

You're listening to episode 131 of the Devoured podcast. Welcome to Devoured, the podcast for women like you who have tried restrictive diet after diet, and are ready for simple solutions and resources to help you lose weight for the last time, from a place of abundance and peace. If you're looking to end the yo-yo of comfort eating and rigid weight loss protocols, and instead step into living your life on your terms while losing weight in the process, you're in the right place.

Okay, so our last episode was on insulin resistance, and that episode was just about 20 minutes, go back and listen to it, especially all the way through the end, it's really important that you understand from a biochemical standpoint what is happening and why our different intangible choices, our thoughts and our feelings, are affecting tangible outcomes, meaning our trend towards more insulin sensitivity, or potentially our trend towards more insulin resistance, those are really, really important subjects when it comes to losing weight.

So now that you know about insulin resistance, let's bring another hormone into the mix, which is leptin. So, what is leptin? Leptin is a protein produced by fat cells that is a hormone acting mainly in the regulation of appetite and fat storage. Leptin tells your brain that you have enough energy stored in your fat cells to engage in normal, relatively expensive metabolic processes, like moving your body, fidgeting, working out strength training, cardiovascular expenditure.

So let's use an example where you might be starving yourself, legit starvation, which is different than fasting, let's say that you have decreased energy intake, and let's say you lose some weight. Now your leptin level goes below your personal leptin threshold, and more research still needs to be done on those different leptin thresholds, this is still a newish area of research, but I think leptin's really important, because this is a lab that you can ask for from your medical practitioner, to see your leptin levels.

And remember, leptin's made in body fat cells, and this is where I was telling you before in the last episode, our body fat is a secondary endocrine organ, it's not a primary, right? Like our different sex organs, those are primary endocrine organs, their main job is dealing with our endocrine system, our hormonal system, but we have different tissue and different other organs in our bodies that are hormonally active, and our adipose tissue, our fat cells, are one of them, and this is one way in which they're active.

So when we are truly starving, we're chronically under-eating, we're never giving our bodies a chance to burn into body fat, so they are... We're chronically under-eating, and moving less and less, and reducing our metabolism drastically, right? We're creating an environment where metabolism's shut down, when that happens, our brain senses starvation, the leptin levels go below our personal leptin threshold, and this is... I want you to be thinking about leptin like a thermostat, and it helps us stay in a place of homeostasis.

So not only is leptin a thermostat that helps us stay in a place of homeostasis, remember, leptin is a hormone that act mainly in the regulation of appetite and fat storage, so appetite is affecting how we're thinking about what we're driven to be eating, how often we're driven to be consuming foods, that thermostat itself is affected by different factors, so it's a thermostat, but it is also being affected and can be acting as a thermostat that's a bit out of whack. So just like how in insulin resistance there is insulin in our bodies and our cells are just kind of numb to it because it's... Remember, if our insulin is always circulating through our bloodstream, our cells can get used to that. That's what that insulin resistance is, and the insulin is no longer acting in the way it's intended to, to help open up the cells, to draw blood glucose into the cells for cellular energy.

The same thing can happen with leptin, and just like how we need insulin, no insulin in our bodies is a very, very bad thing, you can ask anyone who has type one diabetes or is knowledgeable about those

conversations, we need leptin. Leptin levels can increase as body weight from body fat increases, so while we want plenty of leptin, we also want plenty of sensitivity to that leptin. This is what signals us hormonally to understand physiologically, safely physiologically, that food is plentiful, but we don't feel consumed, or might I say devoured, with thinking about it all the time.

So while thought work can help with that, we might habitually have some habits that are creating a compulsive relationship with food, food choices can also help with that, right? Those foods that really light up our brains or are hyper-palatable, like flour and sugar, remember that there's also a tertiary, or a third factor here, is that all this is biochemically driven.

So, leptin is produced in our body fat stores, so when we gain more body fat, we have more potential to make more leptin, even if we're resistant. Now here's the catch, this is why this is a quickie episode, if you did your due diligence and you listened to the last episode, the best way to begin to regulate leptin sensitivity is to do exactly what you do to get insulin levels down to a normal, appropriate place. Isn't that cool?

This goes a really long way in supporting our own liberated view of what makes sense for us, as when we start to understand that not only we can have lephold, like personal thresholds, and we can have different levels of resistance to our own inherent leptin, and that that's being created in our body fat cells, that our body fat is... It's not just willy-nilly not doing anything for us, it's not this thing that sucks and blows, we need body fat, it's working for us 24/7, what we're coming back to at the end of every day, at the end of every episode here, is what are we doing to be regulating ourselves?

What are we doing that helps our homeostasis and experience of stress to be expanded, that we have expanded capacity for stress? Can we lift the heavy weights, can we sleep deeply, can we consume enough food and still be losing body fat, and still be showing our bodies that safely, they're safe enough to come into a place of regulation where they no longer need to be losing body fat, because now the leptin is in place, now the insulin sensitivity has been normalized, now that that is our chronic experience of life? That's what a lot of this stuff comes back to, and again, I'll say it again and again, I know that a lot of you have come to this show, hear me talk about these intangibles of health, but y'all need to know I'm a geek, and so what's also happening from a physiological standpoint is very important. I think for every single person, more education is more empowerment.

Sometimes we can take education and run with it in a way that harms ourselves. You see this happening a lot, especially with... You see this happening a lot with people who take whole food diets to a place that might actually be too extreme for them, they never eat sugar, they're never allowed to ever touch certain foods, they only eat unprocessed foods, they might never eat animal meat, or they might never touch dairy, or things that perhaps for them are actually too restrictive, but if we can come into regulation, we can find a way to be encouraging our own homeostasis that can encourage a stressor here and there, but that we have the capacity then because of our own inherent regulation to be able to overcome.

So, that brings us beyond leptin resistance, but I think it's really important, I want y'all to know that's why I'm bringing up these tangibles of health, insulin resistance, leptin resistance, episodes in the future, is because I want you to have an understanding of what's happening in your body.

That's very powerful, to be able to walk into a doctor's office or have a telehealth consult, and to understand not only lab work that you have had, but to be able to advocate for future lab work, to be able to read and interpret, and then have discussions from a medical standpoint with professionals, is very empowering, and can help contextualize the different options so you feel less hyper-focused on, "Oh my God, what am I eating for dinner? Oh my God, can I not have a snack after dinner? Oh my God, wait, am I allowed to have that?" All that mental stuff can be put into context, so you can really say,

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"Well, what is it that I'm trying to be regulating here? Where is it that I'm trying to go with my health and wellness, and why is that?"

So, I hope that that was a cool episode for you. Again, if you haven't, go listen to episode 130, the one before this, on insulin resistance, because how we regain from our understanding of leptin right now, and what we see in terms of if you look up studies and you start to see what researchers and scientists and medical practitioners see with lab work before and after for someone who's showing signs of leptin resistance, is that what we do from a place to regain leptin sensitivity is the same stuff we do to regain insulin sensitivity.

So I hope that's helpful, if you do have questions, of course, remember I'm always linking up in the show notes where you can find me, go ahead, reach out, I want you to all know you've got this. Did you know you can find more support from me on my website? Go to [luciahawley, L-U-C-I-A-H-A-W-L-E-Y, .com](http://luciahawley.com) to connect.