

*Stephanie
Dodier*

**The Beyond The Food Show
Podcast Transcript**



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Stephanie: This is Episode 61 of The Beyond The Food Show and today we are going to talk to Dr. Melissa McCreery from TooMuchonherPlate about hidden hunger, desire and cravings.

My name is Stephanie Dodier, I'm a clinical nutritionist and at 35 I was trapped with severe anxiety, panic attacks, obesity, and my health completely collapsed. I needed a solution and that's when my journey began. Each episode of The Beyond The Food Show will bring you an expert or a message to help you achieve your health goal, unlock your self-confidence and live a better life.

This episode is brought to you forward by stephaniedodier.com. Today is the final episode of The Crave Cure Series, Episode 10. The Crave Cure Series is about going beyond the food to heal our cravings. It is a special portion of The Beyond The Food Show and you can go in the show notes and check out the entire schedule. If you're just coming in new to this, you've got to look up the other nine episodes. It was 10 experts in total, 10 different reasons why we crave, because we need to understand why we crave, why we emotionally eat, so we can actually solve the real problem, not put a band-aid on the problem.

The prior show, show 60, was with Dr. Keesha Ewers and we learned about our cravings due to deficiency, nutritional deficiency, emotional deficiency, how that type of deficiency can actually create craving. You've got to go and check it out.

Now as I said in the beginning, this is the last show of the series, and all along I asked you to find partners, find a community to help you along the way in healing your cravings. Since this is the last show, what I'm going to do is introduce you to something different. I have normally a group program that I do every year in the fall, but based on your feedback, based on all the social media requests I have received, I have decided to re-open my yearly coaching program called Crush Your Cravings earlier this year. Because a lot of you are in the mindset now of healing your cravings, we're going to go in and open the door in the month of June for that program.

It's likely going to run from mid-June to mid-July. I invite you to go and place yourself in the waiting list, because currently I think we have a waiting list of up to 50 people and we have 100 people maximum yearly that can take that program. I want to keep it small to make it more effective for you. If you go to stephaniedodier.com/crushyourcravings, I would invite you to go and place your name on the waiting list so you get the first opportunity to register for that group coaching program if that's something that's going to help you in your journey. If it's not for you, just move forward to the interview with Dr. Melissa McCreery, but if it is for you, I highly recommend you go and put yourself on that waiting list to secure your spot and be able to get community pricing, because before I put it out to the public, general public, I give you guys the opportunity to get in

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at a cheaper price. So go and put yourself on that waiting list and I'll see you on the other side of that waiting list.

Now, are you ready to do this with Dr. Keesha Ewers? Let's roll it.

Psychologist Dr. Melissa McCreery focused on the three Os that ambush successful, high-performing women, which is overwhelmed, overload and overeating. She's the author of *The Emotional Eating Rescue Plan for Smart, Busy Women* and the creator of TooMuchonherPlate.com, providing busy women the program and the resources that they need to take control of stress and overeating and have more ease and success and joy to their health, their business and their life. Melissa's approach to helping working mothers, busy professionals and stressed-out business owners is unique.

Welcome to the show, Dr. Melissa.

Dr. Melissa: Thank you for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

Stephanie: I'm excited to have you because I have discovered you probably two-and-a-half years ago and I have been a silent follower of your work. I've been getting email every single week, and you've taught me a lot. I'm very honoured to have you here so you can pass this information to my listeners.

Dr. Melissa: I'm excited and I really love the topics that you're diving into. So much of the time we talk about all issues with food and struggles with food, we focus on all the stuff we don't want to do, and all the places that we get so tangled up. Food is such a pleasurable thing and eating and feeding ourselves, nourishing ourselves is such an important part of being at our best. I just love that you have presented this whole series in terms of how to get to the good stuff.

Stephanie: Yes, absolutely, and get to the root cause because for so many of us, we've gone through the word or the experience of craving and punished ourselves and thought of us as being a bad person or lack of willpower or not being strong enough, and that's why we're craving when it's the complete opposite.

At the beginning of the series we talked with Samantha – so you can refer to show 51, I believe, where we talked about the relationship between our emotions wanting to numb and eating. And I wanted to close this series with Dr. Melissa because she talks about something as equally important, which is in relationship to our emotions, which is the concept of hidden hunger.

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I want you, Melissa, to bring us to that place of defining the word hidden hunger, what it is and how it affects our cravings.

Dr. Melissa: Well, I created this whole idea of – and other people have talked about this, but I really homed in on this idea of hidden hungers. I've worked with women around food and eating and overeating and weight and everything you can imagine from my entire professional career. What I ended up seeing over and over again were smart, busy, competent, successful people who were creating all sorts of success in all sorts of places in their lives, and good things, and couldn't figure out how to do it with food. And then getting into these cycles, which I'm sure some of your other experts have talked about, getting so frustrated and not being able to get anymore and not understanding how there's this simple concept of "I should just eat this or not eat this" and feeling like "I'm a smart person, I know what to do, why can't I make it happen?"

The reason that so many people get stuck in this place and can't make it happen is that we jump into this to-do list of what we ought to be doing with food and we skip what I think is really the ground rule, which is there's a reason that we eat. There is always a reason that we eat, as you said in the introduction there. And there's a reason that we overeat, always. And it's not a character flaw. It's not that we are lacking in something. Usually we think we're undisciplined or we're not trying hard enough or we're not perfect enough or we just haven't figured out what everybody else around us we think has figured out, but those aren't the reasons. The reasons are that the food is doing something for us.

What I see, especially with women who are struggling with those three Os – overload, overwhelmed, and then overeating – is that oftentimes, the reason that food has so much power in our lives is because it is feeding hungers that really aren't about food. Those are what I refer to as hidden hungers. Things that we either aren't aware of or don't feel like we have time or energy to pay attention to or we don't know really what to do about them, we know they're there but we think, "Well, what else am I supposed to do?" or we feel powerless or trapped or in some kind of cycle with our time and our energy and our abilities.

Guess what? Food is easy. We live in a society where we are not only marketed to around food as the solution to everything – it's the way to feel good, it's the way to celebrate, it's the way to perk ourselves up. And it does. In the short term, food can do a lot of things. So what I see are a lot of women, especially who for lots of different reasons are using food to fill in the cracks or cover over bigger real hungers that actually really need to be fed. You talk about cravings. And that can be a real trap because when you use the food that way, it's a bandage in the short term, it might get you through or get you distracted or help you feel better even, but those real reasons are still there. If

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we don't feed those and respect those, we diminish who we are and what we have to show up in the world. And the hidden hunger just keeps growing and growing and growing.

Stephanie: And it makes me think – we've interviewed I believe on Show 57 – and don't quote me on this one – Dr. Keesha Ewers, and she talked to us about nutritional deficiency. She talked about the fact that we can crave certain foods because of nutrients that we're missing. Can we think of hidden hunger in the same manner? We're eating trying to fulfill some type of desire we have inside of us that we are really not addressing properly?

Dr. Melissa: It's kind of like that. It's similar but there's a difference. Sometimes we're eating to fulfill that hidden hunger or to try to feed ourselves. For instance, something I see all the time, I think probably everybody listening can relate is overeating that happens in the evening. Whatever your day is like, you get home, you've had this longer day and then you get home and you have all this stuff that you have to do at home, and at the end of the day, if you remember, had that experience where you just flop down on your sofa or in your chair and you're exhausted and all you want is just that little piece for you, something for you, because it's been a difficult day and you showed and maybe you did amazing things and – boy, who wants to fight with a ball of ice cream? You just want to eat them all.

Sometimes it is the reward or it is the comfort and the food takes care of that. But sometimes it can also be a way to distract yourself from hungers that aren't getting fed or to push them down, numbing out – as you talked about in another interview. But it's a way of responding to that hidden hunger.

There're two pieces. There's a reason that we eat, always. There's always a reason that we overeat and we're smart people. It's not that we are stupid or lazy or unmotivated. We've chosen that food because it's doing something for us. So not only do we have the hunger but the food, actually it fits into a slot there. So respecting those two things is so key if you're somebody who wants to make changes with this stuff.

Stephanie: Can we say we're responding to a desire?

Dr. Melissa: Yes. I love that word and I'm so glad we're talking about this because that's the other piece. Part of the reason that food feels so frustrating for people when you're stuck in these cycles is because it can get really complicated. There are all these things that get layered together. I always think of a tangled-up ball of yarn. It's all just stuck together.

If you think about it – overload, overwhelmed, overeating – when you think that recipe, think about those times in your life where you feel one or two or three of those things.

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That isn't a place where women usually feel like they have the ability or the permission or the actual physical space available to really stop and think, "What do I want? What do I desire? What do I need?" Think about it. As you are listening to this, everybody out there, I want you to think about when is the last time you really sat down and thought "What do I want?" or "What do I want to do right now?" or "What do I desire?" It's such a rich but we tend to get so focused on our to-do lists, which just feeds the stress and the stress eating and all that kind of stuff.

When we really get busy, I think the other piece is we think, "Well, that stuff has to wait." So even if I know what I want, what I desire, what I would love to be spending my time doing, that has to wait because I have all these other stuff to do. And you know what? When you don't get what you desire, all day long or all week long or maybe it's been months since you felt like there was any time or space for you, it's a lot easier to start developing that feeling that "You know what? I need that chocolate. I need a treat."

Stephanie: I deserve it, maybe.

Dr. Melissa: Well, you do. I deserve it. And it's a lot harder to convince yourself to say no, whether it's at the end of the day or after a meeting or when you're faced with one more project and you just can't even think about diving in, you just want 10 minutes of procrastination. It's a lot of harder to talk yourself out of it when there really isn't another rich alternative that feeds that desire or that hidden hunger.

Stephanie: And that hidden hunger and that desire is not a physical thing. It's more of an emotional thing. It's not like when we talked to other experts they really talked about physical elements causing our cravings. In this, we're talking about something that's an emotional one, am I correct? Those hungers are within those desires, those emotional needs that we have as women.

Dr. Melissa: Well, we did a self-cure challenge on my Facebook page a couple of weeks ago. It was really fun. The questions – it was over a couple of days, and as this challenge evolved, there was this question that emerged that really got to the core of things, which was giving yourself an opportunity at least once a day to ask yourself "What am I feeling? What do I know?" First of all, don't focus on – because the first thing that's going to happen when you start to ask yourself new questions is you're going to have a lot of "I don't know." So don't worry about that, just focus on what you do know.

So what do I know about what I'm feeling? What do I know about what I'm needing? What do I know about what I'm wanting? And that could be in the body, it could be in your heart, but that's that desire place. "What do I want? What do I need? What am I

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feeling?" And it probably, most of the time, is not going to be food, but food maybe the thing that you think of going to when you start to get close to those things if you haven't developed the ability to really figure out how to feed your desires.

Stephanie: As the theme of the show is going beyond the food, because we seek food because it's easy, because it's in our lives. Two to three times a day we eat so it's an easy thing to gravitate to as a solution to whatever is not responded to through other things in our life. What's very interesting, the concept is that those busy women listening to the show that are successful in other areas of their life are now potentially struggling with this concept of responding to hidden hunger, to desire. Why is it that they're successful in so many areas of their life but not with their relationship with food?

Dr. Melissa: Not to relationship with food or with desire?

Stephanie: With desire, let's go with desire.

Dr. Melissa: Well, first of all, it's complicated and we get taught that it's really simple. We get taught that it's really simple, and if you're smart and you're used to creating results and you're used to solving problems and somebody says to you, "What's 2+2?" And you say "4," and they keep saying, "No, you got it wrong," you're going to get frustrated. It's kind of like that.

With food, we keep being told "Just maybe eat less," or "Move more," or "Don't eat this," or "Eat this combination of things," and it makes perfect sense to our logical brains that like to solve problems. And there is some wisdom there, there's truth. But what doesn't get addressed is why it can be so hard to implement that stuff, and that's the desire piece.

As to why we get disconnected from our desires, that's different for all of us, but a lot of it has to do with being busy, or maybe it's historical things for you, maybe you have been taught that – a lot of women are taught that either they shouldn't have a lot of needs, maybe you shouldn't need a lot of self-care, that would be high maintenance or something. A lot of people think is that comes last, so I need to take care of everything else and then when that's done I'll get my me time or that's when I'll spend some time with my journal, or if I have time I'll work out today, or if I have time I'll meditate. And that takes a big toll. We get disconnected from how powerful feeding ourselves and nourishing ourselves is and how much that allows us to show up as our incredibly rich, best versions of us.

Stephanie: I think everything you say is so true, and that's my personal journey as well. For the listeners who know my journey, when my health collapsed, I put everything else in my

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life as a priority but me, and that shift needed to happen. I went as far as my body collapsing. It doesn't have to be your case. By listening to the advice of Melissa, you can understand how to actually shift your decision-making around what is a priority in your life? Self-care being one of those examples is something that is necessary for every one of us. It's not a luxury. It's not optional. It's something that we must have. And when we don't, there's a possibility that we seek out food to get that feeling of caring for ourselves. Did I understand this right?

Dr. Melissa: Yeah. And there's this other added bonus to it too, though, which is – because I think that people start to hear this stuff and they think, "Ugh, now I have one more thing to do, right? Now, I have to feed this hidden hunger." Some are already busy. And it really isn't like that because – a couple of things. First of all, this does not have to start with a huge, big life overhaul. You don't have to chuck your schedule and start all over. In fact, that's a really bad way to do it because you're just going to get overwhelmed with that and you won't create the results that you want.

The way I talk about it, and you probably heard me use this example a lot, Stephanie, is if this isn't something you're comfortable with, it's a muscle that you haven't been using. You want to think about, first of all, finding that muscle. If you've ever taken the Pilates class, instructors have this great ability to find this teeny tiny little core muscles that you never knew you had, that if you could just find out how to flex them just a little bit, you're going to be sore for a week, but then two weeks later, it's going to really pay off.

So the first piece of this is really just starting with asking, activating the muscle and finding it by starting to ask that question, "What do I know about what I want?" When you find yourself in front of the refrigerator or you wandered down the hall to the vending machine or there you are in the break room thinking about cutting off another little piece of the brownie that somebody brought in. If you can catch yourself or even if you catch yourself after, just stop and take a deep breath, and ask yourself, "Okay, wait a minute. What do I know here?" Because there's a reason, remember you guys start by seeing that. "So what do I know about – what am I wanting right now? What am I feeling?" And if it's hard, you can check inside of your body or, not just but in your heart, use your brain, "What do I know about what I'm feeling? What do I know about what I'm wanting? What do I know – what am I craving right now?"

Don't get caught up in "Oh, but I can't have that, so there's no point in thinking about it." Our brain is so smart and restrictive. But just really think about "What is my desire?" That's the very first step.

Stephanie: For me, and I see that a lot in my community, women that are successful in other parts of their life have a strong ability to put their mind towards an objective and achieving
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that, and they are very connected with their head. They're not as connected with their emotions, therefore, they are going to their "food problem" – and I'm using the air quotes – with the same technique by using their minds in calorie counting, in macros, and trying to approach it with a mind solution as opposed to this heart. So the exercise you're talking about right now will actually force people into that zone of feeling as opposed to their head, which is brilliant.

Dr. Melissa: It's okay, you could ask it all day long today and tomorrow and not come up with anything. But asking it starts to build the connection. And I went in this long circuit here and I started by saying there's a sad and secret benefit to this stop. And so you brought me back which is that you start to get more connected to your desire.

The next step from that is you start to become more aware of "How can I take care of that desire?" And how cool is that? Because you can spend your life micro-managing calories and fat grams and carbs and feeling tired. So many women who are just thinking what they want is – I talk about freedom from overeating in my program. It's freedom from overeating and peace with food. When you can start to respect that there's a reason that you're doing what you're doing, and when you can start to identify what the hidden hungers are – I actually have a quiz for that, that will just help you on that – then you can start figuring out step by step how to feed them. And when you start feeding your hidden hungers, and when you start feeding your real cravings and your real desires, it's not just that food lose its power – which people never believe, but it really does happen, food just loses so much power. But think about how much your life gets better when you're getting what you truly need and your desires are being met, and when you are not hungry for those underlying things in that way anymore. It's like this triple win.

Stephanie: You achieve food freedom, which, for people who struggle with cravings, you feel that that's the only area of your life where you don't have control, that food has control on you. That chocolate, that chips, you cannot resist them, they can be in your house and they are going to get you.

Dr. Melissa: Yes. And then you can just forget you have the chocolate chips. And that's the thing because people always – I talk to people about whether one of my programs is for them or whether they want that coaching, and people always want to get stronger or better, or "I want to figure out how to win this battle." And what I always say to people is, "What if we could just take the battle away?" Because even if you're winning the battle, even if you find this thing where you feel like you're on top and you're winning and you're losing the weight or you're gaining the weight you want to or whatever, which is great, that means you have to sustain that energy in this area to keep winning.

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I work with busy people, I work with people who have amazing things they want to do in their life, whether it's professionally or with their families or in their relationships or in service in some way. The question I always ask people is, "What if you could take all this energy that you're putting in this battle? What would you do?" First of all, isn't it too bad it doesn't burn calories because problem solved? But if that could go away, where would you love to put this energy? What would you do with all the time and the head space that would get filled off? And it can be like that. That's what really makes me to do what I do, knowing that and wanting other women to know, "You do not have to be strong and be winning a fight for the rest of your life."

Stephanie: Yeah. And in part, again, having been there myself, this winning the battle is what I did professionally. That was my life professionally, that's how I became successful, by achieving and winning battles and creating a successful path. What I had to realize is that this way of thinking wasn't what will bring me my win and my health and my emotional stability. I had to completely shift my mindset to not want to win because it's not a battle to win, because there's no battle, there's just me not understanding how my body is functioning.

Dr. Melissa: There is so much freedom that is possible. We don't hear that in the messages about weight loss nearly enough. We hardly hear it all, than all the messages in the marketing around overeating. There is this freedom, and the one program that I have, I called it Your Missing Peace, because it can be peaceful. You can wake up and you cannot think of this stuff anymore. Instead, you can think about "What do I want today? What do I want? What do I feel? What do I need?" It can be that clean. And that, that's a huge weight off of people. There's all this emotional baggage that when it comes – that keeps getting added on when you're struggling with food that sometimes it's almost as heavy as or heavier than that extra weight that gets added with these struggles.

Stephanie: Let's go into the word willpower and the belief around the fact that willpower is something that we need and that we don't have when it comes to our cravings, to our emotional relationship to food. Do you agree with the concept of willpower?

Dr. Melissa: Well, I agree with the concept of willpower, and I tend to work with people who are powerhouses in the willpower department. However, just like what we've been talking about, I don't think it's what you want to set yourself up with as your success tool with overeating and with your weight for a couple of different reasons. First of all, it is no fun. I think what we've been just talking about is way more pleasurable and way more interesting way to want to live your life. Having to live on willpower all the time is not fun. I think that's the most important thing.

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The other thing is I don't care how strong and disciplined and tough and – when I take the strength surveys, perseverance is always at the top for me, so I know what it's like to be somebody who can stick in there in the tough times. However, no matter how strong we are, there is always a limit, and we're going to run out. Usually, that is the place where what you are using your willpower for is to not stress eat, not to overeat. That's the place where you need it the most. That's the place where you are going to be most challenged with food, so you are going to run out of it. And even if you don't run out of it, and even if you are uber strong, willpower is something we have a limited reserve of. And again, wouldn't you rather direct that energy towards something else? There's a lot of things I know that every single person listening wants to do or achieve or create in their life, and if you're using all your willpower over here constantly, it diminishes what you have to be the wonderful you that you are in the rest of your life.

Stephanie: Absolutely. That could also explain the statistics that says that people who've lost weight within the first five years post weight loss will actually regain all their weight if not more. And I see that all the time and I've lived it myself from losing weight four times in my life. I did have that willpower that you talk about, that bank. I moved it from work to put it to my food, but at some point it ran out. It took 6 months, it took 12 months, 13 months, and then you start using food again to make you feel better, and then you start going backwards.

Dr. Melissa: I will never forget somebody I met who had incredible willpower. She had lost a tremendous amount of weight, and she had a very strict, rigid food plan. She kept saying that, "I know it doesn't work for everybody but it works for me, works for me," and she held on for eight years. She had some personal things happen in her life and things that required willpower and those reasons that you want to overeat, they brought up some hungers. But it started to overwhelm and she started gaining weight, and then she started to panic because she saw it coming back. She had worked so hard and she had lost over 100 pounds. And then when it starts to come back, then there's that whole snowball that overwhelm and overload. They build on each other, then they tend to lead to overeating. Everybody knows what I'm talking about, it all goes together.

That whole idea of having to rein it in with willpower, it was too much for her willpower and she couldn't do it. That's actually when we connect it to work on things, because she said, "Okay, I finally get it. Everybody said if I don't learn these tools and strategies, I thought I could go around it." Because she was afraid, she thought, "If I start to look at my desires, I don't want to know what they are." It took eight years but even she ran out.

Stephanie: It will happen, because you used the word tools and strategy, and to me those tools and strategy that we need to use to fulfil our hungers that are beyond nutrition and food are

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tools and strategy that I don't want to say we should or we could have learned earlier in life but we may have not have those tools, am I correct? They have not been taught to us, and then we cannot use them.

Dr. Melissa: Sometimes, they are not taught to us. Again it's that idea of "What else am I supposed to do? Yes, I'm stress-eating, but, what else am I supposed to do?" And sometimes – and I actually see this quite a bit – people have a lot of resources and a lot of strengths and abilities but, again especially women, haven't been taught how to, or that it's okay to turn it then to themselves? Which is great news, it's absolutely great news, and I love working with people. I always work with people around their strengths because when we can figure out that, oh my gosh, you already know how to do this, you just don't think you're entitled to do it for you. Or it just feels really weird and uncomfortable or maybe it triggers guilt if you start to do this, aiming it at you. That's good news because it's not like you have to reinvent the wheel, you just have to change how you do things a little bit, which is fun.

Stephanie: Why do you think that is specific to women? I'm sure men may experience that but why is it that we feel guilty about, example, taking care of ourselves as women?

Dr. Melissa: Oh boy, I think there's a lot of socialization about that, and I'm talking in generalities. Every time I do one of these, I will hear from some man who says, "Wait a minute, I can relate to that." And I'm not saying that, but I do tend to work with women and I think that the way that we have been socialized to care for other people, our roles are often around – we may have a million other roles, but oftentimes there's parenting that is incorporated into that. And women just tend to have a different relationship with caring for themselves and that idea of putting themselves ahead of other people, which, by the way, it isn't necessarily that but I think that's how it's thought about, and she'll feel uncomfortable. And then there are just the realities of there are only so many hours in a day and it's, again, just like there's a reason – well, there is a reason you overeat and one of them, sometimes, is there are only so many hours in a day and you can't figure out "How the heck am I supposed to fit myself in there?"

Stephanie: I want to touch on this subject because there're a lot of women coming here to this podcast who have tried everything. They have tried the low-fat, the low-carb, the calorie counting, the macro. They've learned all of that and they overall eat well, much better than the standard American diet. They know they should eat a lot of vegetables and protein and healthy fat, and things still are not working for them. They are not able to achieve their health goal, whatever it is, weight loss or ending their emotional eating. That's the peace here we're talking about. That's exactly where you need to work on. It's not going to be another food plan. If you're already eating well, another food plan won't

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solve the problem. It's what Melissa is talking about, which is your hidden hunger, your desire that you're not fulfilling with your food plan.

Dr. Melissa: Yeah. And the other piece of that is that your head is overflowing with plans and advice. And if you are disconnected from your hidden hunger – being disconnected from your hidden hungers are not – which is what you have to be. If you don't feel like you can feed that part of you, then the adaptive thing to do is to disconnect and not think about it. It's kind of like if you have chronic pain, it is not adaptive to walk around and think about how much it hurts all day. It's adaptive to try to find ways to distract yourself and not focus on it and deal – make yourself feel better even though you can't take the pain away. And that's the same way with hidden hungers. I've got to figure out where I was going to go with – you had said.

Stephanie: I said that there's a lot of food plans and people are thinking about food plans a lot and the solutions is to what you are saying right now.

Dr. Melissa: Part of what happens is we get disconnected, and when we disconnect, we disconnect from a lot of things. We disconnect from what we know, what we feel, what we need, and we start to look outside ourselves, so there's plan A and plan B, and the paleo thing, and this and that, all of which may be really good. But part of this whole process and getting more in touch with your desire also helps you get in touch with what works for you if you have lived inside your body your entire life. None of these experts have, nobody has, and I have been doing this long enough to know, and you don't have to do this very long to know that there is no one solution that works for everybody. There are some really interesting solutions that work really well for some people that somebody else might find truly bizarre, and it actually would get them completely off track.

Being able to reconnect with our desire helps you really filter all these static coming at us through your incredible wisdom about what you need and what you crave and what you want, and so you can use it with food too.

Stephanie: Absolutely. We see that in clinical nutrition when we teach people bio-individuality and addressing their food based on their health condition. There are some people who do well with tomatoes, others don't. But if you're not connected to your body, I always say to people, "Here's a list of symptoms you can feel." And they are very subtle symptoms and people say, "I don't know. This is not a symptom that is strong enough for me to notice." Part of the reason is people are exactly hear what you are saying, not connected inside of their body, so working on those hidden hungers will also allow you to find your personal nutrition lifestyle that will get you to health and happiness.

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Dr. Melissa: It's amazing what starts to happen when you start to connect with yourself and pay attention to yourself.

Stephanie: We've been talking about hidden hungers and desire the whole time, so you do have a tool that is available to the people listening that they can start identifying those hidden hungers for themselves.

Dr. Melissa: Yeah. Well, I put together a couple of resources and what I did – it isn't even listed there. If you go to our website, to my website, toomuchonherplate.com, you can take the Hidden Hunger Quiz right there. You can take the quiz and what that will give you is a sense of – and don't be alarmed if you have more than one hidden hunger because they work together. If you have one, it's going to help you have another one. Remember, I said, if you are disconnected, it's hard to be connected. But you can take the quiz, you can get a sense of where the best place is to start, because there's always a place to start, there's always a first step, and you don't have to worry about the 50 million other steps. You just have to take the first one, so you can take the quiz, but I also put together what I'm calling a Success Pack for people if they want to download it, and it kind of addresses the different pieces of what we've been talking about today. I've got strategies for taking charge of emotional eating, which are not – it's along the lines of what we're talking about, it's not put a band-aid on your wrist and snap it when you catch yourself bingeing. I think one of my biggest pet peeves is when people say, "Notice if you're emotional eating, and if you are, stop it."

Stephanie: I know. "Use your willpower once more to stop it."

Dr. Melissa: Yeah. I expect if we could do that we wouldn't – so there's another PDF for you guys about how to declutter your brain and release 10 pounds of stress, which, again, overload, overwhelmed, overeating, how they all come together. And then I also put in a real quick training that I have for you on comfort eating and how to kick it to the curb. Comfort eating is so hard because, like you were saying, it's that feeling of "I deserve it." And when we're feeling depleted and/or miserable or bad or just in need of comfort, how do we say "No, thank you, I just won't eat that." There's some really smart stuff that you can do that, again, isn't about willpower and that can really help you take care of that hidden hunger.

Stephanie: And I just want to add to this, it's like a bank. With comfort eating, you're using food because you're not comforting yourself in other pieces of your life. And when you start fulfilling the other areas of your life, food won't be as attractive to feel comfortable because you have so many other pleasure areas in your life.

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Dr. Melissa: It's one of those things that you don't believe it until you experience it. You don't believe it, but that experience – and I just love it when I'm working with somebody who has something that feels so unstoppable, and it's often eating at night, it's often wandering into the kitchen at night when you know you're not hungry. And there will be a time if I'm working with somebody one on one and I'll say, "You haven't mentioned that in a while. How's it going?" "Oh yeah, I don't do that anymore."

Stephanie: It just went away magically.

Dr. Melissa: "I just don't do that." Not "Oh, it's going really well. It's going really well. I've gone three days." And it's that "I'm not feeling called in that way, because like you're saying, I've filled up that reservoir and I'm not craving to do that thing for me in that way."

Stephanie: I still remember the first time that I had a chocolate bar in front of me and I ate two pieces of it and I left it there and not noticing that it was there, and then two hours later I realized that I didn't eat all the chocolate bar. And I didn't have to force myself, it just naturally I ate two pieces, I was done, put it there and never thought about it again. There was no willpower needed at all.

Dr. Melissa: I love those stories, like "Oh my gosh, I forgot I bought those chocolates and they were in my desk and I ran across them the other day and I had totally forgotten that they were there." Or "That Easter candy, I finally threw it away because it's been in the cupboard for" – that's the feeling that when you have those experiences and you realize, "Wow, I'm just done with this." And gosh, you can put that energy back into places that are so much more meaningful than fighting with food.

Stephanie: You've put that power pack together so for everyone listening, you're going to go to the website, stephaniedodier.com/061 and right there in the show notes there will be the link. If you're listening on iTunes, you can just go to the show description, you'll have the link there as well available. And on YouTube, if you're watching, it's right below the video. You can access all that tool pack, the whole thing here. People listening, you don't know what we're doing, but we were pointing down.

It's been an absolute pleasure to have you here. Before we go, I want you to give us three tips to get started on, I want to say, figuring out our hidden hunger or taking the first steps towards food freedom.

Dr. Melissa: Absolutely. Well, if you want the real quick direct route, you can go to toomuchonherplate.com and take the quiz, and there're some simple daily things. One, respect that there is a reason. I don't care how tangled up you may feel with this stuff,

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there's a reason it's going on, and give yourself a break. And just remind yourself, "There's a reason I'm doing this. I'm a smart woman, there's a reason this is happening."

Number two, start asking yourself, "What do I know about what I'm feeling, what I'm needing, and what I'm craving?" You can ask it every morning, you can ask it every morning and every night, you can set a timer on your phone to go off every hour, and you can even title that timer. If you have an iPhone, you can title what the alarm is so that it just shows up on your phone, "What am I feeling? What am I needing? What am I craving?" And don't worry if you don't have an answer, just start working that muscle.

And number three, I think when things don't go your way, when you find yourself with the empty chocolate cracker or feeling like "Ugh, I did it again," go back through those steps and remind yourself. Be curious, there's a reason this happened. Beating yourself up just puts you in a corner of where there are no options other than guilt and shame and maybe more overeating. Try to reverse-engineer what happened there. "What do I know about what I was feeling? What was I needing? What was I craving?" Because there was a reason, and that act of curiosity is going to start to unlock things, and it's definitely going to change the patterns of guilt and blame and the stress eating and the comfort eating that happens because you feel bad about the eating that you just did. That's where you can start.

Stephanie: Those are amazing steps. I encourage you guys to give it a try and go get the information, that's a must. If you feel that little bit of numbing into your heart saying, "Oh, that's me," it's because it's a message. Go get the information, read it, and that might be the solution that you are looking for, that you've been searching for for the last 10 years and trying all kinds of plans. Maybe that's just in there, simple as that.

Thank you very much Dr. Melissa for being with us today.

Dr. Melissa: Oh, thank you. This is a so much fun, I really enjoyed it!

Stephanie: Thank you.

There you have it. I hope you enjoyed, and I'm so grateful that you're still with me at the end of this podcast. If you did learn something today and you enjoyed the show, there's a few things you can help me with to share this message. Number one, go to the show notes, stephaniedodier.com/061 and share the show notes on Facebook or Instagram, tag me, tag Dr. Melissa and tell us what you thought of the content and what you learned. And you can also leave a review, stephaniedodier.com/review on iTunes and let me know how this episode helped you and what would you like me to cover in the upcoming shows.

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Now, as I said earlier, this is the last episode of The Crave Cure Series. Coming up on show 62, I am going to start a new type of podcast. It will be a coaching style podcast, so it's going to be a shorter, less than 10-minute type of podcast. It's going to be a condensed version of what I do with my one-on-one patients on different topics. So a new style of episode following The Crave Cure Series because of the feedback that I'm getting from you and the help that you need. So come with me in the next show to see what this looks like and how it will help you because I know it will help a lot of you out there.

Again, very thankful and glad that you're here with me, and I will see you in Episode 62 with our first coaching podcast ever.

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