

Empowering You Organically – Season 2 – Episode 10

Jonathan: [00:00:00](#) Welcome everyone to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm joined as always by my cohost TeriAnn Trevenan.

TeriAnn: [00:00:06](#) Hey everyone.

Jonathan: [00:00:07](#) And we have our special guest back, Dr Susan Peirce Thompson.

Susan: [00:00:11](#) Hey hey.

Jonathan: [00:00:12](#) And today we are talking about setting goals. Before we get into that, let's just read Dr Susan's bio real quick so that everybody knows that they can trust everything that she's sharing on this podcast.

TeriAnn: [00:00:24](#) Dr Susan Peirce Thompson lives in Rochester, New York, with her husband and her three beautiful daughters. She is a New York Times Bestselling author of Bright Line Eating, The Science of Living Happy, Thin, and Free. She's also the president of the Institute for Sustainable Weight Loss. She is the founder, CEO and Sherpa of Bright Line Eating. That's an inside joke. But she is the founder and CEO of Bright Line Eating.

TeriAnn: [00:00:51](#) Which is a company with an unprecedented track record for helping people lose all of their excess weight, and live in a right-sized body long term. She has a PhD in brain and cognitive sciences, she has been teaching at the university level for 13 years. She's been a professor of psychology of eating and a professor of neuroscience of food addiction.

Jonathan: [00:01:16](#) So listen, thank you for coming back and joining us. For those of you, if you did not listen to our last episode, it aired on December 26th, and we were just talking all about the holidays, we were talking about eating over the holidays, what happens there. We were talking about having self-compassion, and we talked of course about Bright Line Eating and what that is. So if you haven't listened to that episode, be sure to check it out after you listen to this one. And of course share it with anybody that you feel could use the information.

Jonathan: [00:01:47](#) Also, there will be show notes and transcripts and the video or audio, whatever you're looking for that has to do with this podcast, at [EmpoweringYouOrganically.com](#). Let's get right into it. Let's talk. Today is January 2nd, and we're talking about goals, and setting goals, and that's what everybody's doing right now with their New Year's resolutions. Let's just go on the negative side. What's wrong with setting goals? Or what are most of the problems that people face when setting goals?

Susan: [00:02:19](#) So I think something that people get wrong around goal-setting is the expectation that achieving the goal will make them happier. So let's just consider a couple cases here. Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley. People who probably, one might say, objectively reached lots of goals that they might've had at some point, and found themselves to be no happier.

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- Susan: [00:02:49](#) So when we set ourselves up with the expectation that we're setting a goal because we're expecting that reaching it is going to develop some level of satisfaction, some level of, "Okay, now I've arrived and things are better. I'm different, it's different," that's the wrong orientation. That's not what's fundamentally good about a goal or helpful about a goal, is that it's a state, like a location, that once we're there it's better than here. That's not true, fundamentally. And that reality has to do with something called the hedonic treadmill, that no matter how much better things get, they always feel the same. Like no matter where you go, there you are.
- Susan: [00:03:33](#) So what's important is to reframe the entire endeavor of goal-setting and goal achievement to be one of improving the journey. Like we set goals because when we have them, the experience of traveling is better. Goals give us clarity about whether we're on a path we're happy with or not. They give us a yardstick by which to measure decisions and choices, like should I turn left or right in this situation? Well I have this goal, so to be in line with that I might wanna turn left. They make us feel galvanized and motivated. They make us feel happier the moment we set them.
- Susan: [00:04:19](#) And so the state of traveling is better when we have a good goal. And we could talk a little bit about what's a good goal. Because that's an important little asterisk there, not all goals are equal.
- Jonathan: [00:04:30](#) Talk about it. Tell us.
- Susan: [00:04:32](#) Okay, well yeah. So you want what's called a self-concordant goal, which means a goal that matters to you. Not a goal that's to impress him or her, or to satisfy your daddy, or because society says so or whatever. You want to set goals that are meaningful to you, by your own standards, your own metrics. And this has to do with a whole self-esteem literature on independent self-esteem. If you're looking to impress somebody, it should be yourself. Like what do you care about? What kind of person do you wanna be?
- Susan: [00:05:04](#) So any goal that is in line with your best, highest self, that's something that matters to you, is a good goal. But a goal that's something that you don't really care about, but you're sure that all your neighbors will be impressed by it, that's not a good goal. Don't worry about that, you don't need to strive for those things.
- Jonathan: [00:05:23](#) Right. Good clarity. And I think it makes a big difference to really understand it. And I wanna go back to what we were talking about before, because I like the way that you reference the use of the goal. It makes the journey better. It allows you, when you're at that time of inner conflict of do I do this, do I do that, do I turn left, do I turn right, it helps give you that guidance there.
- Susan: [00:05:49](#) Yeah.

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- Jonathan: [00:05:51](#) Let's talk a little bit more about that. Let's talk more about goals, let's talk about how it improves the journey. We're talking about what kind of goals to set, give us some examples of some good goals.
- Susan: [00:06:04](#) So let's talk about weight loss, because that's my area of expertise. You've got me on the show, other people can talk about other things, but I can talk about weight loss with a certain level of expertise. So losing weight for me was a self-concordant goal. I was obese in my 20s, overweight before that. Some time in my mid-20s I crossed the line and became obese.
- Susan: [00:06:25](#) And for me, I was not happy in that body. There was something about it that was not right for me. Those extra pounds on me felt ... they just felt wrong. And it wasn't because society judged me, it wasn't because there's skinny women on TV. It was more that I and knew I could be healthier, I knew I could look better and feel better. And I also knew that those excess pounds were there because my relationship with food was misaligned. I was eating in a way that was not in alignment with my highest self. It was not being good to myself, what I was doing with food. And those excess pounds were the result, the sign, the symptom of that way that I was abusing myself with food, and I didn't wanna be.
- Susan: [00:07:20](#) And I knew that there was some way that I hadn't figured that out yet, that I hadn't cracked the code on why do I keep eating more than I need to be eating. Why do I keep eating junk when I wanna not be eating junk? Why do I sometimes eat with tears streaming down my face? Wondering, like really, another pint of ice cream? For real?
- Susan: [00:07:41](#) And so for me, the goal to lose weight was a self-concordant goal. It wasn't because I wanted to ... you know, whatever. Look good to whoever on the beach in a bikini. It was about me wanting to be the best version of myself. Like Abraham Maslow and the hierarchy of needs, and that top little peak of the hierarchy is self-actualization. That drive to be the best version of ourselves that we can be. A goal that is calling you, of you need ...
- Susan: [00:08:16](#) And for some people, like I have a friend, Linden, it's to paint, and to play guitar and cello and piano. Her heart's calling is to be creative, to produce not because she's gonna break in on the music scene and millions of people are gonna hear her records, but because her soul needs to create. So for me, I had to get that weight off. It was whenever I would settle in to my best, quietest self, it would always come back around to, you gotta crack this one. We gotta get this weight off. It was the first thing.
- Susan: [00:08:57](#) And now that I've been in a right-sized body for 15 years or so, other things come up for me. I've got other goals. But that's an example of one.
- Jonathan: [00:09:09](#) And I can relate 100%. I grew up, chunky is what I'll call it, but if you went to buy pants they were always the husky ones. That's the nice way of saying you're a fat kid.

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- Susan: [00:09:20](#) Yeah. Huskies.
- Jonathan: [00:09:21](#) So I grew up with extra weight, and then I turned 18 I started running, and I started my first business. And I lost weight and I got thin again. And it was my mid to late 20s, started going downhill, I started dabbling in some drugs that weren't healthy, started drinking more. Before you know it the weight just started coming on more and more.
- Jonathan: [00:09:42](#) Business-wise I was successful. I've always been very good at marketing, I've been good at starting businesses, running businesses, things like that. And it was just five years ago, I was living on a Caribbean island of the coast of Panama, Bocas Del Toro, and I looked in the mirror, and I'm 5'8" and I was 270 pounds, totally just not me.
- Jonathan: [00:10:05](#) And at one point, I mean I had a six pack when I was in my early 20s. So I had gotten to that point. And I know the feeling of, this isn't me. And you just know to a core, that's not who I am. I'm very sad inside. And I would drink more to fix that. I would smoke more cigarettes. A big turning point for me was starting a company called The Truth About Cancer, and also my girlfriend at the time was pregnant with my first daughter. And so when I found out that, that was my big motivator. It was time to quit smoking, it was time to start eating healthy, it was time to do a lot of that stuff.
- Jonathan: [00:10:43](#) And all of these other times that I would go on that journey to lose weight, it was like, yes I wanna look good for me, but it was also, I wanna make sure I look good in a bathing suit for them, and for women, or for whatever. It wasn't until it hit home so hard, like I'm not gonna be a fat dad. I'm not gonna be a smoking dad. I'm not gonna be something like that, that things started to change. And I'm still on my journey. I weight just over 200 pounds now. My goal weight is about 160 and I'm still on the way there and it's been four and a half years.
- Jonathan: [00:11:14](#) And I say all that just to say, we're delivering this podcast about getting healthy, and it's not because we're all already skinny, or we've all always been skinny, or we're all the healthiest perfect whatever, we're all on a journey.
- Susan: [00:11:27](#) Yup.
- Jonathan: [00:11:28](#) So this is just all about sharing the information to help everybody on their journey, at whatever stage they're on. So say all that one, because probably not a lot of people know a whole lot of my story, I'm always a behind-the-scenes guy. So figure I might as well share that. And two, to talk about, let's say we've tried to set goals. Let's say we've tried to do things. And for me I'm lucky that I had the daughters there as the motivation, that was the big thing.
- Jonathan: [00:11:57](#) What are other things that people can look for? Because we've all, I think, tried it for ourselves at times, and it hasn't worked. Or we've set goals that haven't worked. What are some other tips that we can use? Or are we using goals wrong? Are we using goals to measure and try to get somewhere, where really

we need to look at a lifestyle change? I know you've talked about something in the past with the acronym AIR, A-I-R, about having a lifestyle change. So I'll stop talking and let you share.

- Susan: [00:12:25](#) Yeah. So much there. I think the goals can often set us off down an unhelpful road. Because when we set goals and do them well, we've often heard the acronym SMART, SMART goals. And the M is like make it measurable. S is specific, M is measurable. And so this is where you learn, don't just say I wanna lose weight in 2019, say by April 15th I will have lost 40 pounds. Or whatever. Specific, measurable, whatever.
- Susan: [00:13:07](#) So what that does is it's an outcome focus. So if you look at changing, there's three levels on which you change. And think of it like concentric circles. There's the bullseye in the middle, the core, and then there's a slightly outer ring around that, and then the outermost ring. And all three are in play all the time. What matters, and what's the difference-maker, is the direction that you go in. So where do you start? And what's more an outcropping or a result, and what's the core of what you're focused on?
- Susan: [00:13:48](#) So in the center is identity. Becoming the kind of person who does XYZ. Being that at your core. And in the last episode, Jonathon, you were talking about how you don't smoke anymore, and you used to, for a long, long time.
- Jonathan: [00:14:06](#) Right.
- Susan: [00:14:07](#) But now you are a non-smoker. Some kind of identity shift has happened, where you became a non-smoker. Someone who doesn't smoke a cigarette under any circumstances, ever.
- TeriAnn: [00:14:20](#) I think that word you is so important. Because when he was talking about losing the weight, and he's like all of a sudden I saw my daughter and I didn't wanna be that dad. But it goes so much deeper than that. It's not just that your identity is that you're a dad, or for other people, individually, inside, what do you wanna be, independent of everyone else?
- Susan: [00:14:41](#) Yeah.
- TeriAnn: [00:14:41](#) And your identity has to be meaningful most importantly to you, even before everyone else. Because you might not wanna be that dad, but if you're not happy inside, and you aren't right with yourself, doesn't matter what you do or don't wanna be for your kids. It doesn't matter. You will not be propelled enough into that change and into setting those goals that are meaningful, even if you've got this outside influence.
- TeriAnn: [00:15:03](#) And I think outside influencers, to some extent can be good, right? Seeing your kids and saying, I wanna change. But you still have to do that core work. I just love that you said the word you. Your identity for you has to be what it needs to be before it is for anyone else.

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- Susan: [00:15:18](#) Yeah. And shifting identity is an interesting thing. Jonathon, do you have a sense of when your identity shifted from smoker to non-smoker, or what that process was like? Can you remember?
- Jonathan: [00:15:27](#) Yeah, absolutely. I remember it was right around July 15th, four and a half years ago that I quit. I'll tell a couple parts of this story. I know I quit cold turkey, and one of the things that helped me stay cold turkey was actually reading about quitting cold turkey every single day, until I no longer needed to read about it every day, because I was thinking about it less and less.
- Jonathan: [00:15:59](#) It had to have been several months after. I mean I know once my daughter was born, my first daughter was born October 7th 2014. I think at that point there was zero going back at that point. And I think at that point I was really clear that I was a non-smoker. I think up until then, as you're going through the transition, you're still fighting. You're still tempted, you still think about it. You see somebody on TV smoking, like I gotta turn this movie off, because there's a smoker in this movie. And he's gonna keep smoking. And I'm gonna keep wanting to smoke, and I am not watching this any more.
- Susan: [00:16:34](#) Yeah. And that's a good. The identity shift is touch and go. And I often think of it as building a brick wall. After it's built, it seems pretty solid. But it went in one brick at a time.
- Jonathan: [00:16:50](#) Exactly.
- Susan: [00:16:50](#) It's like one day at a time. And there's an interplay between you putting the bricks, and you watching yourself put the bricks. Which is a slightly different thing. Like you watch yourself do differently. And you come to believe over time that you are the kind of person who does different.
- TeriAnn: [00:17:07](#) I think that's so interesting. Just going back to that outside influence that kind of compels you into, I want something different. But you felt that internally already, and then you have to do that work inside of this is the next step, this is the next step. Nobody can do that for you. Only you can.
- Susan: [00:17:23](#) Yeah. Totally. So let's go back to the concentric circles. And before I finish talking about them, I just need to give the nod to where this idea comes from. We all stand on the heads of giants and blah blah blah. It's actually a series of ideas that has a long history, but in particular, this articulation of it comes from James Clear's book Atomic Habits. Awesome book, recommend it to the Nth degree, I wanna read that book every year for as long as I live.
- Susan: [00:17:47](#) So he talks about this specific idea. Identity is in the center. The next rung out is the systems and processes that we use. So that could be Bright Line Eating if you wanna lose weight, or it could be whatever. Keto, paleo, I'm running a marathon, whatever. It's the systems, processes and so forth. And then the outermost ring is the outcomes. I wanna lose 40 pounds by April 15, whatever it

is. Outcomes. It's measurable. But that's where most people's goals live, is in that outer ring.

- Susan: [00:18:22](#) But the key idea here is that you wanna start in the middle and move outward. You wanna be focused on changing your identity, and then think, what systems, processes, behaviors, habits will get me there? And then the outcomes come as the result of that. So I'm always nervous when people in my tribe say to me, like we have an annual live event in San Diego, usually in the summertime. And they'll say to me, "I'm gonna be at goal weight in my right-size body by the next live event." And I'm like, "Careful, sweetheart. You got no control over that. I would way rather you say, I'm gonna be committed to Bright Line Eating, to being a Bright Lifer, somebody who does this every day, and I'll see ya next year at whatever size I'm at as the result of being that person."
- Susan: [00:19:16](#) Because you got no control. You can change the food you put in your mouth. But you can change directly what the scale says tomorrow or the next day. That's an outcome. We can't control outcomes. And this is just a big life lesson, right? We can affect the things we can affect. We can change our behavior, we have control over what we do, we do not have control over what spins out from that in the universe. Things happen, we're not in control of outcomes. We're in control of our actions.
- Susan: [00:19:49](#) So I kind of like goal-setting, I think it can be helpful, it can be exciting, it can be motivating. I definitely still sometimes set goals. Like I got a goal: I'd love to do a pull-up before I die. I'm pretty far from that right now, just saying. If I put my little knees on the little thing at the gym, I need like-
- TeriAnn: [00:20:10](#) We're gonna test it right after this, by the way.
- Susan: [00:20:12](#) 60 pounds of assistance or something. I'm like 113 pounds and I need half of my body weight assistance to do a pull-up. Never even come close to doing a pull-up. It's like the first thing on my bucket list. I wanna do a pull-up before I die. Okay, so that's an outcome, that's a goal. But what I need to be is the kind of person who doesn't miss workouts.
- Jonathan: [00:20:33](#) Right.
- Susan: [00:20:34](#) That's the identity. And then, it's like, okay what kind of systems or processes? It could like, okay I got a pull-up bar in my bathroom door jamb. And every time I'm going in or out I just hop up there and I do some negatives. I just hold myself up there as long as I can and then slowly lower down. That would be a process or a system. And if I change my identity, and then I've got a good process or a system, eventually I'll do a pull-up. So yeah.
- Jonathan: [00:21:02](#) I think it's ... I like talking about this, and I can relate it back to the smoking. Because you do ask, when did the identity change. In my mind I had to be a non-smoker day one.

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Susan: [00:21:13](#) Or you're fighting for that.

Jonathan: [00:21:14](#) Or I would've smoked.

Susan: [00:21:16](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:21:17](#) So I was fighting. Like yes I'm a non-smoker. And even if I didn't believe it.

Susan: [00:21:22](#) Yeah, there's a part of you that believes it and there's a part that doesn't.

Jonathan: [00:21:24](#) Exactly.

Susan: [00:21:24](#) It's like you're living in both universes for a little bit, right?

Jonathan: [00:21:25](#) I had to keep telling myself.

Susan: [00:21:28](#) But then it's like, which one lives? The one you feed.

Jonathan: [00:21:29](#) It's a fake it till you make it though, isn't it? I mean for me, even in business-

Susan: [00:21:33](#) Yes, totally.

Jonathan: [00:21:34](#) I dropped out of high school after my junior year.

Susan: [00:21:36](#) You dropped outta high school?

Jonathan: [00:21:37](#) Yes.

Susan: [00:21:37](#) High five, me too.

Jonathan: [00:21:41](#) I don't know that I've ever had a high five for that, but I'll take it.

Susan: [00:21:43](#) Well, us crazy successful people who dropped outta high school, we gotta band together. I have a PhD though. No one asks if you graduated from high school when you have a PhD.

Jonathan: [00:21:52](#) That's an interesting point.

TeriAnn: [00:21:54](#) That's a good point, thoroughly good point. You would never think that, tie the two together.

Susan: [00:21:55](#) Nope.

Jonathan: [00:21:58](#) Furthest I got was a GED, and that wasn't even for me. But I dropped out of high school and I started my first landscaping business. And a lot of that at the time was a fake it till you make it thing. I was going out there, knocking on doors, quoting landscaping jobs against mastery nurserymen that had all kinds of education, that knew what they were doing. And it wasn't kidding, it was I was

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gonna come there and do the work, and I was gonna make sure I did it right, and they were gonna get it good.

Jonathan: [00:22:24](#) But you do have a certain amount of, in my head I had to tell myself all these things, I had to fake it till I made it.

Susan: [00:22:32](#) Totally.

Jonathan: [00:22:32](#) Same thing with quitting smoking, same thing with losing weight. Right now I'm on a 5K-a-day challenge with myself, where I get up and I run 5k every day five days a week. But it's changing the identity of me being a runner. Which I clearly wasn't running at 270 pounds.

Susan: [00:22:48](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:22:49](#) And so I love, as we talk about this, relating it back to my life. And I'm sure a lot of the listeners can look at that too. You may be in a place in your life right now, or there may be areas of your life that you're not happy with. There might be areas that you're super successful, but there are ones you're not happy with. And just think about the areas of your life that you are successful, and how you got successful there. And likely it would be following what you're talking about today.

Susan: [00:23:16](#) Yeah, totally.

Jonathan: [00:23:17](#) So I say all that just to say I get it, and I understand it. And I like the idea of getting rid of, for me it's like gotta weigh 160 pounds. Well that's not fair. Who knows, I might get to 170 and love how my body looks and that's where I need to be.

Susan: [00:23:33](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:23:33](#) And then am I a failure because I didn't hit 160? No, but I succeeded because I run five days a week, and I'm eating healthy and I'm doing this and that and the other.

TeriAnn: [00:23:42](#) Can I ask you an interesting question?

Susan: [00:23:44](#) Please.

TeriAnn: [00:23:44](#) So when it comes to goal-setting, and your journey, and where you've been, and you talked about being in a certain place with your body before, and now here you are. What did you say, 15 years later? You've been at this point.

Susan: [00:23:59](#) Yeah, I've been rocking size four jeans for 15 years.

TeriAnn: [00:24:01](#) So people make the statement, the way you do one thing is the way you do all things.

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- Susan: [00:24:07](#) Yeah.
- TeriAnn: [00:24:08](#) And when it came to conquering that battle for you, and that becoming your identity, that you were a thin, healthy, in the right body kind of person, obviously you have to make a lot of shifts to be there. But do you feel like when you were in that place for yourself, that that wasn't the only place in your life that you had to tighten up. So when you set a goal, like I'm gonna quit smoking, or I'm gonna be a healthy eater, and change your identity in that way, did you feel like you had to change a lot of things in your life? Do you feel like a lot of things were tied to that as well? Does that make sense?
- Susan: [00:24:44](#) Yeah, it does. For me, no. And I think that a lot of people would have a different answer to that, or a different experience for themselves.
- TeriAnn: [00:24:52](#) Yeah, for sure.
- Susan: [00:24:53](#) For me, I had already kicked drugs and alcohol, and had been working the 12 steps rigorously for eight or nine years. I was wrapping up my PhD in brain and cognitive sciences, and had gone through all the personal growth needed to face the dissertation malaise, and oh my god I haven't been working on my thesis ... whatever. That took a ... you know. I had already gone through major transformations in my spiritual journey.
- Susan: [00:25:26](#) And what else? For me, the food was this one last weird piece.
- TeriAnn: [00:25:34](#) Like the last missing link?
- Susan: [00:25:35](#) That wouldn't snap into place. Like there was nothing else. It was like, just the food. I just need to-
- TeriAnn: [00:25:43](#) Yeah, that was like the last missing link for the quote of, the way you do one thing is the way you do all things.
- Susan: [00:25:48](#) Yeah.
- TeriAnn: [00:25:49](#) But my question around that ties back to goals.
- Susan: [00:25:52](#) Yeah.
- TeriAnn: [00:25:52](#) So you had already learned how to set goals in a meaningful way for you because you were fulfilled in a lot of ways in your life. A dissertation, you said spiritually you were on track, and things like that. How did you have to shift in your goal-setting to overcome this last really big hurdle, to be exactly where you wanted to be in all aspects of your life? What did goal-setting look like for you in that context? With your knowledge and where you are with goal-setting and where you were in your life, what did that look like for you?

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- Susan: [00:26:19](#) You know, the first answer that comes up for me, TeriAnn, is it wasn't a goal-setting thing. It was around living. it was like being the person. it was being a person who doesn't eat sugar. Being a person who doesn't eat flour. Being a person who gets enough support from a network of people who are living healthy in right-size bodies, who are swimming upstream, not eating the way everyone around us eats. Everyone around us is eating crazy. Our society is whacked when it comes to food.
- Susan: [00:26:53](#) So it was not about goal-setting at all. As a matter of fact, after I solved the food thing and got thin, I didn't set a New Year's resolution for at least 10 years. January 1st would come around and I would just laugh. And I would be like, "I'm the person I wanna be 364 days a year. I'm not doing anything different because it's January 1st. I live the way I wanna live. If there's a change that needs to be made, that might be on May 12th, or October 2nd." There is no thing about January 1st. January 1st would come and go and I would not feel like I needed to change a thing. I was the person I wanted to be.
- TeriAnn: [00:27:39](#) Yeah. It's interesting. So in your life, do you still set goals, or do you feel like, I change and shift things to be the person I wanna be. Because you've overcome that aspect of your life. Do you think people grow outside of that, or do you think people always need to be setting goals? Just from your personal experience. It's gonna be different for everyone, but I'm just curious in light of what you said.
- Susan: [00:27:58](#) I hold that one loosely. I sometimes get in a real goal-setting mode. And I like to just list them out. And I got a bucket list, I've been updating it really regularly right now in Evernote and stuff, and I'm kind of more in a goal-setting mode these days. But I gotta watch it. Because again, the real magic is in being the kind of person who travels the way you gotta travel to get to those places. It's not about-
- TeriAnn: [00:28:27](#) Small shifts every single day.
- Susan: [00:28:28](#) That's right.
- TeriAnn: [00:28:29](#) And do you think that it happens for a lot of people? Like for people who are listening right now, do you think goal-setting is a good starting place for people, and then slowly as they set goals the right way, over time they just become intentional with their life? And it's not even so much more about setting these huge goals, but it's becoming intentional with what you do every single day. Does that make sense?
- Susan: [00:28:45](#) Kind of. If someone's inclined to set goals, it's January 2nd, they already did, right?
- Jonathan: [00:28:50](#) Right.
- Susan: [00:28:51](#) You probably already have it, right?

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TeriAnn: [00:28:53](#) For sure, right.

Susan: [00:28:53](#) So what I would say is, look at that goal, and then ask what kind of person do I need to be to have this goal manifest in my life at some point down the road? Like what's my daily commitment? To what habit, process, system, and to being the kind of person who follows it? Because the goal is going to be an outcropping, it's gonna be a result. It doesn't come first. It comes last.

TeriAnn: [00:29:18](#) Yeah. I relate to that so much, and I love what you just said about your life, and for you, that weight loss wasn't a goal, you wanted that to be a part of your life. It's where you wanted to be, it's who you wanted to be, this person.

Susan: [00:29:32](#) Yeah.

TeriAnn: [00:29:32](#) And for me, when I think about goals, I work very hard every day to be intentional with my life. This is what I want today, this is where I wanna be. And goals come as a result of knowing where I wanna go, but I've done the work to know where I wanna go. And then those goals come about. I think you can set much more meaningful and intentional goals when you have that clear path of, this is who I am, identity, this is who I wanna be. And then the goals fall into place. This is my next step for me. So it's just interesting, I relate to that a lot.

Susan: [00:30:02](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:30:04](#) Both looking at me, so I guess I better say something.

TeriAnn: [00:30:10](#) We got deep into a conversation. [crosstalk 00:30:10] Like, wait, he's still here.

Jonathan: [00:30:12](#) Still here. So I do wanna talk about things, because it is January 2nd, and a lot of people have set goals. And we've all been through ups and downs. I've been very successful when it comes to business and things like that. There's other areas that I still struggle to find the right balance in my right center on. Weight being one of them.

Jonathan: [00:30:33](#) And let's just talk about things in general. There's likely people listening that have set a goal to quit smoking. There's likely people that have set a goal to make more money, that have set a goal to lose weight, that have set a goal to do all kinds of stuff.

Susan: [00:30:47](#) Weight loss is the number one, by a lot, statistically speaking.

Jonathan: [00:30:50](#) Ideally, yeah.

Susan: [00:30:52](#) Well not ideally, statistically. It's just the number one. More people are setting that New Year's resolution than any other. By a lot.

Jonathan: [00:30:58](#) Absolutely.

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TeriAnn: [00:30:59](#) Yeah, that's why the gym is packed on January 2nd.

Susan: [00:31:02](#) It is. And it will be cleared out again by February 15th.

Jonathan: [00:31:05](#) Statistically.

Susan: [00:31:06](#) Yeah, totally. Yeah, by March we're all on our second diet of the year. Statistically.

Jonathan: [00:31:11](#) So with that said, I think it's really important for us to understand that I don't think that you shift your entire life at once. And I actually think that sets you up for failure, to go in and take on everything. This is my personal belief. I know that whenever I've gone in to make any change in my life, it's not like, "Okay, I'm gonna get up and I'm gonna run every day, and then I'm gonna study for eight hours and do my business, and then I'm gonna go do this for two hours," and before you know it I've scheduled out 16-hour days that fix every negative part of my life.

Susan: [00:31:44](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:31:44](#) Because that's not how it works. It's overwhelming, it's not sustainable. Find that one thing, what's the one thing for you that's gonna matter? And that's what I was gonna come back to. I don't know why I said ideally, because statistically that's the number. For a lot of us that's losing weight. Make weight loss be the only thing this January 1st. If you're gonna make January 1st, whatever date it needs to be, that line in the sand, then just tackle weight loss.

Susan: [00:32:12](#) Because that's enough, man.

Jonathan: [00:32:13](#) Exactly.

Susan: [00:32:13](#) I mean no one's succeeding at that, right? Like if you could actually lose your excess weight and keep it off, you would be a unicorn. I've done it and I help people to do it, but if you look out there, 99.9% of people who aim to lose weight will not keep off weight, get down to whatever they're aiming for and sustain it. They won't.

Susan: [00:32:34](#) So you're so right. Just to conquer that would be amazing.

Jonathan: [00:32:40](#) And then it's gonna be a snowball effect.

TeriAnn: [00:32:42](#) For sure. I was just thinking that.

Jonathan: [00:32:43](#) You conquer that. Now you wake up every morning, you look in the mirror and you're happy.

TeriAnn: [00:32:46](#) You feel better.

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Jonathan: [00:32:46](#) Happier by how you look.

TeriAnn: [00:32:47](#) More energy.

Susan: [00:32:48](#) Yeah. Well also happier because the foods you're eating are conducive to happiness.

TeriAnn: [00:32:52](#) Yeah. Sleep better.

Susan: [00:32:52](#) Totally.

Jonathan: [00:32:53](#) And then it's gonna make it easier.

Susan: [00:32:54](#) It's called a keystone habit, Jonathan. So there are certain habits, and they're different for different people. For me it's my food for sure. For me, my food is on track, everything is on track. My food is out of whack, everything's out of whack. End of story. For James Clear it's exercise. So it could be sleep, it could be exercise, it could be food. Usually it's one of those physiological sort of things.

Susan: [00:33:19](#) And so you ask yourself, what's the thing that when that's on, it has a positive ripple effect on everything? And food and weight, that's a big one. So for a lot of us, yeah it's gonna cascade out throughout our lives. For all kinds of reasons. Some of them physiological, some of them psychological. Some of them behavioral, day structural. Yeah, but getting your food and your weight right, boy it has a big impact.

Susan: [00:33:45](#) I can't even tell you, I can't even language the changes I see in people. Like you were 270 pounds, I was just reading in my Bright Lifers community this woman who used to travel the world, but she was above 300 pounds, and she would always buy two plane tickets, the one for the seat next to her. And then she stopped flying, because she just couldn't. The seatbelt extenders and the whatever.

Susan: [00:34:11](#) And she's now in a right-sized body, she's lost 170 pounds or something, whatever. And she took a picture of the seatbelt around her lap, and these yards of extra seatbelt, the fabric of the seatbelt. It was clicked around her waist, and then there was all this length of extra seatbelt, of her tiny little legs and waist in this tiny little seat, and there was someone sitting right next to her. And she was like, "Yeah here I am on an airplane, I haven't been on an airplane in years. It's my first flight since I lost my weight. And here I am. Whole new life."

Jonathan: [00:34:48](#) So let's dive deep then on weight loss, and I'm gonna ask you to reveal your biggest secrets around it.

Susan: [00:34:55](#) Sure.

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- Jonathan: [00:34:55](#) What are people right now, that's their goal, to lose weight, give me the best of the best. And I know on our last podcast we talked about the four bright lines. If you could repeat what those four are for you inside of Bright Line Eating, but then also just share some more of the really nitty-gritty stuff that people usually have to pay you a bunch of money to find out.
- Susan: [00:35:16](#) Sure. So the four bright lines are sugar, flour, meals and quantities. Bright lines are an approach, really, that isn't right for everybody. Bright lines are clear boundaries that you never cross. Like if you're gonna quit smoking, you're not gonna ever have a cigarette, just no exceptions. No way, no how, doesn't matter, Friday night party, concert, it doesn't matter, you're not smoking.
- Susan: [00:35:42](#) And a lot of people assume that that kind of approach is unrealistic or not helpful for food. And it turns out that that's wrong. It turns out that for some of us it's the only way. Just like we couldn't quite smoking allowing ourselves a puff, a drag here and there. We can't get fit and healthy repeating that one piece of pizza experiment ad infinitum. It doesn't work for us. One piece of pizza leads to another. Let's be real.
- Jonathan: [00:36:10](#) Right.
- Susan: [00:36:11](#) And it's actually easier, and more freedom-producing, to not eat it at all. To just practice the, "No thank you, I don't eat pizza." So that's Bright Line Eating. It's for those of us that have brains that are highly susceptible to addictive foods, there are certain foods that we just are better off if we leave them alone.
- Jonathan: [00:36:32](#) Well statistically, cold turkey is the most effective way to quit any addiction.
- Susan: [00:36:37](#) True.
- Jonathan: [00:36:38](#) Now it may not be the healthiest. If we get deep into heroin or even some pharmaceutical addictions, things like that.
- Susan: [00:36:44](#) The benzos.
- Jonathan: [00:36:44](#) Yeah.
- Susan: [00:36:44](#) There's certain things you can die if you quit them cold turkey. Alcohol if you're super addicted.
- Jonathan: [00:36:50](#) Exactly. But statistically speaking, cold turkey has the best success rate.
- Susan: [00:36:56](#) Yup.
- Jonathan: [00:36:57](#) And it's hard to think that. Because as an ex smoker, I wanted to, "Well let me just cut down to 10 a day, and then five a day, and then two a day." All garbage never worked. "Let me just do an e-cig." That's all garbage too. Same thing with food.

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Susan: [00:37:12](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:37:13](#) It's like you gotta draw that line in the sand, that bright line in the sand. If you're somebody with that addictive personality.

Susan: [00:37:19](#) Yup.

Jonathan: [00:37:20](#) Again, I talked on the other episode, I had smoking buddies that would just have one a week and they'd be fine. They weren't me.

Susan: [00:37:26](#) Right.

Jonathan: [00:37:26](#) So if you're addicted to food, you've gotta draw those lines in the sand and you just don't do it.

Susan: [00:37:32](#) Yup.

Jonathan: [00:37:33](#) So no to sugar, any kind of sugar, right?

Susan: [00:37:35](#) Yup.

Jonathan: [00:37:36](#) No to flour.

Susan: [00:37:37](#) Yup.

Jonathan: [00:37:37](#) And then your other two?

Susan: [00:37:38](#) Meals. Like no snacking or grazing.

Jonathan: [00:37:41](#) Perfect.

Susan: [00:37:42](#) Just eating meals. Ideally breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Jonathan: [00:37:45](#) Okay.

Susan: [00:37:46](#) Then quantities. So I weight and measure my food with a digital food scale. You watched me. I put my food on the scale. And some of that is to make sure I eat enough vegetables, very few people will eat enough vegetables if they're not weighing it out. And then also, it's to just have really clear boundaries around the meal so that that little whispering voice doesn't say, "I don't know if that was enough, maybe need a little more." Because a little more leads to a little more, and before you know it, you've over-indulged.

Susan: [00:38:19](#) Because you can eat, quote-unquote allowable foods, or Bright Line-friendly foods, you know whatever. You can overeat them. And then, basically you don't wanna be setting yourself to eat three troughs a day.

Jonathan: [00:38:32](#) Right.

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- Susan: [00:38:35](#) But you need to eat enough so that you can make it to the next meal. So most of us have no sense of how much that is. By the time we need Bright Line Eating, those sensors are broken. So sugar, flour, meals and quantities.
- Susan: [00:38:47](#) Now you asked, what are my ninja tricks? Well okay, I'm sorry for all you folks who are launched off on your weight loss resolutions and you're hitting the gym, but if you want the straight truth, exercise doesn't help you lose weight. Not if you've got a real weight problem. If you're someone who's like, your weight has crept up 10 or 20 pounds and you were always pretty fit, you were an athlete in school, great, go hit the gym and get those 10 pounds off. Awesome.
- Susan: [00:39:14](#) But if you have a serious weight problem, you need to focus on your food. What you weigh is about what you're eating. And you cannot outrun, out-lift a bad diet. You just can't. And furthermore, when you throw a bunch of exercise in the mix, you set your brain and your body up for demanding more fuel for all those workouts, and you put yourself in a really unwinnable position.
- Susan: [00:39:39](#) If you think I'm wrong about this, I just ask you to look around. How's that strategy working for us, the whole diet-and-exercise thing? Not so great. In Bright Line Eating we say, put your bunny slippers on, let yourself rest, and give yourself a set of weeks and months to get your food really clean and automatic. Like really focus on your diet. And then once your food is automatic like brushing your teeth, great. Go back and hit the gym. Not to lose weight, but for all the other great reasons that we should all be exercising. For cognitive function and sex drive and self-esteem, and cardiovascular function. Don't get me wrong, I know the science on exercise.
- Susan: [00:40:19](#) Exercise is amazing, you wanna be exercising. But not during the period of time where you're getting that weight off and getting an entirely new relationship with food built. Because if you throw exercise into the mix there, you will not have enough willpower on board to set up the food habits right. You'll build in exceptions, little allowances here and there, that then become hard-wired into the system, and six months, a year, four and a half years later, you'll still be like not quite at your goal, wondering what the hell happened and why you can't get these last 10, 20, 40, 70, 80 pounds off.
- Jonathan: [00:40:56](#) I love that you said that. I think it goes in line with the one thing at a time. Let's not try to change your entire life around at once on January 1st and take on all of these different things. Because we all know willpower is not enough. If it was, we'd all be skinny and healthy and millionaires and all of that other stuff. But willpower, it runs out. It lasts a few days, a few weeks, whatever it is.
- Jonathan: [00:41:24](#) Why spread your willpower thin amongst five different things that none get accomplished, and next January first you're setting the exact same goals again?
- Susan: [00:41:34](#) Totally. And Jonathan, here's the thing. We think of food, like eating and exercise, as the same thing. Diet and exercise.

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Jonathan: [00:41:41](#) Right.

Susan: [00:41:42](#) Like we've bundled them. How did that happen? They're completely unrelated. They are not the same thing. So get that exercise out of it. You wanna lose weight, it's diet. It's about the food you're putting in your mouth. Like I want people to uncouple those in their thinking. I want, like if someone has eat too much, I do not want them thinking, "I gotta go for a run." I want them thinking, "Gotta clean up my food." Food is related to food, and your weight is a food problem. It's not an exercise deficiency.

Jonathan: [00:42:12](#) Yeah. They always say absolutely are made in the kitchen, right?

Susan: [00:42:15](#) There you go, exactly.

Jonathan: [00:42:16](#) They're not made in the gym.

Susan: [00:42:17](#) Ask the bodybuilder.

Jonathan: [00:42:19](#) Absolutely.

Susan: [00:42:19](#) What do you gotta do before a competition? How do you get cut? It's not about sets and reps, it's about food.

Jonathan: [00:42:25](#) Yup. And it's the 80/20 rule. Making sure that I do this in the right direction, 20% of that effort is gonna give you 80% of the results.

Susan: [00:42:36](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:42:36](#) And so you could be exercising a whole bunch and not get the same results as you would if you just cleaned your ... And still eat crap food, you're not gonna get the results as if you just fixed the food.

Susan: [00:42:48](#) Yeah, totally.

Jonathan: [00:42:48](#) And left the exercise out till later.

Susan: [00:42:50](#) The trainers will tell you, the personal trainers, "I can't help you. I can give you a good workout, but honestly, what your goals are, it's a food thing."

Jonathan: [00:43:01](#) So all of you that just signed up for the gym yesterday, or the day before, you may wanna go back into the gym and just see if they'll let you pause it for three months.

TeriAnn: [00:43:09](#) Save your money.

Susan: [00:43:09](#) Totally.

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- Jonathan: [00:43:14](#) And get your eating in check. This is a big thing for me. I'm listening right along and learning from you. It's one reason why I wanted to have you as a guest. So all selfish reasons over here. What are some more ninja tricks? Because I think that one was phenomenal.
- Susan: [00:43:29](#) So let's talk about meals for a second. Because there's this widespread confusion around like eating several small meals a day, meals and snacks, keep your metabolism revving, protein shake ... whatever. And no. The research is very clear on this. Eating fewer times a day is better. For weight loss, for health, for all kinds of reasons. And I could go on, I could talk about this for an hour.
- Susan: [00:43:56](#) So first of all, in terms of weight loss, the only way, if you have had ever a weight or a food problem, the only way to solve that is to create behaviors of eating that are automatic, they become wired in like brushing your teeth. You cannot rely on willpower in the moment to make good choices for you day in and day out, the brain does not work that way.
- Susan: [00:44:22](#) So for that reason, many small meals a day is a catastrophe. It's like expecting yourself to be able to brush and floss six times a day, regularly, habitually, without failing. Like I'm sorry. But when I finally learned how to floss, in my 30s, I was so proud of myself, to add the flossing to the brushing, but twice a day is max, right? There's no way that I'm brushing and flossing six times a day. Because you can't expect yourself to stop at the right time and do it, you can't have it on you, you can't be motivated. There's just no way.
- Susan: [00:44:58](#) But brushing and flossing twice a day works, because of the time-of-day cues and the way that it gets wired into your routines that happen morning and night. Food is the same way. You only wanna force yourself to stop and eat at these clearly demarcated times when meals become obviously and are happening. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, it's all you wanna be eating.
- TeriAnn: [00:45:21](#) I feel like a lot of times I eat that way too, I'm not a big snacker. And I feel like on days when I'm snacking more, and this may be different for everyone, I eat more. And then I wanna eat more. Because it's just that habit of, I'm gonna eat, I'm gonna eat, I'm gonna eat. Okay here's something, I'm gonna eat it. And I love eating three times a day, that works for me. And it's just, you have time to plan out, like I'm gonna eat this for breakfast, I'm gonna eat this for lunch, I'm gonna eat this for dinner. You get your meal, you go on with your day. You're not snacking in between, thinking about food, always thinking about food, always thinking about food, always thinking about food.
- Susan: [00:45:54](#) Yeah.
- TeriAnn: [00:45:55](#) Six times a day is a lot of thinking about food.
- Susan: [00:45:56](#) It's a lot of thinking about food, it is.

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TeriAnn: [00:45:57](#) It really is. And especially when you talk about the addiction side of it. That's a lot of eating food throughout a day.

Susan: [00:46:03](#) Totally.

TeriAnn: [00:46:03](#) So I'm not addicted to food and I've never had that problem, but I love the three times a day rule, it works so well for me, and it's just a healthy balance in eating your meals.

Susan: [00:46:12](#) And something you pointed out, TeriAnn, is so true. Eating more times is eating more food, right? So we're all struggling with weight problems here, 80% of us now, and in what world are you thinking that giving yourself license to eat all day long is a good idea? No. You should not be eating any time.

Jonathan: [00:46:30](#) For me it's that willpower. Six times a day I have to make healthy choices? No.

Susan: [00:46:34](#) No.

Jonathan: [00:46:35](#) Why not just give me one meal or two meals a day so I only have to make that choice once or twice. For me personally that works. It's the same as when I quite smoking.

Susan: [00:46:43](#) Fewer times.

Jonathan: [00:46:44](#) I'm not gonna hang around with people that smoke while I'm trying to quit smoking. I'm not gonna put myself in a situation where there's cigarettes around. It's the same thing with food. Don't put yourself in that situation where there's food always around, or you're always going to try and eat that many meals a day.

Susan: [00:46:58](#) The no thank you. You just gotta wire in the no thank you. If it's not meal time, you're not eating. It doesn't matter if it's healthy, unhealthy, you don't even have to think about it. It's like three in the afternoon, you don't eat. No thank you. No thank you.

Jonathan: [00:47:11](#) I'm trying to think what, it was probably a Tim Ferris book, 4-Hour Body, or I was listening to one of his podcasts or something, and he just talks about, do we even know what being hungry feels like anymore?

Susan: [00:47:22](#) Right?

Jonathan: [00:47:22](#) Right, I don't think that we truly do. Yes, you might feel a little bit hungry. You're probably dehydrated and need to drink some water. But I think he was referring to, well what do I do on a travel day, if I'm gonna go be in the airport all day and there's not healthy stuff, and he's like, "Just don't eat." Like when's the last time you actually felt hunger?

Susan: [00:47:40](#) Yeah.

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- Jonathan: [00:47:40](#) And it just brings me back to that when we're talking about how much we eat throughout the day and all of that. I think that we have really fallen into a routine of just eating. We just eat, it's that addiction, it's emotional.
- TeriAnn: [00:47:53](#) Well we're always eating on the go too, we don't sit down and chew our food and think about, I'm chewing food and it tastes good. And you're methodical about it. You're just shoveling food into your mouth to be onto the next thing. Think about if you're eating six times a day how fast you have to eat through each meal. It really is insane when you think about it like that.
- TeriAnn: [00:48:09](#) But it's crazy that we don't even enjoy our food anymore, we just rush through it. And we don't say, "Oh I'm satisfied now, I'm not gonna eat the rest of this." We eat the whole plate, and then we're like, "Oh I'm stuffed." That's another issue I think a lot of people face is not enjoying your food, chewing it. And guess what, you probably don't need to eat every single thing on your plate. Do you feel satisfied? That's a huge key I think.
- Susan: [00:48:34](#) Yeah. So that works for you, TeriAnn. So you're low on the susceptibility scale. Your body tells your brain, I'm satisfied, and then there's a natural desire to stop eating that comes from that. I don't get that. And you don't either, Jonathan.
- Jonathan: [00:48:50](#) Nope.
- Susan: [00:48:50](#) We're 10s on the susceptibility scale. What happens for us is, sometimes we get no signal that we're full and it's time to stop eating. Sometimes we get a signal, it's vague, it comes from the belly like I think I might be full, but for some reason it's not paired up with an actual wanting to stop chewing and eating. The mouth still wants to go and the brain still wants to go. We still wanna bend the elbow and put more food in our mouth, even as our stomach is saying, "Kinda stretched out over here, feeling pretty full." It's like, "Oh yeah, but that was good and maybe if I had another bite of that that would be good. And now we're switching from salty to sweet and sweet back to salty." And we still wanna eat.
- Susan: [00:49:28](#) So the question of am I satisfied, it only works for some people.
- TeriAnn: [00:49:34](#) And do you feel like over time you've never gotten to that point where you eat a meal and you're like, "I feel good, that's all I need."
- Susan: [00:49:38](#) No, I do. Not reliably enough to live in a right-size body. That's not the answer.
- Jonathan: [00:49:44](#) Is this why you weigh your food out?
- Susan: [00:49:45](#) Yes. Totally.
- TeriAnn: [00:49:47](#) So real question. Do you ever go out to eat? And if you do, how do you weigh your food? I'm serious, for people who have lived before like this.

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- Susan: [00:49:54](#) Yeah, I eat out all the time. I travel like a whatever, I travel all the time, I eat out all the time. There's lots of different strategies. In my Bright Line Eating Bootcamp I have a whole module on all the different kinds of restaurants, how to handle each situation, how to eat out in a Japanese restaurant, a Mexican restaurant, a Thai restaurant, a Chinese restaurant, a Mediterranean restaurant.
- Susan: [00:50:14](#) Sometimes I'll weigh my food in a restaurant. Usually not, usually I'll eyeball my quantities. And I know the categories of foods that I eat. Categories like protein, vegetable, fat, fruit, like that. And what that does is it narrows my attentional focus as I'm looking at a menu. I'm not thinking what most people are thinking when they look at a menu, which is, "What do I feel like eating right now?" That's what most people are thinking. "What sounds good? What do I wanna order?"
- Susan: [00:50:43](#) I'm not thinking that. I'm thinking, where are the vegetables that look clean and good? Where's the protein? Okay, and then what kind of fat would I have on that? That dressing sounds like it might be a little sweet, I'll see if they've got the carafes of olive oil and balsamic vinegar. I'm looking for my food categories. And it puts blinders on a little bit. Literally from a psychological standpoint, I don't even see the pasta section on the menu.
- TeriAnn: [00:51:07](#) I don't read the dessert menu.
- Susan: [00:51:08](#) I don't read the dessert menu, exactly.
- TeriAnn: [00:51:09](#) You don't know it's there.
- Susan: [00:51:10](#) Because it's not in my categories, I'm not even seeing it.
- TeriAnn: [00:51:12](#) Yeah, and you don't even know that it exists.
- Susan: [00:51:14](#) Exactly, it's not in your field of vision. So I eat out all the time. But for some people who start Bright Line Eating, they avoid eating out for a while. Because it's like, why would I be around the smokers?
- Jonathan: [00:51:24](#) That's what I was gonna say. Is yes, you've been doing this of 15 years, so you can eat out and that's easier. I can go to a bar now and it's fine and I can do that. When I quit smoking, I wouldn't even consume any kind of alcohol. I couldn't have any wine, I couldn't have anything, because that was a trigger too. So not only would I not go out anywhere, because I didn't wanna be out around people and be triggered to smoke, but I wouldn't do other things that would trigger that.
- Jonathan: [00:51:49](#) And I would imagine that's the same with almost any new habit that you're trying to create. Why put yourself in a situation where it's easy to break that habit?
- Susan: [00:51:57](#) Yup.

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Jonathan: [00:51:58](#) So just eat at home.

Susan: [00:51:59](#) Totally.

Jonathan: [00:51:59](#) For the next month or two, and get it under control. And then slowly eat out, slowly do these things.

Susan: [00:52:05](#) Exactly.

Jonathan: [00:52:05](#) And bring them into your life, and make sure that you are remaining in control.

Susan: [00:52:09](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative). I just, TeriAnn, I just ... Okay, I just flew from Rochester New York to London to catch the Prince 4U concert that was doing its last show of the world tour. I flew in for a night to catch that concert, then I flew to Washington DC to have a lover's getaway with my husband for a couple nights there, went to another concert, went out to eat. We spent ... okay I'm not even gonna tell you how much money we spent on dinner for two nights, eating out.

Susan: [00:52:36](#) I ate out every meal with my husband in Washington DC, so breakfast, lunch, dinner, breakfast, lunch, dinner, breakfast, lunch. And then I flew here to Dallas to be with you guys, hit a Whole Foods grocery store on the way here, got a bunch of groceries and stuff. But it's like an eight-day whirlwind tour, London, DC, Dallas, back home to New York. And I'm gonna weigh exactly what I weighed when I left, I'm not gaining an ounce, and I'm enjoying every last minute of it. There's no hit to my relationship satisfaction, my experience in the world, my joy, my whatever.

Susan: [00:53:16](#) I went out to eat and enjoyed it like I used to. I didn't eat dessert, I didn't have bread. If they were bringing over french fries for free or whatever, we're like we don't need those, they took them away. But I ate some food that was pretty frickin' sexy and delicious by my taste bud standards, and I enjoyed every bit of it. So you recalibrate. And food is one of life's pleasure. And I enjoy it more now than I used to. And I don't have to shrink the way I live in the world at all.

Susan: [00:53:49](#) But like you said, Jonathan, it's been a process. I've been doing this for a long time, and yes I made my world a little bit narrower at the beginning, just to keep myself on the beam and let those habits gel.

Jonathan: [00:54:00](#) But you should, right?

Susan: [00:54:02](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [00:54:02](#) Set yourself up for the win. How many years have we eaten like garbage? How many years have we not done what we should have? I hate the word should, but have we made choices that did not ...

Susan: [00:54:15](#) Serve us, did not empower us.

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Jonathan: [00:54:15](#) Yeah, that didn't serve us. So don't expect, okay I'm gonna fix 10 years of bad choices.

Susan: [00:54:23](#) Right, 40 years, 50 years, 60 years.

Jonathan: [00:54:25](#) Yeah. In a month or two months. And oh I'm not gonna fix it without sacrifice. It's gonna take some sacrifice.

TeriAnn: [00:54:32](#) How long did it take you? You probably can't just pinpoint a certain spot, but how many years was it before you felt like, I enjoy eating and it's not a chore for me to make good decisions and do what I need to do to feel good all the time? You know what I mean?

Susan: [00:54:44](#) Yeah.

TeriAnn: [00:54:45](#) When did it become enjoyable for you, instead of all the time thinking ... And I know you're still very intentional, you think about what you're gonna eat, weigh it, but do you know what I'm saying?

Susan: [00:54:52](#) I do.

TeriAnn: [00:54:52](#) That shift in your mind of, I own this and it's fun for me now to eat because I don't have to worry about what choices I'm gonna make, I have that Bright Line like you talk about.

Susan: [00:55:01](#) Okay, so change is an interesting thing. I had moments, TeriAnn, that were like within the first week or two or three, where I was like, "Hey I'm loving this. Wow, this meal tastes great."

TeriAnn: [00:55:12](#) For sure.

Susan: [00:55:12](#) I'm someone who does this now.

Jonathan: [00:55:14](#) Especially when the scale responds.

Susan: [00:55:14](#) Oh yeah, that was amazing, watching the weight melt off.

Jonathan: [00:55:18](#) When the scale responds, then it's like, "Oh yeah, that salad does taste good."

Susan: [00:55:19](#) Yeah. It's intoxicating. Weight loss is intoxicating for sure. And this is some of what Bright Line Eating does that's Ninja is we help people maintain. Because once with weight starts melting off, because you're there already, you're in a right-size body, psychologically that's a different phase. Where you're not seeing the motivation of I lost some more weight. As a matter of fact, now you're staying the same. How do you get comfortable with that?

Susan: [00:55:45](#) But back to your question, TeriAnn, in the brain, change is like taking a river of water that has been grooved over years. These are fiber tracks in the brain. The

currency of the brain is electricity, and it runs in these networks, these cables, these fiber tracks in the brain. And they groove. They wire up with association, with behavioral experience. And it's like electricity flowing, it's kind of like electrons flowing through a copper wire. And they groove up. It's like a river, water in a river.

- Susan: [00:56:24](#) Now if you wanna change that, you gotta dam the water upstream and divert it into a new pathway. And when you do that, it's like water flowing over dry land. There's no groove yet. It's just awkward, and it's wandering and meandering. But you keep the dam firm upstream, and you let that water flow in that new pathway, and then over time the water grooves a little bit of a riverbed, and over more time it grooves more of a riverbed.
- Susan: [00:56:53](#) So when you ask me how long did it take for it to start feeling different, my answer is, well it was gradual. I had moments of feeling different, kind of from the beginning, and then there were other times where it felt strange, awkward, constraining, depressing, scary, whatever. And then the water flowed in this new pathway, and over time I had more and more meals, moments, times, where I felt like I got this.
- TeriAnn: [00:57:21](#) I had a feeling you were gonna say that, and I wanted to ask that because I think a lot of people now think it should just be instant. It should be instant.
- Jonathan: [00:57:30](#) Everything else is instant, right? I can go to Amazon and buy everything instantly and have it delivered tomorrow.
- TeriAnn: [00:57:35](#) And it goes back to the lifestyle conversation and this gradual change. We talk about quitting things cold turkey, and that's fine. But then to stay on that path you have to continually make those changes and those decisions to be there.
- Susan: [00:57:51](#) You have to reaffirm that identity.
- TeriAnn: [00:57:52](#) It's like a lifetime process that's fulfilling for you.
- Susan: [00:57:56](#) Totally. And with food we can't underestimate how much we're herd animals, and how much we will behave in ways that are reinforced and normative within the group of people that we hang out with.
- TeriAnn: [00:58:10](#) Yeah.
- Susan: [00:58:11](#) So if you're gonna keep hanging out with people who eat like crap, your habits are gonna devolve back to that old way. So you've gotta form a new community, you gotta be around people who are like traveling and stopping off at a grocery store. You know what I mean? You gotta hang out with people who, it's Thanksgiving, but they're not just gonna eat every last crappy thing, it's not all about the pie. Where it's like, "Hey, can I bring the big salad?" "Yeah, sure that'd be great. Can you bring enough for 10?"

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Susan: [00:58:45](#) So in Bright Line Eating, we make sure that if your friends and family that you've got now aren't gonna be that community, we supply the community. Because you're gonna need to get reinforcement from other human beings, otherwise you won't change. You just won't.

Jonathan: [00:59:00](#) So let's focus, because we're about to wrap up the episode, let's focus more about Bright Line Eating. So one, BrightLineEating.com is a website people can go to to learn more about that. B-R-I-G-H-T-L-I-N-E eating dot com. You can also go to EmpoweringYouOrganically.com, we'll have links to all of Susan's different pages. You also have a video series right now called Reboot And Rezoom. And it's very relevant to this time of year, right?

Susan: [00:59:29](#) It is.

Jonathan: [00:59:29](#) We're talking about the New Year, we're talking about resolutions, we're talking about change. This is a free video series that's not usually free. So go to ... Do we know the URL offhand where they can go and watch this? So go to EmpoweringYouOrganically.com, we'll have a link there in the show notes and on the page. Go check out this video series, it's life-changing. Go check out BrightLineEating.com, especially for everybody here, and 80% of the world has some sort of challenge with weight. So I know you listening, if you're shaking your head no, nod it yes because that's you too. Go to BrightLineEating.com.

Susan: [01:00:06](#) Except for the TeriAnn's in the world.

Jonathan: [01:00:09](#) Go to BrightLineEating.com and learn more about this. I love you have different names, you have your Bright Lifers, these are people for life. And it's true, these are the people you wanna surround yourself with. Don't surround yourself ... Or I'm not gonna say don't, because some of us don't always have choices, your coworkers, your family, things like that. Consider adding more people into your life that will influence you in the direction where you want to be.

Susan: [01:00:36](#) That's right.

Jonathan: [01:00:36](#) So you want to be healthier, then go find a community of healthier people.

Susan: [01:00:41](#) Yeah.

Jonathan: [01:00:41](#) Which you'll find at BrightLineEating.com. If you want anything else, go hang out with more people like that. You wanna make more money, go hang out with some more business people, you wanna do different things like that. For today's conversation we're talking about weight loss.

Jonathan: [01:00:55](#) Is there any last tip you wanna leave for people here before we sign off?

Susan: [01:01:00](#) Yeah. I wanna cover just the reframe of Reboot Rezoom.

Jonathan: [01:01:04](#) Love it.

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- Susan: [01:01:04](#) Because it's January 2nd, and so a lot of people have launched off with a resolution. And there is a way that we set ourselves up for failure. 91% of New Year's resolutions will not be achieved. By people's own admission. They will say, I did not succeed at that New Year's resolution. 91%. That's a huge number. And I want to presense the flaw in our thinking as we start off that sets us up for that kind of merry-go-round of turning over a new leaf and then falling off the wagon. Turning over a new leaf and then falling off the wagon, over and over again.
- Susan: [01:01:49](#) And here's the flaw in our thinking. The flaw in our thinking is, it's gonna be different this time, I'm really committed, I've found the silver bullet, I've got the program, the system, the approach, and I'm doing it, I'm all in. And the idea is that with enough motivation, and enough oomph in that rocket launch, in that sort of thing, that we will be different from now on and we will ... It's almost like the Hollywood happy-ever-after expectation. That at the end of the romantic comedy, the man and the woman have decided that they're actually right for each other, now they're gonna get married, and now the movie ends as if now it's perfect. They're about to get married, so it's done, it's over.
- Jonathan: [01:02:31](#) Sure.
- Susan: [01:02:33](#) As if the beginning of a marriage of living happily ever after. So the reality is that life always shows up and perfection is not available. So the question is, how do we think about it as we notice ourselves having veered off track?
- Susan: [01:02:53](#) And the answer is that if we expect it to happen, we know that relapse always is going to happen. Re-lapse, lapse again. Here I am, in a period of lapse. Why? Because my mother-in-law is in the hospital, because my daughter has an ear infection and I'm driving to urgent care and that means I'm not gonna prep my food for tomorrow. Because I just twisted my ankle and I can't hit the gym for two weeks. My New Year's resolution was to work out Monday, Wednesday, Friday, blah blah blah. Well, all right, I got a bum ankle so I'm off track for a while. Relapse, lapse again, it's always going to happen. Expect it.
- Susan: [01:03:32](#) So the solution to the launch off and then crash and burn, restart, fall off the wagon, is to expect those cycles but to smooth off the edges. And we do that by interrupting the shame spiral. When we notice that we're off track, it's not like we've blown it forever and ever and it's all ruined now and we have to wait for some new motivation to start some other system, program, New Year's resolution. No no no, stick with the one you were on. You don't have to be perfect, you just have to be unstoppable.
- Susan: [01:04:07](#) So get a little bit of support to get back on track, and start a resume cycle. Relapse, resume. Relapse, resume. Relapse, resume, it's what you do, TeriAnn with your food. You're a naturally thin person who's low on the food addiction susceptibility scale, and what you do is when you relapse a little bit with your food, you naturally resume. You go, I gotta get back to my center. Ain't no thing,

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no catastrophe. I'm not a bad person, I'm not like ... there's no issue here. This is life, we relapse, we resume. We relapse, we resume.

- Susan: [01:04:43](#) And over time, you become a ninja at those cycles. That's what it is to live in a right-size body life long, is you just become a better steward of the relapses and the resumes.
- TeriAnn: [01:04:56](#) Instead of being like, "Now I'm just gonna eat bad for 15 weeks and start over then."
- Susan: [01:05:00](#) Right.
- TeriAnn: [01:05:01](#) That's truly the heart of it, though.
- Susan: [01:05:02](#) Yeah. Like here it is in October, nobody starts a diet in October, might as well just wait till January 1st.
- TeriAnn: [01:05:07](#) Exactly.
- Jonathan: [01:05:08](#) Plus Halloween. Free candy from your kids.
- TeriAnn: [01:05:11](#) Exactly.
- Susan: [01:05:12](#) Totally.
- TeriAnn: [01:05:13](#) Valentine's Day comes around it's like, "Oh I just ate all this food and I didn't keep my resolution, so I'll just start in the summer, in May when I need to get into-"
- Susan: [01:05:20](#) Yeah. So the how of that is what's in my Reboot Rezoom video series. Like how do you become a ninja at those relapse resume cycles. But I think even just hearing that the expectation is not perfection, the expectation is you gotta become a person who does it differently, and people who do it differently, it's the AIR that you presenced before. Maybe we can close with that again.
- Jonathan: [01:05:42](#) Do that, yes.
- Susan: [01:05:42](#) Automaticity, identity, resume. Those are the components to living happy, thin and free in a right-size body forever. Whether you were born with it constitutionally like TeriAnn over here, I keep picking on you, or you're like me and Jonathan who have to fight our way through it the hard way, we have to become someone who has automatic healthy habits, who has the identity of someone who just doesn't eat that crap, because that's not who we are. And when we veer off track we resume. Automaticity, identity, resume. Essential as air.
- Jonathan: [01:06:13](#) Love it. This was an amazing show, Susan, thank you for joining us. Thank you guys for listening. Go to EmpoweringYouOrganically.com for the transcripts, for

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the show notes. Share this episode with anybody in your life who you think could benefit from it, which we all know there's at least 10 or 15 or 20 people we know. We have Susan on here, we are not affiliated, we don't get any kind of compensation, there's no payment here, we had her on because she is the leading expert in the world when it comes to weight loss, when it comes to psychology around eating, when it comes to just getting healthy.

Jonathan: [01:06:48](#) And so we're so honored that you came and joined us today, thank you. Go check out her website, BrightLineEating.com, and become a Bright Lifer yourself. Thanks everybody for listening.

TeriAnn: [01:06:58](#) Thank you.

Jonathan: [01:06:59](#) And we'll see you on the next show.