



INSTITUTE FOR THE  
**PSYCHOLOGY** *of* **EATING**  
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The Art and Science of Food and Body Coaching Summit Interview  
With Sarah Lucille and Amy Bondar

**Sarah Lucille-** Hey, everyone, it's Sarah Lucille here with the Institute for The Psychology of Eating, and we are here in the Art and Science of Food and Body Coaching Online Summit. And I am joined by nutritional therapist, Amy Bondar, who I'm going to talk to about nutritional therapy, what might that mean working with food, working with body. So if that's what you're interested in doing for yourself or you're interested in learning more about receiving that kind of work, this would be a great interview to tune in to. And who knows what might come up. So, Amy, I'd love to hear from you, you know, how you like to introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about what you do.

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, thank you, Sarah. So, yes, I'm a nutritional therapist and I've been practicing for 16 years in Calgary, Canada. And what I do is I nourish body, mind, and soul. And what that means to me is nourishing the body is about working with my clients and awakening them to the power of food, and doing whatever we can with nutrition to improve symptoms, alleviate conditions, optimize the body, and to ensure optimization of energy and vitality. And so working on that physical level that might mean customizing nutritional programs for clients, connecting people to the love and joy of eating, and also just working with all of the inundated confusion that we have out there and helping people get really clear on the path of nourishing well. Nourishing the mind for me is really working with my clients to help resolve the unresolved. So working with my clients to resolve the stresses, the conflicts, the challenges in their life that are often at the root of the manifestation of their symptoms, of their unwanted eating challenges, as well as their weight issues. And so to me that's a huge part of my work, and I just love that piece. And I feel it's a piece that's often missing in coaching. And I think that if we wanna really shift our relationship with food and have a great understanding of why we manifest what we do in our body and how we do food, then nourishing the mind is so important. And the third piece of my work I nourishing the soul. And that's where I really help my clients find their purpose, their mission, their joys, and encourage them to live from a place of inspiration every day, really creating their ideal day. Because what I find is that a lack of mission and purpose is often at the root of eating challenges, weight issues, fatigue, and a host of other conditions as well. So nourishment of the soul and truly doing what you love every day, and getting my clients excited to live their life that way is also a huge part of my work.

**Sarah Lucille-** Wow, I love it. And so agree with, especially the pieces we don't necessarily think about needing in our lives in order to feel better in the other place, like with food and body, the soul work being really, really cool. And I definitely wanna come back to that specific topic.

**Amy Bondar-** For sure.

**Sarah Lucille-** I'm curious before we do, this is something a lot of people think about, is the path into this work. What gets other people into it? What for you was the reason you decided that you wanted to first begin working in nutrition and what inspired you to bring in the body, the mind, and the soul work?

**Amy Bondar-** Mm-hmm, good question. I actually, I knew all the way back in high school, so quite a few decades ago, that I really, I always knew I wanted to help people but I wasn't really clear on what that was going to look like. And I ended up actually going into social work. That was my very first degree because I had that interest in counseling and supporting people. And I had a very special interest in eating disorders actually because I had many close friends that had severe eating disorders, and I also grew up with a mom who is in a generation of chronic dieting. And so dieting was just like whatever diet was out there, those books and talk about was all often in our home. So I had a very interest, a special interest in that but as I worked in social work for a short period of time, I just, I knew it wasn't what my soul was called to do. I wanted something more positive, more transformational, and somewhere where that I could take really what I love to do and inspire other people. So I often had a love for movement, a love for eating well, and having a great relationship with food. And I just wanted to inspire other people to do the same. And so I went into nutrition and I studied at the Edison Institute of Nutrition and I did that back in, well, many years ago, back in 2000, and loved working with that holistic idea of food and how can we optimize our health and just feel great by connecting to food, and using food as medicine. And as I began my practice and working with functional medical doctors, I just started to realize that there is such a bigger story than just the physical part of food. It's easy to start to tell somebody to change their diet and shift their diet, and customize nutritional programs, but when it really came down to following those, people would have challenge with following a protocol or a program for a period of time. They would often find themselves not being able to follow it because the emotional triggers started making them wanna crave food or eat foods that weren't on their protocol. And so I just sort of always knew that there is a bigger story or a deeper conversation that needed to be had with my clients. And I felt very comfortable going in to that realm, I suppose, because I had that counseling background. And then I came across an article years ago that Marc David wrote about the soul of the eater. I think it was called "Nourishment for The Soul", and I just absolutely resonated so deeply with what he was talking about about deep connection with food and eating with joy and purpose and pleasure. And I began to follow his work. And, gosh, back in 2006 or 2007 I started doing a certification, and then before I had my second son I did his, the IPE certification Training program to become a coach. And so, yeah, I just sort of always knew there was a deeper and more meaningful conversation to be had than just the foundations of physical nutrition.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yes, there's always that journey of this led to that, and this led to that. And I appreciate you sharing because I've also talked to people who beat themselves up for it from, like, I should have known, or, like, I've done so many things. And it always is that. It's always piecing together the things that complement each other, and they come in their own timing.

**Amy Bondar-** Absolutely. And we evolve and we grow and what we're attracted to and drawn to

at certain parts of our life are important at that time, but then we may find that we need to evolve into that. And so, yes, it's giving yourself permission to change paths or add something to what we're already doing and find our own, I guess, way, our own voice and all of it, right?

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah. How do you, when you're working with someone now, how do you, well, first before I go there, what's the main reason people might come to work with you at this phase in your career?

**Amy Bondar-** Number one, I would say, people are often referred to me for optimization of health, right? So they might be presenting with a health challenge and still will need to customize nutritional program for that. But I'm becoming more and more known to be the person to go to if people are struggling with their relationship with food. So I work with a lot of people who may need to do that optimization with health but also need to work on, well, why do I sabotage, what do my cravings mean. I can follow a program for a while but then I might end up binge eating or stress eating or emotional eating. And so I'll see a lot of plans in and around that as well. And I think, too, with working where I do with functional medical doctors, I bring in this mind, body, soul dimension. And so often when they, when we only get so far with the physical, we may now need to start looking at well, what is the emotional unresolved that needs to be looked at? And I use a specific tool called The Demartini Method to help clients resolve their issues. And for other people it may be that we don't even talk about food until we talk about nourishing that soul, right? If you're not fulfilled in doing what you love, your food will only take you so far. And I so I guess those that seek me out, I could do really all three, the physical, the mental, or the soul piece, but I think that sometimes we don't even know what we're working on until after that first initial intake, right, where I do the full story and get that full 90-minute conversation and really get a sense of where I need to work with that person. It may be we don't even talk about food until we do the soul or until we resolve the mental. Or maybe we really do just focus on the physical nutrition and then jump into something else as we go on the journey, right?

**Sarah Lucille-** Yes, that kinda goes back to the question I had, which is I'm going add to it because I'm already hearing the voice of our new coaches, where they haven't had their first session with someone yet. They haven't done an intake with someone before. And there's nervousness about that. And you know Marc David has approaches very much like you know when you know with clients. You have the tools to draw from but going in with a protocol beforehand usually isn't what we would advise because of what can come up. So for those who are new or those who are curious about doing this work, what helped you really exercise that intuition or skill to really be available to ask maybe preplanned questions, but to be willing to shift and pivot depending on what came up in that session with that person?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah. I've truly believed that there are no mistakes in who comes to work with us. And the person that's sitting in front of me or in front of you is the coach. There is a perfection and a hidden order in that and I fully, fully trust in that divine universal piece that's playing out. So I believe that those clients come to me for a specific reason because I have a message that I

meant to share with them and vice versa. They have something that's gonna help me grow as a practitioner or even as a person. And so just trusting in that is the number one thing, just that there is no mistakes. And so wherever that client or that session goes, wherever the conversation goes, I just trust it's meant to be that. I also trust that I will do my absolute best and that at saying that, that means be the most present with that client in the time that I have. And I trust that whatever comes through in that session is what is meant to come true. So again, there is no agenda. It's just let's go, I do have my set questions, but sometimes I jump from page one to page seven in my intake. And sometimes I don't even talk about weight at all and we're just talking about the major stress that happened at the moment of the manifestation of their eating challenge or their health challenge. So there is really no specific way that I go. I trust in the flow. And the third piece I think is just most important is, and Marc said this too, and it often stands out to me is just that we only need to be one step ahead of the person that we're supporting, right, and working with. And I think if we go in with that, it allows us to be much more relaxed, much more open. We don't need to know everything. We don't need to be the expert. We don't have to have all the answers, but just to be there to listen and be present and be certain with what you are meant to share with that client, that trust will just allow the session to flow and go wherever it's meant to.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah, I like the steps to that too. There's different ways of thinking about it. And one thing that stands out is the presence piece being a really important one. Are there things that you do for yourself before a session and even after a session that helps you get into that room or on that call and be at that level of presence?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah. I actually use essential oils. I love my essential oils, and so sometimes even doing this interview, right? So I just put a little bit of balance on my wrist, just inhaling some essential oil, that just helps me to feel grounded, to feel present, whatever that might be for me in that moment in that day. And I'll diffuse essential oils in my practice as well just to create an energy and a space and a calm that I'm looking for. So that's number one. And number two, yes, I always just take a few moments of deep breath. And I personally have a mantra that I've used for years and I actually started using it when I began speaking. And it was, I have the knowledge, I have the, oh, see now I can't even remember, but yeah, I have the . I have the knowledge, I have the wisdom, now go and inspire. Those are my lines. And I just say that to myself before a session. And again I just wholeheartedly trust in, and that just puts me in the place that I need to be. And I also love what I do. So when somebody comes to work with me, I mean it's an honor to sit with somebody. And I don't take that for granted. So whoever comes to my space, that's a gift. And I never want take that time for granted or be wondering what I gotta do next or wondering what emails I have to get rid of. It's just, it's you and me, and that's sacred to me. So that brings me to present in a very deep way.

**Sarah Lucille-** I like that a lot. And that I would feel very appreciative as the client of that.

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah. Yes.

**Sarah Lucille-** I had a funny story. I had a massage recently with someone who was late to the session. I was leaving the massage. The person before her left their bed in the room so they were like, she opened the door to talk to him while I'm laying on the bed. It was like this whole chaotic experience. And it really made me appreciate the difference between someone who comes in as though they came in unprepared and rushed and they don't really wanna be there, to what you just shared which is really sacred. Like you said, I'm here for you. This is our time together. I think that can be very healing in a way with clients who have felt kind of unheard--

**Amy Bondar-** Absolutely. And honestly I think that's why people come back, right? People don't come back necessarily because you've put them on the perfect way of eating or you've given this perfect, it's really because, they're coming back because of who you are and because of how you make them feel in the room and how rare is it to actually sit with somebody, I mean my consults are typically 90 minutes. So how rarely is it that we sit face to face with somebody for 90 minutes especially in the wellness or the healing industry and you get that full 90 minutes, right? And so that time is like, it is, it's very important to them, to me, and we get to do that, which is really, really a beautiful thing.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yes. Yeah, it is. What are the most common challenges you see with the clients you work with the most?

**Amy Bondar-** I would say number one is the mass confusion that people come in with. I think everybody is just so confused about what to eat and how to eat because of all of the messages, all of the books. I mean, the full diet industry. It is, it's confusing. And so I think people just don't even know what to do anymore, so there's a level of frustration and there's also a level almost of anxiety and fear around food because people don't know what to eat. And so I think that, number one. And I think the other challenge that I honestly see a lot and probably because this is my work and so this is what I attract, but I really do see so many people not doing what they love to do. And this lack of daily fulfillment, this lack of daily joy really contributes to eating to fill that void, to using sugar to feel happy, to using caffeine to give them energy because their work's not inspiring them to give them natural energy, right? So to me that's another huge challenge. And so it's a place that I spend a lot of time on and sometimes even encourage people to leave the jobs they're in. If I see that their health and their, and they know it too, right? If their health, their eating challenges, their weight are so much tied into the life that they're not loving, there's a lot of work there to do. And it's usually some of the most transformational work, because when we transform that, eating becomes completely different relationship, different story.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah. What would you say when that comes up with you noticing okay, this person's relationship with their career has come up? Enough that it's time to talk about it. What would you say your approach to that is? And everyone seems to be very different. Some people might be more direct. Here's what I think you need to do or more inquisitive. Do you have a style of coaching that you feel most comfortable with or comes naturally to you?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, I think I probably am. I'm probably a little bit of a balance of inquisitive and direct, but I think if I saw that somebody's not loving what they're doing and they, too, also feel that that's affecting their health and well-being and relationship with food, I mean, I just go right there, right? And just say, if you could do anything, if there was no sort of boundaries in your way, what is it that you would do? What would you love to do? And most people know, right, but it's the fear of going after it or the feeling of it's too late to start something new often will come up. But we usually talk about, well, if you did want to leave your job, if that was the example, if you did wanna leave your job, what are the action plans that you would need to do to do that? And what would be the benefits of leaving that job? What would be the drawbacks of leaving that job? And how would you move forward in creating something or going after your ideal job, right? And sometimes it's actually working with my clients and giving them their homework of spending time to actually create and write down what that ideal job would be for them. To image it, to imagine it, to ask for it, right? To put it out there that it's even a possibility. So that's some of the conversation that we may have around that.

**Sarah Lucille-** That feels less scary to me than this career is no good, you need to do something different which is what maybe your mom might say to you.

**Amy Bondar-** Oh, right, yeah.

**Sarah Lucille-** Versus that sounded, it's like, let's look at ways that could transpire, if you were to go in that direction.

**Amy Bondar-** Yes, and if it's not an option. 'Cause that's always possible, too, right? If it's not an option, then we look at, well, how is that career actually a benefit to you? What are the gifts in it and how is it serving you? What is the meaning in it? How is it supporting your financial growth? How is it supporting your family? How is it giving you the means to what you're really wanting to do, right? And so sometimes when we refrain and we look it that way, that changes the energy around it. And then it's also about then if the job can't be left, it's about, well, what can you do after your working, before or after or on the weekends that will really fill you up and inspire you, right? And is that doing creative stuff? Is that spending more time with your family? Is it traveling? So whatever it may be, and that just might be what we have to look at is creating the love list. And how can we then insert those loves into the day, into the week, into the month so that that steals the soul when perhaps the job's not doing that for you. And so it doesn't have to be one without the other, because obviously you can't just. That's not realistic for some people, right?

**Sarah Lucille-** Right, yeah.

**Amy Bondar-** But there's a lot of people that sometimes just need the encouragement and the space to give themselves permission to leave what they know they wanna leave, but for others who can't, well then we have to look at the blessings and the gifts and being where they are, right?

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah. I like that you used homework a few times. I say homework as well. And then some people might be like, what is homeworks?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah . I don't like homework.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah.

**Amy Bondar-** There's a far more inspiring word for that.

**Sarah Lucille-** I know, I haven't yet.

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah.

**Sarah Lucille-** What would be homework as the practitioner working with the client, how do you decide what that is and are there specific actions that you find you enjoy offering the most? And then what's your follow up with that?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah. Okay, well, it really depends what we're talking about, right? But I'll give you a few examples. So if we're just focusing on the physical nourishment, right? What I will tell you is that in my experience, most people really dislike keeping food journals. They really dislike tracking their food, right? And so what I encourage people to do is not so much the tracking of the food but really getting connected to how they feel every time they're eating. So it's just more of like a general check in. Whether they're writing it down, whether they're emailing it to me, whatever it may be, but how is it that what you just ate made you feel? From an energy, from a gut perspective, from an inflammatory perspective, just so that they're becoming more connected to what their food, how their food is affecting their physical health and even their mental and emotional well-being. So that's just number one, but I typically never give the homework of doing a food blog, but it's more of how did it make you feel awareness and tracking of that? There's also some great apps. I personally don't use the apps yet but there are some where a lot of people like to take pictures of their food. And so the great homework could be like, take pictures of your food, send it to me, and then I can give you some feedback on what that could be, and that could be an encouraging way to work with a client. That's not something I typically do, but I know quite a few coaches do that. Another piece of homework is the love list. I love, one of my clients need to work on creating a love list. Because a lot of times and people don't even really know what they would love to do. They've forgotten, right? They've left that part of their lives behind or never explored it in the first place. So just creating a love list of the things that they would either choose to do, like to do, or love to do. And then next to that list, I often encourage people to make a list of the things they feel they have to do, need to do, and should do. Because here's the thing is that so many people live from a place of need to, ought to, should do. And that definitely when you're living your day based on that, those are the days that you're likely feeling fatigued, like your day is running you, and like you're eating for fulfillment because you didn't get much inspiration and energy from doing what you actually love

to do. So it's important for people to sort of take stock of that list and the love list, and see where they're living from. And then when they bring that back, then we can begin to do some work around that? What can we delegate? What can we get rid of that should do, ought to list? And how can we bring in more of the love to, choose to, like to list. So that's another homework that I'll often give.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah, I love it 'cause it's so experiential .

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah.

**Sarah Lucille-** That's like my, when I was a teacher, most of our curriculum, alternative school, we did experiential curriculum. And I love that because it takes it, there's a difference between you giving the information of here's the difference between loving something and feeling like you should, but it actually puts you in the action of realizing where those things have been showing up in your life, because I could sit there and intellectualize about it forever because I love talking. And I used to joke that I would try to get an A at therapy. So I mean am I gonna be the best client ever? But that actually would challenge me to confront some habits or even boundary stuff. And I could see how that would lead to really important deeper work.

**Amy Bondar-** Absolutely. And I think especially when we're talking about relationship with food, right? So if you're not conscious and aware that your day was based on all the things you felt you had to do, and then you noted what you actually ate in that day. So if you had a binge eating or an emotional eating or whatever it was in that day, that it can become very connected and very clear, like, oh wow, the days that I was like, doing the stuff I hate doing and I feel I have to do, that's when my eating was horrible, right? But the days that I was doing what I love to do and when I was most inspired to do, my eating was awesome. Like it wasn't a thing. It was just I ate because it gave me energy, right? So that's a huge connection and a great piece of work, I think, to work on with clients, yeah.

**Sarah Lucille-** How often do you find that you're actually suggesting specific ways of eating or specific foods?

**Amy Bondar-** Oh, that's a good question. Again, I think just because based on where I'm working, if I'm working with my functional medical doctors in clinic, there's often a lot of time where I do, I do need to work on here's what we need to eat for this specific health condition, but I never do it from a place of all or nothing. I never create or give generic meal plans. I really, in my intakes I get an idea what people like to eat, what they really love to eat, what they don't like to eat. So that when I do create a meal's plan or some suggestions, they get excited about it, right? And it's not a diet. It's not about restricting. So yes, of course, there's foods we often need to take away to improve a specific health condition. But the focus for me is more on but what can you eat and how can you really embrace food in that way. So although I may be giving a specific program or protocol, if it's a therapeutic needed protocol, I come from off it from a real place of let's still connect with food and eat with joy and yeah, just like, connect to the energy

and vitality of food versus the restriction and the angst around eating, right?

**Sarah Lucille-** Yes. That came up, I was doing a live video but it was just a thought where I had been at one point in my life, I was very severely asthmatic. Marc and I had a similar story with health issues. And so, and someone came at me with a suggestion of you should quit doing this, my response was like, you're giving me another thing I can't do in life. It's another thing I have to cross off my list, and so I was very resentful and bitter about it. Years later, it was more of a curious exploration into experimenting with what is going to feel good to add or let go of. And it was like the same suggestion but I had a different result. I felt like so much better. I didn't have that resentment. And so I think the way, I love that you're mindful of the way you deliver that message.

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah. It's about empowering people, right, to make those right, those choices. And what you just said is spot on, too, about just being aware of how food makes you feel, right? So if I give somebody a suggestion, and I always say at the end, perfection is overrated so never strive for perfect. And if you happen to eat something that's not ideal because we know it may be a trigger for your health condition, it's okay. Just be aware of how it made you feel. So yeah, did it trigger an asthma attack? Did it trigger skin flare-up? Did it trigger gut issue, whatever it may be, right? So it's just helping them. I always say that one of the greatest things that I can do, I could teach you a lot of things about nutrition, but the greatest thing I can do is teach you to raise your level of nutritional consciousness. Just the awareness of how your food makes you feel, and that's it. You may come back and tell me that you ate a food that you shouldn't eat and you're fine. And I'll say, great, let's bring that back in, right? So that's really what it is. It's an exploration, it's an experiment often with food, right? It's not a all or nothing strict one way way--

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah. And for me it was what it was for then and realizing that your body role change over time.

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah.

**Sarah Lucille-** That was a big one 'cause I was like, holding on tight 'till I found this one way. And then when I needed to adjust, I needed to maybe allow in some more carbohydrates, it was very challenging for me because I was so scared to make one wrong move and end up with symptoms again. And we had someone ask us this question recently. They had listened to an interview we did with someone who does a specific protocol. And the question was around orthorexia and having health issues and trying to find that peaceful place where you don't go into obsession and fear because of what it might trigger in your body but you're also finding a way to be in nourishment so that those symptoms don't dominate your life. And I'm curious if that comes up for you with clients, the food obsession, and how would you meet someone in that place and help them find that more peaceful center?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, well, a few things pop up that I think are important to say here. And the

first one is letting go of that notion that you need to be perfect on a diet, because it's that meeting or that thinking that we have to be perfect so that we don't ruin our body really sets people up for stress and really sets people up for challenge with eating and orthorexia in a big way. So that perfection mentality has to go, right? And I think the second thing within that is trusting the body that your body will always give you those physical feedback symptoms to let you know of something worked and something didn't. And if you did eat something that didn't work, it's okay. Yes, your body will flare up or it'll give you a symptom but then just treat it better the next time and just don't put that food back in or flesh it out with water, eat really well for the next few days and avoid that food. But almost like thank the body for the symptom versus like fearing it or hating on it or hating on yourself 'cause you put that in there. 'Cause that just, anytime we're eating in the stress response, anytime we fear eating something right, wrong on the protocol, whatever it is, if we eat from that place, we can't heal the body anyway, right? Healing only happens in that parasympathetic state, right? It only happens in that place where we can fully be, and relax, and digest in joy and pleasure. And so when we're eating from that fear-based place, we're not helping the body to begin with. I hope that answers the question a little bit. But that's sort of what I would be thinking about, just that trust of the body, and a symptom is a symptom but it will go away. And I think we all ultimately just wanna feel our very best. So knowing those foods that make you feel your best most of the time are the ones that will make up that nutritional lifestyle for you, right?

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah. I think it's so relaxing to approach symptoms from that mindset, from that relationship. And this impacted me where we have a wellness culture especially online and in these books where it's like, someone's story and then now their health is perfect. And so we don't see the days where they're a little more fatigued than others. It says though it was like they never had another health concern, not even like a sniffly nose ever again. And I used to have that belief like, okay, so if I have one symptom, I'm screwin' something up. And I think it's important to hear from practitioners who say like, the point is to hear what your body's saying not to like, treat your body as though it has to be some kind of a machine that's constantly running perfectly all the time.

**Amy Bondar-** And here's the truth. And this is from the work of one of my other great teachers, Dr. Demartini. And that's some of the work that I do to help my clients nourish the mind in resolving their stress and conflicts. But his definition of wellness is the balance of a positive and negative. So at the exact same time in the body simultaneously we will have a balance of good things happening and a balance of things that are not great happening. So we're always having, we're having parts of our body that are well, healthy, and parts of our body that are imbalanced and in disharmony. We will never be free of symptom completely, right? So optimum wellness is the balance of both. And when you can just know that your body's going to be both, right? Like our blood cells, they're living and dying at the exact same time. That's balance. And so our food is the same, that you're gonna have days where the things are really awesome and super vibrant and days where, you know what, there's a little dirty in there too. And that's okay. The key is just are you listening to your body. Are you honoring those symptoms? And if you're listening to those symptoms and trying to do the good things for your body most of the time then

that's gonna take you far, but never ever expect that your body's gonna be free of symptom ever. That means you can't grow anymore, right, 'cause your symptoms are things that help us to eat better, take better care of our health, do whatever we need to do. Maybe it's oils, maybe it's supplements, maybe it's homeopathy, whatever it might be, but the symptoms are there for a reason, a purpose, but we can never be a 100% free of disharmony. The aim is optimum wellness but it's never 100% perfect ever. Does that make sense?

**Sarah Lucille-** Oh yes. I am all behind that message.

**Amy Bondar-** It's balance, my friend.

**Sarah Lucille-** Balance. Someone once said to me, I can't remember who and I've got it up with clients before but I think it was someone who did biomechanics. And they were saying balance, when you're walking, is essentially not falling. So you're preventing yourself from falling as you balance when you walk or as you balance on anything. It's the act of staying upright, which truly when we're in movement we're never rigidly straight without kind of feeling pulled in this direction and that direction. And I think that really helped see it in that way. It's almost looking at like, what is pulling me this way right now so that I can be aware? And you had used the word awareness earlier. You also talk about stress a lot and the impact of stress. And I've noticed that there's so many different ways that people view stress. I think there can be a universal understanding of why I'm stressed. This is stressful. And then there's the things that we may not even acknowledge as stress that's living in our bodies. How do you view and describe stress and work around stress with your clients?

**Amy Bondar-** That's a big question. Listen, we can't live without stress but how we react or relate to it is what's most important. First of all, I think just on a pure physical level. I mean there's lots of things that we can do to support our body to help us handle stress better, right? Whether that's our B vitamins, whether that's our adrenal supports, ensuring that we're eating really well and not fueling on caffeine and sugar and all those sorts of things. So I think in that sense having a really optimum vibrant energetic balance, macronutrient-balanced diet is a really great way to help us just handle with our day to day, handle our day to day life. Nourishing the mind, what I would say there on the stress piece, is that often how we view events is going to determine how stressful we are or not. And again, with this work of Dr. Demartini, what I do is ask quality questions for anything that's coming my way that's stressing me. So often the things that stresses out, we immediately think of all the bad negative drawbacks of those things, right? But the things that we actually, whatever is stressing us in that moment, the quality question to ask and something you can use in your coaching with people is how is this serving me, what are the benefits, what are the blessings, what am I learning, how is it helping me to grow, how is it helping me be a better practitioner, a better mother, a better whatever, right? So the quality of your questions determines the quality of your life, as Dr. Demartini says. And so this is a really important piece because when you can see that every event has that balance of positive and negative energy again, then the event is just the event. You don't let your emotions go crazy on you, right? You balance it out by equilibrating your mind with those specific questions. So yes,

stressful things have negatives, but there's also benefits, blessings, positive teachings and gifts in that. And when we can ask and see that, then our stress response stays pretty even keeled, right? Pretty balanced. And then the third piece of the nourishing the soul on stress would all about coming back again to not doing what you love to do. That's stressful when you're not doing what you love. That creates stress, right? So, again, filling your days, your weeks, your months, your year with the things that inspire you, that are meaningful to you, that you love, that certainly will keep the joy and pleasure factor up high and the stress factor down much, much lower. So those would be the three ways that I would tackle stress if I was nourishing body, mind, soul.

**Sarah Lucille-** I love that all the things come in threes for you .

**Amy Bondar-** I can't go without, that's my practice. That's what I've built and created because I just can't see one without the other. I think that they're so entwined, and to have a conversation with one and out the other, it just doesn't seem quite complete.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah, and three's a pretty magical number, and I love it. You mentioned mind, nourishment and then you also have soulful nourishment. And it's interesting because I now having been in the health coaching world for, whatever, many years, I don't even know, I think it was seven or eight years ago, that I even heard the word nourishment. That wasn't a word that I grew up with. And I know that's the same story for many people. And so we see it a lot in health and wellness coaching because we're very familiar with it, what it means to be nourished. And how would you describe like, what a state of soulful. I don't know why that word's so hard for me, soulful nourishment is. What does it mean to be nourished? And then what would soulful nourishment?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, I think what it means to be nourished is, again, just what feels really good, what feels really good with food, what feels really good mentally, emotionally, and what feel really good in my soul. So when I'm in nature, I am nourished. It feeds me. It excites me. It inspires me. I feel my most authentic self there when I'm with clients, I am nourished. It's feeding my soul. It's giving me some, just this feeling of nourishment. That's the word. It just gives me a feeling, right, it's giving. So that's sort of really what I would look like. So whatever it is that inspires and nourishes you, that feeds you, that gives you that sense of like fulfillment and fullness and completeness, that would be soulful nourishment. And that's different for everybody. For some people that's as simple as just like reading a book. For other people, it's drinking that sacred cup of coffee. So it's like never take coffee away from people that have a soulful connection to coffee. I don't drink coffee. I've never liked it, but people really have this thing where it feeds them, right? It could be going to a movie. It could be walking with your partner. It could be doing your work that you love to do. I mean, whatever it is. Creating, art, whatever, playing music. There's so many ways that that feeds and nourishes the soul, right? Yeah.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yes, that coffee is for sure mine. Not a doubt. And in some of those nostalgia

too, just with my grandparents and there's no worry there. And when I was in the Training I actually had a question from Marc about a client I was working with who had that kind of relationship with smoking cigarettes. And she had a bunch of other stressors in her life around things that she couldn't control and was just, like that was the one thing she would go out, have a smoke. And I was of the mindset, like how do I, and she was of the mindset, how do I help her quit smoking? And I had a peer coach in the Training as we do the peer coaching thing who said she nearly spit out her water when she heard him say, I wouldn't even go there with her. I wouldn't even bring up quitting smoking. That's not what the work is asking you to do right now.

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, beautiful, yeah.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah, and I was like, this can be wellness. The smoking was in place for a reason and it may or may not exit her life and be replaced within different nourishing habit. But to just take it away while all these other things were happening, I wouldn't have been showing up where she was and--

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, meeting the client where they're at, it's so important, right? And I think that's what we do with food and that's where, or collectively that's where society is coming from with food is that it's all about restricting, taking away, removing that joy, removing that pleasure. And I think that sets people up for failure. And I think that's why they'll jump to the next diet because that last one didn't work, 'cause you know I can't maintain that. Who can maintain that, right? So it's like, yes, how do we meet people where they're at and give them the support, the solutions, the suggestions that they can do and that they're excited to do.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah.

**Amy Bondar-** And then some things you just don't touch until they're ready and like Marc said, they may not be ready and that may not be where the work needs to be anyway, right? Yeah. Sometimes we have to be careful of our own charges or our own judgements that might come in, right, to a session as well, right? 'Cause you may, as many of us do, may have a charge on smoking, and that's so bad and it's not good for your health, right? But if we just took that charge away and that judgment and actually saw how it was serving her, because maybe without it her health will be even worse. Maybe that's the only moment she was getting some deep breaths and relaxation and calming anxiety or whatever it may have been, right? So yeah, sometimes we have to sort of remove our own sort of stories around things to have a clean conversation with people.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yes, that is such a good point. I so appreciate that because that's another art of coaching skill is checking your own biases and checking your own beliefs, and making sure that's not what your coaching from.

**Amy Bondar-** Absolutely. And especially in the diet world when there so many different ways of eating, I often say that to my clients is just that I'm not married to any diet. The only diet that I

care about is the one that's right for you. And I'm using the word diet loosely, right, but yeah. Because so many people will come in and expect their clients to, all of a sudden, turn from vegan to paleo or from eating keto and then going into a high carb diet, or maybe it's vice versa, right? Maybe it's the paleo person that now needs to be plant-based vegetarian, right? So we can't bring in our own sort of beliefs with diets. We have to really understand what works for each individual unique body type. And I think that's so important in the field of nutrition right now.

**Sarah Lucille-** Do you personally have a favorite client story or favorite experience in your work so far that just kind of brings you back to the why or why you're doing all this?

**Amy Bondar-** I do, I do. If I can share it. And this is the really great example of the nourishing the body, the mind, and the soul, so I will share it. Thank you for asking. So I had a client, she was 27 at the time that she came to see me. And she was part of this lose to win program, right? So there is a, I was the nutritionist as part of the program and there was personal trainers as well. So she came to see me and she presented with polycystic ovarian syndrome, insulin sensitivity, and fertility challenges. And of course she wanted to lose weight as well. And so when I looked and assessed her diet it was very clear. I mean, it was a very insulin-dominant spiking diet, right? It was very estrogen-dominant as well. High carbs, lots of grains, very little, if any essential fat. Her protein was fine. No vegetables, a lot of fruit. So her macronutrient balance was very imbalanced and definitely from a physical place I could see. Well, yeah, this is like a no-brainer. Let's just tweak those, adjust her diet, get her onto whole food, et cetera, and a lot of those insulin and estrogen condition should probably improve. And so she came back for her follow-up about a month later. She'd been working out five days a week, and eating as I had sort of suggested to her, and she lost zero weight. And I was a bit surprised because I mean, her diet literally I'm not exaggerating, she was probably eating seven to eight servings of refined grains a day. So I was surprised. There was no budge. And so I then went deeper. And a lot of my work is about understanding when and why somebody manifested their symptoms and conditions. And so one of the things that I've studied over of years is something called German New Medicine. And that looks at the emotional shock or conflict that may have happened at the time of the manifestation of a symptom or illness. So I was curious about her polycystic ovarian syndrome. She was diagnosed with it at 19. And I was like, that felt sort of young to me. And I understand that the connection with ovaries according to German New Medicine is that anything to do with the ovaries has to do with the significant loss conflict. So I had asked her, was there anything going in and around that time that she was diagnosed with that that had to do with a significant loss conflict? And she said yeah, I lost everything. At the time, I cheated on my fiance. At that time, I lost him, I lost his family. My family turned on me and all my friends that I knew turned on me. So my life, as I knew it, I lost. And I was like, well, that's really interesting. And she said, and to this day I carry so much guilt and shame about the affair that I had. So I had a very strong intuition that that unresolved conflict and that unresolved emotion was definitely contributing to the physiology being stuck. So physically she was doing everything right so to speak, to improve her health, but there is a physiological shift and block that wasn't allowing it to take place. So all that great food she was eating, the working out, et cetera, wasn't

working yet. And so that's often because there's an unresolved emotional block in my experience.

**Sarah Lucille-** Wow.

**Amy Bondar-** So I did the work of the Demartini method with her which is a series of questions that helps people equilibrate their mind. And one of those questions was really about looking at the benefits of her affair and how it was actually a benefit to her. So when she had her affair, how did it serve her, how did it serve the fiance at the time, how did it serve all the family members she felt she hurt, the friends, et cetera? And we looked at all the benefits and blessings and gifts and the divine messages and the hidden order behind that affair. And she came to realize all these incredible things, but mostly she realized that if she would have stayed with him, if she never would have had that affair, she would've lived a life that she never wanted to live, she wouldn't be living in her authentic self and doing what she really wanted to do. And so by looking at all of the benefits and doing this whole method which is about two and a half hour method and process, she resolved some major stuff that she was holding on to to the point where by the end of the session I told her to go look at herself because she looked younger. She had de-aged in the session. She looks softer, she looks younger. And like it was a real physical shift that took place. It was quite fascinating. And she also realized that her weight was symbolically there for a reason. She realized that her weight was a protection for her, because at the time she had the affair, she was the thinnest she had ever been. She looked the best she had ever been. And so she had a fear that if she kept her or if she continued to look that way, she will continue to attract men in her life. The person she had the affair with was actually her current husband now, but she wanted to make sure that she wouldn't be attractive to other men, so she held her weight for a reason. So we ended up writing a letter. She wrote a letter to her weight thanking it for how it's protected her, how it served her. The understanding she had of it now, and she wanted to let it go, and she also wanted to release all the shame and guilt she'd be carrying about that, about that affair. And so about three weeks later we followed up and she had lost 16 pounds.

**Sarah Lucille-** Wow.

**Amy Bondar-** So finally that unresolved stuff that let go, her physiology relaxed, her mind equilibrated, and then all that great stuff she was doing with her nutrition and her exercise started to take effect. And then a year later I ran into her at the health food store and she was pregnant. So her fertility challenges were no longer fertility challenges. And she is now living the life of her dreams. She wanted to be married to her soulmate and she wants to have a family, and that's fully nourishing her soul. So that's a perfect example of how sometimes we chase that physical level. We always focus on food and exercise, et cetera. And we can only get so far. And if we're stuck, and if there is those unresolved pieces, that's an area to definitely play in and explore. And if you're not comfortable exploring that, then somebody else will show up that will be comfortable exploring it, but typically, again, those people that come before us are there for a reason. And I think that we have words, resources, anything that we can do to support people

where they're at. But that's one of my favorite stories. That was a huge transformational shift physically, mentally, and soulfully.

**Sarah Lucille-** Yeah, I can see why. Yeah, it's my favorite. That's so, it's so amazing. And it's like in two ways. She could have been another, it's like a terrible thing about like I use casualty of the dieting world where it could have been a life long journey of diet-exercise, why isn't this working, this diet, exercise wise, and it's working, which tends to be the cycle. And you intervened in such a beautiful non-judgmental way even toward yourself, even toward like, okay, that didn't work. Time to be more curious instead of forcing more of the same which--

**Amy Bondar-** Yes.

**Sarah Lucille-** Which kinda goes back to why I love coaching. It's no matter what kind of practitioner you are, there's still coaching that comes in to that relationship and if you're doing it in that way. If you were, for a lot of people who are new to coaching or considering coaching, if you were to offer them a piece of wisdom that would have helped you when you were at the beginning of your journey in this work, what would that be?

**Amy Bondar-** Trust yourself. Fully trust yourself. Sometimes you get those little voices that come in or that thing like you think you're supposed to say this but then you don't because you trust yourself, and just be who you are as you are in your sessions. Be your authentic self. And again, just remember that there is no mistakes in who's showing up in front of you. And those will be my three pieces.

**Sarah Lucille-** Another three. Yeah .

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, three .

**Sarah Lucille-** Love it. Amy, thank you so much. People are now wanting to, I know, find out more about you and what you do and how to get in touch with you. What would be the best first place for them to go?

**Amy Bondar-** Yeah, my website, it's amybondar.com. A-M-Y-B-O-N-D-A-R.com. And all my information is on there. And you can contact me in any way that's on there that you can see. Thank you, Sarah, this was super fun. And I enjoyed seeing where our conversation was gonna flow and go today, right? We didn't really have an agenda. We were just gonna go with it. And look at this, we had a beautiful conversation. So thank you very much.

**Sarah Lucille-** Well, thank you. And thank you, everyone who watched. We appreciate your time, too, and we'll see you in the next one.