

## Empowering You Organically – Season 2 – Episode 9

Jonathan: Welcome everyone to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm joined by my cohost TeriAnn Trevenen.

TeriAnn: Hey everyone.

Jonathan: And we have a very special guest today, Dr. Susan Peirce Thompson.

Susan: Hey, hey.

Jonathan: Thanks for joining us. TeriAnn, do you want to give us a quick history, a quick bio?

TeriAnn: Yes, so we're super excited to have Dr. Susan Peirce Thompson here today. She lives in Rochester, New York with her husband and three beautiful daughters. She is a New York Times best-selling author for her book "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 and CEO of Bright Line Eating, which is a company with unprecedented track record for helping people lose all of their excess weight and live in a right-sized body long-term. I love that, by the way.

TeriAnn: She has a PhD in brain and cognitive sciences. She's been a professor at the college level, the university level for 13 years, and she has taught on the psychology of eating and the neuroscience of food addiction.

Susan: Yeah, so excited to be here with you two.

Jonathan: Yeah, thank you for joining us. I was really pushing to have you here because we film just a couple days before we air and so this is going to come out on December 26th, the day after Christmas. It's such a vital time to talk about food, talk about food addiction, talk about choices that we've made over the holidays. For a lot of us, the holidays is when we let loose, it's when we kind of get away from our standards and just let it go.

Susan: Yep.

Jonathan: Do you want to talk about that for a minute? Can you talk about what happens over the holidays for most people?

Susan: Yeah, totally. The holidays are kind of the mack-daddy sort of instance of this pattern that a lot of us fall into actually year-round. It's this sort of pattern of indulgence followed by sort of turning over a new leaf and tightening up and like getting it back together, right? But during the holidays, there's sort of this widespread societal permission and sort of expectation of like, "Well, no one keeps their food together now," right? Like let's be real, no one keeps their food together now. That's sort of the thinking, right?

Susan: You add into that sort of a lot of extra activity like we still have lives to lead and now we're buying presents and going to more parties and prepping more like sexy, exciting food and then family stress, right? Family is amazing but it's also for a lot of us, it's complicated, right? There's no guarantee that all of these parties and events and stuff are just filled with nothing but love and connection. There's like layers of stuff going on there, right?

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- Susan: So put all this into this big cauldron and there's this sort of letting it all hang out that happens, this phase of, "I'm just taking my comfort and food, I'm not worrying about it now." Then there's the societal backlash that happens called January 1st, right, New Year's resolution time where it's like, well, now's the time to get it together.
- Susan: Most people are doing that and I-
- TeriAnn: When you say it like that, it sounds emotionally chaotic. It does, like when you put it in that context of like, everyone's ramping up for the holidays, and then the family expectations, and the stress, and the chaos of the holidays. Then all of a sudden it's like, "All right, I got to get back on track," and it's like this heightened sense of awareness of where you're failing and everything like get your goals set and get back on track for the new year.
- Susan: Right, totally.
- TeriAnn: It sounds totally chaotic.
- Jonathan: I mean, even when you're trying to keep together, right, you have other people that aren't, right? And so you have your friends and your family that have decided to let loose and let go of their goals and, "Oh come on. Eat some, it's the holidays. Have some pie. Have this, it's Christmas."
- TeriAnn: Yeah.
- Jonathan: There's all kinds of stuff that just makes it I think, a minefield when it's time to keep your goals and keep your personal commitments that you might do really well throughout the year but then at the holidays, just everything collapses.
- Susan: Well, this is a really interesting point, Jonathan, because we are living in the dark ages around food. I don't know if you guys remember the movie "Forest Gump"?
- TeriAnn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jonathan: Yeah, oh yeah.
- Susan: Did you see that movie, right? When Forest is a little boy and he's seeing the doctor and he's saying about his crooked spine and stuff and the doctor's got a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, you know in that scene?
- TeriAnn: Yeah.
- Susan: That's the state of our society around food right now. Where we are becoming overweight and obese at breathtaking, gob-smacking, horrifying rates. Our kids are destined to have Type 2 diabetes at levels that we're going to be watching this generation of kids have legs amputated and be going blind in their 30s and 40s at mass numbers and financially as a society, we can't afford it. Like the heart disease and the diabetes and stuff, we're about to go bankrupt on a global scale because of how we're eating and we're still at the point where if you try to say no thank you to pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving, people give you a

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hard time. Like you're being some sort of ridiculous version of like an overzealous, like nobody diets on Thanksgiving, come on.

Jonathan: Right.

Susan: It's like 1950 and you're trying to say no thank you to a cigarette or 1970 and you're trying to say no thank you to a drink on New Year's Eve. Now I haven't had a drink in a long time. Nobody harasses me on New Year's Eve if I try to say no thank you to a drink. If I say straight up, "No thanks, I don't drink." They go and find me some sparkling water to put in my champagne glass, right? They're cool. But if I try to say, "I don't eat sugar on Thanksgiving," they give me a hard time. Like I'm being ridiculous, right?

TeriAnn: Well, and nobody wants to talk about the fact, we've talked about this multiple times on different episodes about food not even being real anymore. A lot of the food that people are eating is not even food.

Susan: Yeah. Right.

TeriAnn: It's not food.

Susan: Right, just because it's edible, doesn't make it food.

TeriAnn: Right.

Jonathan: [crosstalk 00:05:58] the whole fat-free movement right, that I think has also moved a lot of this faster, right, to get rid of the fat, we just added a bunch more sugar.

Susan: Yeah, and the chemicals and yeah.

Jonathan: That's for another episode that we're going to do in a little bit about sugar addiction but let's get back to the holidays because I think it's a very relevant point, right? I'm not shy about it, I smoked for 20 years. I was very unhealthy. I quit smoking close to five years ago. Anybody who knows me now would never judge, and when I say, "No, I don't smoke or anything like that," they're not going to try to push a cigarette on me. That would be absurd, right? Same thing with somebody who drinks or you say, "No, I don't drink or I'm sober." It would be absurd for you to push a drink on that person.

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: But we'll push sugar.

Susan: Yeah, food.

Jonathan: We'll push cake. We'll push crap on people without any second thought.

Susan: Without even knowing we're doing it.

Jonathan: And a lot of times, it's Aunt Jane that's 50 pounds overweight and pushing it on you, that's not healthy and you're over here trying to get healthy but it makes her feel like crap because you're drawing a line in

the sand and you're trying to be healthy and it's like, "Oh, no, well, if I'm going to be unhealthy, I'm going to bring everybody down with me."

Susan: A lot of what I do in the Bright Line Eating approach that I teach is I help people navigate those social situations with their families, with the Aunt Jane who has baked something gluten-free and whatever out of spelt flour and agave syrup or whatever and she's handing you these baked goods and she's like, "I know you're on a special thing," and we're like you know, I'm not going to eat it, so how do you language that to her? How do you get through the family because breaking bread together is a very primal thing, right? How do you keep your relationships intact? How do you stay close to the people that you want to be close to?

Susan: Jonathan, so right here, right, I'm in your home and last night we were on the phone and I said, "Let's talk a little bit about the food for tomorrow, because I just went to Whole Foods and I got all my food." I've got enough food to get my dinner for tomorrow and you're like, "Well, I got this and that and the other," and now I have a choice point of like am I going to eat what you're serving? Am I going to break bread with you in your home eating your food? And I decided to because you told me what you were serving and it was like foods I eat, right?

Susan: But there is this sort of dance, this negotiation that has to happen when you decide to swim upstream from society's expectations around food and not go with the unhealthy flow of like the not even food products that everybody else is eating. You decide you're only going to eat whole real food and whatever way you want to spin that and there are relationships to navigate and through the holidays that is a thing. Like if you want to be healthy through the holidays, which not everybody even tries to be, we just started this episode talking about like most people just don't even try, right?

Jonathan: Right.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Susan: I try. I don't just go with that flow. I'm not eating a pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving.

TeriAnn: Yeah, well, and it's interesting when you say navigate the relationship with other people, you also have a relationship with yourself and what you owe to yourself and it's funny, I wanted to touch on something when he talked about having a smoking addiction, you know, one of the addictions that is the hardest to break is the sugar addiction. We don't talk about that enough. There's all these addictions but there's research and information behind the fact that sugar addiction is one of the most powerful addictions.

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Not only do you have to honor yourself and your relationship with yourself but it's like you're right, how do you navigate the relationship with other people but put yourself first because it is a very primal thing, it's a cultural thing, and then how do you tell people no, when it comes to what they're eating and serving you?

Susan: Yeah. Oh my God.

TeriAnn: It's such a tough thing-

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Susan: There are so many ways I could go with that. Totally. Well, first of all, one of the approaches that I share with people is yeah, think about your commitment to yourself. Such a good point. Put it to yourself this way, if I were really allergic to peanuts, I mean like I eat a peanut and now I've just signed up for an Epi-pen shot and a ride in an ambulance to the hospital. Like no joke. And Aunt, what was her name?

Jonathan: Jane.

Susan: Aunt Jane has baked me-

Jonathan: Sorry to anybody out there who's Aunt Jane, this is not personal.

Susan: We're going to have to write her at the end of the movie credits like no real people [crosstalk 00:10:06].

Jonathan: Exactly.

Susan: Aunt Jane has baked you peanut butter cookies. It doesn't f'n matter. Right? You find a way to language it, "Aunt Jane, I don't eat that. I'm not eating that," right? Like, "I know you just went out of your way, you baked them just for me," et cetera, "I'm allergic to peanuts." There is no world in which you decide, "Well, she baked them for me because I'll have one, right?"

TeriAnn: So I'm just going to eat it and make myself sick.

Susan: Yeah, exactly.

TeriAnn: Potentially die from eating something, right?

Susan: Exactly, yeah. It's like I say show up with your identity that firmly entrenched. The identity of someone who doesn't eat that stuff and suddenly it becomes easy. You find the words, right? Doesn't matter how much Aunt Jane wants you to eat that, you find the words.

Jonathan: It's really interesting because when it comes to cigarettes and I quit cold-turkey and I think that's the best way to do it-

Susan: Can I give you a high-five?

Jonathan: Thank you.

Susan: Cigarettes- whoa.

Jonathan: There goes the mic.

Susan: There goes the mic, cigarettes have been the bane of my existence too. I feel you.

Jonathan: When I quit, it was, there's just no question, right, and of course, you go through a process of breaking free and you think about it less and less.

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Susan: Changing your identity. It's an identity thing.

Jonathan: Right. Now at this point in time, I mean I wouldn't even consider smoking a cigarette. You know what I mean?

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: Like there's just no-

Susan: It's a Bright Line, that's the term, Bright Line.

Jonathan: Sure, yeah, and there's no situation that would make me do that.

Susan: Right.

Jonathan: But I still struggle with food, right?

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: I struggle with sugar. I love sugar.

Susan: Yep.

Jonathan: I have an addictive personality clearly, so I love sugar. It's just interesting and I can do really well at times but then there's times, "All right, let's have a cheat day," right, "Or it is Christmas, or it's Thanksgiving."

Susan: That language right there, "cheat day".

Jonathan: Exactly, so it's just interesting as we talk about this because, and I got to quit being so animated too, I'm going to knock over all these mics ...

TeriAnn: Breaking all the rules.

Jonathan: ... It's interesting, and this is why I love having you on as a guest. This is why we love doing this podcast because I'm not perfect, TeriAnn's not perfect, none of us perfect, right? We're just figuring out how to be healthy together, so everybody at home-

TeriAnn: It's different for everyone too.

Jonathan: exactly.

Susan: It is.

TeriAnn: It's different for everyone.

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Jonathan: Everyone has their different fights or different struggles and it would just be interesting if I treated sugar the way I treat cigarettes, it would be very different.

Susan: Yep. That's how I treat it.

Jonathan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Let's segway into Bright Line Eating on that.

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: I think that was a great touch point there. You said when he said, "I wouldn't smoke a cigarette ever again," you said, "That's a Bright Line."

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Talk about that a little bit and explain what you mean by that, either in relation to not smoking a cigarette anymore but also in relation to sugar ...

Jonathan: Food choices.

TeriAnn: ... Yeah, and food choices.

Susan: Bright Lines are clear, unambiguous boundaries that you just don't cross, right? Like Jonathan, you don't smoke.

Jonathan: Right.

Susan: Doesn't matter if it's New Year's Eve, doesn't matter if you're at a concert, doesn't matter if you're with 10 people and they're all smoking ...

Jonathan: Right.

Susan: ... You don't smoke.

TeriAnn: Why do you call it Bright Line?

Susan: It's just the name for it. A Bright Line is a legal term, a Bright Line rule in the law is a clear standard that gets applied the same way every time to produce consistent and reliable results. If you Wikipedia it, that's what comes up as something from the law and psychologists some time ago, started co-opting that phrase to describe the psychological boundaries that some people put up between themselves and whatever, right? A Bright Line rule as opposed to a fuzzy boundary.

Susan: If you're going to be the designated driver for the night, you will be, research shows, there's research on this, you will be far more successful if you put up a Bright Line for alcohol for the night. I'm not going to drink tonight. As opposed to walking into the party and thinking, "I'm going to be sure to drink

moderately tonight and make sure that I'm safe to drive." Because you never know which side of the line you're on with a fuzzy boundary like I just had a beer and a half and it's 8:30 PM, am I drinking moderately enough? Right? With the Bright Line rule, it's clear. You've had a drink or you haven't. Full stop, right?

TeriAnn: Makes perfect sense.

Susan: Here's what I know about Bright Lines and food. The more addictable your brain is when it comes to food, the more helpful and even I would say necessary Bright Lines are going to be for you to be healthy in this current food environment. We have a crazy food environment around us where the queues and opportunities to eat foods that will result in being fat, sick, and unhealthy are everywhere. They're just ...

TeriAnn: Endless.

Susan: ... Endless.

TeriAnn: Everywhere you go.

Susan: Ubiquitous, right?

TeriAnn: Every corner there's food to eat.

Susan: Totally. Yeah.

TeriAnn: Every place in your house, there's food to eat snacks. We live in a world full of snacks, snacks, and more snacks.

Susan: We did not evolve to handle that, right?

TeriAnn: Right, no.

Susan: We evolved to handle a world of scarcity and like eat the calories when they're there, right?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Susan: Our brains did not like, they're really no match for this and so we're having to like put up structures and safeguards to like keep ourselves healthy in this environment. It's a bizarre environment for a human creature to find him or herself in, right? Really what's important to understand is that there's a continuum of susceptibility to food addiction and to the pulls of these foods. Some people find themselves regulating just fine in the face of this environment. They have the no thank you kind of brain where it's like, "Yeah, I've had enough. That's too sweet. That's a little too rich. Oh, I feel full. No, I'm just not thinking about food for a few hours because I just ate. I don't need anymore food." That's how their brains are.



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Susan: Then there's those of us whose brains are like, "Oh yeah, baby, that's good. We're having some more of that." The stomach is saying, "I feel kind of full," but the brain and the mouth are like, "No, we're eating some more."

Jonathan: Especially if it's a cheat day, right? Seriously, that's how I feel for me. It's interesting because we're not going to be home on Christmas so I celebrated Christmas yesterday with my daughters and it was one of those days for me so I'm talking real time, real world what happens and it's true. I was full last night. I didn't need to eat anymore but man, there's still some of those ...

Susan: I know you did.

Jonathan: ... Some of those Reese's little miniature peanut butter cups that were in their stocking or some other candy and it's like, "Well, this is my only day because tomorrow I'm going to go run four miles in the morning and be back on Keto," and all this other stuff. It's just interesting but I just kept stuffing myself, even though I was not hungry at all.

Susan: Do you know that that's exercise bulimia?

Jonathan: It's what?

Susan: Exercise bulimia.

Jonathan: Talk about that.

Susan: Well, you just said like that your brain had some sort of relationship, some connection between the four miles you were about to run and the permission to eat a bunch of food that your body didn't need. That's exercise bulimia. That's like, "I'm going to work it off," right?

Jonathan: Interesting.

Susan: It's the equivalent of a purge.

Jonathan: Sure.

Susan: Like, "I'm going to get rid of it-"

Jonathan: I normally run three but this morning I was running four because I had extra calories yesterday.

TeriAnn: You just proved her point even more.

Susan: Boom, baby.

Jonathan: Absolutely.

Susan: [crosstalk 00:17:00].

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TeriAnn: [crosstalk 00:17:00].

Susan: Totally, so the Bright Line is like for those of us and I have like the most addictable brain in the world apparently, like I have a history of we didn't go into my background but addiction, like straight up crystal meth addiction, crack cocaine addiction-

TeriAnn: So you need that Bright Line, can I ask you a question around that with addiction?

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Can people have more addictive personalities than others?

Susan: Yes.

TeriAnn: I think there's a simple answer to that but talk a little bit about that.

Susan: Like yes.

TeriAnn: It's a simple answer. I think everyone knows the answer but talk about that, especially when it comes to holidays and eating food and sugar.

Susan: There's research on this and some creatures, human beings, rodents, there's research on all kinds of species around it are addictable and some are not, and there's a continuum. It actually interesting falls out in both human populations and rodent populations where there's a lot of research on this. One-third, one-third, one-third, where one-third are not addictable. They're just not and I mean like you give them heroine daily for weeks-

TeriAnn: And nothing.

Susan: Yep.

Jonathan: They can stop.

Susan: Then they stop.

Jonathan: [crosstalk 00:18:06].

Susan: They're like, "Oh, ugh, so glad to be off that stuff."

Jonathan: I used to have friends that smoked, right, and it was like, "Oh, I'm just a social smoker."

Susan: Right.

Jonathan: Like that was my excuse. I just hang out with people all the time. Back then they really did, right? They could have two cigarettes on a Sunday and be fine until next month and I'm like, to me, that's like if I have one, I might as well have a pack.

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Susan: Exactly, how are you doing that? Totally, me too, so one-third are not addicatable, one-third are moderately addicatable, and one-third are heavily highly addicatable. Then another layer to this research is that just because you're addicatable doesn't mean you are currently in a state of addiction with all things that are addicatable so me for example, I've been thinking lately like, "What am I not addicted to? Shopping? Gaming? Gambling?" Those are things that are addicatable like gaming. Oh my gosh, some people are like wasting their lives away playing whatever these, I don't even know the names of the games. Whatever.

Susan: Like I could sit down and play a video game and walk away and be fine.

TeriAnn: Be fine.

Jonathan: That was me 20 years ago.

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: I have a very addicatable personality and so but it's interesting, yes, I used to game a whole lot.

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: Right, and same even with drinking and with smoking.

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: Now I'm not addicted to gaming, I'm not addicted to gambling, not addicted to smoking anymore.

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: Probably still semi-addicted to food.

Susan: Okay, but let's go back to smoking.

Jonathan: Right.

Susan: Just because you're not smoking right now, doesn't mean you're not addicted to smoking. Your brain has walked far down the path with the smoking queues, which means you are in a state right now where one cigarette you might as well buy a pack, you just said it.

Jonathan: Sure.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Susan: Right, so you are addicted to smoking, you're in a state of abstinence or remission.

Jonathan: Okay.

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Susan: That's different from maybe I don't know what, shopping? Have you never done the shopping thing ever?

Jonathan: No. The gaming I was never addicted to gaming, it was like if I go play a video game now, you're not going to find me 30 hours later playing the same game.

Susan: Yeah, okay.

Jonathan: I'm good with that but yes, I guess I was just trying to understand-

Susan: So there's different states.

Jonathan: Right.

Susan: There's addicted and in an active state of currently using.

Jonathan: Got it.

Susan: There's like used to be addicted and I'm in a state of abstinence or recovery or you know, whatever. Then there's like the other one is like no, my brain has never developed the noticing of like, "Oh yeah, that'll do." Like that thing produces a hit like if we're in distress or need relief or whatever, like we could go there and get the hit we need. If your brain's never noticed it with that particular set of queues, then if you're an addictable person, it's available to you but you're in a state of sort of protection around it. You can kind of dabble and until your brain notices like, "That was a good hit," maybe in a time of stress in your life or whatever, addictions develop through the brain kind of noticing that and then you develop these queue response behaviors.

Susan: Addiction take a while to develop and it develops within a domain, the smoking domain, the drinking domain, the food domain. You go to AA and there's people who yeah, they were hardcore alcoholics but they're pretty neutral around food. Like food's never really rung their bell. They just kind of never noticed but then they go through a divorce later on and they get through it with one-pound bag of M&M's and suddenly, food becomes an issue, right?

Jonathan: Interesting.

Susan: There's a layering of like susceptibility, and then environmental history with the queues and experiences of that particular substance.

TeriAnn: That's interesting because I've heard, well, and to take it one step further, I've had a lot of friends who have had problems with addiction, and drug addiction and things like that and it's when you look at their lives, then they'll turn to something else to be addicted to.

Susan: Yes. Right.

TeriAnn: It's like I can't be addicted to this but they have that addictive personality and it's like how do you ever break that cycle because it's an ongoing battle.

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Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: You talk about the one-third, one-third, one-third, talk about the holidays for a minute, it's like going back to that and eating, you kind of notice-

TeriAnn: Talk about the holidays for a minute. It's like going back to that and eating. You can kind of notice that pattern with people, too when you're eating at the holidays or there's a lot of food around. Some people are just like, "I don't want sugar. It doesn't do anything for me."

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: And some people are like, "I'll just have a little bit. That's all I need." Then there's, you know, "I want to eat all the sugar." People go from, who have very addictive personalities. You'll notice that with people. They have this addiction but they're like, "I don't want this addiction. It's a bad addiction." But it transfers into other things. And-

Susan: Yeah. Addiction transfer is a very real thing.

TeriAnn: Yes.

Susan: And around the holidays, so it can feel like whack a mole, right? You know that game where there like a little groundhog that pops up or whatever. You smack them on the head but then what happens is one just pops up somewhere else. If you're highly addictable, sometimes it can feel like that.

TeriAnn: It's so many things to be addicted to.

Susan: You sandbag one and another one pops up.

TeriAnn: Yeah. Yeah.

Susan: The issue there is in the brain. It's dopamine down regulations. So, in the addictive centers of the brain, you've basically blown out the dopamine receptors. So, they've become less numerous, less responsive through just getting flooded unnaturally.

TeriAnn: Just not, just do whatever I want now.

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Just everything I see. Food, shopping, all of that.

Susan: And what happens is, you take away any crazy intense stimulus and you just don't have enough dopamine on board anymore, naturally to feel okay. So, you need to kind of go get something. Your brain is constantly in a state of, "I need a little something."

TeriAnn: Yeah.

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- Susan: Because, I feel pretty bleak, pretty itchy, pretty not okay.
- TeriAnn: What happens with your emotions at that point, right? Because that's going to impact, you're going through that phase of like, "I need to find something, find something." All this addiction going on around you, all these things you can be addicted to and when you're at the holidays, especially, we talk about the emotional impact.
- Susan: Yeah. And the family stress and all these extra, the financial stress, the extra tasks you got to do on your to-do lists that are added to an already busy life and stuff. Yeah, it is this feeling, I just said it, kind of bleak, itchy, not okay. It's something that people who have never been heavily addicted to anything, don't really understand which is that the addict isn't using to get high after a certain point. They're using to get normal. They're using to get relief, comfort, back to baseline.
- Jonathan: I think that's a really important thing to say again, right? Because I had been addicted and I am addicted, right?
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: To things. A lot of things, right? We haven't gone into my history either but there's other things that go down that line as well and not everybody understands that. They don't understand that that cigarette, that drink, that line, that hit, that whatever isn't always just to get high. It's just to get back to freaking normal.
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: Right? And you just need it and to bring things back to the holidays. It feels like, to me and yes holidays are wonderful and I love what they stand for and I love being around family and I love that love. But, I think at the same time, it opens up Pandora's Box to reengage all of these addictions that you may have broken in the past, you know what I mean? Whether it's a food addiction or smoking or whatever because of the stress or maybe you're addicted to shopping. Now, it's time to go buy presents for everybody or all of these different things now get opened up during the holidays, right?
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: And this is what I want to talk about right now because right now it's December 26, right? It's the day after Christmas. How many people are now hungover on the holidays? Are just now listening to this, maybe going on their bulimic run or stuff like that. But, they see January 1st ahead and it's like, "Crap, I smoked. Crap, I ate a bunch of junk. I'm done. I'm tired. I'm fed up. It's time to make a difference. The first is coming up."
- Jonathan: Let's talk about where people are right now as they listen to this and let's talk about how, to powerfully move forward into the new year and maybe create some bright lines, create some, just some different distinctions because I think we could talk all day long about addiction and we are going to do an episode just on sugar addiction. But, I really want to connect with people where they are in this moment, right?
- Susan: Yeah.

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- Jonathan: They've gone to the parties. They've eaten the pumpkin pie already. They've already said, "Okay crap. I already did all that. Now, tell me what do I do now?"
- TeriAnn: Well, and let's not miss the step too that some people aren't even at that point. When I talk about the emotions and the addiction, they're coming down off of that high or even just the normal back to a lower point of like, "I messed it all up. I messed it all up." I think it's easy to fall into that depression at the-
- Jonathan: The depression is setting in.
- TeriAnn: Yeah absolutely.
- Jonathan: The depression is setting in from the choices you made.
- TeriAnn: Before you even get to the goal point. I think a lot of people are dealing with that after effect of how you feel.
- Susan: And it's interesting in the holidays because, it's December 26th now but that can hit at any point, you know. It might hit after the company party on December 9th.
- Jonathan: Sure.
- Susan: Maybe it hit already after Thanksgiving but the foods have such a profound impact on our emotional state. You eat a bunch of crap and you feel like crap. I mean, sugar makes you depressed, it makes you a little bit like, you know that state of mind after you didn't sleep the night before and your head starts talking smack to you? Like, "This is desperate. My relationship's got to go. It's all wrong. This is off. This is off. I got to quit my job." Whatever and then this higher voice comes in and says, "You know what? You got like two hours of sleep last night. Why don't you get a good night's sleep and think about all this tomorrow."
- Susan: The sugar and the crappy junk food that we load ourselves up with during the holidays, it creates that. It creates the sort of unnatural negativity, desperation. In some cases, it goes more toward self loathing, really negative self talk, "God, you do it again. You're so worthless, stupid, hopeless." I like to talk a lot about self-compassion and about how we talk to our, how we language this kind of stuff to ourselves which is a whole separate topic but anyway.
- Jonathan: Well, let's talk about that.
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: Talk about that for a second. This is where everybody is right now as they listen to this and not everybody, right? But a lot of us right now are in that state and how are we talking to ourself? What's the narration that's going on in our head because it matters.
- Susan: It does matter. It does matter and it's one of the things that matters most to me actually and my mission in the world is to help people, well, who've had weight problems and problems with food addiction to learn how to do it entirely differently, the whole food thing, right? How to live in a right-sized body after

you've been overweight or obese and how to experience the mental shift also which involves far more self-compassion than people realize.

Susan: self-compassion's an interesting topic. From an academic perspective, the first scientific article on self-compassion, I believe came out in 2005. I say that with about an 80% confidence level. But, what happened is articles started to get published on it and then they exploded like so many articles now are being published on self-compassion. It's one of the hottest topics in psychology.

Jonathan: It's really recent.

Susan: Really.

Jonathan: I mean 2005, that's like yesterday, right?

Susan: Well, what's interesting is of all the articles that have been published like most of them have been published in the last two years, like three years.

Jonathan: Wow.

Susan: There's this exponential-

TeriAnn: Do you think that has to do with people being more open to the conversation around mental health and talking about it more and being more open about it because I think that has a lot to do with our, you know, being self-compassionate.

Susan: Maybe.

TeriAnn: And feeling that compassion.

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: It's more about opening that conversation about telling people where you really are and not being afraid to talk about it and I think we're making that more socially acceptable to share where you are.

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: And I think it makes it easier to have compassion for yourself when you realize you're not alone.

Susan: Yes. I'll get into the definition of self-compassion. That's part of the definition actually, right there. I think what actually happened in the academic sense is that the construct turned out to be ridiculously powerful and it just kind of blew scientists away. So, if you look at ... The equivalent in the 1970s and 80s self-esteem as a construct came on the scene and it turned out to be pretty powerful. If you measure self-esteem, it turns out to co-relate with all these, you know, high self-esteem and at risk teens predicts, you know, less likelihood of getting involved with drugs, more likelihood of graduating from high school, blah, blah, blah.



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- Susan: Couple of decades later, this construct of resilience came in and that turned out to be a really powerful construct. Self-compassion blows them all away. Like, someone's ability to be compassionate with themselves when they blow it, when they perceive themselves to have effed up is a better predictor of success in every way than anything we've ever measured and self-compassion in and of itself accounts for about half of our tendency toward depression and anxiety.
- Jonathan: So, define it. Define self-compassion so that we are all on the same page moving forward because this is important.
- Susan: It's so important. Three things. Self-compassion is three things. Number one is how you talk to yourself inside your own head. I love that you're taking notes because this is such important stuff. Like, are you kind to yourself when you blow it? Like, let's imagine that you forgot to pick your daughter up from school and she sat there for two hours. Like, "What? It was my turn to pick up Sarah from school?" You just blew it. There's no world in which you didn't just blow it. That was a, dropped that ball, right?
- TeriAnn: And your kid tells you, you blew it.
- Susan: Yeah.
- TeriAnn: "How did you make me stay here for two hours?"
- Susan: Totally. How do you talk to yourself inside your own head? "You idiot. Here you are." Or is it like, "Oh wow, phew." Do you sort of, yeah, how do you language that inside your own head? Do you beat yourself up? So, the way to sort of test this is, do you talk to yourself like you would actually talk to your best friend about something? Or do you talk to yourself in a way that's meaner, harsher than you would ever talk to anyone? Like people who say yes to statements like, "If anyone every talked to me the way I talk to myself, I would kick them out of my life forever." There will be people that tick that box like, "Yeah, that's true of me. I am more mean to myself than I would ever let anyone else be to me."
- Jonathan: I would guess that's probably a majority of people, right? And I don't know the numbers, right?
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: But I would imagine anybody that's doing, I don't know that most people are as compassionate with themselves as they could be.
- Susan: There you go.
- Jonathan: And I think that society sets us up for failure around that, right? We talk about social media and Facebook and things like that where all you're seeing is the pretty pictures of your friends.
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: The doctored pictures of your friends. They're only sharing the good stuff in their life, right?
- Susan: Right.

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- Jonathan: So, now, all of a sudden you're depressed even more because you're on Facebook and you're comparing yourself to their lives and now you're being even crappier to yourself, right?
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: I just would imagine that we're going further and further down that line of being less compassionate with ourselves because of all the comparison and all the other stuff that's out there.
- Susan: Yeah, it definitely doesn't help. It definitely doesn't help. The second component of self-compassion is recognizing your humanity, your shared humanity in the moment of like, so you forgot to pick up your daughter from school, right? In that moment, recognizing every parent blows it. You know what I mean? "I'm one of the legions of parents who have had times when they dropped the ball on their kids." As opposed to thinking that, you're the first person in the history of parenting who's ever dropped the ball on their kid.
- Susan: So, in that moment, literally recognizing your shared humanity and that you're one of many, not a special instance. The third component of self-compassion is, it's kind of hard to describe. It's being mindful in the moment so you can rally resources for yourself. It's like thinking, "Okay, I just ..." It's almost like a meditative thing but it's like, "Okay, so here I am. I just learned that I dropped the ball on Sarah. Let's go get her, first of all and then, you know, can I wipe something off my calendar for later so I can spend some extra time with her tonight and just check in with her? And maybe I might need to talk on the phone with a friend tonight as well to get some emotional support."
- Susan: It's sort of a mindful presence, like a can you turn yourself into the switchboard operator who's rallying resources, aware of the present moment and able to care for yourself in that moment. But, it requires mindfulness.
- Jonathan: Is it being mindful? Is it stepping back and just having perspective of it?
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: And I'm just asking for clarity so that I understand it better.
- Susan: Yeah.
- Jonathan: You know, getting perspective or is it solution based? Is it okay being mindful, is it, "Okay, here's what I'm going to put in place so that, that doesn't happen in the future." Or is that not it?
- Susan: It's mindfulness. It's mindfulness in the moment and that mindfulness allows a lot of things. It allows for perspective. It allows for rallying resources. It's like if you go right into reactionary mode, reaction mode as opposed to response mode, you're just not going to navigate the situation as well. So, it's kind of hard to language but it's mindfulness in the moment.
- Jonathan: I'm not trying to put you on the spot too much but I really want people to understand this because they think that this is the part that is going to change them, right now in the moment on how they're feeling, today.

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Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: Right? After Christmas, after eating, after breaking their bright lines.

Susan: Yeah. Totally.

Jonathan: So, what are some other things, just to really understand that number three, being mindful?

TeriAnn: And I have a clarifying question too because Jonathan touched on this just a little bit but when you're in that state of trying to find self-compassion, in that being mindful, are you thinking about next time this happens, it won't happen because I'm putting this in place. Also, while you're thinking about, "I need to talk to someone. I need support. I want to just feel good around the situation because I'm human and I'm going to be compassionate to myself." I need that clarity of like, are you-

Jonathan: I agree. That mindfulness isn't being forgiving it. You were not talking about forgiving yourself. We're not talking about [crosstalk 00:37:36].

TeriAnn: Or creating a plan, creating a plan.

Jonathan: [crosstalk 00:37:38] solution. What is that mindfulness?

TeriAnn: I think forgiveness could be part of it. Isn't that self-compassion is saying other people, that's kind of the humanity part.

Susan: That's the humanity part.

TeriAnn: That's the humanity part. It's like other people have done this too. There's billions of people on this planet. I'm not the only one that did this, right?

Susan: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Other people have done that. I think you can speak to that but that would make sense to me that the forgiveness part comes in there, right?

Susan: Yeah. Let me put this in a different domain because I think it'll be easier to recognize in a different domain.

Jonathan: Perfect.

Susan: Imagine you're arguing with your spouse or significant other. If I said that, a component to being, having a high emotional IQ, EQ, a high relational intelligence would be mindfulness. Like imagine you're arguing. That mindfulness in that moment, it provides a lot of things. It provides a little bit of pause so that you're not like interrupting them and it provides a little bit of perspective. You're not scream at them as much. If you bring mindfulness into that moment, do you see how it opens up a lot of just different types of responses like an emotional flexibility because you're actually, you're showing up with your highest self there. Does that make sense?

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Jonathan: Absolutely.

Susan: Yeah. So without that, it's hard to be fully self-compassionate.

Jonathan: It helps when you put it in perspective of your spouse or significant other or something like that because when you think about being mindful with them, it's like, "All right, even though we're fighting, I'm not going to fight dirty."

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: Right? And that's different because we talk about, well, I wouldn't talk to my friend the way that I talk to my self and so to me, the way that it occurred to me when you just said that was not fighting dirty with me.

Susan: Exactly.

Jonathan: How to be mindful with me when I'm being hard on myself.

Susan: Exactly.

Jonathan: It's very easy for me to see it on my girlfriend or spouse and not be hard on them during a fight.

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: Or fight dirty. But, with me, I'll fight dirty all day long.

Susan: Right.

Jonathan: Right? So, that to me gave a lot of clarity.

Susan: Totally.

Jonathan: So, now that we've defined self-compassion. Let's talk a little bit more about self-compassion. Let's talk about, are there tools? Are there things that we can do in the moment? We've talked about these three things of self-compassion but how do we help break that cycle? How do we break that cycle of negative talk? Because right now, how many people are listening that are having that negative talk because of what they ate yesterday or because there's still leftover pie in the fridge, right?

Jonathan: It's like, "Well, New Year's is coming in five days. I'll change then."

Susan: Yeah.

Jonathan: But, between now and then, they're going to have a whole lot of, I call it narration. How you talk to yourself, how you narrate a situation whether it's to yourself or even verbally to somebody else. What are things people can do even in the moment right now as we're on the back side of the holidays?

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- Susan: Well, I mean, this is going to sound self-serving but from my perspective, anyone who wants to do right by themselves in the moment on December 26th or whatever and you know, it's around food, around weight, around the hangover from having eaten their way through the holidays and just sort of been in that mode of indulgence and "I'm just going to take my comfort in food." It's like the best next right action is to hook up with a community of people who are living the way you want to live, who have an answer, who have a solution that you want to emulate and just join, like hook up because there is no way, I don't believe to succeed in this current food environment without doing that.
- Susan: You got to hook up. You got to be in a community. It's sort of like, I often say, "Getting into a right-sized body and living there long term like solving the food issue." If you've got a food issue, not everybody does, not everybody has a food and a weight issue. I get that but these days, most people do, statistically. If you want to solve that, if you want to give yourself the best odds of success, globally speaking and even right now, today, it behooves you to think of yourself as like wanting to climb Mount Everest. If you look around statistically, people are not solving this problem.
- Susan: They're turning over a new leaf and then failing, over and over and over again. Our obesity rates are sky-rocketing even as most people are trying four and five times a year to solve the problem. Nothing is working out there.
- Jonathan: Trying harder than we've ever tried in the past, right?
- Susan: Trying harder than we've ever tried in the past and yet, the statistics keep climbing. As a society, we are out of control with our food and our weight. So, I'm sitting here in a right-sized body. You guys have seen me, right? I look like a normal skinny person. I used to be obese. I had a weight problem as a kid and I was overweight as a teenager and obese in my twenties and I've been in a right-sized body now for over 15 years.
- Susan: Statistically speaking, that doesn't happen. Nobody goes from obese to slender and stays there for 15 years. One, one hundredth of 1%.
- Jonathan: I'll give you some on that one.
- Susan: Boom baby. Your smoking success. That's me.
- Jonathan: Absolutely.
- Susan: And not to say that it's been easy and it has not. It's a thing but I help people do that like an experienced guide who takes people up Mount Everest and back down with the best survival rate ever. People don't die on my watch. Some do because no one takes thousands of people up Mount Everest and back down without losing some.
- TeriAnn: You can't choose for people. It's a choice they have to make.
- Susan: Oh totally. I always say I'm not in the convincing business.
- TeriAnn: No. No. They have to make that choice and want it.

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- Susan: Totally. But, you got to hook up. This is not something that you can just think like, "I'm just going to buy the latest diet book at Barnes & Noble or on Amazon and like read it and.
- Susan: Buy the latest diet book at Barnes and Noble, or on Amazon, and like read it, and succeed. Like if that worked, don't you think that people would be thin already? Seriously, it doesn't work. You've gotta find a different kind of solution.
- TeriAnn: Let me, since this is your personal experience and we're talking about the holidays, and food, and things like that. You've changed your life, and you have control your food, and your body, and things like that. I wanna ask you two questions. First one is, how did self-compassion help change your way of thinking for your own body, and living in your right size body if you will, for how you put it? And what were the top three changes you made that came from that self-compassion, that led you to where you are today?
- Susan: I think there was a lot of self-compassion in play in my just resilience, my willingness to just keep trying. To just keep trying. 'Cause I was a drug addict, and that one got solved pretty quickly and easily for me. Like wicked drug addict, like prostitute living on the streets, crack cocaine addiction, spending day upon night upon day upon night upon day upon night in a crack house. Like drug addiction. And when I was 20 I got clean and sober, and I just got removed. Not to say that was easy, that was getting recovery in that area took a lot.
- Susan: But the food thing, I just couldn't get it. I just kept trying to find a solution, and my weight kept climbing. I'd lose 20 pounds, 40 pounds, 5-0 pounds, and then gain it all back over, and over again. And overall my weight kept climbing. And then I was fatter, and then I was fatter. I'd try something, lose some weight, then I was fatter.
- TeriAnn: I think a lot of people can relate to that by the way. I think that's a really important part of your story. That's the struggle a lot of people go through.
- Susan: Over the years seeing those new peaks of weight. Like, okay now I'm in this decade of weight, whatever the weight is, the 200s, the 220s, whatever the number is. Now I'm in this size. Okay, now I'm in this size. Now my closet now has like 14 sizes of clothes in it. You know what I mean, 'cause I never know what's gonna fit on any given day. And just that I kind of hung in there by myself, you know what I mean, that I hung with myself and didn't give up on myself. There were moments when I just decided, and I think most people who are like me have this phase where they think, I just need to accept myself fat. Like, there is no answer to this, so I just need to accept that I'm just gonna carry around a lot of weight. And how do I make myself feel as attractive as I can at this size, and settle in to my identity as a heavy person.
- Susan: And then the day comes where it's like, no I need to try to get this weight off, again. Okay, back to square one looking for an answer. I forget your question had multi layers, but like-
- TeriAnn: Well so I think the next part is really important. So that was just your self compassion, and I think for you self compassion's gonna look different for everyone, but for you it sounds to me like a lot of it was like, get back in the ring, keep fighting, you can do it, you can do it. And I think that's different for everyone, but it sounds like that's what you were telling yourself, like you can keep doing it, you can keep going.

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- TeriAnn: So the second part, and I actually think this applies to everyone coming out of the holidays with the physical and emotional aspect. What were three things that you really did to put yourself on a course where you change your life? And I think coming out of the holidays this can be really be meaningful for people too. Because, obviously you made some big shifts.
- Susan: I did. Yeah, I was on the lookout for a solution, actively, for a long time. And a lot of what turned into Bright Line Eating, you know Bright Line Eating came from a couple places, well really three places. But one is the 12 step food movement. I got clean and sober in 12 step programs, and then I was looking for a solution to my food addiction in 12 step programs. And ultimately I, it's hard to say whether I found it there or not, I found it well enough. But I kept looking for people, like the guide who takes people up Mt. Everest successfully.
- Susan: I kept looking for people who had done what I wanted to do, who used to have a food and a weight problem, like I did. 'Cause if they haven't, you know, them saying, "Oh just da da da da," you know, it's like, "Well dude, you've always been skinny. You have no clue." You know what I mean, like if you haven't done the equivalent of like making a bowl of cookie dough and sneaking off to the bathroom to eat it, or whatever your version of I'm gonna eat a whole pizza now, or I'm gonna like whatever, right. If you don't have that kind of food problem, your brain doesn't work like mine. I need a potent solution, not just some-
- TeriAnn: You found your group like you talked about earlier. You found people that you could relate to and keep you strong.
- Susan: I did. And I'm not in a 12 step food program any more. Ultimately I founded Bright Line Eating, and there's lots of reasons why I think it solves for me what were unsolved issues in those communities. So I kept looking. And I joined up. I formed my posse. I found my tribe. I also, you know one of the things that I baked into Bright Line Eating, is like the science. You gotta understand why your brain has done this to you.
- Susan: Like for me, I could do anything. I ran a marathon. I got a PhD in brain and cognitive sciences at one of the top schools in the world. I was happily married. I had a lot of friends. I kicked crack cocaine. I had a lot of evidence that I had some capacity on board, and some badassery in lots of domains. But I couldn't solve the food and the weight problem. And I think understanding that, finally, like why is this problem particularly intractable for so many people. A lot of what I do teaches the science of that, which I think is really helpful.
- Susan: But you're asking for specific things. I'm gonna be totally self-serving, but honest. Join Bright Line Eating, like it's the only solution that I know out there that has any kind of track record.
- Jonathan: So let's talk about that. Being the Bright Line Eating Sherpa that you are, right. And let's talk about it, because I know that, and there's no worries being self-serving this is why we're having you on the podcast because we want to help a lot of people that are out there listening. We're not gonna be able to solve everything in a 45 minute or one hour long podcast, there's more that needs to be done. There's more that you can share. Yes we're having you on for a few episodes in a row, so everybody that's listening in, make sure you tune back in for the other ones.

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- Jonathan: Let's talk about Bright Line Eating. Let's talk about where people can go, right now on-line. You're also, I know that you're currently running a video series, Reboot, Rezoom, that's 100% free for people to watch as well. So there's more here to this story. Let's give people some resources right now, and then let's talk a little bit more about Bright Line. So first, will you give us some URLs that people can go to to learn more about Bright Line Eating?
- Susan: Yeah, sure. So the first thing is, no where your brain is on that addictive food susceptibility spectrum, right. So go to [foodfreedomquiz.com](http://foodfreedomquiz.com), [foodfreedomquiz.com](http://foodfreedomquiz.com). Take the quiz. It's a scale from 1-10, I'm a 10, dude you're a 10.
- Jonathan: I'm sure I'm a 10.
- Susan: I don't know about you TeriAnn.
- TeriAnn: Secret, secret, secret. I'm not gonna give that away.
- Susan: Okay. But yeah, so go find out what kind of brain you have. 'Cause if like you're a two on that scale, you could do Bright Line Eating if you have a weight issue and you just wanna get off X number of pounds, Bright Line Eating is ridiculously effective at helping people lose weight. And that's fine, we have people who are lower on the scale and just use it as a weight loss solution. They just wanna know, just tell me what to eat, and how much, and when. And I just want some clarity around my food.
- TeriAnn: That would totally be me. I really would be at that lower end of the spectrum. It's really not a secret, I would never to think to find myself up at a 10, that would be me.
- Susan: But then if you've got a weight problem and a food addiction problem, you're in a coffin with the nails pounding in, and you hear 'em. Like 'cause you try other stuff, and it's like kinda works for a little while, and then you watch it unravel, over and over and over again. I lost my place. Okay, URLs right.
- Jonathan: [Foodfreedomquiz.com](http://Foodfreedomquiz.com).
- Susan: Food freedom quiz, and then [brightlineeating.com](http://brightlineeating.com). B-R-I-G-H-T L-I-N-E, bright line, its two words, but in the URL it's all smushed together. [Brightlineeating.com](http://Brightlineeating.com). And then there's the book, you could get that. But the video series that's going on, you're gonna laugh at me Jonathon 'cause I'm like you are, I'm sure I don't actually know how all the tech works. Like I'm pretty sure if someone takes the quiz they'll be in some kind of E-mail sequence that'll offer them the video series or whatever. It's not available just on the website or whatever.
- Jonathan: Here's another thing that people can do, go to [empoweringyouorganically.com](http://empoweringyouorganically.com), 'cause we will have all the show notes. We'll have transcriptions. Obviously you can watch the video here, and we'll have links to all of your sites too.
- Susan: Perfect. The video series will be right there.
- Jonathan: So we'll have food freedom quiz, we'll have [brightlineeating.com](http://brightlineeating.com) there. Also for your video series, and understand that the video series is free right now, but it's up just for a limited time. So make sure, don't pause, right, if you're listening to this. And if you don't feel like you have a food addiction, forward this



podcast on to somebody that you know that does. Talk about, for a second, 'cause there's some other things that I love that you do. You have one mission that you're on by 2030.

Susan: Yeah. We want to get a million people who are currently overweight or obese, down into a right size body, like straight up slender, normal BMI, rocking their skinny jeans, whatever they want, and living there by 2030. One million people by 2030. So it's like one million at goal weight by 2030.

Jonathan: And how many have gotten there so far?

Susan: We don't know. We can't wait to find out. So it's on our strategic plan for 2019 to create the database. We've got thousands and thousands, I mean how many people have, I don't know, like 50,000 people have signed up for our programs and stuff. We've only been around for four years, really just three since we've been really cranking. But then my book, New York Times bestselling book, like it's everywhere. It's in its fourth printing or something, it just came out last year. So we don't know. 'Cause I keep running into people, "Aren't you Susan Pierce Thompson? I'm fat. I read your book. I watch your weekly VLOG on-line." It's like all this free stuff, and we got all these people out there who are rocking right size bodies with Bright Line Eating, we don't even know who they are. They're not even in our system. We don't even have their E-mail address.

Susan: We've got a million people on our E-mail list who've given us their E-mail address over the last 3.5/4 years, but we need to start tracking the people who are at goal weight, we haven't done that yet. Bright Line Eating has been growing like hand over fist, like we can't even keep up with the growth. It feels like giving birth honestly, like I'm just like the contractions keep coming, just like, okay well here's the next thing we gotta do. Okay, well here's the next thing. Like we have the most effective weight loss solution in the world, by a lot. Like 55 times more effective than any other method getting people from obese to slender in one year. So we don't know, and we can't wait to find out. We're gonna set up that database this year.

TeriAnn: That'll be awesome. Rewarding for sure.

Jonathan: One thing you can talk about though is the success rate that you have. So you may not know how many people you've made successful, but how many people ... 'Cause it matters. Listen there's all kinds of fad diets, and there's the keto and paleo, and vegan or vegetarian. Or there's a new carnivore diet that people are doing now, and there's the cookie diet, and the watermelon diet, and all this other stuff. I'm not knocking anybody if you're on that. All of us are different, we all respond differently to different things.

Susan: And most of those plans can be done with Bright Line Eating actually. Not the cookie diet.

Jonathan: Then tell me. What is Bright Line Eating?

Susan: Yeah. And then let's circle back around to success rates. Bright Line Eating is founded on four clear bright lines. Which are, again, those clear boundaries. No sugar. You can eat whole fresh fruit, but not anything with sweetener added to it. So no artificial sweetener. No natural, like honey, agave, none of that. Just no sugar, now added sweetener.

Jonathan: What about stevia, erythritol? None of it.

- Susan: Nothing added to your food to make it sweeter. One of the connections that undoes us is actually straight from the taste buds up to the addictive centers of the brain. So stevia, even though blah blah blah, doesn't effect glucose. It doesn't matter. It's hitting the sweet taste buds on the tongue, that's the issue, it triggers the addiction that way. So no sugar. No flour. All flour, doesn't matter. Stone ground, coconut flour, almond flour, it doesn't matter. It's actually the grinding down of the molecules, like the exposing of the molecules to the surface area of the digestive enzymes that makes it flood into the digestive system and hit the brain with a wallop of dopamine that keeps the addiction alive. So no flour of any kind. No sugar. No flour.
- Susan: Eating only meals, not snacking or grazing. So like you eat at meal time, and then every other bite of food is a no thank you. Doesn't matter if it's baby carrots and hummus out on the tray at three in the afternoon, it's a no thank you. You eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Nothing in between. And there's actually wiggle in terms of how many meals. Different people need different numbers of meals, most people are best served by three meals a day, at standard meal times. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Susan: And then quantities. A way to bound the quantity of food. 'Cause once you sort of put the first three bright lines in play, the brain will trick you into eating more, for some of us, more roasted Brussels sprouts, more Honeycrisp apples, more butternut squash, whatever, to keep the weight higher than we want it to be. Especially those last 10 pounds, you gotta be really clear on your quantities. So oftentimes we have people weigh their food with a digital food scale, mostly so they eat enough vegetables. They won't eat enough if they're not weighing. So we give people very precise clarity around how much food to eat. It's more than they expect. People don't go hungry on Bright Line Eating.
- Susan: So sugar, flour, meals, and quantities. Those are the four bright lines. There's amazing support. It's a fully scientifically grounded, psychological, behavioral, program that it's a whole system. Like it works in a very integrated, comprehensive way, it's not just a food plan. What we do in Bright Line Eating is, we handle the problem of execution, longevity, and compliance, over the long term. 'Cause the real issue is not what are you gonna eat or not eat, the real issue is how are you still gonna be doing it a year from now. That's the issue.
- TeriAnn: Lifestyle. It's a lifestyle, not just a small change.
- Susan: And I talk so much about what that means. When you say you gotta change your lifestyle, it's not a diet. What does that mean?
- TeriAnn: Fully Embracing it. And changing everything. In your house, out of your house, where you're going, being prepared.
- Susan: Here's what lifestyle means. It's three things. These are the essentials of a lifestyle change not a diet change. It's essential as air, A-I-R, that's the acronym. A is for automaticity. You gotta make your new behaviors and habits so ingrained that they're automatic like brushing your teeth. And the reason that's so important is, because willpower will fail you. You cannot rely on your willpower to be executing under stress.
- Jonathan: You can for the first three days, right?

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- Susan: Exactly. Or a couple weeks or whatever. But then when the stuff hits the fan ... So think about how you brush your teeth. It's like you keep brushing your teeth even when your spouse is in the hospital because it's triggered by a certain time of day, a certain location, a certain ... That's how you gotta be weaving in your eating. Now you leave yourself on your own recognizance to set that up, you'll fail. But take my hand, I'll teach you how to set that up so that your eating is happening automatically. The right thing to eat is the easiest thing to eat, is the thing you are eating, no matter the conditions. So automaticity.
- Susan: Identity. Like you Jonathon are a non-smoker. Deep. Deep. Doesn't matter the situation you're in. You've gotta become someone who is a certain kind of eater, Bright Line eater. A bright liner, or whatever, like a healthy eater. However you wanna language it to yourself. It's not, "No I can't eat that 'cause it's not on my diet." No. It's like, "No thank you I don't eat that. I don't eat that." Like I don't smoke, right, identity.
- Susan: And then the third one is resume. You have to have a flexibility and a way of getting back on track, because nobody's perfect. Like perfection is not available for human beings living on planet earth. And anyone who's naturally slender, like you TeriAnn, you are resuming back to a certain level of healthy eating naturally. Like when you veer, yes, when you veer don't you kind of get back on track?
- TeriAnn: For sure.
- Susan: And there's something in you that says, "I've kind of gone too far."
- TeriAnn: And I don't like it. Yeah. I don't like it. And it's nice for me to get back to where my center is. I call it my center. But like my center of where I wanna be. And I love that feeling of coming back.
- Susan: And those of us who don't have a heavy magnetic pull back to a center, we have to create it externally. That's what the bright lines help to do, and that's what the community helps to do, that's what the program helps to do. We're basically jerry rigging ourselves to be like you. 'Cause our brains don't give it to us for free.
- TeriAnn: Re-wiring your brain. I think that's a great way to close this out, talking about the holidays, that AIR. Will you say those three one more time?
- Susan: Automaticity. Identity. And resume.
- TeriAnn: So when you talk about those three things, and the holidays particularly. And we're gonna talk about this more in a later podcast with you, but those three things coming off of the holidays, and getting back on track, and getting to where you want to be, I think are critical. And lifestyle. It's not a quick change, it's a lifestyle. And those three things, I think those are three really important keys to living the lifestyle.
- Susan: Totally. And the next episode is gonna be all about goal setting, January first, New Year's resolutions, and then that resume.
- TeriAnn: That's a good place to start with those three things. Really processing those for yourself as you go into what's next.

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- Susan: And I just want a presence, you're about to set New Year's resolutions, you're gonna do it wrong, but I got your back, 'cause we're gonna talk about the science of goal setting in the next podcast. And it'll be fixable. However you wanna set your New Year's resolutions, go ahead, and then I'm gonna give you a little psychological tweak that's gonna give it lasting power, staying power.
- Jonathan: Which is perfect. 'Cause you're gonna join us next week for our next episode on January second. So you are our Bright Line Eating Sherpa, and you're gonna help lead us to better goal setting, better mindset, better lifestyle changes on our next episode.
- Susan: That's right, I got your back.
- TeriAnn: You need to add that next time for your intro, Bright Line Eating Sherpa. That's a thing now, it's a thing.
- Jonathan: Exactly. So thank you everybody for listening. Go to [empoweringyouorganically.com](https://empoweringyouorganically.com), you can get all of Dr. Susan Pierce Thompson's links to her sites, to her quiz, to the free videos, to her book on Amazon or wherever else you wanna get it. Anything you need to know you can go there. Thank you so much for tuning in. Thank you.
- TeriAnn: Thank you.
- Susan: Such a pleasure.
- TeriAnn: Thanks everyone.
- Jonathan: Thanks everyone.