

Episode 37: Rebel insider tips to surviving (and thriving!) through the holidays

MERYL: Hey everyone. Welcome back to the Rebel Nutritionist podcast.

Today. We are taking it on the inside. I am here with Jill Alter and we always have these amazing conversations in the office and wanted to really share with you guys because we've been talking about sort of our own tips and tricks and, and secrets to surviving the holiday season. And I just said something to Jill about why don't we call it surviving the holiday season? We should be thriving during this

having fun and enjoying

Exactly. So today we're going to talk a little bit about that because we hear all the time from people, like, what do you guys do to get through the holidays?

What are your secrets? So I feel like let's share it because there's really no secrets. And with that being said, welcome, Jill. Thanks for coming back.

JILL: Thank you for having me again.

MERYL: You're so good at this. You got to keep it going back.

So yeah, we've had many conversations over the past few weeks about this gearing up for our own holiday party. Right. And what we're going to be doing and, and look we're in the throws of Hanukah. I had a friend of mine last night who said to me, you actually eat latkes, you know? And I'm like, yes, I had a latke.

It was quite delicious.

JILL: And the key point you had a latke.

Yes.

So everything in moderation, **enjoy, but everything in moderation.**

And I think that has to be the overriding theme during the holidays. And I feel like with so much of what we always talk about whether it's prevention or moderation that doesn't register for a lot of people.

Right. It's

JILL: it's very true. However, some people say oh, I just had a couple of bites. Let me just finish it. Cause you know, tomorrow's another day. So let me just keep on eating.

MERYL: Right. Or where they don't even say tomorrow's another day. They basically started Thanksgiving and don't finish until new year's.

Right. You've had some clients that you've talked to about that. We've had people coming in and out. What do you say to people on that? Because you struggle like listen, let's be real. We all struggle with that.

JILL: Absolutely. And I can tell you that my Thanksgiving was a food frenzy. I was tasting all day long as I was making. I had a full plate and I had to have my daughter's desserts because they were amazing. So I did feel not so good. The next day my stomach was hurting me. So for the rest of the holidays, I am going to watch it.

I am going to enjoy it, but I'm not going to eat as much as I did on Thanksgiving. Right. So that was a common theme in the office. We were all saying **how much we ate and how we didn't feel good. So our stomachs are hurting and we've just really kinda need to learn from that.**

MERYL: Right. And I think the other thing is, is **we don't listen to our bodies.**

We become very disconnected from the messages. I know that I pay such close attention to that because again, I think when you've come from the standpoint of I had an illness, I know what it felt like to be at rock bottom. And when you feel like that, you don't ever want to go back to that. So you really, or at least I have really learned to hone into my body signals and I very much listen to those.

And so, yes, I indulged on Thanksgiving. And I indulged the next day because I was at my friend's house and dinner was amazing and dessert was amazing. And I had a little bit, I didn't gorge myself, but it was certainly more than I usually eat. And Saturday I was so happy to be coming home on Saturday because at least I was like, all right, I'm going to the gym.

And I'm trying to get back into, I didn't do it in an obsessive way. I did it in a way that it was. **I needed to get back to something that made me feel good.**

JILL: And that has to be key. And it has to be key.

MERYL: Yeah. And so it's, it's **paying attention to what makes you feel good** and not just saying, oh, screw it. I was right because it would have been very easy to say, oh, you know what?

Yeah. I feel sluggish and I feel lethargic and I just don't feel great. Should I continue doing that? Like that was, to me, my body's message was hello, wake up, go, go do something beneficial for yourself. But I had to be at the point where I am in tune with my body enough to do that.

JILL: Exactly, exactly.

And a lot of people aren't able to do that. At this point like you said, listen to your body, your stomach starts to hurt. Or if you're not able to wake up the next morning because of so much tryptophan in the turkey that's when you know.

MERYL: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, and, and especially I think the sugar frenzy, the alcohol frenzy, right?

Like we're going to parties that we obviously you don't indulge maybe during the week that you normally would or so, so I feel like this resonates a lot with people. what is realistic for people? What can they really say to themselves and be like I can do that.

I can maybe find if I have one or two office parties coming up or whatever holiday parties, I always say, **plan your indulgence**,

JILL: plan, your indulgence. And one thing that I do try to do **when I go to a party is eat something before**. So I don't show up to the party famished and just shove everything in my mouth.

So I go a little. A little full and I can still eat and enjoy, but I don't overdo it.

MERYL: That is a really good tip. And we talk to our clients all the time about that because. We **don't want you to feel like you have to deprive yourself**. It is the holiday season.

We're not about deprivation or starvation ever. Right. That's never our motto. And so how do you go in saying, wow, I am going to have a good time. I am going to indulge a little bit, but moderate the indulgence and right. And don't go in famished and don't go in completely starving and dehydrated also.

JILL: **Drinking water is key**. You know, it, **helps you feel full and it helps you flush out the toxins** as well., Staying hydrated is important for so many reasons.

MERYL: Yes. Yes. Especially as it gets cooler, even in Florida, it's a little cool here. Right. And I even noticed when it gets cooler, I don't always drink as much.

So I have to be very diligent. But if you're in one of the states where it is really cold, right, right. Drinking, I know it can be challenging for some people. So really staying up on your water intake because **we know dehydration mimics hunger**. So you actually tend to overeat when you are dehydrated.

And that is really, really important. So I think there's that piece of it as well. And I think people just tend to **zone out during the holidays**, I always find this statistic so interesting that the **average weight gain between Thanksgiving and New Years is somewhere around six pounds** for people.

JILL: And then not everybody is able to take all those pounds off.

MERYL: Right. So every year it's like cumulative. Exactly. But that's a lot of weight you think about one pound is 3,500 calories. That's a lot of calories, calories, right. But that is a lot of calories that you are consuming and you know, that you're not burning off or that you're not using it.

This is what I always say to people that I find is really helpful, or they have told me they found really helpful. Most of the time we know we're going to a party, we know there's gonna be drinks.

We know there's going to be appetizers whether it's a charcuterie board, whether it's dips, whether it's chips, right. You're going to start with that. And then you're going to go on to a main meal. I always say, go like **visualize yourself, going through the party**. Like I am going to take a small plate of the appetizers that you want and limit it to that plate.

JILL: And to that point, **Don't stand by the appetizers, go and talk away from the appetizers**. And also everybody. Well, not everybody, but we like to have a cocktail at the party. I don't have the cocktail on an empty stomach because it's just going to bring on the hunger.

So just a couple of tips.

MERYL: Yeah. Yeah. And so the same thing, if you're going to have the plateful of the appetizers, when you go into the main meal, do the same thing. Take one plate because here's the one plate isn't going to kill you. It's, it's, I'm going back or I'm picking, right. I'm picking and picking and picking and picking.

And so maybe if we can limit it. So we're not saying don't have the things that you not wanting or are not supposed to eat, have those things, but just to **have a smaller amount and fit it on a plate and don't go back for seconds**. It really the same thing with the dessert.

I mean, by the time you get dessert, if you've had the appetizer and you had that main meal, and you've had a drink and some water there. Shouldn't be all that much room for that dessert. Right. So go take a taste of the things that you want most of the time, if you, **if you allow yourself to taste it, it takes away the guilt**.

JILL: It's very true. It's very true. But also when you take your plate, but when you take it off of somebody else's plate and a lot of stuff, it still counts.

MERYL: Right? We always say those crumbs don't count. Well, they do. So so I think those are really useful practical things that people can use for right now and, and to get them through the rest of the year. I know, after I came back from Thanksgiving weekend, I'm like, oh, I don't want to see any more alcohol. And I didn't want to see any more chocolate and then, of course, another week happens and you're like, okay, I'm raring to go.

So I think. If there's one thing you can take away from this conversation and use that as your ammunition then. Great. Right. I think the other thing that we really need to think about is people **put their health on hold.**

And health is a whole different conversation then, because people say, well, I'm putting on weight. And I don't like how I look and that whole weight conversation then of course we know we're inundated in January with all of the diets and the cleanses and people are like, oh, well, I'm waiting to do that.

And I'm like, well, why wait? Right. **You can still incorporate these healthy behaviors that will carry you through.** That will keep you healthy. and there **still is this misnomer that weight is synonymous with health.**

JILL: That's very true. People are very misinformed with that.

MERYL: and that is, I think the challenge for us always here is we try and separate out the two that just because you look thin ish, right.

Or, or you look like your normal weight. I hate to even say that. Right. **Just because you look like you're at a healthy weight, doesn't necessarily mean you are healthy and the reverse is also true** where there's a lot of judgment with people who are overweight. Like, oh, you must be unhealthy. You must be gluttonous.

Right. All of those things, even though we're really working or supposedly working on body positivity, I think there's still a huge disconnect on that whole area. But I still think we still have a **long cold flu season ahead of us. And we need to pay attention to what are the things that are keeping us healthy.**

And if we are stressed during the holidays, if we are not sleeping during the holidays, if we are not keeping up with our let's call it vitamin regimen, or even eating healthy foods that are nourishing. That is going to really affect our immune system and our health overall.

JILL: So that's a good point.

Getting back to taking your plate, **fill the plate with vegetables and then fill it in with the other things.** Make it mostly the vegetables and that will help fill you up. So you don't want the other unhealthy things.

MERYL: Right. And because we know the vegetables and those kinds of things have lots of fiber, even some of the salads, right?

Whether you've got a salad or why is it important to balance it? Because we need the vitamins and the minerals and the fiber, and even the healthy fats in there to, to really keep our system supported. Through all of it. I mean, if we're going to be now and environment the other issue is that we've gone from being isolated in, a way that we never were before.

Now, all of a sudden we're all out and about and excited to be with people

and wanting to celebrate.

And all of a sudden our immune systems are even more compromised because of that. I don't think we realize that when we isolated actually affects our immune system in a very, very negative. That our bodies need to be exposed to germs in order to build and mount an immune response.

And so if we haven't been exposed to that for so long and we're thrown out now, cluster of people in a menagerie of, of different kinds of people now were we exposed to these germs that we haven't been able to mount a response to. And I know we've seen it we've seen,

we've seen a lot of it.

Yeah. We've seen a lot of people who have been sick, not necessarily with COVID, but who have just been. Right with the cold, with flus, with stomach bugs. I mean, we've seen them all come in through the office and we still have to pay attention to the fact that **we need to stay healthy**. and first and foremost **really nourish our bodies in a way that is going to best serve, serve our health**.

Anything you want to add, add to that?

JILL: I think we pretty much covered it. Yeah. I think we pretty much covered it. Just enjoy your holidays. Be mindful of your eating and. Exercise. And of course the water intake

MERYL: and exercise, we didn't really know that you mentioned that, right. **You want to keep moving** the other thing is I think, and to that point, so I'm glad you mentioned that is **we tend to get out of our really healthy routines this time of year**. Yes we do. So what I want to encourage people to do is get back into some kind of group, get back into. Resuming your workouts, and it may be, you don't have to go full force, like where you are or

just move right now. It's so beautiful in Florida. Just get outside, take a walk, walk the dog, anything, just move.

Yep. And if you're not in Florida and you're somewhere else where it's really, really cold, then find a place that you can move. Right. I know the gyms are opening back up or whether you find a track or, or bundle up and get outside and move.

I know a lot of my friends put on their heavy coats and their scarves and their hats and just get outside and get some fresh air because that's so, so, so important. So all of the things that we talk about all the time the nutrition piece is crucial. The movement piece is crucial managing your stress.

So if you don't have any kind of **stress management practice**, meaning a meditation practice or a breath work practice. So easy to do, just breathe, like really breathing, some of the apps that we use, right? Calm and Headspace and breathe. 10% happier has a real. Nice. Nice meditation flow.

And so there's so many of them Buddhify is another one. So if you guys have not checked those out and you don't engage in a regular meditative or breathwork type of practice, that is. And can be the most restorative thing for your body, even more so than sleep. I think mark Hyman quoted a study in the past couple of weeks that said **a regular meditation practice is more restorative and, helps you deal with stress better than sleep does.**

JILL: I didn't know that.

MERYL: Yes, that's interesting. Hm. So, yes. Get out of meditate. Enjoy the holiday season. Make it fun, make it festive. And with that, we are going to say goodbye. Make it a great season. Everyone. We'll see you soon. This is the Rebel Nutritionist signing off.