

Encouragement for Real Life Podcast

268 Why I Pay Attention to What I Put in My Body

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie Lefebure, your host. Life is remarkable, sometimes raw, and always real. And some days we could use a little extra encouragement for our real lives. Here, you'll find that. Along with personal life-impacting stories, helpful life hacks, timely inspiration, biblical insight, and a fresh perspective.

The Encouragement for Real Life podcast equips you to be a light in this world and to shine bright wherever God has you. I'm glad you're here today.

Years ago, when I was younger, I didn't care what I ate. I ate whatever I wanted to. I didn't have to think about it, wasn't concerned about it. I guess maybe because my metabolism was really high back then. I don't know. But things changed over the years when I suddenly - realized, like, okay, I [00:01:00] have something to... the scale is moving. This number is moving. Why is that? And what do I need to do to make it so it doesn't move? I'm sure you've not ever thought about that. You probably never had that experience.

But I remember, even, even in high school, I remember going with my friends to Perkins, and we would, uh... It was a, a breakfast. I just, I just remember this one instance, and I know I did it more than once, but I would order, uh, an item on their menu. I don't know if they still have it, but it was called the Tremendous 12. And what would show up, the waitress would bring this huge plate full of 12 things, 12 items on this plate with eggs and bacon and pancakes and all the works, and I would eat it all. And it was delicious. I could never do that today. Oh, my goodness. But that's the kind of stuff that I just thought didn't really matter what I ate.

But I look at this different now. I look at [00:02:00] my health a little bit different than I did in high school. And I understand that it does matter what I put in my body, and why I pay attention to what I put in my body. It does make a difference.

So this is what we're talking about today, and over the years, I have learned everything from, you know, going on these fad diets to, well, first the Tremendous 12 days, and then the fad diet days, and then I just went into

another era, era of life where I, um, really restricted what I ate and, you know, it was... it's just been a journey. And today, now I do things totally different than I ever used to.

And so I am not sharing this episode to say, "Look at me" or, "You have to do what I do" or anything like that. But I wish I would've had someone come alongside of me in my years of just over the, the vast years of, of eating different things and, and fueling [00:03:00] my body and not fueling my body. Um, just to have someone say, "This is what I'm doing. You don't have to do it, but this is what I'm doing, and maybe it might help you." That's why I wish someone would have come alongside me and said these things. But instead, I had to learn it on my own.

So I'm just gonna share some of my, it's not even expertise, some of my experience with you today regarding why it, why I do care about what I put in my body. So if you would like to have just a little bit of hope and inspiration regarding your health today, you've come to the right place. So let's get into this episode.

Welcome back to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I am so happy you are here today. My name is Julie Lefebure, and I am the host, and I am, um, excited about this subject. All month long, we are talking about being healthy, whole, and well.[00:04:00]

And the first episode, the first week of this series, we talked about what does it mean to be well? And last week, we talked about when did taking care of ourselves get so complicated? Because it has gotten complicated, right?

But today, we are talking about food. Now, I know a whole lot of emotions get wrapped around our food. I don't know where you are coming from today. I don't know what your experience with food has been. I don't, I don't know any of that. But what I do know is that God is with us, and God takes us through different things. He teaches us and trains us and molds us into the women He wants us to be. And we're all on this journey. None of us have it figured out yet.

I want to say from the very beginning, I do not have this food thing figured out. I am not a nutritionist. I am just a mom, a grandma, a wife who's trying to figure out [00:05:00] how to better care for myself. I do not do it perfectly. I won't ever claim that I do it perfectly, because I don't. I still like french fries. I still like chocolate chip cookies.

And now, what I'm really kind of focused, what I really kind of is my hangup, I should say, is frozen brownies. Frozen brownies. Yeah, I made my mom's brownie recipe recently, and I put 'em in the freezer because I didn't want 'em all sitting out because I would eat 'em all. But I just grabbed one out one day and ate it frozen. Oh, my goodness, they are so good. Okay, so you're seeing the real me here. All right.

Uh, so anyway, as we talk about this subject of food and why I am so, um... why I pay attention to what I put in my body is I have learned things the hard way. I [00:06:00] have done things the wrong way. And I don't even know if I wanna say wrong. I've just done things. I've just learned over the years of what works for me and what doesn't work for me. And what works for me may not work for you.

So I just wanna give you some freedom in this. We talked last week about, you know, that, that in Christ, we have freedom, and we're not under the yoke of slavery. We are not under the yoke of slavery of food, first of all. We are free in Jesus, and I'm so grateful that we are.

So I, as we talk over this, this subject today, I, I just wanna tread lightly. Again, I do not have this figured out, and I won't probably on this side of eternity. But we can learn from each other, and we can grow, and we can... I think we can all learn a better way to eat and fuel our body. So for many of us, we women [00:07:00] tend to think eating healthy, that, that - it correlates with losing weight or restricting food or counting calories. Mm, I can't tell you how many calories I've counted over the years. Or fitting into a different size or a certain size.

Did I ever tell you about the story about, um, the weeks before my daughter's wedding in 2018? Talk about fitting, uh, into a certain size. I had bought this dress, um, from Dillard's. It's a beautiful dress. I absolutely loved it. Uh, maybe, I don't know, nine months before her wedding and it fit me perfectly. I didn't need any alterations so it, it hung in my closet for nine months until two weeks before the wedding. And I put the dress on and it didn't fit. My husband couldn't zip it. And so he's like, um, he was trying to polite- [00:08:00] politely say that he couldn't - couldn't zip it 'cause I couldn't reach back there.

And so I went on a crash diet of not eating and I know that was like the worst thing I could have done but I fit in the dress. I fit in the dress that day two weeks later. Okay, that's, yeah, we fit into a certain size or, um, if we wanna look a certain way.

But that's not why I've become intentional about food. I've made a lot of mistakes over the years. Um, but one thing I have continually learned, especially as of late, is that food is, is nourishment. It's giving our bodies what it needs to function, to move, to think clearly, to work well, to sleep soundly, to recover our muscles and, and just to live our lives. It's really hard to do all those things [00:09:00] when we're not nourishing and feeding our bodies what they need.

So what if we thought less about what will food do to our appearance maybe and more about what does it do for our health?

My, I don't even... I guess I, I, my food story is just, it's, it's just a mixed bag. I mean, I've done everything from like the Tremendous 12 days to the, to the, um, low fat diet to, uh, a thing called Body for Life. Um, my husband and I did that for years. We've, I've just done different things. But, um, I, it was - in 2020 when of course COVID hit, and I, I think I've sh- shared this before that I, um, I thought I was really - healthy until I looked at the food that I was eating. And - that motivated [00:10:00] me, COVID motivated me to eat, started to eat different. Because I started hearing about inflammation and how inflammation in our bodies could, um, uh, give our bodies an environment that would welcome more, um, viruses, and I certainly didn't want COVID. I ended up getting COVID, but, um, I wanted to do everything in my power to, uh, be as healthy as I could be.

And so I, um, don't even know how it happened, but I believe God allowed this to happen, that I came across... Or , this woman came across my feed on social, social media, and, um, I started watching her. And the stuff she was talking about was the, the ingredients in our food. And I started to pay attention.

I'm like, "Oh, my goodness." So I started looking at the ingredients, flip the thing over, whatever it was, and I was shocked about what was in the food that I was eating. Just general everyday food. [00:11:00] Uh, and I, um, this woman really taught me a lot. Um, I owe her a big debt, a big gratitude. A big debt of gratitude. Is that what I'm trying to say? I owe her a lot because, um, she taught me about seed oils and how bad seed oils are for our bodies, and how they stay in our bodies for years. And, um, microplastics, and just things that I knew nothing about.

But the big thing was reading the ingredient labels. And she had on her website or her social media, um, uh, her social media feed, a list of the things to avoid, of ingredients to avoid. I think it was her no-no list or something like that. And

so I followed that, and I learned so much. And so that was like the first step, that I just thought, "This is something I can do. I can start reading ingredient labels."

And, um, then it kind of progressed of, um, I just started becoming more interested in the things that my [00:12:00] body needs, like the protein that my body needs, the fiber that my body needs, the, just the, the various things that I really never paid attention to before.

Um, and again, she helped me a lot. And I also followed another medical... There's a gnat. That gnat is back. So sorry. I hope he stays away. Um- There was another doctor, a medical professional that I followed, and he kind of backed up a lot of what she was saying. And so I had these two sources that, again, when the world was locked down, I was grateful that I had, um, these two people to, to kind of learn from. And, and I felt like they were, like, teaching me, walking me through this. So I guess maybe they were the two, the two people, the, that walked alongside me in this season.

But I, I just kept learning. I just - had this desire to learn more. And then after reading the ingredient labels, I also heard this gal talking about eating organically. Now, I had [00:13:00] never I thought eating organic foods was a, was a, I don't know, just a silly thing to do, 'cause I didn't think it really made that big of a difference. But watching her and learning from her, I just all of a sudden realized, okay, I, I wanna learn more about this and see what this organic thing is really all about.

And it took a while, but little by little, I started incorporating organic foods into our home, replacing what we had with organic after we used it up. And now my husband, he was a little bit slower to come around than me, and he's still not there 100% yet, but. So for, for just generally, we now eat organic foods here at our house. It drives our kids crazy, but that's what we do.

I remember the first Thanksgiving meal I made with all organic and, um, it, it was, it was different. It was a [00:14:00] challenge. But I made dressing, I made, I made everything from scratch, potatoes from scratch. Everything. And it was a good eye-opener for me, like, okay, I can do this. It takes a little more effort, but I, you know, I... It's worth it to me to buy the things that are not sprayed with pesticides. There's, um, a thing called the Clean 15 and the Dirty Dozen. Just - do a search for those, Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen, and you'll see the fruits and vegetables that are, um, the Dirty Dozen y- you kind of wanna stay away from, but the Clean 15 are really good to, to have.

Again, just something that I've learned over the years. Now, why do I do this, though? Why do I do this? Because I want, I want to be able to honor God with my body. Now, not only does the food affect my physical body, but it affects the way I think. It affects the way I act. It affects my [00:15:00] attitude. I, I know that I am a different person when I eat clean than when I'm not eating clean, and I just wanna honor God with all of that.

Now, I'm not saying that you have to eat organically to honor God or that you have to eat a certain way to honor God. I'm just doing what God has convicted me to do, and He's might be convicting you in a ti- a to- totally different way, and that's okay. ... Again, what works for me may not work for you. Um, but I... These are just the things that I, I know that I'm supposed to do, that God wants me to do, and to be obedient to Him.

Um, now, sugar and alcohol is something I get asked about kind of often, is what do I do about sugar? Do I have sweets? I love sweets, but I- Once I start sweets, I have a hard time stopping, but once I stop, I'm pretty good. I don't really crave sweets after I stop for a while. Um, it's, they're just so addicting to me.[00:16:00]

But, you know, if I'm gonna have sweets, I will make it here at home because I know what goes into it. I know the ingredients. So like, for example, um, my mom's brownies, you know, like I, I, I made them, uh, recently and I know what's in them. It's all organic. Flour, butter, sugar. Um, I know what's in them. I, I love making chocolate chip bars. When I'm craving I, I think I make the best chocolate chip bars in the world. But, um, I will make them because I know what the ingredients are. Instead of me going out to the store and buying them, I will make them here at home because I know what's in them. And I will have some. Like my frozen brownies, you know? Um, but I, I am intentional about that.

I, I know that it's just better to eat sweets at the end of the meal than at the beginning of the meal. I mean, just the things I've learned. There was a time, um, when I was working with my functional doctor, and [00:17:00] she will be on, uh, the last episode of this month, the last Tuesday of the month, she's gonna be my guest, so come back for that. But, um, she, uh, with the help of, through her and, um, just learning the things that I was learning, I was wearing a continuous glucose monitor for two months, and I learned a lot about the order that we eat our food and how that matters. To eat your protein first, then your, um, your carbs, and then your sugar at the end. That makes all the difference. Where if you did that backwards, your blood sugar acts differently than it does. ... It actually, for me, my blood sugar, uh, leveled out more and quicker when I

had the protein first than when I had the sugar first, which makes sense, but you wouldn't think the order you eat your food makes a difference, but I learned that it does.

There's just so many things, how God designed our bodies so miraculously that [00:18:00] He, you know, even down to the details of when we eat our food does make a difference. So anyway, that was eye-opening to me.

Now, when it comes to alcohol, I, um, I just really don't drink it. Um, that's a personal choice. Um, uh, it's a personal choice because it affects my heart in a way that I don't like that it affects it, and I just don't... I think God has just taken my desire for any alcohol out, away. He's just taken it away 'cause, you know, I had a glass of wine not that long ago, or part of one, and it just didn't even taste good to me. So that's just a personal choice. That's what I've done.

Um, I've heard people say, there was a, um, a gentleman I used to follow. He's passed, he's since passed, but I used to follow him and his podcast, and he would say that alcohol is poison And, uh, I thought that was really [00:19:00] harsh. I'm like, "Oh, wow, really?" But, um, the more I learn about it, you know, it's just something that I don't need right now in my life. So I don't know. That's just me. That's what I've done.

Um, and I notice that I feel differently when I eat cleaner. I do. I feel differently. I act, like I said, act differently, think differently. Um, and I also, though, we've been to three weddings last month. We went to three weddings and, um, I had dessert, and I didn't feel guilty about it. And I also, uh, ate what was given to me, you know, even though it was not organic, even though it was not the healthiest food. It's okay. It's okay. One meal does not make someone healthy or unhealthy. It's the [00:20:00] patterns. The patterns that we, we choose to live in day, day in and day out.

So it's okay not to let, let our health be such a thing that we strive for to be perfect in. That's not what this is about, and I don't believe God ex- expects us to be perfect in it, but just to honor Him.

Um, and also, another example is every Wednesday, , my husband and I and four other friends, we play trivia at a local, um, little local bar and restaurant on Wednesdays. We've done it for, I don't know, two years, three years, two years. And every Wednesday we have... we eat there and you know what bar food is like. You know, it's not always the healthiest. And so, uh, for example, um, last week, I had a grilled chicken wrap and, um, cottage cheese. The week before

that, I had a cheeseburger wrap, which [00:21:00] is my favorite, and french fries, and ranch to dip it in.

So you can see, I don't do this perfectly. But I do have to tell you, after eating the french fries dipped in ranch and the cheeseburger wrap, I inhaled it. It was so good. I felt like a big blob. I felt awful. But last week when I had the grilled chicken wrap and the, um, cottage cheese- I felt just fine. So I do know that food, what we put in our bodies does make a difference, even in how we feel in the moment.

And so it's not a thing, like I said, it's not about doing it perfectly. It's just making the choices. And maybe the, the decision isn't, the question isn't say, "Can I eat that?" But maybe it's more of [00:22:00] something like, "How does this make me feel? How am I gonna feel after eating this?" Because that was my decision last week. I didn't wanna feel like that again, so I didn't have the french fries. But now I, I kinda wanted to have onion rings, but I didn't have the french fries.

Or another question might be, is this something that I really want to put in my body regularly? Yeah. It's just simple questions like that. Instead of us feeling shame or guilt, we just ask a different question. It does matter, just one question at a time.

We can pay attention to what we put in our mouths, what we eat. Uh, we can, we can do it without becoming obsessed. And we don't wanna be, you know, striving and trying to be perfect. We, we don't need to scrutinize every ingredient or fearing certain foods, which is what I used to do. Feeling guilty after dessert, I've done that, too. Comparing grocery carts, have you ever done [00:23:00] that? I've done that, comparing grocery carts with someone else. Don't do it. Doesn't do any good. Or believing that I've failed or you've failed because we ate something that really wasn't the best or ideal. No.

This is not the kind of wellness that I believe God wants us to or that I'm advocating. Absolutely not. I care about what I eat because I value my health, not because I'm trying to eat perfectly. Not at all.

So yeah, I just choose in the moment sometimes, and sometimes I don't choose great. But I, for the most part, I really do try to fill my body with what it needs. Again, it's not about being perfect. It's not about striving for a certain thing. Being intentional, it's not about the same [00:24:00] as being obsessive.

Now, again, you don't have to eat like I eat. I'm just sharing my experience. I'm not giving individualized nutrition advice because I'm not the nutritionist. I kind of wish I was, but excuse me, but I'm not. And what works well for me may not work well for you. It may not be appropriate for your needs, for your budget, for your allergies, for your medical conditions, for your, the season of life that you're in. Just do what God is calling you to do.

And there's no reason that you need to leave this episode and replace everything in your refrigerator. Not at all. Please don't do that. But just become curious. Read a label that you maybe haven't read before. Notice how a certain meal feels. Ask questions. Learn what you're eat- learn, learn about what you're eating. Talk with your medical provider if you need to.

And [00:25:00] I love this verse. I love this verse from 1 Corinthians 10:31. And it says this. This is in the NIV translation. "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Isn't that good? "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it for the glory of God."

That's with everything we do. Do it for God's glory, not for our glory, not for anyone else's glory, but for God's glory. Even ordinary things, including eating and drinking, can be approached just, can be approached with God in mind.

And you know, some days when I really struggle with my eating, I do ask for... I should ask it, I j- should ask every day, but I don't. But there's days that I just really have to rely on Him and say, [00:26:00] "Lord, please help me with my eating. Please help me to honor you with my eating." And we'll pray for that in a minute.

But some action steps maybe just to take today is just to look at one thing differently this week. Look at one thing differently. Maybe it might be reading a label on the ingredient list - something that you regularly buy. Just read it. See if you can pronounce all the words.

Add a nourishing food to your meal instead of restricting something. Add something in that's nourishing. Notice how you feel after you eat a certain food. Or prepare one meal at home that you normally wouldn't. Or ask yourself why you're making a particular food choice. Like, "Why am I eating this?" Or, "Why am I craving this?" And I think it's always good to reflect on, on different things as we go [00:27:00] about our days, and this is something we can reflect on. Am I choosing what I eat primarily by habit or convenience or how it tastes? Or am I also considering how it supports my health?

Let's pray. Let's pause right here before going any further. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I just thank You that You've given us choices. That You've given us choices, um, to eat well, Lord, and there have been years, so many years, that I just ate without even thinking. And Lord, until I became aware of the ingredients and how important those are, Lord, I thank You for teaching me. I thank You for growing me. I thank You for opening my eyes to see that there's a better way to eat.

And as I share my experience today, I don't want one, one single person, one single woman to feel less than or inferior or that she's failing because, Lord, this is not what we do.

Lord, You, [00:28:00] You ask us to share our experiences with others, to encourage and equip. And Lord, I pray that each one that's listening today, that, Lord, You will meet each one individually. She has her own story with food, and Lord, I pray she's able to tell it someday. It may be totally different than mine, and that's okay.

And Lord, use our stories to, to encourage others, and I pray that You'll meet us individually in our food choices, that we would do it all for Your glory. That You would help us, equip us to make the choices that You want us to. It's not gonna happen overnight. I know that, Lord. I've lived it. It's been six years, and I'm still learning.

Lord, I, I just ask that You would help us in this. Help us to glorify You. That's what our hearts desire is to glorify You. And I pray, Father, that You will help us to encourage others. We just love You [00:29:00] so much. We're so grateful, Lord. Continue to help us to be healthy, whole, and well in Your name. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

This is good. This is good. I'm really glad you're here. You know, and food is just one part of this conversation. We've been talking about it all month long, ab- about being healthy, whole, and well.

Next week, we're gonna look at some of the things that we've just come to accept as completely normal in everyday life that may not actually be helping us become healthier, whole, and well. So we're gonna look at that next week, so come back then.

And if today's conversation resonated with you, I would love to hear from you. And I just real- realized, though, that I forgot a piece of what I wanted to talk

about, so I'm just gonna back up for a minute. I don't do this perfectly. Not even a [00:30:00] podcast episode do I, do I do it perfectly.

But I forgot a piece that I wanna mention. Not only does it matter what we put in our bodies, but it matters what we put on our bodies. And I think it's important that we can look at the shampoo we use, the skincare we use, the, the makeup we use, the deodorant we use, the, um, body wash, the lotions, and just to see what's in them. Look at those ingredients, too. And I am still trying to figure out all of this. The haircare- care part is really what I'm struggling with right now. Trying to find a, a really clean hair- haircare line. But, um, that's just something that we can look at, is not only what we put in our bodies, but what we put on our bodies. All right, I just wanted to mention that.

Back to what I was saying. If, if this conversation today just impacted you at all, I would really love to hear from you. [00:31:00] Would you send me a message? Or you can even leave a review if you're feeling extra generous. But ... I read every comment, every message I get, and they encourage me so much. So I thank you. Thank you for always reaching out to me and, and just being... sharing what's going on in your life, 'cause I love to hear about that. Thank you for being here each week. It truly means so much to me.

And before we go, I wanna invite you, if you live next, if you... Not next to me. I wish you lived next to me. Um, but if you live near me in this local area, - near Cedar Rapids, Iowa, or any part of Iowa, I invite you to come to, um, our event Thursday night. It is called... It's Thursday night, September 17th. Um, it's called Wake Up: This Is Your Time. Registration closes at the end of the day tomorrow. So first, that's important.

But this evening is about stepping out of autopilot and just waking up [00:32:00] to the life that God has given you and me right here, right now, right where we are. We're gonna spend some time together being encouraged, getting honest about what's been keeping us stuck or distracted, and considering what it might look like to move forward with God in this season. Yeah, I'm really excited about it, and I hope you'll join us. I'd love to have you there. You can find the details, um, and the registration link in the show notes. Because this really is your time. Not to do more or prove more, absolutely not, but to be fully awake to the life that God has for you right here and right now.

So thank you for joining me for this, this episode. I know it was a different kind of one. I normally don't share all of the, the details and the, the things about, um, life, but I was glad I was able to do that today, and I pray that it helped you

and encouraged you. [00:33:00] And if you have something that works for you, I would love to hear from you.

But again, thank you for being here. Until next week, stay encouraged, and keep living the life, the abundant life that Jesus came to give you. God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at julielefebure.com. And until next time, stay encouraged.