of your questions answered to make sure that my program is a great fit for you.

**0:37:41.5 BR:** And we'll make sure to have all that information in the show notes so you can easily get a hold of Tessa Romero. Well Tessa, thank you so much for joining us on Let's Go! With USANA. This has been really informative and thank you so much.

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## **Eating for Success: Diet Tips to Support an Active Life**

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[music]

**0:00:06.8 Ben Raskin:** Welcome to Let's Go! With USANA. My name is Ben Raskin, and today we have a great show planned for you. We're gonna be talking about something near and dear to make, food. There's an old adage out there, "One should eat to live, not live to eat." Unfortunately, lots of us, including myself, love to dive in with both forks ablazing when there are culinary delights around. While eating what you want might be good for your taste buds, they're not always great for your waistline. There's no secret to weight loss, burning more calories than you eat and you'll lose weight. This, of course, is a lot easier said than done. Most folks hold onto weight differently or have a hard time making healthy food choices to support their active lifestyle. That's why we've invited Shelli Baxter onto the show. Shelli is USANA's Executive Director of Global Nutrition and a wiz for helping people get the most out of what they eat. We're gonna discuss the steps that you can take to build a new and better relationship with your food. She'll share her expertise in creating a meal plan that is not only healthy, but something you'd actually want to eat. And we'll learn about Shelli's [0:01:03.0] \_\_\_\_ foods for good health, how to be kinder to yourself while eating and how to make the small changes for noticeable results.

**0:01:09.1 BR:** Welcome to the show, Shelli Baxter.

**0:01:12.7 Shelli Baxter:** Great to be here, Ben.

**0:01:14.8 BR:** Well, let's talk turkey. Why is nutrition important?

**0:01:18.8 SB:** Well, you wanna have a healthy life, right?

**0:01:20.8 BR:** Yeah, of course.

**0:01:22.0 SB:** You wanna be healthy for as long as you can and live as long as you can and enjoy good health?

**0:01:28.0 BR:** Yep.

**0:01:28.6 SB:** So nutrition plays a central role in that.

**0:01:32.2 BR:** It's always funny, when we talk about... When I think of nutrition, it's always like you can't live on donuts alone. And also... But then there's sort of this idea of how much cheese can somebody... How does one really start looking at themselves in the mirror and say like, "Hey, I need to make some changes with my diet, and maybe start really making some healthier choices when it comes to planning out my nutritional intake."

**0:01:53.6 SB:** Okay. Well, I might say some things that are a little counter-intuitive. So I would ask a person who wants to make healthier choices, "What are the reasons, what are your goals? Why do you wanna make these changes to your diet? Is it solely to lose weight? Or let's look at what's more important..." So this may seem counter-intuitive to people but when I look at somebody, I don't generally focus on what they look like, what their body weight is. I get a general sense of what their body shape is, and if that may or may not be a risk factor for metabolic syndrome, but what's important to me as a nutritionist is to dive inside the body and see what's happening in there. What



does your blood sugar look like? What does your blood pressure look like? What does your cholesterol profile look like? I want to know your numbers. When I see your numbers, that is what forms the foundation for where nutrition should go and where your diet should go.

**0:03:08.9 BR:** That's an interesting point, we talk about something like blood pressure, we know that it should be about 120/80, that's in the normal range, could be a little higher, a little bit lower, but we wanna be there but... So when people who have blood pressure issues, they should probably avoid sodium, or they should make decisions based upon that. What are some of the things... When you look at those numbers and you're trying to extrapolate from it, and we'll use blood pressure as the example.

**0:03:34.0 SB:** Okay. So let's say that you're trending towards a higher blood pressure. Your blood pressure's creeping up systolic, say, around 130, 135. Then that's when I'd like to dive in and see what you're eating because there's many contributors to sodium. Americans get way too much sodium in their diet, and a lot of that sodium comes from processed foods, not whole foods.

**0:04:00.9 BR:** Well, it's almost impossible to avoid, to use processed foods. It's like everything's got sodium in it, it's packed to the gills with it.

**0:04:07.4 SB:** Yes. And so we may look at what you're eating and then make some changes based on that.

**0:04:18.4 BR:** But the problem is that we live in the land of plenty. The problem is it seems like we live in the land of plenty, but we don't live in the land of plenty of good stuff for you. It's like... And the idea of burger chains around on every street corner, but The Kale Factory, you gotta make a pretty deep dive into the grocery store to find her.

**0:04:36.6 SB:** Right, right. My general advice for people going to the grocery store is to shop the perimeter.

**0:04:41.5 BR:** I've heard this before.

**0:04:42.3 SB:** Yes, stay away from the inner aisles. I mean there's some good things in the inner aisles, there's good whole grain oatmeal, there's legumes. There's some good food that's on the inner aisles that you should be shopping for, but generally you're gonna stay on the perimeter of the grocery store. And it's not very hard to find kale actually. [laughter] When we talk about... And so I'm anti-diet and I'm anti-food police.

**0:05:14.1 BR:** That's a weird thing to say considering you're... As a nutritionist.

**0:05:15.3 SB:** And... As a nutritionist. Mm-hmm. I am anti-diet police and food police. I think that when you start labeling foods as good or bad, then that starts forming your mindset towards foods, and then forming guilt when you eat those foods. I'm more of a person that says you should aim to eat healthy, foods that serve you, that serve your health, 80% of the time, and then 20% of the time, don't worry about it.

**0:05:53.5 BR:** So you're... It's funny when you say this, so it's like you must be easier on yourself when you're trying to have a healthy diet.

**0:06:00.5 SB:** Yes.

**0:06:01.2 BR:** It's like, if you do have slips or you have a "cheat day" or the Super Bowl Sunday's coming up, you're gonna eat a bucket of wings with your friends, don't beat yourself up on this particular thing, but just try to make sure that come Monday after the Super Bowl, you're doing a little bit better.

**0:06:16.1 SB:** Yes. The most important thing to me is a healthy relationship with food. Because when you don't have a healthy relationship with food, that just sets you up to not be successful in your everyday food choices. And it sets up that situation where you eat a food and then you feel guilty, and then when you feel guilty, you beat yourself up and... It's just a downward spiral.

**0:06:47.9 BR:** I would say... I think we do have, on occasion, we do make mistakes like a second slice of cake or something to that effect, but could you ever say that maybe when you make a food a mistake, and I hate using the word mistake, I'm doing air quotes for a podcast, but it's like... Maybe that's a... Hey, you walk an extra or half mile tomorrow. Maybe you catch it on the back end of stuff.

**0:07:09.0 SB:** Well, that's an interesting perspective on that, Ben, too, because my perspective on that is a little different as well. When you... I don't frame things as making food mistakes, and then needing to work off that mistake with exercise, because then that puts in your mindset that exercise is punitive, that your exercise is a punishment for indulging. No, what I would say instead is just look at your intake on your next coming days and just reduce a little. If you had that second slice of cake, you know what, did you enjoy it? That's the first question I'm gonna ask you. Did you... I mean, what did it taste like? What did it feel like when you ate it? Was it nice and moist and creamy? Was it wonderful? Did you enjoy it? Great. Because if you ate it and you don't remember anything about it, then you ate mindlessly. Eat mindfully.

**0:08:10.2 SB:** And then if you have that second slice of cake, you know what, maybe you'll set a goal and say, "I'm not gonna have cake or another treat for the rest of the week." Just let it slide into your overall calorie intake over the next few days. Certainly, if you wanna go exercise or go for a walk, go for a walk for the right reasons, which are more than just punishing yourself for eating the second slice of cake. But exercise and moving your body is really important to that overall calorie balance. I mean, there are many ways to mitigate overeating, but coming at it from a punitive standpoint really is the wrong approach.

**0:09:01.6 BR:** It probably is but it's also... I think of my grandmother rapping my knuckles when you reach for an extra cookie or something, and so I kinda get that. But I've learned myself as someone who's always trying to lose weight and trying to stay active with my diet is that a lot of times I forget that I'm full, and portion control is 100% if in terms of putting on weight or unable to lose weight, it's because I load up my plate more than I probably should, or I continue eating even though I've had enough to eat. How do you talk to people who do that? Is it something as simple as get a smaller plate?

**0:09:38.2 SB:** It can be, but I think the bigger principle there is mindful eating. So when I talk to people about eating, I talk to them about really being present with your food. So if you are enjoying, let's go back to your slice of cake, if you're enjoying that cake, set it out, look at it. What does it

look like? What does it taste like? Maybe it's a lemon cake and it smells amazing. What does it smell like? What does it feel like when you eat it? Enjoy the cake in the moment. Pay attention to your body cues. Am I hungry? Am I full? And we'll go back to mindful eating and intuitive eating in just a moment, but put away the phone, put away the TV, eat in the moment. Set up your table clutter-free, set your food out in front of you, and then really enjoy your food for what it is. But going way back to the beginning where you were saying, "I don't always pay attention to when I'm hungry and when I'm not." So my number one advice to individuals when they are trying to change their diet is rather than making huge changes to what they're eating, is how they're eating. So my number one principle is, eat when you're hungry, stop when you're full. And don't ignore those hunger signals for too long because you become hangry.

**0:11:18.0 SB:** And when you become hangry, then you are so hungry, you're just gonna grab whatever is in front of you. So maybe you meal prepped and you brought something very healthy, something that you really wanted to eat for lunch, and you're walking out to the cafe, the cafeteria, to the refrigerator to get that meal, and you pass a box of donuts your colleague brought. You might be more... You might be more apt to grab that donut out of the box than to walk the extra 20 feet to the refrigerator to get the meal you actually spent time making and that you would enjoy just as much if you weren't hangry. And so when you're eating mindfully like that... I'll give you an example. I eat breakfast, but I might be hungry at 7:30 in the morning, and I may not be hungry until 10:00 AM in the morning. I don't eat breakfast just to make myself eat breakfast, I eat when I'm hungry. And I eat slowly. So it takes about 20 minutes for your signals to change in your body to tell your brain you're full and to send those fullness signals to you, to tell you it's time to stop eating.

**0:12:44.3 SB:** So a lot of times when I'm eating a big meal with family and friends and I find myself eating and talking, I will mindfully put my fork down, sit back in my chair and just have a conversation. And then ask myself, "Am I still hungry?"

**0:13:03.0 BR:** But it's also when you're with friends and family, it's easier. In a weird way, I'm less inclined to overeat, not because of the guilt of eating with other folks, but more it's like you're engaged with folks. You're talking, you're laughing, hopefully you're laughing, you're enjoying the company and being with each other. And like what you had said earlier, which is something that I've been trying to do over this last year of working from home and working remotely, which I'm sure lots of our listeners have been doing, is eating in front of the TV could've been the easiest thing to do, but we made a conscious decision not to do that.

**0:13:35.5 SB:** Great choice.

**0:13:36.4 BR:** And the reason being is because Netflix will be there. It really will be there for the half hour it takes, but sitting down at the table, it's a chance to reconnect with your spouse, connect with your partner. It gives you, I think, that moment... Not to the mindfulness for me as much, but more like the appreciation of what you're doing. It's a little more formal and therefore mealtime actually has more value to me. I don't know, how do you feel about that?

**0:14:00.5 SB:** I think that's really great. I think one of the... And just going back to raising my children, so I'm the mother of five grown children, and one of the rules, the hard and fast rules I had in my home, is that we would sit down and eat dinner as a family. There were no devices. There was no TV, there were no cellphones or other... Game Boys or anything else allowed at the table,

not even a book, with my most...

**0:14:27.0 BR:** I disagree with the book thing, but keep going. [chuckle]

**0:14:29.3 SB:** The point was to have dinner together and enjoy each other's company and be present in the moment as we're eating food. And going back to the comment you made about, "Do I start with a smaller plate?" That is always great advice is start with smaller portions because if you're like my family... So my family, my great-grandparents lived through the Great Depression.

**0:14:58.3 BR:** Yeah, yeah.

**0:14:58.5 SB:** They literally did not have food.

**0:15:01.3 BR:** Yeah.

**0:15:02.5 SB:** And if you left food on your plate, they absolutely guilted you into cleaning your plate, which is counter-intuitive to that intuitive eating, which is stopping when you're full. So if you take less food and you take longer to eat that food, and then you can sit back and say, "Do I want seconds and what do I want seconds of?"

**0:15:24.4 BR:** Yeah.

**0:15:24.5 SB:** You can get back up and go... And I always say this, serve your food over on the counter so you have to get up from the table, walk back to the counter, help yourself to seconds and walk back to the table, and then just eat what you want until you're full and then stop. It's okay to have leftovers.

**0:15:50.5 BR:** So in an age of convenience though... We're gonna get back to normal in my presumption. People are gonna be going back to offices and they're not gonna be working from home. The hardest thing about working from home, this is not even a joke, is that on a Monday, I'm starving by 11:00 on a Monday even though I had breakfast. Whereas on a Saturday because I'm out and about doing yardwork or going for a bike ride or hanging out with the dogs, I'm not exaggerating, a handful of almonds and a cup of black coffee and I'm good for 10 hours. Why is it one's appetite changes depending upon what they're doing? Or am I associating work with having to binge eat or...

[laughter]

**0:16:32.3 SB:** That's really interesting. What you're describing is something that a lot of people experience. When they're more sedentary and they're working, they will eat out of two things, boredom or stress. And sometimes it depends...

**0:16:49.4 BR:** Or stressful boredom. [chuckle]

**0:16:50.5 SB:** Yes. Right? So when you're busy and you're moving, a lot of times when people are moving around and they're physically active, that's naturally appetite suppressing, so that's why we say movement is so important. Not just for the health of your body and your joints, but also for your appetite.

**0:17:11.3 BR:** Yeah.

**0:17:12.3 SB:** It's a natural appetite suppressant. A lot of people... And again, we are all individuals. I'm going back to... I'm going back earlier, you were describing how when you were with family and friends, you tend to eat less.

**0:17:27.5 BR:** Yeah.

**0:17:28.4 SB:** That is not the case for a lot of people I know. They tend to eat more because they're not paying attention to what they're eating, and they're just really just enjoying each other's company and then they find out, "Wow, did I really eat all of that?" So going to the whole individual approach, some people actually feel hungrier when they move around and less hungry when they're just sitting still, but for individuals who are hungrier when they're sitting still, it's, "Am I bored? Am I stressed?" So those are... That's an emotional eating.

**0:18:04.5 BR:** So we're talking about emotional eating. So I'm gonna take stress off to the side and not address it. I'll just talk about boredom specifically. It's like... I think a lot of times while we're at work and engaged there, there is this... Almost like a handful of Skittles seems like it might be the inspiration to get you past the next project. How do you curtail that? Is it moments like this is when you really should have meal-prepped healthier choices like carrot sticks instead of a bag of Skittles?

**0:18:29.5 SB:** But why carrot sticks?

**0:18:31.2 BR:** Or celery or jicama.

**0:18:33.3 SB:** How about something you enjoy?

[laughter]

**0:18:36.4 SB:** If jicama and carrots are what you enjoy for your go-to, then by all means have carrots and jicama. But what I tell people is have something on hand that you enjoy. So do you enjoy almonds? Do you enjoy cashews? Have some of those on hand. Do you enjoy protein bars? Have one of those on hand. Do you like edamame or do you like hummus with...

**0:19:02.5 BR:** Carrot sticks? [chuckle]

**0:19:03.2 SB:** Carrot sticks or baby bell peppers.

**0:19:05.5 BR:** Baby bell... Yeah.

**0:19:07.5 SB:** Let's see. I'm just thinking of things that a lot of people like. Or cottage cheese...

**0:19:12.5 BR:** Yeah. But these things that you're mentioning goes back to your supermarket. These are around the border...

**0:19:16.4 SB:** The perimeter...

**0:19:16.5 BR:** The perimeter of the shop.

**0:19:17.5 SB:** Of the supermarket.

**0:19:19.2 BR:** And so we... I think if we're being intellectually honest, we know that things that have cartoon characters on the front of the package probably are not the healthiest things for you.

**0:19:28.3 SB:** No.

**0:19:29.5 BR:** And so you probably want...

**0:19:31.4 SB:** And the things that are healthiest for you don't even have nutrition facts labels.

**0:19:35.5 BR:** That's a very good...

**0:19:36.4 SB:** Just think about your produce.

**0:19:37.4 BR:** Yeah.

**0:19:38.0 SB:** When was the last time you picked up an apple and it had a nutrition facts panel on it?

**0:19:42.4 BR:** Never.

[laughter]

**0:19:43.4 SB:** Right?

**0:19:44.3 BR:** Arugula doesn't come with a QR code scan. [chuckle]

**0:19:46.5 SB:** No. And generally neither does a package of lean chicken, skinless chicken breast, right?

**0:19:53.3 BR:** Yeah.

**0:19:54.9 SB:** So if it has to have advertising that's screaming to get your attention, it's probably not great for you.

[chuckle]

**0:20:06.0 BR:** There's something I wanna go back to that you mentioned is I have learned over the last couple of years... And this is about sleep. And what I've determined is that my next day is better when I stick to my schedule. And what works for me might not work for you, and it might not work for any one of our listeners, but I kinda hit the rack usually around 10 o'clock, and I usually find myself getting up around 5:30, 6:00. And having done this for years now, I don't even really need an alarm. My body tells me it's time to go to bed, and then my body tells me it's time to wake up. And what... I even do this is on Saturdays and Sundays. Now, with dieting, is there any similarity to establishing these routines of when you should be eating or, back to your point earlier, it's like, do

you just eat when you're hungry?

**0:20:52.3 SB:** I think the more you try to put yourself on a set schedule, the more you may derail your own dietary attempts.

**0:21:01.8 BR:** Really?

**0:21:02.8 SB:** Really.

**0:21:03.4 BR:** I didn't expect you to say that.

**0:21:04.8 SB:** I think what you need to do is... So let's go back to... Let's go to babies. They're the classic example of intuitive eating. They only eat when they're hungry, you don't see babies eating all the time to eat. Toddlers either. In fact, toddlers drive their parents crazy because you can't get your toddler to sit down and eat lunch. It's noon, it's time for lunch. And the toddler is like, "But I'm not hungry," or, "No, I don't want that." And then they don't eat, and you clean up lunch and it comes 1:10, they're starving, "Mommy, I'm hungry." Children are the most natural eaters. We were all born intuitive eaters, and the more we put ourselves on the schedule and stop listening to what our bodies are telling us, the more we get away from that natural inborn intuitive eating, which is listening to your body's signals, "I'm hungry, I should eat. I'm full... "

**0:22:10.4 BR:** "I should stop."

**0:22:10.5 SB:** I should stop. "I'm not hungry, but I should eat right now. Wait a minute, should I eat right now?" Or, where it's like, "I'm craving something right now," and usually when you're craving something, it's a comfort food, right? If you're... And I know we put stress aside, but emotion... There's so much...

**0:22:29.8 BR:** Well, we can go back to stress...

**0:22:30.3 SB:** There's so much emotional eating around stress, individuals will just reach for something because they're in a stressful moment like, say, you've just got... You just can't get past this important moment on a project, you just need to make this breakthrough, and you're just struggling with working on something and you just wanna go get a donut. That is a natural response to stress, is reaching for something that comforts you. It's actually better for you, and not just your diet, but it's actually better for your brain and your cognition to get up and walk around for 10 minutes and come back to your task. You will actually be more focused and have sharper cognition to take on that task. One thing I learned in college, which feels like a lifetime ago, was always take a walk before a stressful test, even if it's a boring walk around your building... The Math hall, go take a walk up to the third floor, down to the second floor, and down to the first floor, go into your test, you'll perform better on your test.

**0:23:44.2 BR:** So what you're really saying when you're talking about stress and boredom in that kind of not that mindless eating is that you're just... You really are not hungry. Your body does not need nutrition, your body does not need calories, you just want something to satiate you in that moment. And so almost in a weird way, you need to train yourself... Like train yourself to get away from that, to almost have better coping skills.

**0:24:07.0 SB:** Absolutely. You need to find a way to honor your feelings.

**0:24:10.0 BR:** Honor your feelings.

**0:24:10.1 SB:** They're your feelings. They're there, they're valid. Why are you feeling that way? That's... You can sit down and you can journal that. Like, "What's going through my head right now? What's bothering me?" You can phone a friend, you can go for a walk. If you have a dog, it's even better. You both get to walk. Just get up and move away, but find a way to honor your feelings without food. Because where most people, and I hate to use the term they wreck their dietary plans, they get off... They get off-track with where they really wanna be, is emotional eating, eating their feelings.

**0:24:51.9 BR:** So you're moving this conversation forward a little bit in terms of what people should be eating. I've noticed in other cultures and other countries, and I'm thinking of a place I recently visited, I was in Mexico City a couple of years ago, and they have these wonderful open-air mercados, these markets, and people go there and they're like, "Oh, the chicken looks good", and "Oh, the peppers look good." And was like, "I'm staying away from the fish this time, but I'm liking the way these beans are looking." And so they'll shop for the day and they'll cook that night the meal for the family and whatnot, and I know this is done... Europeans are very Mediterranean so... I think, unfortunately, for a lot of people here in the United States is that we live... Maybe it's not even real, but we are very busy and we tend to grocery shop in bulk. We'll hit the membership stores to get chicken for a month and ground beef and ta ta ta. How do people... How can they, when they're shopping and setting up these diets for themselves and getting with meal prep, how can they make smarter choices if they are buying for long terms of period of time and they're not shopping for the day?

**0:25:53.9 SB:** So focus on your whole foods. Focus on your lean sources of protein, focus on your... If... And I don't wanna villainize any food. So I know a lot of people don't eat dairy, but if you are someone who dairy is a big part of your diet, that's fine. Focus on the lower fat sources of dairy, stock up on those. Stock up on fruits and veggies, which we know, produce goes bad pretty quickly, right?

**0:26:19.0 BR:** Pretty quickly, yeah.

**0:26:19.3 SB:** So be really mindful. Why not get frozen veggies? Frozen veggies are amazing. Frozen fruits, without added sugar, are amazing. And what's the best part? They don't go bad.

**0:26:32.1 BR:** They don't go bad, yeah.

**0:26:32.9 SB:** Right. They might get freezer burn if you don't get into your freezer and get 'em out, but it's totally fine to go shopping for frozen fruits and veggies. 'Cause I do know families that only shop once a month. I mean, everybody is different.

**0:26:49.1 BR:** Yeah.

**0:26:49.4 SB:** Some people go to the store every couple of days, some people go once a week, some people go once every two weeks, and there are some families that go once a month. And so frozen produce for them is a staple. So it's about planning. It's about sitting down and saying,



"Okay, I'm gonna make good choices. So I'm going to buy these whole grain oats, and I'm going to have oatmeal for breakfast, or I'm gonna buy these whole grain pancake mix," if I don't wanna make pancakes from scratch. It's about sitting down... I find it helpful to sit down and meal plan, and say, "What am I gonna make for the week? What am I gonna eat for breakfast, what am I gonna eat for lunch, what am I gonna eat for dinner, and what am I going to have for snacks?" And then I go from my meal plan to my shopping list... And I don't go grocery shopping hungry.

**0:27:44.9 BR:** No. [chuckle]

**0:27:45.1 SB:** Number one...

**0:27:45.8 BR:** That one I actually knew. [laughter]

**0:27:46.5 SB:** Number one tip, don't go grocery shopping when you're hangry, [chuckle] or else you'll go right to those inner aisles. You might even grab something and eat it while you're shopping. But to go with that list, and really try to stick to that list, and then try to stick to what I said I'm going to do. Now, that said... And I'm a master meal prepper, but there are days where I just look at what I brought for lunch, and I'm a human being, and that just doesn't sound good. In fact, I really want to go get a salad from, say, a local restaurant...

**0:28:26.6 BR:** Like deli [0:28:26.9] \_\_\_\_\_, yeah.

**0:28:27.9 SB:** Right. So I may say, "Okay, you know what, today I'm gonna treat myself. I'm gonna stay pretty focused on something healthy here, but I'm gonna go get a protein bowl from my local restaurant that I really like. And I'm in a hurry too, and I just feel like going out too today."

**0:28:47.2 BR:** Yeah.

**0:28:48.6 SB:** Or, "I might just wanna go have some sushi and some edamame today. That's my treat."

**0:28:53.0 BR:** Well, it's also... What I like what you said here, you said it's both a combination of discipline, planning out your week, but also giving yourself the freedom and also the slack that if you're gonna throw an edible during the day, don't beat yourself up over it. Try not to waste the food, but if you could carry over for a day, do it, but it's not the end of the world if you... I'm not even saying falling off the wagon in terms of switching from lunch A to going out and getting for lunch B, but it's just we're human, we make mistakes sometimes, and we just have just... I don't know, we want more of these choices sometimes.

**0:29:26.4 SB:** Or you're at work and you're not getting home when you thought you were, say you had to stay at work, and another hour, or two hours, and oh my goodness, you even have gotta finish this project, so you've gotta eat and go back to work, or you've just had a day? You know what, if you wanna go pick up dinner, go pick up dinner, but try to make a... Try to make a choice. I always say there are healthier choice, a whole foods-based choice, rather than your garlic rosemary fries, which should be more of a treat. [laughter]

**0:30:03.2 BR:** Yeah. [laughter]

**0:30:04.2 SB:** That type of thing. But when you're really stressed, you may be thinking, "I just want a burger and garlic rosemary fries right now." And you may have to have a talk with yourself and say, "Does this really serve me? What are my bigger goals?"

**0:30:18.8 BR:** Yeah.

**0:30:19.5 SB:** "What am I trying to accomplish?" My advice to individuals is always have your goal in mind. Always have that end game. What is the end game? What am I trying to do? And, "I'm feeling really rotten in the moment, how is what I want to eat, what I'm thinking I want to eat, how is that going to accomplish that goal?" And a lot of times, if people just take a pause and they think about it, they'll make a healthier choice.

**0:30:50.2 BR:** Yeah.

**0:30:50.5 SB:** And something that they enjoy. They're not going to eat something they don't enjoy. That's one of the very basics when I work with individuals, and we sit down and we start talking about their diet, they think they have to eat all these things that they don't enjoy. Well, you're not setting yourself up for success if you're planning to eat things you actually don't like.

**0:31:16.4 BR:** Like. Exactly. [chuckle]

**0:31:17.9 SB:** I've worked with individuals who said, "Okay, well, I guess I have to have salmon 'cause I need more omega-3 fatty acids. I guess I'm gonna have to have salmon one to two times a week, and I really, really, really don't like fish."

[laughter]

**0:31:38.5 SB:** "The thought of it makes me gag." Then we sit down and we say, "Let's talk about other sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Let's look at your cooking oils, and [chuckle] let's talk about flax seed, and chia seeds, and where we can get those into your diet."

**0:31:55.3 BR:** So not only you have to be flexible, you have to be creative then?

**0:31:58.2 SB:** Yes.

**0:31:58.3 BR:** 'Cause it's as funny, 'cause you think about how we grocery shop, we'll buy for the week, and it's... And I'll be honest, week one of the year is pretty similar to week 26. But I like this idea, is if you're starting a healthy journey, it's like those things that we're being programmed that are the most healthiest foods might not just work for it. You might need to find something that's a little more effective for your own healthy nutritional journey.

**0:32:21.9 SB:** Yeah, you actually just touched on one of the key components for setting yourself up for success, which is stocking your pantry.

**0:32:28.0 BR:** Yeah.

**0:32:28.5 SB:** And not just your pantry, I'm talking your refrigerator, your freezer, your cupboards, those... And your secret treat drawer.

[laughter]

**0:32:36.1 SB:** Cleaning up your pantry a little. I mean, how... It's really funny because I... It was 20 years before I moved into my current home, and I went through my pantry, and I had things in the back of my pantry that... So just some staples, like some bagged rice and flours, and things like that, that I hadn't looked at in years. And I really did a total overhaul of my pantry. And now I try to do that every couple of months, is go into my pantry and rotate. So I try to keep staples of a lot of things on hand. So my pantry, my fridge, and my freezer are always stocked. Which is also going back to our pandemic situation... If you suddenly couldn't go out to the grocery store for three weeks because you were quarantining at home because somebody in your home, or yourself were ill, it's really good to have a constant supply of food.

**0:33:34.2 BR:** Well, it goes back to... It really is something you've been touching on throughout this entire conversation, is like being mindful of what you're trying to accomplish. And part of this is having the tools for success. In this particular case, just having the staples in your pantry can be enough. And with everything we're sort of dancing around here, it's like maybe to have some success, it might not be a bad idea to know how to cook a little bit.

**0:33:56.0 SB:** Yes, cooking is a wonderful skill.

**0:33:58.9 BR:** Yeah, it's...

**0:34:00.1 SB:** Yes... I very...

**0:34:02.8 BR:** Are you much of a cook?

**0:34:04.2 SB:** Yes, I love to cook.

**0:34:05.0 BR:** Good.

**0:34:05.7 SB:** And I found it really humorous, I guess, and also very satisfying as a nutritionist to hear that during the pandemic, more individuals were cooking at home. And they were making healthier choices. And I think that's probably one of the things about the pandemic, I think, that was... If you could say that there was a positive during the pandemic, that is one of the positives during the pandemic, is that more people are cooking. And you do not need to be a master chef. I don't have time to make... To plate my food and make it beautiful, like a chef does. It doesn't take that much skill to make a lean protein, especially if you have a grill. Right?

**0:34:50.3 BR:** Yeah, yeah.

**0:34:51.7 SB:** You can grill your meat or you can bake your... You can make a sheet pan dinner. Put everything on a sheet pan, put some seasonings... I'm a huge proponent of seasonings. I have two huge seasoning drawers. Season it all up, put it in the oven, bake it up, it's done.

**0:35:09.2 BR:** And that's just... And you know these are not only... And back to what we talked about earlier about with these functions, when we're friends and we're eating together, and I don't eat very much. It's like I do a lot of the cooking for these events. And so more often than not, the

cooking... The eating happens in the kitchen as you're getting ready for the meal.

**0:35:25.4 SB:** Right. Well, you have to taste everything.

**0:35:26.8 BR:** You gotta taste everything. But what I've noticed is that cooking gives you an appreciation for what you're about to eat. And there's a bit of anticipation while things are cooking. It gives you... I think you value your meal a little more by cooking. And over this pandemic, to your point, it's like, "Thank God for YouTube," because I've learned to make a ton more recipes than I knew prior to... In 2019.

**0:35:51.3 SB:** Absolutely. And you know the world wide web is just chock-full of amazing recipes as... I have a couple of handfuls of things that are my favorite dishes to make. But one of the things I like the most, and I just did this over the weekend, is I went out on the web, found three new recipes I've never tried before that looked really appealing, they're pretty simple, eight or nine ingredient dishes where half of it is spices, which is really wonderful and fresh garlic, fresh onion and things like that. And I planned to make those. Because I think diversity is also the key to not getting bored. Some people like to eat the same things all the time, more power to them. I actually get bored with dishes, and I like a lot of variety.

**0:36:40.5 BR:** So sprucing it up every now and then is also good to keep you focused on your nutrition. Because obviously, if you're trying something new, you might wanna take a moment to go like, "Oh, it's got a lot of heavy cream," or I don't know... No food policing people, but there's things you probably shouldn't have in there... When you look at some of the... I think this is me projecting here, but I think the Rock is one of the healthiest guys on the planet.

**0:37:01.3 SB:** Okay.

**0:37:01.9 BR:** 'Cause he spends so much time on his diet. But his diet is unsustainable, like nobody can eat five pounds of cod a day and work out four hours a day.

**0:37:10.7 SB:** Right.

**0:37:11.3 BR:** But I want you as we're kind of wrapping up the show... It's like talk a little bit more about exercise and that relationship of exercise with what you're eating, so that you have the energy to live that active lifestyle.

**0:37:22.9 SB:** Right. So you wanna eat a lot more of the foods that provide energy for you. So when I think about that, I think about looking at making sure you're getting enough protein, making sure that you're getting healthy carb... I know carb is like an evil word in many people's diets. And I guess I didn't say the most important thing, which is... I know I talked about anti-diet. I'm anti-diet. I don't like the word diet because it contains the word 'die'. And while it may not kill you, it may kill your motivation. It may not be sustainable for you. And I know people who are on keto and they're doing very well. I know people who are vegan and they are doing really well. I know people who are just eating good whole foods-based diet, cutting out no foods, and they're doing very well. Diets start getting people into restrictive mindsets...

**0:38:19.9 BR:** Got you.

**0:38:21.2 SB:** But I think... So going back where I said carb... Oh, the evil word carb. Look for your good whole grain sources of carbohydrates. They provide a lot of energy. Nuts and seeds, they're very nutrient-dense. They contain a lot of energy. If you are eating a good whole foods-based diet, you're gonna have sustained blood sugar levels. You're not gonna hit that big sugar spike and then that inevitable crash a couple of hours later. You're going to feel more energy, your mood is going to be better, and you're going to be motivated, to the question you just asked is, to go out and exercise more. But what I found is that when people make little changes in one area of their life, it often has a cascading effect.

**0:39:14.8 SB:** So if people are starting to move more, their mood is improving, they're sleeping better, they want to eat more healthy. It's just kind of a natural consequence. Then they keep making small changes, it could be in sleep, it could be in stress management, it could be in their nutrition, it could be an exercise, it will have a ripple effect throughout... Through all the other lifestyle factors. And they're just... Get themselves on a path of continual progress, and that continual success in a sustainable new habit. It's all about forming new sustainable habits. So it's not like throw out everything you've been eating and then just completely overhaul your diet. That's generally not sustainable. Or going all out at the gym. Or just thinking you're gonna go run a marathon when you haven't even run a 5K...

**0:40:11.8 SB:** That's great. And I've seen people achieve it and I've seen them sustain it, but they are the minority. The majority of individuals need to make small sustainable changes. And those small changes become, their new habits.

**0:40:32.4 BR:** Success builds upon success.

**0:40:34.1 SB:** Absolutely.

**0:40:35.8 SB:** Well, Shelli, thank you so much for joining us on, Let's go! With USANA. This has been a wonderful conversation. And we're looking forward to hearing you in the future.

**0:40:43.1 SB:** Thanks, Ben.

**0:40:43.4 BR:** Take care.

[music]

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## How Gut Health Helps an Active Life

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[music]

**0:00:06.2 Ben Raskin:** Welcome to Let's Go! With USANA. My name is Ben Raskin, and today we have a wonderful show for you. We're joined by Dr. Rachel Brewer. Rachel is the Director of New Product Research here at USANA Health Sciences, a laboratory trained scientist where they focus in molecular biology and nutrition. Rachel earned her PhD at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, home of the world renowned Nutrition and Obesity Research Center, where she investigated diet and nutritional impacts on aging and longevity. Rachel has been invited to present her work at both national and international scientific conferences. In addition, she's also won awards from multiple organizations including the American Society for Nutrition and the Society for Heart and Vascular Metabolism. Today, Rachel is gonna share her knowledge of the microbiome and why the microbiome is essential for good digestive health. You'll have a front row seat to the steps you need to take to protect your gut and support an active lifestyle.

[music]

**0:01:04.3 BR:** Welcome to the show, Dr. Rachel Brewer.

0:01:06.7 Dr. Rachel Brewer: Thanks for the invitation, Ben. It's great to be here.

**0:01:09.2 BR:** Thank you so much for being here with us today. We've invited you on to talk about the microbiome, and so, I figured the best place to start is, what exactly is the microbiome?

**0:01:17.6 DB:** That's a great question. Generally, when we refer to the microbiome we're talking about all of the bacteria, viruses, fungi that live on and inside of our bodies. Now, technically, if you wanna get really detail-oriented, the microbiome is the collection of both the microbes and their genes, while the microbiota is referring to the microbes themselves. However, kind of colloquially we just say microbiome in referring to all these things that live on us and inside of us.

**0:01:50.8 BR:** It's always funny for me to think about having things living on us, you know? Like for example, if we were having a picnic and an ant crawled on my arm, you'd brush it away as quickly as you can, but from what I'm gathering is, it's important to have these things living on, in, and around us for good health.

**0:02:06.6 DB:** Yeah, absolutely. They are so important to our health, in fact, without any sort of a microbiome, people and individuals and animals actually suffer a lot and aren't able to grow as healthy or as big and strong as you can with a microbiome.

**0:02:21.7 BR:** Really? So, is it like a symbiotic relationship, like they benefit from being on us, or is it... How does that work for the microbiome itself, this bacteria and fungi?

**0:02:31.0 DB:** Yeah, that's a great way to think about it. So we provide really a nice, warm, cozy home for them. [chuckle] And then they provide a lot of benefits to us. For example, they help break down some of the foods that we can't and release nutrients for us that otherwise would stay trapped in molecules and just pass through our bodies.

**0:02:48.4 BR:** Really? So, what would be an example of, if you can provide one, of something



maybe microbiome can do in helping with digestion?

**0:02:56.8 DB:** Yeah. So, for example, a lot of plants, which we all know are very healthy for us to eat, fruits and vegetables, plants have cell walls, and those walls, we can't break them down very easily, but bacteria are able to break them down. So these plant cells move through our bodies, the bacteria help to break them down and release the nutrients that are inside of those plants to us, so that we can actually use them.

**0:03:20.7 BR:** So, things maybe like kale, which I just... Just if you use the hand test, kale's kind of rough around the edges, it feels firm, it's very fibrous and stuff. So when you have these bacteria inside of your gut, they're actually able to help to break down the cellular walls around the kale?

**0:03:37.4 DB:** That's exactly right, get to the good stuff that's inside of it.

**0:03:40.6 BR:** You know, let's get all that iron and vitamin D into your belly.

**0:03:43.5 DB:** Exactly.

**0:03:44.2 BR:** I think in a weird way, a lot of us talk about cleaning germs off us and stuff, but we are really talking about fungi and bacteria, you know? What is the role of fungi when it comes to that microbiome?

**0:03:56.4 DB:** So that plays a really important role as well. I like to think of the microbiome kind of like a forest.

**0:04:02.3 BR:** Okay.

**0:04:02.8 DB:** And in a forest, you have trees, you have water, you have flowers, you have other plants, and then you also have all of these animals, right? You have insects, you have small animals, you maybe have some large animals, and they all interact together to create this whole forest ecosystem. And it's really similar in your microbiome. So you can imagine maybe the animals as bacteria and the plants as fungus and maybe some of the other insects as viruses. [chuckle] And each of them plays a really important part in feeding each other, supporting each other and supporting the health of the entire forest being our human body.

**0:04:42.6 BR:** In terms of the microbiome, do they actually support each other in addition to supporting us?

**0:04:47.0 DB:** They do. Your microbiome, and right now, I'm generally referring to the gut microbiome.

**0:04:53.3 BR:** Gut biome, okay.

**0:04:53.4 DB:** Then we do have skin microbiome, and even your skin microbiome, the microbiome between your fingers is different than that on your arms, which is different than your arm pits, but in general right now, when we're talking about the gut microbiome, your microbes are very different in different regions of your gut. So in your mouth, you have certain microbiome, or microbes that help to start breaking down food. And then in your small intestine, you have different ones that help

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break down food a little bit differently. And at each stage, they're not only breaking down food for us, but when they pass it down, it makes it easier for the next microbes to play their role in breaking down things as well, so they kind of support each other as you move along.

**0:05:36.7 BR:** So obviously, it's not a closed system, it's actually an open system, 'cause it starts in your mouth and ends with the finger sitting on. So the microbiome inside of your mouth actually helps the microbiome that might be into the stomach or the small intestine, until it gets to the large intestine, until it gets to all the way through the system?

**0:05:54.0 DB:** Yeah, that's exactly right.

**0:05:55.0 BR:** Wow.

**0:05:55.1 DB:** They all support each other and they all play a really important role.

**0:05:58.5 BR:** So why is it... It seems like... I mean, I'm trying to be cute. Five years ago, I never really heard about the microbiome, and now it seems like microbiome is almost a hot subject that people are talking about. Why is the microbiome as popular as Taylor Swift when it comes to these things? Why is it the Taylor Swift of health issues these days?

[chuckle]

**0:06:18.9 DB:** Yeah, so that's a great question too. And really, it's kind of multi-fold. We've known for quite a while that there is bacteria and fungi and viruses that live on us and inside of us, and that they're probably important. The problem was, we didn't have a really good way to study them.

**0:06:34.3 BR:** Okay.

**0:06:34.8 DB:** In the laboratory, usually what you used to have to do was maybe, you know, take a swab of some bacteria from inside the mouth and put it on a plate and try and... Like on a petri dish and try and grow it or in a test tube, but a lot of the bacteria that live inside of us don't actually grow well on a laboratory plate, that's not their natural environment.

**0:06:57.3 BR:** So it's hard to replicate the natural microbiome in a laboratory setting, and so you've had to have like... You almost had to improve the laboratory research methodology to start really looking at the microbiome.

**0:07:08.5 DB:** That's exactly right. Now that we have better ways to look at the genetics of things, instead of having to grow it, we can just take a sample and use, for example, PCR to look at what genes are there.

**0:07:21.0 BR:** Alright, back up for just a second there, what's a PCR?

**0:07:24.5 DB:** So, PCR is Polymerase chain reaction, and it's a way of looking for specific genes in a sample, so we can say we know that this gene is always in this type of bacteria, so you can take a sample and look and see if that gene is there and if it is, you can assume that bacteria is in that sample as well.

**0:07:44.1 BR:** Gotcha. So as research on this was getting a little more advanced, we're able to start kind of digging deeper into why it's important to have this. A question, it's like you're from Alaska, I'm from Nevada. How much different is your microbiome from my microbiome?

**0:08:01.2 DB:** Very different.

**0:08:02.4 BR:** Not just geographically, we're talking like our ages, our gender, our diets probably make it differently, can you go into some detail, explain why it is different.

**0:08:12.1 DB:** So that's another thing that's made the microbiome really hard to study, because usually in science, you like to look at different people and maybe see how they all respond to something, and if you can see patterns, then you can assume that those patterns are maybe related to the interventions that you're looking at. But microbiomes, the biggest thing they're related to is you as a person, so my microbiome is always going to be more similar to itself than yours is going to be to me, whether we're living in the same space, or what we're eating. But all of those things have a big impact on our microbiomes as well. So people who live in Nevada will be more similar to each other's microbiomes, than people who live in Alaska are to those in Nevada. So where you live, what sort of workplace you have, how much time you spend outdoors, what you're eating, if you have pets, all of these things impact the microbiome, which is what again makes it really difficult to study because there's so much interacting.

**0:09:18.7 BR:** So you can make some generalizations about this, for example, if maybe certain cultures around the world eat specific foods like rice or sweet potato, so if there's a dominant sweet potato in their diet, they might have a similar microbiome, but ultimately even in that sub-group, it's still gonna be vastly different between the people in there, right?

**0:09:38.2 DB:** Exactly. If you take lots of different samples from people in a single group over time, you'll see some changes within those based on what they're eating and if they're all moving around, but you can usually pretty closely identify one person over time and track them because their microbiome will be more distinct from everyone else in their group.

**0:10:00.7 BR:** That's great. It's funny you mentioned the dogs. So having animals in your home can impact your microbiome?

**0:10:06.7 DB:** Absolutely.

**0:10:07.6 BR:** Really?

**0:10:08.0 DB:** Your microbiome will actually start to look a little bit more like your animals, especially like your dog, and please don't think too hard about why that might be, but certainly sharing an environment with people and animals impacts your microbiome.

**0:10:23.4 BR:** As we're talking about this, we really are talking about the microbiome, the gut microbiome. So we're talking about the stuff that goes inside our mouth, to our tummy, to our digestive track and stuff like that. What is some of the foods you can eat that can help support that microbiome, 'cause I assume, I mean, could super spicy foods impact it, or what are some dos and don'ts for food sources for your microbiome?

**0:10:47.8 DB:** Yeah, absolutely. So what you eat does have a big impact on your microbiome. I usually recommend the three best foods to eat are fiber, fiber and fiber, and I know that sounds a little trite, but honestly, the best research we have is that the more fiber you eat and the more diverse types of fiber you eat, the better it is for your gut and for your microbiome.

**0:11:13.0 BR:** So, what are some natural macro nutritional for fiber. We mentioned kale at top of the show, but what are some other good fibers that people can eat?

**0:11:21.7 DB:** Sure, absolutely. Just about any fruit or vegetable is a great option, whole grains are a really good way to get some extra fiber as well, and when you think about fruits, don't just think about things like apples, things like oranges and other citrus fruits have a lot of great fiber in them. And again, when you're eating a diversity of fruits and vegetables and whole grains, you're getting a diverse type of fibers, which again is great to support a healthy microbiome.

**0:11:49.6 BR:** Well, I'm gonna ask the question maybe some other people are thinking, 'cause I never considered there's more than one type of fiber. I guess there's like, you have something like hemp and maybe cotton fiber for shirts, but you're saying like the fiber in orange is different and maybe can benefit the fiber from like carrot or something like that?

**0:12:06.6 DB:** Yeah, absolutely. The structures of the fibers are very different, and they break down a little bit differently in the gut and again, support different types of bacteria and release different types of molecules that can support our health.

**0:12:19.7 BR:** And obviously, chances are, if you're eating a lot of these macros that are easily identifiable like kale, oranges and apples and stuff, it's probably gonna be pretty good for your diet nonetheless, these are healthier foods.

**0:12:32.9 DB:** Absolutely, what I really like to say is, if it's good for you, it's good for your microbiome. Because we know a lot about what supports general health, eating healthy with fruits and vegetables, getting enough sleep and sleeping regularly, exercising. These are all things that are good for you and good for your microbes.

**0:12:51.3 BR:** So in terms of... We're gonna jump back to the sleep in just a little bit, but I want... While we're still talking about foods, I wanted to ask you about fermented food, 'cause it seems like as much as the microbiome has become kind of a hot topic, it seems like fermented foods is very much in vogue as well, stuff like Sauerkraut, yogurt, kimchi, miso, and it's like, "Why is fermented foods good for a healthy microbiome"?

**0:13:15.5 DB:** So, there's a couple of reasons that they can help to support a healthy microbiome, and part of that is because the bacteria or funguses that are in there are good for your gut as well, they almost kind of act like probiotics for your gut. But at the same time, like we've talked about, as these microbes are breaking down food inside of your body and releasing healthy molecules, ones that are outside and fermenting foods are also releasing some healthy molecules that can then support your health when you eat them.

**0:13:47.1 BR:** So when I think of fermentation, I usually think of wine and stuff like that. So is there yeast, is it the yeast that help the microbiome, or is yeast play... How does yeast play a role in this?

**0:14:00.3 DB:** Yeah. So yeast can be a healthy support for your microbiome as well. If people are having problems with yeast, we sometimes recommend that they limit foods with them or talk with their doctor, but for most people in general good health, yeast can be a healthy support for their microbiome as well.

**0:14:15.6 BR:** So I recently went to the dentist to get a cleaning, as we all should do every six months, but one of the things I remember talking to, the dentist had said that sugar consumption, obviously, can rot your teeth out and stuff like that. How does processed sugar hurt the microbiome? Is it just as bad for your teeth as it can be for your entire system?

**0:14:38.0 DB:** You know, interestingly, definitely, we recommend limiting processed foods and processed foods high in sugar, and part of the reason is that they almost starve your microbiome a little bit.

**0:14:50.5 BR:** What do you mean they starve it? Like, they deprive your microbiome of the foods that you're actually eating in addition to it?

**0:14:58.3 DB:** Yeah, so your microbiome, like I mentioned, it's very different across your whole gut. So the microbes in your small intestine are different from those in your large intestine, and even within your large intestine in different regions you have different groups of bacteria. And in your large intestine is where most of that fermentation in your body occurs, which again, is very good for supporting your health. But in processed foods, especially high in refined sugars and things like that, you have these very small molecules that don't actually really need broken down, and so a lot of them are absorbed in your small intestine, which means there's just not much left as food for the bacteria in your large intestine once it reaches there.

**0:15:43.8 BR:** So when you have that refined sugar in your system, when we are... So like with the kale analogy, the kale can start in the mouth and the microbiome can be benefited from this whole grain food and stuff, but when you're eating refined sugars, it might not get to the end source, so you could be depriving your microbiome towards the end. So it sounds like it's another reason to be a little more careful about maybe the stuff that you have in your diet.

**0:16:04.7 DB:** Yeah, that's exactly right.

**0:16:08.7 BR:** I figure we are supposed to sleep six to eight hours a day, I'm assuming the microbiome does not? [chuckle] It's always working?

**0:16:15.2 DB:** It is absolutely always working, but interestingly, you do see some daily variation in how it's working, when it's functioning, and obviously part of that is when we're eating, it's when it's getting food, it's a lot more active than when it's not, but there's actually... Just like there's a circadian clock in your brain, and in all of the cells of your body, bacteria as well have circadian clocks.

**0:16:41.0 BR:** Really?

**0:16:42.4 DB:** And so, when you're disrupting your circadian clock, know that you're disrupting the clock of your bacteria and fungi as well. So, it's really important as much as possible to keep a

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healthy and regular sleep schedule and lifestyle schedule, so that you're not just supporting your own health, but you're supporting the clocks and the health of your microbes as well.

**0:17:06.7 BR:** Yeah. I was recently reading that circadian rhythms, it's like part of the reason why some flowers in the desert open up in the morning and then close in the afternoon. So, I always think of that about being like, "Oh, you should go to bed at 10:00 and wake up at 6:00." So I see there's benefits in having a good sleep schedule, but for those microbiomes, not only is good sleep good for like muscle recovery, turning observations into memories, as you're sleeping through REM, and that gives you a chance to reflect and kind of recharge and regenerate. It's like you're recharging and regenerating your microbiome to a certain extent by having it follow in line with your own sleep cycle. Is that correct?

**0:17:43.9 DB:** Yeah, that's a good way to look at it. Basically, your circadian clock and your gut helps to prepare your gut for when it's going to be receiving food and being ready to break down whatever you get in it and make the best use of it. And if you're eating at random times or not sleeping regularly. Well, now, your gut doesn't know when to be ready to receive this food, so it may not be best able to process it.

**0:18:09.1 BR:** So that leads us kind of into what we've been talking about here on Let's Go! It's like, we're encouraging people to make small, manageable changes in their life, just so they can live a little healthier and a little more rewarding an active life. What we talk a lot about on the show is, you don't have to get ready to run a marathon, but how about we take the dog for a walk around the block and how you can feel about this. So when you start making conscious food decisions that help benefit your microbiome, you really are helping live an active life.

**0:18:41.1 DB:** Yeah, that's really true. Again, if it's good for you, it's good for your microbiome, and the healthy changes you're making for yourself will probably be healthy changes for your microbes as well. And one thing that's really, I think, interesting is how resilient your microbiome is.

**0:18:57.7 BR:** Really?

**0:18:58.3 DB:** So how you've been living your life and what you've been eating, your microbes are really used to that, and if you make small day-to-day changes or if, say you take a trip and travel across the world, you might see some small changes in your microbiome or even big changes in your microbiome. But once you return home and get back to your normal lifestyle, those will revert and you'll go back to the microbiome that you had before. So, if you're making changes, one of the best things to do for your microbiome is to make those small sustained changes...

**0:19:32.1 BR:** Small sustained.

**0:19:33.5 DB:** That you can keep and continue to carry out, so that you make these long-term changes to your microbiome and you're not just disrupting it for a little while and then it goes back, because you decide you don't need to eat any fresh fruits anymore.

[laughter]

**0:19:45.8 BR:** Well, I think a lot of people would agree that why some diets fail or some workout

routines fail, is that they're like, "Oh, we're gonna do P90X today and train like Navy SEAL." It's like, no, probably not gonna work... It's not gonna too sustainable, and I think a lot of times when we beat ourselves up because we're trying new diets and like... Food comes across our plate, sometimes it wasn't meant to be there, but we still eat it, and I think it's a little harder to make long-term positive changes, if you make dramatic changes. Have you noticed with some of this research that you've done is like the small gradual changes that people make in their life, can there be benefits, potential benefits by doing that?

**0:20:28.8 DB:** Yeah, absolutely. Again, adding these beneficial things like increasing fiber in your diet, for example, is a great way to really make sustained changes in the health of your microbiome, so right now, the recommendation is 25 to 30 grams of fiber per day for a person.

**0:20:49.6 BR:** What is that? For those of us that don't use the metric system, how much fiber is that?

**0:20:57.4 DB:** So that much fiber is a couple of servings of fresh fruits and vegetables and a couple of servings of whole grains.

**0:21:06.5 BR:** Okay.

**0:21:06.7 DB:** So it isn't that much, but most people get about 15 grams of fiber in their diet per day. So about half of what they really need to be getting. And interestingly, so studies on coprolite, which is actually a fossilized poop, show us that our ancestors were eating sometimes in excess of 120 grams of fiber a day. So we're far short of what our bodies and our microbiomes can really be handling, but that's not to say I recommend going out and eating 120 grams of fiber tomorrow because when you do make these big dramatic changes, your microbes aren't ready for it, and all of us, I think have maybe eaten really randomly one day or tried to make a huge diet change and our guts have felt really unhappy about it, and that's because our microbes just aren't used to that, but if you make these small changes, your body and your microbiome can adapt to it and help support your sticking with those changes.

**0:22:11.1 BR:** Do you think with, back to our ancestors with 125 grams a day, is that because food was much more scarce and it was catch as catch can with their diets whereas today, I think we live in a pretty much a land of abundance, or at least in a lot of... Throughout the United States, it's fairly easy to get everything from a double cheeseburger to tacos and stuff.

**0:22:34.2 DB:** Yeah, so that's a really great point. And definitely a lot of our ancestors, a lot of what they were eating was plants, most of the time, because meat was usually a little bit harder to get a hold of, and maybe you didn't have it every day, but most days you could find some plants to eat, so that was a big part of the diet, but right now it's actually difficult to get the fiber that you need from just eating a general diet, because if you look at the amount of fiber in the food system right now, it's not high enough to support the amount that we need. You have to be really deliberate. You can't just passively try and eat and hope that you get enough fiber, you have to seek out fiber to make sure you're getting enough.

**0:23:23.3 BR:** So, one thing that I hear a lot about, but I'm not really... Never really understood is, what is a probiotic? I know that yogurt has probiotic elements, but what is a probiotic and do you recommend people taking a probiotic?

**0:23:39.9 DB:** Yeah. So a probiotic, the word itself means good bacteria. So in general, it's bacteria that have been researched and studied and shown to have beneficial effects on some aspect of human health. For example, probiotics, if you take them, can help to support gut health and things like that. And interestingly, it's not always because the probiotics move in and kind of set up shop and they add these beneficial effects, they kind of help create an environment that other good bacteria want to live in. So for that reason, it's helpful when taking probiotics to take them fairly regularly in your diet, whether you're taking a probiotic supplement or eating yogurt, though if you're eating yogurt, make sure you're looking and either, for bacteria itself.

**0:24:34.2 BR:** Is this like the benefit of the Greek yogurt versus the non-Greek yogurt. I've always been curious about that, like why is one yogurt better than another?

**0:24:43.5 DB:** Sure, so Greek yogurt actually has a lot more to do with filtering some of the way out and kind of concentrating the protein in there.

**0:24:49.2 BR:** Got you.

**0:24:50.4 DB:** But most important is check and see if it says on the container that it has a live cultures.

**0:24:55.4 BR:** Live cultures.

**0:24:56.7 DB:** And that's the most important because those are the probiotic bacteria that you want in your body.

**0:25:00.9 BR:** Got it. So this is gonna sound like a silly question, and if not, we'll just cut it out of the show, but it's like for vegetarians, do they have to be concerned about probiotics and stuff like that, or is there benefits to having a vegetarian-based diet versus not having a vegetarian-based diet?

**0:25:18.0 DB:** One of the biggest benefits to a vegetarian-based diet is, and I know I keep saying this word, but it's easier to get the fiber that you need.

**0:25:26.0 BR:** So it's fiber, fiber, fiber.

**0:25:28.8 DB:** I hope I'm making that clear.

**0:25:30.7 BR:** So fiber, fiber, fiber.

**0:25:32.0 DB:** If anyone walks away, just remembering the word "fiber", I'll feel like this has been a success. But that's one of the biggest benefits is they're able to get more of that fiber usually than other people who are eating a non-vegetarian diet, but there's still other ways they can support their microbiome, like eating other foods that have probiotics in them, so even if someone say it's vegan and would prefer not to yogurt, maybe they can still eat kimchi or some other foods that have been fermented and have probiotic bacteria.

**0:26:03.0 BR:** So, as we're getting ready to wrap this up, I just have one more question. And it's basically from the cradle to the grave, from young to old, how does one's microbiome shift through



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the course of one's life, does it need to have special needs towards the end of it or towards the beginning, can you talk maybe about the longevity of somebody versus the relationship they have with their microbiome during that time?

**0:26:26.8 DB:** Yeah, so there's definitely changes that we've seen as people travel through their lifespan and infants and newborns, interestingly, in adults, you hear a lot of talk about the benefits of diversity of a microbiome, but in infants you see really some very specific types of bacteria in their gut and those are completely dominant of their microbiome, and that's because generally, they're eating one source of food, and they want a really specialized microbiome to support digestion and use of that food, which is...

**0:27:01.7 BR:** So, when you're a kid, your chances are you probably, like formula or maybe you're having cream corn or something as kids do, having not had a kid, I assume that's what all kids eat, is formula and cream corn. But when you have a very limited diet as a young person, that your microbiome reflects that and it's gonna work as best it can to kind of match that, but as we get older and we seem to be walking through the buffet of life, where we're eating everything from around the globe, it's a little bit more diverse in the microbiome?

**0:27:30.9 DB:** Yeah, that's true, though to be clear, I'm speaking specifically about infants.

**0:27:34.5 BR:** Infants, okay.

**0:27:34.8 DB:** So maybe don't give your infant cream corn but formula and breast milk are great options. And so they'll have specific microbiomes to support digestion of those. But yes, as they start weaning and eating more solid foods, then you start to see those shifts in the microbiome, and you see them suddenly developing more of an adult-style microbiome, and usually by the time children are about age three, they have what's considered a more adult microbiome, though again, that still shifts over time, and as you get older and then become elderly, you see these changes, again, in your microbiome though we're still trying to really understand whether that's coming from aging, whether that's coming from environment, whether that's coming from what you tend to eat at different periods in your life. So there's a lot we're still working to understand about the microbiome and how it changes.

**0:28:26.2 BR:** Well, I think that's a really interesting field of study, and I wanna thank you for dedicating some time to joining us on the show today. Dr. Rachel Brewer, she's over here at USANA, thank you very much for being on the show.

**0:28:38.1 DB:** Thank you very much. And remember, eat more fiber.

**0:28:40.8 BR:** Fiber.

[music]

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## **Mindfulness and the Importance of Self-Reflection**

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**0:00:01.3 Ben Raskin:** Welcome to Let's Go! With USANA. My name is Ben Raskin, and we have a very special episode for you. We're gonna explaining the importance of mindfulness with Amy Zirneklis. Amy is a certified mindful instructor, as well as the Athlete Relations Manager here at USANA. As we're going to discover, Amy teaches that there are multiple ways to achieve a state of mindfulness, and while the techniques might differ, the goal remains the same: To achieve a mindset that is focused on relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgment. Essentially, she wants your mind to refocus on the present moment and to gently push aside those unhealthy or unhappy thoughts. The results can help your entire health journey. Amy will discuss the importance of self-reflection and why a positive attitude and self-love are important for your overall health. She's explored the benefits of taking time for yourself and how these moments of reflection become the foundation of a happy life. And as a special treat, Amy will walk us through a mindful exercise at the end of the podcast. So welcome to the show, Amy Zirneklis.

[music]

**0:01:08.9 BR:** Amy, to get started, what exactly is mindfulness?

**0:01:11.9 Amy Zirneklis:** Thanks for having me Ben. So the definition that I like to work from is paying attention to the present moment and putting that attention on our thoughts, our feelings, the sensations that are occurring in our body in that moment, our surrounding environment, but bringing with that attention the characteristics of kindness, curiosity, and non-judgement; which is probably out of kindness, curiosity and non-judgement, I will say non-judgement is probably the most difficult of those characteristics for us to practice.

**0:02:00.0 BR:** It sounds like it's a holistic full body way of sort of achieving a positive mindset.

**0:02:06.7 AZ:** It's a dropping into your body. So yes, in a very holistic way, you're dropping in and you're noticing, not only what your body is physically feeling in that moment, but perhaps what are the thoughts that your mind is producing in that moment, are they planning thoughts, are they worry thoughts, are they judgement thoughts, or perhaps what you're feeling in terms of an emotion in that moment.

**0:02:42.5 BR:** So this sounds a lot like mindfulness and meditation might have a... It might be different branches on the same tree. Are they the same or is there a difference between the two of them?

**0:02:52.7 AZ:** So we can think about mindfulness as that process of paying attention, of collecting the attention in the present moment, and we can think about meditation as a formal or an informal intentional practice or training. So there's different techniques of meditation and different practices of meditation with the same end goal of cultivating that awareness, cultivating that attention. So for example, an example of a formal practice would be sitting in silence or sitting and listening to a guided meditation, informally we can practice meditation while we're walking, there's a laughing meditation that exists. [chuckle] So many different types.

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**0:03:57.9 BR:** It sounds like what you're really trying to get people to do is to cut out all the distractions of the world, and that's increasingly more difficult between our cell phones, our iPads, and being linked in, especially this last year with lots of people working from home and being kind of dependent upon these electronic device, is to connect us.

**0:04:18.9 AZ:** Yeah, so it's a practice of not going outside, so not going to your phone or not going to your iPad, but it's a practice of going in.

**0:04:32.2 BR:** So you said a few moments ago about dropping in, I'm not exactly familiar with that term, and maybe you can explain it to our listeners. When we're talking about dropping in, how does that factor in with mindfulness?

**0:04:44.4 AZ:** So we spend so much of our day, we have our family responsibilities, we're at work, we're trying to perform and produce at work, we're all trying to meet our obligations to our community and to our friends, and so we spend a lot of time in our head. And so what I mean by dropping in is kind of moving from all that thought and energy that's going on in our brains and in our minds and coming into our body and coming into our natural internal awareness that we have.

**0:05:28.0 BR:** I'll be the first one to say this, I don't practice mindfulness and meditation in a formal setting, but when you said about going for a walk, like when I walk the dogs in the morning, my brain is going 1000 different directions, even though I'm just by myself and the dogs don't talk yet. [chuckle] How could people do a mindful exercise when they're doing something that doesn't require a lot of focus, like walking the dogs?

**0:05:52.3 AZ:** So a few different ways that we can just start to tap in to our inner selves. One of the easiest and simplest ways is by pausing and taking a few full, deep in breaths and complete out breaths and you'll start to naturally feel a little bit of a dissolve of what you may be holding in your body or resting what that thought process is producing. And putting a little bit of space in between all those thoughts that are running through and racing through your mind and how you are being.

**0:06:51.1 BR:** I mean, that sounds like an easy thing to do considering it doesn't take a gym membership to take a moment for yourself to take a deep breath. [laughter]

**0:06:58.4 AZ:** Yeah, yeah, it's one of the simplest things that we can do, is pause and take a few full deep breaths. And you'll notice the more you take those deep breaths and you release and fulfill that complete out breath, that sense of dissolve, that sense of release, that sense of reprieve, you'll notice it.

**0:07:26.5 BR:** Well, you know, I remember as a kid, for me, it's been decades ago since I was a kid, but it's like, I remember you have these cry sessions. It would be over anything from like your brother got a toy or your disappointment or whatever, but I remember as you get towards the end of that cry you find yourself like almost panting and it feels almost like if I were to think back on that moment, it's almost like an endorphin rush getting all that oxygen into your system. [chuckle]

**0:07:53.7 AZ:** So there's a saying in the Mindfulness Community that, "The issues are in your tissues."

[laughter]

**0:08:04.8 AZ:** So if we can oxygenate our tissues, we will purge or release some of those issues.

**0:08:13.8 BR:** Well, even though we breathe... Obviously, if you're not breathing, you're probably not listening to this podcast, but it's like you actually have to... It sounds like you need to really take time for yourself. Why is it important to block out parts of the day to take time for yourself to just do a simple breathing exercise?

**0:08:34.6 AZ:** So I think everyone who is listening to this podcast has likely said to themselves like, "I need a break," or, "I need to go do something else. I need to stop for a minute." So when we take time for ourselves, what happens is that we regain access, so we regain access to our creativity, our sense of perspective, and we regain our capacity to take life in again. And then over time, if we don't disconnect and spend time on things that we enjoy things that spark our curiosity, that spark our sense of wonder, or our ability to release our stress or tension, then we become more susceptible to the stress-related challenges, core sleep, higher cortisol levels, lack of motivation.

**0:09:55.0 BR:** Yeah. Would you say that having a sense of mindfulness could actually help with working, with achieving a state of gratitude, like to be able to take an assessment of yourself plus the relationships with the people in your life?

**0:10:11.6 AZ:** So speaking from my own personal experience, yes, and when I think back to what mindfulness has given me over the years, it's changed. So in the early, early years of starting to practice, what I would notice is my ability to make space. I would notice that kind of reprieve from a sense of being overwhelmed and I would kinda notice those things after I took the time of a mindfulness session or a meditation session. And as the years have gone on, I go through different stages of life, I go through different life experiences. And now what I notice is more of a sense of empathy, more of a sense of gratitude. And that noticing of the lift or that noticing of that reprieve or of that space that I was making, that's now happening as I'm preparing to go into my meditation or I'm getting ready to listen to a guided meditation rather than after the session. And now I notice a bit more compassion, I can notice when people are stuck in their emotions or they're stuck in their thoughts more quickly, and I have a greater sense of empathy and a greater sense of compassion that comes out of that noticing.

**0:12:08.2 BR:** I wanna bear down on this empathy because I think, I personally believe it's very important to... When you're making connections with the people in your life, it's like you have to almost put yourself in their place, and it seems like when you're trying to achieve a state of mindfulness that it could make you a better partner, probably maybe a better colleague, maybe just a better friend, brother and sister, and so. Would you agree with that having empathy is a good tool to have in your toolkit?

**0:12:36.7 AZ:** It is, and I think you grow it first within yourself and for yourself, and as you do that and as you have done it and you notice that you're being kinder to yourself, you're being more understanding, you're giving yourself more grace for the humanness that we have. That once you have that for yourself, you then are able to better put yourself, in other people's shoes, to think about their scenario or their situation, or their hardship or their joy, and then you feel that with them, and that I think is what strengthens the connection and our bond as humans.

**0:13:31.0 BR:** Some people might say that they don't have time to practice mindfulness. And you're

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a mom, you've got a kid running around the house. Just to give our listeners a sense of how they could fit mindfulness into their daily routine. When do you suggest people practice mindfulness?

**0:13:49.4 AZ:** Great question.

[laughter]

**0:13:53.0 AZ:** So one of the most important things that I think I've learned about mindfulness is becoming very cognizant of where I place my attention, where I place what my mind focuses on, and that's become more important to me as the years go by, and that's a constant conversation with myself because my mind probably runs as fast as your mind and as slow as somebody else's mind.

**0:14:25.5 BR:** Well my mind runs pretty slow most of the time.

[laughter]

**0:14:30.1 AZ:** But the conversation I have with myself is, "Okay, I notice I'm placing my attention on Exhibit A. Do I want to place my attention there? How is placing my attention there serving me?" So incorporating mindfulness or self-reflection or expanding that out to incorporating something that better serves my health and well-being with a child in the background, looks different than it did before children.

**0:15:04.9 BR:** Yeah, I could imagine. [laughter]

**0:15:07.9 AZ:** But I intentionally keep that idea of, "Where am I placing my attention?" I keep that in the frame of my life. So that's related to time. How time gets used, shifts with children.

**0:15:24.3 BR:** Yeah.

**0:15:25.6 AZ:** So some days I'm able to make the time in the morning before everyone is awake. Some days, I am too tired, so I choose to put my attention into my sleep. [chuckle]

**0:15:40.6 BR:** Yeah. [laughter]

**0:15:43.0 AZ:** And some days I incorporate it in between work, or maybe I just drop my son off at school, now, I'm in the car, I can listen to a guided meditation, I won't be closing my eyes while I'm driving.

[laughter]

**0:16:00.9 AZ:** Sometimes the shower has become that place of meditation, which oftentimes when warm water is hitting yourself, it can be a lovely time to do that. Sometimes it's when I'm walking the dog. So with children, re-conceptualizing time in general, has helped me to open up more opportunities to practice, and it looks different.

**0:16:32.3 BR:** Prior to us having this interview with each other, it's like my understanding of mindfulness was almost next to nothing. And in a weird way, when I was doing research in preparation for our podcast, I thought mindfulness was like a very serious, serious activity,

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something like Zen monks would do at the top of a mountain, but the more that I've kind of research it for myself, what I'm noticing is that it doesn't have to be strictly formal, you can have this informal relationship with mindfulness from walking the dogs to when you're taking a shower. Do you think people can get scared off simply by the term mindfulness?

**0:17:11.0 AZ:** It can be a vague and maybe woo-woo term. [chuckle]

**0:17:16.8 BR:** Woo-woo. [laughter]

**0:17:21.0 AZ:** Some people may get scared off, some people may just kinda ride it off.

**0:17:23.8 BR:** Yeah. I think some people may get scared off by it. But I guess what you're really talking about, it's like just a chance to really center yourself, which has a lot of benefits, right? Wouldn't you agree?

**0:17:32.8 AZ:** Yeah, this culture is a busy culture, and it's easy for us to do one thing and just move on to the next without taking 20 seconds to breathe. And that's another practice, easy practice that people can do, they just take 20 seconds in between finishing your email and starting that next project. Sit, pause, breathe.

**0:18:07.5 BR:** Sit, pause, breathe. You and I are probably like the same ways. Our inbox every morning is jam packed, we have to answer all these emails, and it's like sometimes it's almost a rush... I'm not saying you have to appreciate work but rather you're not appreciating the process. And it's just sort of like when you're crafting that email or crafting that response, if you're a little more in the moment, you might create better work, I mean, it seems like you might even be more productive, right?

**0:18:38.0 AZ:** Yeah, when you're able to drop in in that moment and be in an integrated sense of yourself, there's a richness there that is easy to skip over when you're in that auto-pilot mode of, "Okay, let's just get this done."

**0:19:00.7 BR:** Yeah, yeah. [chuckle]

**0:19:03.2 AZ:** One, two, three, four, okay. [chuckle]

[laughter]

**0:19:03.7 AZ:** We miss out on that richness that we have inside and that creativity, just sitting and feeling integrated, how nice that feels instead of feeling fragmented of, "I've got this and this and this and this to do." And you get into that frequency of a little bit of anxiousness.

**0:19:27.4 BR:** Yeah, it does seem like, because we do have a lot of external pressures. And frankly, I think a lot of these external pressures are things that we put upon our own self, and I think we're trying to... I think sometimes we're trying to do way too much and that we're not actually hitting the pause button to sort of like... Not to use a horrible cliché, but it's like you never really see the trees from the forest sometimes, 'cause you're always got your head down and you're moving forward. Since mindfulness doesn't have to be serious, like when... Can you redefine how you are going to be mindful, like when you are mindful in the shower, does that differ from when you're being mindful



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to say when you're walking the dogs or when you're doing the that guided meditation lesson for yourself?

**0:20:08.7 AZ:** So there's different, what in the Mindfulness Community we'll call anchors.

**0:20:15.5 BR:** Okay.

**0:20:17.1 AZ:** That we can tap into when we're practicing mindfulness. So across those different activities, let's take walking the dog, for example. When you're walking the dog, an anchor that could help you to come in to center and to stay in the moment, it could be sounds, you could be taking in the sound of, let's say you're walking on gravel.

**0:20:51.1 BR:** Okay.

**0:20:51.9 AZ:** You're taking the sound of the crunching that's under your feet, or you're taking the sound of your dog's nails clicking on the gravel. For the example of the shower, when you're in the shower, on a one anchor that you could rely on to bring you back into yourself is the sensation of the water hitting your shoulder or hitting the top of your head, or rolling down your face.

**0:21:22.7 BR:** So is this like, so in the shower, so is it like, can it be something simple as like, the temperature of the water, like noticing how hot or cold it is?

**0:21:31.7 AZ:** Yeah, you could notice the temperature of it to bring yourself back in and as you're noticing that temperature and you're staying with that noticing of, "This is a very pleasant warm," or maybe you're taking a cold shower to jump start your... [chuckle]

**0:21:51.1 BR:** Or post-workout shower, or it's time to get ready. [chuckle] You gotta get up and at them, when you're thinking of that temperature, so that temperature is what you're talking about, is the anchor that you're trying to set your mind to.

**0:22:04.1 AZ:** Right. And as you stay with noticing what that temperature is, you'll notice that your mind will leave it, because that's the nature of the mind, is to produce thoughts, so your mind will leave and you'll start thinking about what you're gonna have for breakfast, or you have to take the trash out.

**0:22:27.4 BR:** Yeah.

**0:22:29.4 AZ:** And then you notice, "Oh, I'm not thinking about," or "I'm not feeling the temperature of the water." So you bring yourself back to the temperature, you bring yourself back to that feeling. And that is in its essence, the training of awareness is noticing when you have gone, when your mind has left and you're now focusing on that train of thoughts, and you're not connected to your anchor.

**0:23:02.5 BR:** So this is like, as an athlete relations for USANA, it sounds like this is when athletes get into the zone. Is there parallels between the two of them that you're talking about?

**0:23:14.8 AZ:** So I think we've all heard of entering that flow state that many athletes speak of, and I feel like that is akin to spending time in our awareness that in a internal, constant knowing that is

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always ongoing in our background, but when we practice mindfulness, we bring it into the foreground of our experience. In meditation, when we meditate, we're shifting our attention from our mind, from our thoughts or from our emotions or feelings, or something we're hooked into shifting from that and starting to enter into that field of awareness.

**0:24:11.6 BR:** Wow. It almost seems like when you're practicing this, and I wanna emphasize the word practice, the way that you would practice the violin or practice shooting a free throw in basketball or something like that. But as you're practicing this, you're trying to achieve a standard perfection that you'll never quite get there. Is that fair or am I misreading the tea leaves on that one?

**0:24:35.6 AZ:** I think the achieving that state of perfection maybe brings in that theme of seriousness...

**0:24:41.9 BR:** Yeah, that's probably true. [laughter]

**0:24:42.7 AZ:** That we're talking about. [chuckle] What we're doing in mindfulness is bringing that sense of curiosity, that sense of kindness, that sense of being a gentle, independent observer.

**0:25:00.4 BR:** Gentle independent.

**0:25:00.7 AZ:** To what our experience in that moment is in a nonjudgmental way. So when you speak of, "Oh, we're trying to search for perfection," we'll naturally go into a judgmental state because, "Oh, I'm not reaching perfection in my meditation. I'm a bad meditator. I'm doing this wrong." [chuckle]

[laughter]

**0:25:34.0 AZ:** Kind of in USANA terms, we wanna be that scientist, that independent curious experimenter to what we're experiencing in that moment.

**0:25:48.1 BR:** I'm speaking personally on this one, it's like being judgmental on myself, man, that happens all the time, it's like... Both personally and professionally, it's like, "Ah, you could have done that a little bit better," or "I could have been paying more attention to my wife," or even something like, "Well, you could have had better edging when you're mowing the lawn," or something like that. We do judge ourselves all the time. What's a tip to sort of be a little kinder to yourself and not be so judgmental?

**0:26:15.6 AZ:** So one practice within mindfulness that can support bringing a little bit of kindness or a little bit of space in between the judgment and yourself is simply noticing when you're doing it. And in that noticing, it's a neutral notice, it's you notice it, and you can softly, silently, gently whisper to yourself, "Okay, judging. My mind is judging right now." So you're focusing more on what the process of the thinking is.

**0:27:02.1 BR:** Okay.

**0:27:03.5 AZ:** Versus the weight and the harshness of what that thought or what that judgment is. And that if you can start to practice that of you notice it, you gently, softly, kindly, just label it, you'll feel a natural, just a natural softening around it.

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**0:27:35.0 BR:** It almost, it's like you wanna push that bad judgment away with the strength of a feather, just like, "Get out of here!" [chuckle] But you're recognizing it and just sort of moving on. And so that goes back to the... What even the etymology of the word mindfulness is, it's like you're being mindful of this negative thought, or this criticism, or this judgment and just gently saying goodbye to it. Is that fair?

**0:28:03.2 AZ:** Yeah, I think that's a fair assessment. You're just gently, or you could just gently be saying hello to it. [laughter] There is another saying that goes around the Mindfulness Community that we invite our suffering or our stress or our judgment, we invite it to tea, we ask it to take a seat right next to us, and leave it there. We don't have to hook in or jump on to the bandwagon of, "Yeah, that edging is terrible!" [chuckle] It's just, "Okay, I'm critiquing. Well, what's happening is that I'm critiquing my edging." Neutral.

**0:28:53.2 BR:** So it's almost like it's a dinner party, and you just don't have to invite all the guests to the table that you don't wanna see there.

**0:29:00.8 AZ:** Yeah. [laughter] You can gently notice them and let them pass by because that's the other natural phenomena is that we're sitting here having our great conversation, and are you still connected to how you felt about your edging? It comes and it goes.

**0:29:22.0 BR:** I think a lot of these things, even when I'm not being... The focus on this one thing. It's like it does ebb and flow, you're right. It's like you move on to the next challenge, and maybe that's what it is, it's like this roller coaster of recognizing and saying goodbye or saying hello as you said, and then just moving on to the next challenge in your life.

**0:29:42.5 AZ:** Yeah, the emotion or the mental state or the thought, it will arise. And it will pass.

**0:29:52.6 BR:** Well, Amy, I think this is a great time. Since we have you here, would you be willing to maybe walk our listeners through a mindful exercise that they could practice while they're listening to this at home or wherever? Maybe we could set the table for how you'd like our audience to practice a mindful exercise, and we can go through it together.

**0:30:13.2 AZ:** I would love that.

**0:30:14.2 BR:** So I'm just gonna say one thing real fast is that I'm not gonna interrupt you for a while, the mic is absolutely yours. And so talk to our audience and then have us go through a mindful session. [laughter]

**0:30:25.5 AZ:** Oh, great. Alright, so I will start and I will end our time with this bell. So I first, before I ring the bell, I'd like to invite you to find a position. It could to be a sitting position, can be a lying position, but find a position that will support you, that will allow you to feel safe, alert and at ease for the next few minutes. And we'll start by just taking a few full, deep cleansing in breaths and smooth, complete out breaths. We're just breathing in, peace and calm, and breathing out stress, and just starting to arrive in the moment, collecting the attention. And now letting your breath resume its natural rhythm, let's just scan our body and see if there are any areas of holding or habitual tightening that we can release, we can soften, just see what wants to be let go of as you settle. We're opening our mindfulness, checking in to the awareness of your body and senses.

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**0:32:33.3 AZ:** I'd like to invite you to let the eyes be soft, and soften the face. Unhinge or loosen your jaw, and just let your tongue rest at the top of your palate. Let your shoulders relax. Let them drop down and back. The arms and hands just rest easily. So you're seated with a sense of dignity and alertness, and at the same time, a deep invitation of presence and relaxation. And for the next few moments, just begin to notice the play of experience as you sit quietly, you can notice that sounds come and go, you can notice the body sensations, areas of ease or tightness, warmth or cool, vibration or stillness, pleasure or pain, the field of this body received with a kind attention.

**0:34:54.1 AZ:** And you can notice the state of the heart as well. Is there interest or gratitude, perhaps sadness or grief? Excitement or tenderness. And you can notice the states of the mind that's present now, planning, excitement, relaxed, doubting, questioning, remembering, curious. And for the last minute or so, feel yourself seated here with presence and dignity and realize that you can notice the play of experience as you have with the spacious and kind attention that you call more fully into the present. And as you're ready, and can slowly come back into the room, gently open your eyes, give yourself one last full, deep in breath. Complete out breath. And thank you for your presence.

[music]

**0:37:00.3 BR:** Thank you very much Amy.

**0:37:00.9 AZ:** My pleasure.

[music]

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## **Starting a New Diet & the Importance of Fiber**

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[music]

**0:00:04.7 Ben Raskin:** Welcome to Let's Go! With USANA, my name is Ben Raskin, and today we have a great show for you. We're gonna be talking about everyone's least favorite four-letter word, diet. If you're anything like me, you've tried it all, from the grapefruit diet to an all cabbage soup diet to... Well, you name it, if there's a fad diet out there, I've probably given it a shot with limited success. The problem with the fad diet isn't our desire to make healthy changes in our lives, the issue is that they're simply not sustainable, often you're asked to do too much, too quickly without a plan or even a support system, which can cause too much discomfort or even worse, a loss of motivation to stay the course. It takes effort and some guidance to start a new diet. That's why we've invited a friend of the show, Shelli Baxter, to share her tips for overcoming the roadblocks you might face while starting your new healthy journey. Shelli is USANA's Executive Director of Global Nutrition and a master at helping people focus on making smarter food choices. She's a big proponent of small, consistent changes and a champion for encouraging people to push through the first phases of a new health routine. All diets can be challenging in the beginning, but Shelli has the expertise to help all of us to start, follow, and maintain a smart diet plan. Welcome to the show, Shelli Baxter.

**0:01:21.6 Shelli Baxter:** Good morning, Ben.

**0:01:22.8 BR:** Why do people get cranky when they start a new diet?

**0:01:25.6 SB:** Well, you know, Ben, let's just face it, changing your habits can be really stressful. So, there's a lot of planning, there's a lot of tracking involved at first, that you may not be used to doing, right? And you may be cranky because you're feeling, let's just flat out say it, deprived. And you may be craving the foods that you're trying to cut out, you may be feeling left out socially, especially if eating out with your friends or having drinks with your friends is a big part of your social life, and you're trying to make changes that restrict that area of your life. Sometimes you may not be eating enough, especially if you're just severely cutting back on calories. And quite frankly, a lot of times people get cranky is they're craving the sugar, they're trying to cut out.

**0:02:24.7 BR:** I figured a lot of the... When we talk about discipline that comes with a diet, a lot of it is like what you can and can't have, and sometimes the things that you can have are not the things that you crave, you know. And I think we have such a easy access to so many of the foods that we love eating that are really not the best choices for us. And so, when you make small choices, differences in your life, like what are you looking at to have some sort of sustainable change for a diet?

**0:02:52.7 SB:** So, I look at making a smaller change that I can stick with over time. So, I'll give you an example about, and really it was about 10 years ago, I used to drink soda for lunch, and I used to drink, let's say, a Coca-Cola for lunch, and then I decided that I needed to stop drinking sugar-laden soda, so I ramped down to Coke Zero. And then eventually I just cut out soda all together, I haven't had a sip of soda in about nine years. But it took time, it took time, I didn't just say, "I'm gonna cut soda, cold turkey." And hey, that works for a lot of people. And if that works for you, that's great. That didn't work for me, I had to just slowly taper off the soda, and then I found I wasn't cranky, I wasn't feeling deprived, and when I fully eliminated it, I didn't miss it, and I don't miss it today.

**0:03:55.9 BR:** Is it just like you trained your brain to have different things to crave in a weird way? It's like instead of wanting a soda pop at lunch, it's more like, "Oh, you know, this is when I'm having my water with lemon." You know, with a fresh lemon or you started looking at other alternative stuff that are healthier, that you're still not feeling that, having a sense of being deprived.

**0:04:16.1 SB:** I found that it was more a matter of training my brain to stop wanting the foods and drinks that I was trying to cut out. And once I changed my palette, my palette naturally started enjoying things like green tea that I drink now, or as you said, water, I absolutely love water with lemon and lime and orange slices and, yes, I look forward to those.

**0:04:47.5 BR:** Well, I liked what you said too, about training your brain to other things that you're not gonna be having anymore, and it's like, "But how does we train their brain to start craving the things that are actually really good for themselves?"

**0:04:57.8 SB:** I think it's all about mindset, Ben, I think when you... And so I really enjoy food, right? And so, I'll find a lot of recipes that just sound really delicious, and they have ingredients that are the ingredients that I want for that particular meal. I'll get really excited about it, and I'll shop and I'll enjoy cooking it. And then most importantly, I really enjoy eating it.

[laughter]

**0:05:27.9 BR:** It doesn't make a difference what you cook if you're not actually eating it. Well, since we're talking about diets here, it's like, "Why is it like when I've tried these fad diets in the past, I haven't had the success?" It's like I joked in our introduction about an all cabbage diet, but I've noticed that it's something that was actually kind of prominent about 20 years ago.

**0:05:45.7 SB:** Oh, it is. There's well over 40 different diets out there, and I would say the all cabbage diet or the all grapefruit diet is definitely on the extreme end of that. But I'll ask you a simple question, "How much did you like cabbage before you started the all cabbage diet?"

**0:06:05.0 BR:** Well, on March 17th for St. Patrick's, I love it. The other 364 days of the year, not so much. [chuckle]

**0:06:11.7 SB:** Exactly. So, a lot of times where people make mistakes when they try to start a new diet is, they're not honest with themselves and they don't do their research ahead of time. And when they look at the actual diet, they'll see that it's not either the foods they typically eat. Because we all like healthy whole foods, we all have healthy whole foods that we like, but the thing with a lot of diets is that they cut out huge food groups.

**0:06:48.0 BR:** Like what?

**0:06:50.9 SB:** Well, so for instance, keto severely cuts out carbohydrate.

**0:06:55.2 BR:** Yeah, that's a good point.

**0:06:56.3 SB:** So, you're cutting out a lot of your whole greens, you're cutting out a lot of your legumes, which are like your beans and your lentils, and you're cutting out a lot of your fruits, those are all wonderful fiber-rich, whole foods. But generally, people don't do enough research on a diet



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and they start into that diet and they suddenly realize, I don't like a lot of these foods or I don't eat in this particular pattern. So, some people do really well on... I mean, just use intermittent fasting, for an example, some people do really well on intermittent fasting and having a eating window is generally a really great idea. But some people have low blood sugar in the mornings and they don't do well with cutting out their breakfast, so they start their day really kind of in a mental fog, and they feel tired and sluggish, and that's no way to start your day, right?

**0:07:58.3 BR:** No, that's...

**0:08:00.5 SB:** So, you have to be honest with yourself. When you look at a new diet and you say, is this how I want to eat? Is this what I want to eat? Can I stick with this?

**0:08:14.3 BR:** So, when you're trying to make a diet that actually can be sustainable, 'cause I think that's what you're really trying to talk about here is like, it's not enough just to fast for 10 days, and lose a couple of quick pounds, it's like you're not gonna stick with that for a long period of time, and probably the more you're forcing yourself on something you don't like, the more miserable you're gonna be around it in the first place.

**0:08:33.0 SB:** Cranky, like your first question.

[laughter]

**0:08:35.8 BR:** You're gonna be cranky. When I think about a lot of diets, so I've had some experience with, even with whole foods or diets where like, my tummy gets upset. I feel like a little bit of some discomfort with when I'm starting a new diet routine that I'm really making a big effort to stay with for a long period of time. I feel sometimes maybe my stomach hurts a little bit and maybe I get a little cloudy in the head sometimes, why is that happening? How do you kinda survive that?

**0:09:07.3 SB:** Well, let's tackle the stomach discomfort first, okay? Many of the good popular diets. So, there are a lot, I am not anti-diet in particular, I support individuals that are following a general good healthy whole foods diet, and there are a lot of diets out there that are based on healthy whole foods, and they all have one thing in common, they generally have you starting to eat more vegetables or/and for some diets, fruits and vegetables and fiber-containing foods, just in general. And if your GI tract is not used to that much fiber or the types of fiber found in those foods, then you might find some stomach discomfort. You might experience some gas, some bloating and maybe loose stools for a few days, that's very, very common.

**0:10:10.0 BR:** So this is because we're introducing fiber into our diets, so What's an average diet a person, how much fiber do you think someone gets in an average day?

**0:10:17.7 SB:** Less than 10 grams.

**0:10:21.0 BR:** What is, for me, and not even for our audience, what is 10 grams of fiber look like? [chuckle]

**0:10:25.2 SB:** 10 grams of fiber looks like maybe a couple of servings of vegetables, maybe a serving of brown rice, a couple of pieces of fruit, just depends on what you eat, right?

**0:10:37.5 BR:** Mm-hmm.

**0:10:39.5 SB:** Interestingly, when the last time I looked at the Utah statistics, the majority of Utahans here in our state are eating less than three servings of fruits and vegetables in a day, and there's even an unfortunately high amount of people who don't even eat one serving, which might be very surprising to a lot of people listening to this podcast.

**0:11:04.9 BR:** So, average Americans are eating a lot less fiber than usual, 'cause I had to do a lot of the iTest when it comes to diets. I know that if you stay away from like a drive-through fast restaurant, it's probably better to have an apple versus a lot of food on the go, when we're trying to kick starting this new routine, we're talking about adding a lot more fiber than what you're talking about, than what we're we usually expecting, so what happens when fiber hits your system? You've talked about some of the symptoms, but does it ever go away, those feelings?

**0:11:35.3 SB:** It does. Oh, absolutely, as your body adapts to the additional fiber... Now, I'm just gonna back up a little bit. We've talked about most people are getting less than 10 grams of fiber a day, you wanna be getting at least 30 grams of fiber.

**0:11:50.8 BR:** So, tripling them out that you traditionally get?

**0:11:53.9 SB:** Generally. Of course, again, it's very individual, and what your diet looks like presently. About 90% of individuals do not get enough fiber daily, so that's a pretty good figure to start with, so most people are trying to increase that fiber. And fiber feeds the good bacteria in your gut.

**0:12:14.7 BR:** This would be like the microbiome and like the gut...

**0:12:16.0 SB:** Mm-hmm. Your microbiome, exactly. And when your microbiome actually gets the food that it likes, it starts fermenting them and turning fiber into compounds that are beneficial for your body, so let's just focus on some of your very top beneficial microorganisms in your gut, they like a type of fiber that other microorganisms can't digest and we call those in layman's terms, prebiotics.

**0:12:50.7 BR:** Prebiotics?

**0:12:52.4 SB:** Like inulin, like fructooligosaccharides, and when your gut microbiome gets a hold of that type of fiber, when they ferment that fiber and they turn it into something called a short chain fatty acid, and what do those do? Those have all kinds of health benefits. And for one, it feeds the cells in your gut, so they are definitely our friends. They manufacture vitamins that we don't get in our diet, and they do a whole host of very beneficial things. And when they start fermenting, your body may not be used to what that feels like, right? And over time though, it adapts and that settles down a bit and those symptoms disappear, and I wanna be clear, if you're eating a good fiber-rich diet, you're going to have gas 10-20 times a day, and I'm talking small amounts, right? That's a sign of a well-fed gut microbiome, and some people aren't used to that.

**0:14:02.9 BR:** So, there's a little bit of discomfort, mostly because your body is actually operating optimally when you get this.

**0:14:07.8 SB:** Yes.

**0:14:08.0 BR:** So, with these fibers that go into the system, and I actually genuinely curious about these, what did you call, short chain fatty acids?

**0:14:13.7 SB:** Mm-hmm.

**0:14:16.8 BR:** So, why are those beneficial for a human body?

**0:14:19.5 SB:** So, like I said, one rule that they serve is to feed the very cells lining our gut, and then they have a whole host of other health-related.

**0:14:33.3 BR:** So these things actually can help digestion by... It's almost like an additional step that is beneficial for good digestion is what you're saying?

**0:14:41.8 SB:** Mm-hmm.

**0:14:42.5 BR:** Wow.

**0:14:43.5 SB:** Yes.

**0:14:44.1 BR:** So, and then when that fermentation is working there is that... I assume more of the by-products of fermentation is like carbon dioxide or...

**0:14:53.8 SB:** There's various gases, yes.

**0:14:56.1 BR:** Various gases, which can accomodate why things... You might get poofy towards the end of the digestive cycle.

**0:15:00.1 SB:** Yes, yes.

**0:15:02.6 BR:** Well, a lot of times when I get an upset stomach, my initial go-to thing is really just to double down on the amount of water I'm drinking.

**0:15:10.4 SB:** That's an excellent go-to.

**0:15:11.0 BR:** And so, when people are starting a diet with has more fiber in it, it's like, should they be drinking more water to sort of combat this on the front end?

**0:15:18.0 SB:** Absolutely. So, fiber needs water to do its job properly, as it's moving things along in your gastrointestinal tract. But I think just first and foremost, healthy hydration is essential for every bodily function, especially your metabolism. Your metabolism, digesting your food, you need water to do that, and another benefit of water is individuals sometimes confuse hunger for just being thirsty.

**0:15:52.4 BR:** Huh?

**0:15:53.9 SB:** Yeah, so they think they're hungry, they're mixing up the signals for thirst with the signals for hunger. And so, one of the top tricks for people who are trying to cut back on their calories, is when they're feeling hungry, is to drink a glass of water and just wait 15 minutes and see how you feel. You might have just been feeling thirsty.

**0:16:16.3 BR:** So, this signals your brain, it could be like, I want food right now, but the reality is, you just need a drink of water, that could give you... It sounds to me like...

**0:16:24.6 SB:** That's very common.

**0:16:26.1 BR:** It sounds like a great diet hack right there too.

**0:16:29.1 SB:** It's a totally great diet hack. Because you're doing the, am I hungry test? You're drinking a glass of water, you're waiting 15, 20 minutes, and then, oh, if you're really, truly still hungry, then eat a good snack, or maybe it may be time for your next meal and eat your next meal, but if you're not hungry, then go about your routine.

**0:16:54.4 BR:** Well, it's like I think I always mistake, well, maybe I'm not mistaking, but I usually connect a diet with a new exercise workout. It seems to be a fairly common like, oh, I'm gonna...

**0:17:04.5 SB:** Oh, yes. That's a lifestyle change.

**0:17:07.7 BR:** It's a lifestyle change, yeah.

**0:17:08.7 SB:** Yeah. When we change our diet, we also start exercising more.

**0:17:12.9 BR:** So, do you recommend any kind of exercises that could sort of support when you're having more whole foods or more fiber in your diet?

**0:17:19.9 SB:** Well, the truth is, your body loves and your gut microbiome loves any type of exercising you're doing. So, the important thing is just to get your body moving. Diet aside, just increasing your physical activity is so good for your health in general. And so, my rule of thumb there is, don't hurt yourself. I've seen too many people try to do too much at once, and they're out with injuries for weeks, they strain something, they sprain something, so it's always best to just be honest with yourself. If you can't walk a mile without getting winded or your ankle hurting, to think you're gonna start running a half marathon tomorrow may not be realistic. So just like with a diet, start small changes. And I think it's really important to do things that you enjoy. We're more apt to stick with something if we enjoy it. And the things that I don't enjoy personally in my life as much for physical activity, but I know are really good for me, like weight lifting, that's when I'll go join a class. Because when I'm in class with a whole bunch of my colleagues, then I'm actually really enjoying myself, doing something that I struggle doing on my own.

**0:18:42.0 SB:** I mean, if I'm just going to be completely honest, I'm not super good at weight lifting on my own, but I know how important that is for maintaining good lean muscle mass and just strength in general, right? You need to keep your muscles strong, you need to keep your joints strong if you wanna live a healthy long life, right? 'Cause some people are just dying too long, living too short and dying too long.

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**0:19:08.9 BR:** Well, let me ask you this then, a lot of times when we start a workout or we start a diet, a new lifestyle change, it's like we have shortcomings, we make mistakes or we fall off our... We break our routines and then we don't get back on the routines. What are some tricks that you could suggest that when people are starting with their nutrition, working on a new diet, when if they happen to have a flub or a couple of days of flubs where they're not following it, how do they get back on the horse, so to speak?

**0:19:35.9 SB:** Okay, so this is one of my favorite ones is, don't beat yourself up. Okay, focus on progress, not perfection. I have a general rule of thumb when it comes to nutrition for anybody following any diet, try to follow your diet 80% of the time and the other 20%, don't worry about it.

**0:19:58.6 BR:** So don't beat yourself up too bad?

**0:20:00.3 SB:** Don't beat yourself up. Too often, people get into the mindset of all or nothing, and so if they "Mess up" one day or they struggle one day, then they just write the whole thing off as a complete failure, it's kind of like throwing the baby out with the bathwater, right?

**0:20:18.3 BR:** Bathwater.

**0:20:22.4 SB:** If you're struggling constantly with a new lifestyle change, you might be taking on too much at once, so maybe pick two or three smaller changes you can make and stick with them until you master them, and then move on and pick two or three more. A lot of small changes made over time actually leads to huge changes overall, and I like to compare it to... Do you remember what it was like to learn to drive a car?

**0:20:51.8 BR:** Yes.

**0:20:52.7 SB:** Do you remember your first days alone in the car, you have so much you have to pay attention to, and then over time, it becomes second nature, right? Well, making those lifestyle choices is like driving a car, it's just so new at first, and so much you have to pay attention to and plan and track and whatever your lifestyle change or your goal involves, and then once it becomes a habit, like driving a car, it's second nature. Absolutely second nature, but I remember those first few days in the car, all those gauges, you have to pay attention to, everything going around on around you. And it was just so stressful.

**0:21:39.1 BR:** Well, I look at this in a very similar way where it's like I think we put a lot of emphasis on New Year's Day is the day we start a lot of these new habits, we make these resolutions, and I've learned early and often that I only have one year's resolution every year to be a better speller. I figure like, Hey, you pick up a couple of words. You'll be okay. But what I've seen with friends and even my own life is that when I make smaller choices throughout the year and I don't make big events out of it, it's not as if, like, alright on July 5th, I'm going to do X, Y and Z. It's like, you know, today I'm gonna try and walk 10 more extra minutes or when it comes to dinner, it's like I'm not gonna go back for seconds immediately, I'm gonna give myself like a 10 Mississippi before I go back to get something else to eat, and I would... While you're the expert, I would just encourage people listening and say, a lot of these changes that you can make in your life, they can be so small that they become second nature, like what you're saying when you're learning how to drive.

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**0:22:38.6 SB:** There is actually a very popular doctor in the UK that I follow, his podcast is amazing, and he has several books out and what he's taught his patients that he found really sticks, it's just starting with small five-minute habits around each area of your lifestyle, they can be nutrition, it can be more physical activity, it can be stress management...

**0:23:06.6 BR:** Or mindfulness or even meditation or something?

**0:23:09.7 SB:** Yeah, mindfulness, and sleep, improving sleep. So basically, his whole philosophy centers around these really small habits, and I've done a lot of research in change in forming new habits, and one of the more popular theories is if you are trying to make a new habit, try to tack it to a habit, you already have.

**0:23:41.2 BR:** Yeah, give me an example of that.

**0:23:42.5 SB:** So let's talk about you're gonna go out in the morning and you're going... Say you're a coffee drinker, you're gonna set up your brew and it takes a few minutes to brew, that might be when you decide, Hey, I'm going to do 50 squats, takes you two or three minutes. I can even use a little example out of my own life, so I told you I don't like to lift weights, right?

**0:24:07.4 BR:** Yeah.

**0:24:08.1 SB:** And I like to do things like hiking, I like yoga, and I'm very, very active as an equestrian, I have to feed my dogs every single morning, and it takes them like 10-15 minutes to eat. In that 10-15 minutes while my dogs are eating, I crank out 150 squats and about 50 push-ups. I am not kidding.

**0:24:33.5 BR:** Let's go podcast listeners, are you hearing this? She's double-dipping first thing in the morning with her workout.

**0:24:41.3 SB:** So what I did, absolutely. So what I did was I took that advice to heart. And I picked, I said, I'm gonna form this new habit, I'm gonna tack it on a habit I already have, so instead of sitting there and flipping through Instagram and Facebook while my dogs are eating, I now do my squats and I get some arm exercise, I choose a different one each day. So today, I worked on my shoulders with light weights, so I just set the little tiny barbell in there on the counter and it reminds me, hey that's what you need to be doing, and I don't allow myself to take my phone in to the room where I feed my dogs.

[laughter]

**0:25:24.3 BR:** Yeah, I think that's a smart thing. I think we get distracted, I think we have so many distractions out there.

**0:25:29.3 SB:** How can you not get distracted with your phone, it's a perfect excuse to get out of doing something you may not actually want to do.

**0:25:38.3 BR:** So when I think about it, It kinda bring us back to the diets for a second. For lack of a better word, starting a new diet really stinks. It's tough.

**0:25:47.3 SB:** It's hard.

**0:25:49.3 BR:** And it's almost like you're saying, don't beat yourself up on this, one small change in your life can actually make a big difference down the road, success builds on success. If you were to encourage somebody who is listening to this, like what would be three to four things you would suggest, besides doing 150 squats when the dogs are eating [0:26:09.4] \_\_\_\_\_, can you give me some examples or some ideas, what would you give people to start their own healthy lifestyle change?

**0:26:18.4 SB:** Well, my top tips for people starting a new healthy lifestyle change, and this is gonna sound so cliché, but it really is ramp up your fruits and vegetables. How hard is it to look at a list of fruits and vegetables and pick two or three that you like and say, Okay, I'm going to incorporate these into my meal plan next week, I'm either gonna eat it as a snack or I'm gonna make a stir fry or something like that.

**0:26:45.0 BR:** Get a little more specific on this, so when you're talking about adding more fruits and vegetables, are you saying for breakfast, I'm gonna have an apple or for lunch, or is it...

**0:26:51.5 SB:** However you want to do it.

**0:26:53.8 BR:** So just add some citrus, and it's almost any fruit is good for this?

**0:26:58.8 SB:** Oh, absolutely, absolutely, I'm not going to...

**0:27:04.4 BR:** Vilify?

**0:27:05.6 SB:** Vilify any good, healthy fruits and vegetables. So what I typically tell people to do is if you're struggling to just get a serving in a day, then maybe pick your favorite fruits or vegetables and try to get three extra serving next week, that's seven days.

**0:27:24.3 BR:** To get three extra...

**0:27:25.8 SB:** Yeah, just three extra serving, start there, right? Start where you can be successful. So saying, I'm gonna eat seven to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every single day for seven days to start out with, well, that isn't a very admirable goal, it's generally not a goal that most people can do, so you gotta start...

**0:27:49.0 BR:** It's like crash landing diet. It's not gonna work.

**0:27:52.4 SB:** Start where you're at.

**0:27:54.9 BR:** Yeah.

**0:27:55.2 SB:** Some other really easy things to do are, be honest with yourself, look at the processed foods you're eating, look at the favorite maybe fast foods that you're eating, look at the sugary foods and beverages that you're eating, where can you taper down? Those are some really small changes, so I gave you my example earlier of soda, how can you start tapering down things like that, the other is just like super simple swaps, if you're someone who really likes to eat white bread, try eating good whole grain bread, and you know, a slice of white bread and a slice of whole

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grain bread have the same calories, but whole grain bread has way more protein, fiber and minerals than a piece of white bread, so start with some of those swaps and swap your, what I call Your refined grains for healthy whole foods grains, those are some really easy, easy ways to start.

**0:29:01.4 BR:** [0:29:04.1] \_\_\_\_ title of this podcast. It is like a slow and steady wins the race.

**0:29:07.4 SB:** Absolutely.

**0:29:08.5 BR:** This is the tortoise and the hare, because if you start out too fast, you're gonna crash and burn. When you're talking about adding 7-10 extra servings of vegetables a week, ideally, you should be having 21 meals a week and having 10 more into that, I don't see people following up on that. Speaking from personal experience, I know that vegetables are good for you, I know that you should have them in your diet, but sometimes you're just so darn bored and you're not feeling it. And so just to get an extra one or two servings a week really can make that big of a difference?

**0:29:42.1 SB:** Mm-hmm. And you know, and they don't have to be plain and boring, you can use them in recipes that are very appealing, you can jazz them up little bit, you can get some really nice like yogurt, like fruit dips, you can get hummus. Hummus is always nice. I think when people envision eating more fruits and vegetables, all of a sudden you have this person who's standing there holding a cup of carrots sticks and celery, [laughter] it's not like that. There's hundreds, literally, of different types of fruits and vegetables out there, pick something you like, and you know it's a little olive oil and garlic salt can really jazz up green beans or asparagus, try something new, there's so many, I always tell people, spice it up, there's so many wonderful herbs and spices out there, play around with those, those can really perk up those fruits and vegetables without adding a lot of extra calories or saturated fat to 'em.

**0:30:49.8 BR:** So as we're kinda winding to the end of this show here. My real question, is that, when you're talking about all these diets is, are we training our brain or are we training our belly when we're starting a new diet?

**0:31:01.3 SB:** Well, it is a little bit of both, Ben, because we'll go back to the fiber, the fiber example, you are training your belly a little bit, but I believe you're training primarily your mind, you know, go back to driving the car example, you have so many new things you're trying to do, if you're starting one of those popular diets, you're studying the diet, what are the foods? What are the requirements? What are the recipes? Now I gotta sit in here and I've gotta plan out what I need to go grocery shopping for, what I need to meal prep for? If I'm going to successfully stick to this diet, it requires a lot of planning ahead.

**0:31:46.0 BR:** Yeah.

**0:31:46.8 SB:** And for some people, it may involve learning how to cook to a certain level, do you mean vegetables or even putting vegetables in the microwave, steaming vegetables, or even learning how to use an oven or a grill is to me, super, super simple, right? But to some people who aren't used to it, that can be a whole new skill they're trying to learn, and then if you're tracking on top of that, so say you're tracking your macros, then there's a lot to keep on top of. It's almost like going back to school. But once it becomes a habit, and I'm gonna go back to that word over and over again, a habit, second nature, then it's so much easier to do, I don't give meal planning a second thought, it's something I've done my entire adult life, you won't survive raising five kids,



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unless you know how to meal, unless you know how to plan ahead and meal prep.

[laughter]

**0:32:47.4 BR:** Meal plan. Yeah.

**0:32:51.5 SB:** It was a survival skill, [chuckle] when I was a young parent. So it just becomes second nature. But then I meet individuals where I understand this is completely new to them, and as second nature as it seems to me, I have to realize when I'm meeting them where they are, that this is very foreign to them, so then you start with some very simple meal prepping and meal planning tips with them, you might even sit down and help 'em pick out some things they could make during the next week that they feel confident about, that's another part of that mental game, you need to be ready, and you need to be confident to be able to make these changes. And some people are so ready, but they lack that confidence. I don't know how to shop, I don't know how to cook. So that's where you help them, that's where really the value lies.

**0:33:50.8 BR:** That is a great place. And I wanna thank Shelli Baxter, USANA's Executive Director of Global Nutrition for joining us on the show. If you have any more questions regarding this, please reach out to [shelli@usanainc.com](mailto:shelli@usanainc.com). Thank you for listening. Bye-bye.

[music]

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The Strength to Pursue Your Dreams

## **The Strength to Pursue Your Dreams**

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[music]

**0:00:00.6 Ben Raskin:** Welcome to Let's Go! With USANA. My name is Ben Raskin, and we have a great podcast for you. Our show today is gonna help you reach new heights. That's because we're talking with Olympian, social influencer, and all around inspiring USANA athlete, Priscilla Loomis. She's a track and field star for Antigua and Barbuda, specializing in the high jump.

**0:00:20.3 BR:** Priscilla's passionate about courage others to follow their dreams. In her quest to reach the top of the leaderboard, she's dedicate herself to grueling training, persevered through physical and emotional sacrifices, and knows how to spring back after defeat. Because of this and so much more, Priscilla is powerful both in her sport and in life.

**0:00:39.7 BR:** With a shock of purple hair and a smile to charm the world, Priscilla is ready to go for gold this summer in Tokyo. She lives her life by the simple mantra, "I can become great at anything I set my mind to." While most of us will never experience this level of international success, Priscilla is an inspiration and a champion for all to do their very best. Priscilla's committed to sharing her passion for training, embracing the sacrifices, and having some fun along the way.

[music]

**0:01:07.2 BR:** So welcome to the show, Priscilla Loomis. When did you know that you were good at jumping?

[chuckle]

**0:01:13.6 Priscilla Loomis:** I wish there was like the clouds parted and the heavens shined down upon the high jump. But it didn't happen like that. In high school, my coach taught me with the picture moving book, so he would put the pages at the bottom and the picture would move, that's how I was initially taught how to high jump. That was my first time.

**0:01:37.1 PL:** And the senior at the time needed a partner to go to some competitions and be on a relay team, and so I just kind of picked it up. I loved the idea that it didn't incorporate other sports, so it literally put me at a very elite level just because I was a high jumper. You know, not many people are like, "Oh, I was a pole vaulter." Everybody says, "I ran track in high school." Right?

**0:02:00.6 BR:** That's a fair point. [chuckle]

**0:02:01.9 PL:** "I did the 100, I did the 200." But no one was like, "Wow, I was a really badass high jumper." You know what I mean? So for me, that was very, very cool. And so once I started getting really good at it, my mom took a huge sacrifice and started paying for a private coach, because she saw that I had this really good talent in it.

**0:02:24.3 PL:** I started to excel, and I took it seriously my senior year once I realized how much college was, and that I didn't have that in my bank account. So I started taking it seriously, I didn't want my single mom to have to pay for my education, and so that following weekend after the guidance counselor told me how much college was, I jumped a school record of 5'9, and it just kinda stumbled from there becoming the Meet of Champs champion, Nationals bound, fourth place

in the country, and yeah, just kind of snowballed from there. So it wasn't this... It wasn't placed on my platter like, "This is your journey." It just kind of happened. [chuckle]

**0:03:05.9 BR:** For those of us that we might have seen track and field high jumping, but we're not really too familiar with it, it's like, talk about what 5'9 means at that level. And also, what kind of sacrifices did you have to make once you dedicated yourself to becoming a high jumper?

**0:03:21.5 PL:** So the high jump is you run in a J-shape and you run backwards. It's not the one with the pole, that's the pole vault. The one where you run in a J and I jump over backwards. So if you're talking high school, on average, if you jump anywhere between 5 foot, 5'4. That's what you usually do. Anything like 5'5, 5'6, alright, you're pretty good. 5'9 is, "Okay, now you can go to college for free."

[chuckle]

**0:03:56.1 PL:** Anywhere like 5'9, 5... And that was back then. Now it's like 5'10 and 5'11 is like, "Okay, now you can go to college for free." But along this way, it's taken... Even in high school, it took so much sacrifice, and I had to grow up at a very early age. I had to make sure that my time management and my communication skills were on point. Trying... 'Cause I was very involved in the arts, so communicating with my art director, the director of the place, the dance teacher, plus my track coach, plus the principal, all these things. And my teammates. I had to be able to manage my time and communicate, and I had to sacrifice in a sense, being a high school kid.

**0:04:41.7 PL:** I didn't go to parties, I didn't drink, I wasn't out and about. I didn't really have a social life as much. And when it came to that senior year where I got really good, prom was the night before a big meet. So instead of going out after prom, I came home, I didn't ride in the limo.

**0:05:04.9 PL:** When it came to the SATs, I had the SATs in the morning, and then I went to State Championships. I missed my high school graduation because I had Meet of Champions. So it started at the very young age, and I realized that I wanted to be elite, I wanted to separate myself and do things that other people couldn't do.

**0:05:28.2 PL:** So moving along this journey, obviously in college, you learn all about sacrifice and time commitment and dedication and focus, and then moving on to becoming a pro, it's a relationship. So it takes time, commitment, loyalty, focus, energy, sacrifice everything, because it is a relationship.

**0:05:50.6 PL:** I've been in this dating game with high jump since I was six years old. You have to have a different relationship with it when it's something so important. So I have done a lot with high jump, and so it's been a big part of my life and it's taught me a lot of life lessons.

**0:06:08.6 BR:** Yeah, so a lot of folks, they don't know what they want to do. Maybe they do have aspirations of greatness, and maybe in terms of wanting high jump to help you pay for college and stuff like that. But a lot of our listeners to our show, they're looking at more of a, wanna make these smaller changes in their life. How would you inspire somebody to take a risk?

**0:06:31.7 BR:** 'Cause obviously you threw it all on the line and the sacrifices speak for themselves, from surrendering high school as you're moving forward in this career. But when you speak with

younger athletes, specifically younger women athletes, how do you encourage them like, "This worth it."?

**0:06:46.9 PL:** It's funny because in my journey I've encountered so many athletes that always ask me that same exact question, and I am very open, I'm very honest, very truthful and very genuine. And the biggest thing is, for me, the two things that helped me were pressure and setting myself apart from everybody else. I didn't wanna be average, I didn't wanna be normal. I knew that I was a unicorn and I needed to set myself apart.

**0:07:14.1 PL:** And so, when it comes to pressure, it's funny, Doc Rivers just said that, "Pressure is a privilege." And when you put it like that, that's what I've been following my whole life, is that when you get these opportunities, you do it because you can. Not everybody can. And if you have the opportunity, you need to never block your blessings.

**0:07:39.1 PL:** And so obviously it's going to be different, it's going to be scary, there's going to be trials and tribulations along the way, but you do it because you can. And so when I talk to younger athletes, I always make sure that they understand that it is a sacrifice, it is time commitment, it is going to be something that's a little bit difficult, because you're not gonna have as many people to talk to about these certain things when you're going along this journey.

**0:08:08.2 PL:** But you know in your heart of hearts that this is something that you want. Don't do this because somebody else is pressuring you, do it because you truly want to. If it scares you, that's okay, we can get through that. Things that scare you, perfect, that's great. I am super excited and scared to be competing to be a gold medalist. I'm excited for that, but it's also scary.

**0:08:32.8 PL:** But for these kids, they're choosing, with so many different distractions, they're choosing so many different things, so many different options, but if they know what they wanna do and they have that kind of inkling, like, "This is something that I just..." Most of the time the kids are like, "I don't know if I'll be good." And I'm like, "Yeah, but what if you're great? What if you're awesome?" Take that negative thinking and change the narrative and think about all the things that are there for you.

**0:08:56.7 BR:** What do you tell people with the self-doubting? How do you help them push down that negative self-talk? If you're encouraging somebody.

**0:09:03.8 PL:** Negative self-talk is something that everyone, not just in sports, goes through. Everyone goes through a negative self-talk. For me, what helped me greatly and what I also preach in my Olympic mindset talk is, change the narrative. Change how you talk to yourself. If you wouldn't say something to another human being, why are you saying it to yourself?

**0:09:28.0 PL:** You don't tell the other people, "You suck. You're horrible. You're never gonna make it. This is too big. You're dreaming too big." No, you always are like, "You got this, you can do this." That same narrative, you need to be speaking to yourself. The biggest thing that helps is doing the research, do the work. You've gotta read books, you've gotta speak to a sports psychologist or a regular psychologist.

**0:09:53.5 PL:** Get inspired by all the things that are around you. If you're following things on social media that aren't in line with your vision, then stop following it. If you're watching television shows

that aren't in line with you, stop watching it. Movies, books, music, everything has to align with this positive self-talk. And so it doesn't just come one day, you have to practice it, it becomes a habit.

**0:10:17.3 PL:** So for me, I have a five-minute journal that I do in the beginning of the day and at the end of the day. There are books that I'm reading about habit and adventure and happiness. And it doesn't have to just be about sports. One is about the Pope, one's about the Dalai Lama, one's about this guy who just gave up his life and started riding his bike. It just comes from all... You know what I mean? So it comes from everywhere.

**0:10:42.2 PL:** I also have notebooks, I had my vision board, I have Post-it notes on my car and my window. It has to come from everywhere, because it has to become a habit. And so for me, you gotta change the narrative. If I don't say other things, if I don't say certain things to other people, I'm not telling it to myself. Every single day, I'm telling myself that I'm worth it, I'm working hard to become great, I can fight any battle, I'm a warrior, I am courageous, I am tough, and I will kick anybody's ass.

[chuckle]

**0:11:12.2 PL:** I am ready today. That's it. That's the energy you gotta have every single day.

**0:11:18.9 BR:** For an Olympian like yourself though, we measure your success, how you define success is really, is to a certain extent, do you podium, do you medal? And stuff like that. But for those of us that don't compete at that level, and that we're just trying to make those changes in our life, maybe not eating dessert.

**0:11:37.9 BR:** I mean, I'm not trying to make it simple as that, but it's simple sacrifices, from weight loss to getting off the couch and maybe going for a walk and stuff like that. How would you encourage somebody to find small measurable amounts of success that they can build upon to maybe reach a higher level?

**0:11:53.7 PL:** This is just my opinion. I don't want anybody to be like, "Wow, she said this." You deserve the best. You do. It is your life. Everyone has the same 24 hours. It is your absolute duty to be the best version of yourself every single day. If you wanna change, then change it. Change it. You can google "how to make small changes in my life, how to..." I guess weight is a big thing, "how to lose weight, how to become more consistent".

**0:12:30.6 PL:** You have to dedicate yourself to yourself. That is a big thing. It's a mentality, it's a habit. It is a work ethic. Anybody has the capability to do anything that they want to, and everyone's like, "Well, Priscilla, you're an Olympian." Well, once I retire, what do you think? I have to find a job, I can't just... Do you know what I mean?

**0:12:55.4 BR:** Yeah, you can't freelance jump.

**0:12:57.8 PL:** Exactly.

[laughter]

**0:13:02.1 PL:** I wish I could. But it's one of those things where I'm getting into a different genre

where I have to start from scratch, and I have to look at myself. And so I have to say, "I got this. I'm worthy of this. And I'm going to change whatever needs to change in order to attain this." But the biggest thing is that I need to show up every single day for myself, and so whether it's losing weight, whether it's accomplishing something small, I have to, one, believe in myself and take the necessary steps, and get 1% better each day.

**0:13:36.8 PL:** 1%, not a million percent, to take on the world. But if you take 1% by the end of the week, you're at 7%. By the end of the month, you're 30%. Do you know? So once you start taking these small measurable steps, a lot of incredible things will change.

**0:13:56.6 BR:** Obviously, you have the mindset of a champion, but for a lot of folks, it's hard, it's easier to see other people doing this and stuff like that. Where did you find this inspiration to really define success by investing in yourself? Was it strictly on the playing field in track and field? Do you find it maybe in business? Or did you find it in some other aspect of your life?

**0:14:19.7 PL:** You have to understand, to the normal eye, I'm not a champion. I don't have a gold medal. I don't have an Olympic gold medal, I don't have a silver medal. So for me, when people see me, I think that's why people can relate, because they're like, "Well, she's not a gold medalist, she's not signed by some big shoe contract, but she's still making a way, she's still a part of the pack."

**0:14:48.5 PL:** So when you say, where do I get this mentality from, I get it from everyday learning. Every day I'm faced with some kind of battle or something that I have to overcome, and so through the years, I've just learned how to not give up on myself. 'Cause it is, it's very easy to just wallow in self-pity and think to myself, "Ugh, I'm not good enough. I don't have a gold medal. I'm not signed by... "

**0:15:19.8 PL:** I can always count the things that are against me, but the hardest part for me to do is count the things all that are for me, to do all the things, all the work that I've gone through, all the things that I've overcome. Everybody that's listening right now is overcome something. They've gotten better. They're here, they're listening. They've won something.

**0:15:38.1 PL:** So for me, it's relatable because everyone is a warrior because they've gone to battle and won. That's what a warrior is. That's what that warrior mindset is. So when you think of this Olympic mindset, everyone can relate to, because even though we do it from a sport level, you can still do it in your regular life. You still have to deal with people, you still to deal with sacrifice.

**0:16:04.8 PL:** There are moms and dads listening who have sacrificed so much. There are entrepreneurs that are listening who have probably lost one or two businesses or lost money, and they're all like, "Well, how am I gonna get back up again?" You're listening, you've got back up, you've got another sheet of armor. So take a lesson from every step of the way, every road of this journey.

**0:16:29.0 PL:** You can set your GPS to success, whatever your success is, but just know that your GPS is going to re-route you a thousand times to get to your destination. So as long as you're learning that and learning something along the way, you're winning.

**0:16:47.3 BR:** I'm a huge fan of the Summer Games, I'm a huge fan of track and field for a variety of reasons.



**0:16:51.1 PL:** Yay.

**0:16:53.8 BR:** I truly am. One of the things that I do like about the sport is that as you're representing your country with this, it's like there'll be other participants on the track and field team, there will be the javelin throwers, there'll be the discus, there'll be high jumpers to pole jumpers, sprinters, and so on and so forth.

**0:17:12.4 BR:** How do you see yourself in terms of being part of a team, but still competing as an individual? How do you draw upon the success of your teammates, but you still are the one that's jumping over the bar?

**0:17:23.0 PL:** For me, it has always been about giving back to others and being an example and a leader. It's always been my journey. My mom was a single parent, she did this all by herself, she raised me, she instilled a lot in me. And so, my major goal in life is to give back. And so for my teammates, I wanna make sure that when people see me and when they meet me, they see happiness, they see positivity, they see courage, they see faith, they see dedication, they see all of those traits through me.

**0:18:01.1 PL:** And so when I do this, I do it for my mom, I do it for my fellow athletes. Because it's not just track and field, we have sailors, we have boxers, we have swimmers. And sometimes they get nervous, sometimes they might be having a bad day, but if they can see all of that through me, it gives them the extra push. I also do this for my country. Antigua and Barbuda is a part of who I am. I wasn't born there, but it's in my DNA. And so to learn about the culture and for them to accept me and support me, I do it for them.

**0:18:36.2 PL:** They're on my shoulders, they are on... Their pressure and their support is all on me, and I love that. I love that I represent an entire country. And so I do it for my husband, for my family, I do it for others. So it's a balance, and I do it for others. And so if they can see courage through me, then I've done my job.

**0:19:01.4 BR:** I sort of tapped down on this one idea about being nervous. Obviously, there's butterflies in everything you do, from asking somebody out on a date, to going into a job interview. It's a whole kit and caboodle when it comes to this. I think what I've learned personally when I've talked, from people, is that it's all about controlling my breathing when I get nervous. It's about being conscious of my surroundings, almost being mindful of it. How do you tap down being nervous in competition? Do you take that same sort of skill sets and put them into your real life?

**0:19:33.9 PL:** So what I've learned about competition for me, is I love competition. I love pressure, I love the exhilaration, I love the feeling. I love knowing that there's an opportunity for me to be the best, and that's why I continue to do it. Because even though I'm not number one today, I could be number one tomorrow, everything can change. And so I do take that mindset in everything. I am a go-getter, I am extremely competitive, I'm a workaholic, and so when it comes to, like I said, pressure, pressure is a privilege.

**0:20:11.0 PL:** When it comes to nerves, nerves are good, that means you care. If you fail and you're upset, good, that means you care. So again, it's changing that narrative. Rather than it being like, "Oh, I have all these butterflies, I don't know what's gonna happen," why are you always thinking

that the worst is gonna happen? Why don't you think that's something amazing is gonna happen? Anything great can happen at any time. So if you keep that mentality in every aspect, you'll succeed. It doesn't matter.

**0:20:40.8 BR:** Well, it's like definitely... I agree, I think success builds upon success. And I was looking, before we did the show, I was doing some research on you, there's a great article that is talking about the five ethic lessons that a business owner can learn from an athlete. And I tell you, the one of all these, and I'm gonna read them through for our listeners, but we have, "humility, don't quit, keep educating yourself, enjoy the journey and think like an athlete".

**0:21:08.2 BR:** I love the last two specifically, which is like, "think like an athlete", which is that mindset of a champion with that ultimate optimism and stuff. But "enjoy the journey", that's gotta be the reflective side where you're sort of taking in this experience. I'm not saying you toggle between the two, but how does one kind of know, "This is when I'm supposed to be reflective. This is when I'm supposed to be active and engaged."?

**0:21:31.5 PL:** You don't.

[laughter]

**0:21:33.0 PL:** You don't, you really don't. If somebody would have told me like, "These are all the things that you're gonna have to go through in order to enjoy the journey," I'd be like, "No, I'm not really for this. I don't think I'm up for this. We'll call it quits." Things where... But no, it's, I had to take a look back at my journey.

**0:21:55.4 PL:** And I have gone through a failed engagement. I have pulled my hamstring at World Championships. I am 32 and unsigned. I have had to change coaches. I've dealt with weight issues, I've dealt with mental issues. And when you look back on all of that, I keep going back to this warrior mentality, I really am a badass. You know?

**0:22:23.3 PL:** And it's not cocky, it's just, "Wow." I have gone to battle so many times, and in that, I never thought, "Well, this is it. This is the end." I just thought, "Okay, this is another obstacle I have to fight through." That's it. There was never like a, "Well, maybe I should... This is it, this is... I'm done." It was, "This is making me stronger, I need to learn something from this." And so, enjoying the journey is truly about enjoying all the highs and the lows. You have to take both equally, it's a balance.

**0:23:00.2 PL:** So when you look back at your journey, I can look back and know all of the lessons that I learned from every single moment, that I thought that I was failing. And thinking like an athlete is, I always consider it as the Olympic mindset. People are like, "Oh, you're an Olympian, that's why." No, that has nothing... I earned being an Olympian, it wasn't handed to me. So I have to learn a lot on this journey.

**0:23:26.3 PL:** There are certain things that an Olympic mindset, when it comes to taking care of my body. My body is everything, my body is my temple. Sleep, eating right, treating it right, getting massages. People think I'm going to get a massage like, "Oh, you're getting a relaxed..." No, a woman is digging into my butt with her elbow. That's is not an enjoyable experience, but I gotta take care of my body.

**0:23:52.8 PL:** So I meet with a sports psychologist, I'm making sure that my nutrition is on point. Time management, I'm making sure that I'm working, I'm balancing my job plus my cleaning business and my podcast, but I'm also getting the training in. It's a balance. It's the work ethic. It's resilience. I continuously rise. I'm surrounding myself by with people that don't suck. Meaning they're not sucking the energy out of my life. Not that they... I mean, people suck.

**0:24:21.2 BR:** No, no. I totally get it. [chuckle]

**0:24:24.9 PL:** You're not sucking this energy out of my life. They're in my life, they're adding something positive and courageous to my life. These are not just things for an athlete, the should be regular everyday kind of things for people. Get to the gym. If you wanna lose the weight, then lose the weight. If you want a better relationship, then start treating yourself right and expecting more from your significant other.

**0:24:48.3 PL:** These are just things that athletes, we don't really have to think about, we just go for it and we know that it's in our best interest. So those are these last two that I'm very passionate about. I know that my five aren't what you're gonna see on billboards or when you listen to a TED Talk. But they're true, they're honest, and they have worked for me.

**0:25:12.2 BR:** I think you're spectacular. On top of this, this makes a heck of a lot more sense why you're journaling five minutes in the morning, five minutes at night. If you carry this kind of energy, it's like you need just a bare minimum just to help remember all the options that you're putting out there. [chuckle]

**0:25:26.5 PL:** I'm telling you, there's bad moments, but there's not bad days. I will say that. I'll have moments... I got COVID, and the doctor after weeks of tests and everything said, "You need to retire. You're done." And to do that three months before the Olympics, you're like, "Well, alright." And so I cried for a moment and I said, "Okay, well, now it's time to switch gears."

**0:25:50.8 PL:** And then 72 hours later, I found another doctor and he said, "You're good to go. You're fine, you're healthy." I said, "Let's get back to it." Life is gonna happen, the GPS re-routing always happens in my life. So I enjoy whatever route is taking me to my final destination.

**0:26:09.8 BR:** For our listeners who don't know much about the high jump here, how many attempts do you get before you get disqualified while you're trying, attempt to jump?

**0:26:16.9 PL:** Three.

**0:26:18.4 BR:** Three jumps.

**0:26:18.4 PL:** Three jumps at each height. And it keeps moving up.

**0:26:20.5 BR:** At each height? Okay. I have to imagine, because you've been training for an entire lifetime, that you've had the moment where you're running your J, hopping over the bar, and at the very last second, your calves just didn't snap up high enough and you catch the bar. That's probably happened 10 times today, if not 100 times today.

**0:26:41.8 PL:** Yeah, it happens all the time. [chuckle]

**0:26:46.5 BR:** So in that moment, you know, and pardon me for, I'm not calling you a failure, but I'm saying in that effort you had failed, you have not achieved your goal when you do that. When you hit the mat, do you beat yourself up for a second? Or do you just take a chance, is this an opportunity for you to regroup and say, "Yo, snap those legs. A little higher on the hop on the way there."? Do you do the self-talk to help massage your way into your next jump?

**0:27:08.5 PL:** There are different times. In the beginning when I was younger, I would get super pissed. And as I got older, I was like, "Why am I wasting all of this energy being upset when I still have two more chances?" So every opportunity... So that's something that actually my sports psychologist and my doctor worked on, and he was like, "We need to talk about," I think it's called inoculation, where as soon as I have a bad attempt, it's a positive thought.

**0:27:36.5 PL:** But not positive like, "You can do it." It's, "What went right in the jump? What did you do that was right?" Rather than focus on, "Damn, I did this wrong." And that's what I do. So during practice, I'm like, if I knock it down, I'm like, "Well, I executed this really, really well. This needs to be a little bit better."

**0:27:55.4 PL:** In a meet, my whole... It's competition mode. So I'm like, right away, I know exactly what I did wrong. So as soon as my heels hit, I'm like, "Alright, I gotta pull. I have another opportunity. Let's get to it." I am a showman, I am in the high jump for entertainment. So for me, I'm like, "Let's give 'em a show." That's exactly what's running through my head, I'm like, "Let's give 'em a show."

**0:28:22.7 PL:** But if you think positive, and you'll see it sometimes, you'll see other people get upset and down on themselves when they miss the bar, and a lot of people, honestly, I swear to you, followed me on Instagram after my final attempt at the Olympics, because I popped right up and I'm dancing and I'm ecstatic. Why am I upset? I jump over a bar for a living. Why do I have to be upset? I'm at the Olympic Games. What do I have to be upset about?

**0:28:50.7 PL:** Like seriously, I'm in great shape. I'm always beach ready. You know what I mean? For me, it's not that serious, I'll get another opportunity. So that's how I take life. Okay, you messed up. I still have other chances. It's not the end. So especially in the competition, you've gotta always say, "Okay." And what's great about it is, let's say I miss that one height, I can skip that height, move to the next one and get another opportunity to do it. So for me, I'm literally always raising my bar.

**0:29:26.7 BR:** I think the real takeaway from this entire conversation is, it was, and you just touched upon it, was the fact that you make a mistake, you do not clear the bar, but it's like, you don't beat yourself up on that one, that instant. You do the analysis of like, "Oh, I got this right, I got this right, I got this right. Heck, if I get two more things right, then I'm on to the next height."

**0:29:51.1 PL:** Exactly. You have to understand, high jumpers always end on a failure. Every competition, we end in failure.

**0:29:58.5 BR:** Absolutely. Again, because at some point you're just, you can't jump more than what you can jump.

**0:30:02.3 PL:** Exactly. So, you're either gonna beat yourself up about it, or be like, "I just attempted this height. I'm awesome." That's what you gotta do. [chuckle]

**0:30:15.0 BR:** Well, you touched upon this earlier, 'cause as we're wrapping up on this show here, is that one really cannot jump forever. And it's like... When do you know it's time to hang up the proverbial shoes, the high jumping shoes, and to start getting into that next stage of the career? And how do you...

**0:30:33.1 PL:** It was last summer. It was last summer.

**0:30:36.1 BR:** So it was last summer. [chuckle]

**0:30:38.9 PL:** It was last summer, in 2020 I was gonna retire after my second Olympics. So now they were postponed, I sat with my husband and my mom and my coach, and they were like, "We gotta finish it, we gotta finish this journey." And so this Olympics is my final one. I'll retire at 32, and I'll be very happy with everything that I've done and I've accomplished.

**0:31:02.1 PL:** So as I move forward, I have to take this Olympic mindset, give myself a little bit of time to enjoy retirement, eat a cheese burger, you know what I'm saying?

[chuckle]

**0:31:11.0 PL:** And move on to my next endeavor, which is using my college degree, I majored in International Communications with a focus on television and film. And so right now I work at a radio station as a morning radio DJ, and I wanna get into television and film, acting, and all that jazz. And so for me, I have to be as diligent as I was for the Olympics in this endeavor. I am very excited for the next five, 10 years. I'm not very easy on myself, I don't have the simplest of dreams.

**0:31:50.7 BR:** Well, I would tell you this, our listeners would be remiss if they didn't check out Instagram and do not listen to your podcast, which is this... You just got a taste of what Priscilla's like.

[chuckle]

**0:32:01.4 BR:** The show is amazing. Priscilla, tell people where they can find you, how they can touch with you on Instagram, and how they can cheer you on as you're heading to Japan.

**0:32:12.0 PL:** Thank you so much. The best way to follow me is through Instagram. I am an Instagramer, it's something that I do love. It is Priscilla\_Frederick, which is my old name. When I say "old", I got married. So it's Priscilla\_Frederick, and you can tell 'cause there's a purple haired chic in the icon. You can't miss me.

[chuckle]

**0:32:35.0 PL:** You can go to Priscillaloomis.com. Priscilla Frederick on Facebook. I am on TikTok, but I don't even know it, but I'm sure if you type in "Priscilla Loomis" it'll come up. Yes, I'm a TikToker. [0:32:48.2] \_\_\_\_\_ TikTok.

[chuckle]

**0:32:50.0 PL:** And of course, my YouTube channel is just Priscilla Loomis. So it's been a fun, incredible ride. Thank you, I love my podcast. It is my baby. It is something that I actually love, and I'm enjoying doing it with my husband. So we hope to continue it, and I will be taking the cameras to Tokyo with me, so hopefully to give people a little bit of behind the scenes.

**0:33:13.5 BR:** Oh yeah, and also to the listeners, this is where you see it, follow the Instagram Live stories, because they have access that NBC doesn't even have.

**0:33:24.4 PL:** Oh yeah. And I cover everything. [chuckle]

**0:33:27.8 BR:** And frankly, sometimes most of the fun happens, not even on the pitch, it happens on the sidelines.

**0:33:32.0 PL:** Where all the good stuff happens. [chuckle]

**0:33:34.5 BR:** But anyway, I wanna thank Priscilla Loomis for joining us on Let's Go! With USANA, and best wishes as you pursue your dreams, and we can't wait to see what happens for the next chapter.

**0:33:44.8 PL:** Thank you so, so much. I appreciate it.

**0:33:47.5 BR:** Take care.

**0:33:48.4 PL:** Bye.

[music]

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