

NBAFT S3E3 Ander extras - 10:3:21, 12.22 PM

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SPEAKERS

Kendra, Megan

Kendra 14:30

Hello, our beautiful listeners. This is Episode Three of nobody asked for this: a diet culture take down I'm Kendra.

Megan 14:39

Megan.

Kendra 14:41

And on this episode today, y'all. We're talking with Ander Wilson. It's about religion and food, religion and diets. Wow, is it good? Can I just tell you that we had such like good conversation that at least 20 minutes of it is going to find its way to our Patreon to not overwhelm the episode. So if you listen to this, and you're like I need some more of that, get on over to our Patreon. It's linked on our IG account. And not only will that be there, but several other wonderful things as well for you to have. So we would love for you to join our little community over there.

Megan 15:19

Yes,

Kendra 15:20

Here's what we have to talk about before we get into this episode. Hopefully, a lot of you know that this past Friday, we released the first episode in our new mini series the weigh down, take down.

Megan 15:30

Hey,

Kendra 15:31

Hey! where we really get into this docu series that is on HBO called the way down about the weigh down workshop and Remnant Fellowship Church in Nashville, because we are the podcast that we are,

and we have, you know, Megan is in Nashville, a number of our guests live in Nashville. The Remnant Fellowship is in Nashville. We've talked about this before. And in today's episode with Ander, we talk about it again. But we want to be just remind you that all of our interviews, basically for this season were recorded at minimum a year ago, and this one was recorded in 2019. So without giving too much away, for those who are like, I'm gonna go watch that. I'm gonna go watch the episodes the HBO episodes, and I'm gonna stay away from the media telling me what's up to date right now with the remnant church just know. That events that have unfolded in the last year. Yeah, we recorded this before that happened.

Megan 16:33
right.

Kendra 16:34
We're real excited about this miniseries, we're, I mean, it's kind of all of a sudden, it was like, Oh, this is happening? We're, they're shedding a light on this hugely problematic, oh, church, as they call themselves or cult as we might refer to them. And we're going to be doing these mini series as we can. And if you didn't catch it, go back and listen to it. But we're also really excited. Megan, do you want to share about our amazingness?

Megan 17:02
Yes, I do. Okay, so the reason that I even know even found out about the Remnant Fellowship in the first place, was through a friend, personal friend, and also friend of the podcast, if that's a thing. Haley Osier. Who actually attended the Remnant Fellowship one time on a recruitment night. Spoiler, spoiler alert, if your church has recruitment nights, it might be a cult. So we're going to have her on an episode and she's going to tell us about what she experienced there and what it was like to be there in the presence of Gwen.

Kendra 17:43
Yes. Yeah. I'm really excited to hear from Haley about her experience there. And I'm really grateful that she's willing to share it. Yeah, cuz, you know, if you're watching the docu series, you know, there's a lot

Megan 17:59
It's wild.

Kendra 18:01
It's real wild. So as always, we just want to let you know we do talk about diets and specific language of diets within the church outside of the church. So take care of yourself. Listen, if that feels good to you, and if it doesn't, don't listen. And as always, this podcast is for information and education purposes only. Please do not take anything we say as professional advice.

Kendra 00:02
And now it's time for Shut the fuck up. When we talk about diet culture, in pop culture, in our interview today with Ander Wilson, she shares with us ways that we see religious language, show up culture, just

within culture, particularly how it is used in, you know, we'll call them main mainstream or secular diet programs.

Megan 00:28

Yeah.

Kendra 00:29

that is always just a fascinating thing to talk about.

Megan 00:32

Yeah.

Kendra 00:32

And so, you know, like talking about Atkins and how we talked about it being the Last Supper. You know, like the last big meal before you decide to start a diet is crazy, just a whole lot of stuff. I decided, we're all very aware that there are even within Christendom, we'll say specifically, there are a lot of authors out there who are real desperate to make \$1 and real desperate to prey on your insecurities and really want to mess with you and so they write books where they claim that the all the way to Jesus and the way to God is through the food you eat. So I did a little you know, a pretty simple Google search that we're all capable of doing. And found a whole list of books and some of these titles y'all I just can't Okay,

Megan 01:24

So these are book titles...

Kendra 01:26

book titles for authors who I mean I guess they're Christians and they have written these diet books like let's diet with Jesus, thankfully was not the name of any of these books. Please, nobody get any ideas and write that book. But anyway. Okay, so here's the list. And I have no authors attached to these because I'm not trying to give anyone any great props or credit.

Megan 01:51

great great I like that.

Kendra 01:54

For all you know, I made them up. No, I did not. These are real books, you guys. These are real books, real stories with real people. Viewer discretion.

Megan 02:02

(laughs) you got real serious...

Kendra 02:05

What shows us that well in order anyway,

Megan 02:09

yeah.

Kendra 02:10

The makers away. Could be about I'm a crafter, that diet and Jesus not the thing I think about

Megan 02:18

it sounds very crafty or like pottery even pottery chips. Pottery chips with Joanne

Kendra 02:26

well, and that could very well be a making pottery with Jesus. Yeah, this is the potter

Megan 02:33

and we are the clay.

Kendra 02:34

We are the clay. That's right. Healthy Eating God's way.

Megan 02:40

Hmm. Had I just can't remember like much in the Bible about like, what to eat past like, past like the hood stuff and shrimp. Like, you know?

Kendra 02:52

Yeah. Yeah. And well, yeah, and majority of the kind of prominent stories of food are that we should make sure everybody has some

Megan 03:11

(cackle)

Kendra 03:11

food scarcity and are

Megan 03:13

more radical than like what we should be eating. Yeah. Okay.

Kendra 03:18

Okay, speaking of the next one, what would Jesus eat? No dying. I'm dying for the bracelet. w w. j. e. I'm gonna make myself because I'm human. Yeah, I'm going to wear it. And when people ask me, what does that mean? And like we all remember, what would Jesus do? This is Jesus eat. It's like a whole year thing. The next one's called the pray fit diet, which I don't even want to talk about. Okay, this one's hard, y'all just be prepared. This next one is called freedom from emotional eating, more weight loss Bible study, yikes.

Megan 04:05

yikes. Also, I would just like to point out that even intuitive eating which like a lot of people kind of, kind of consider like, the latest most evidence based sort of way to eat without restriction, but it's still like supportive if you want to pursue health. And like, even in the last edition of intuitive eating, they took out emotional eating because they were or they or they at least like had a discussion about how like it is not bad.

Kendra 04:39

Yeah, they changed the the principle. Right to not to not essentially mean that though. Part of the work of intuitive eating is to not emotionally they sometimes emotionally eating is a good thing for us to know.

Megan 04:53

It's like a birthday is having birthday cake. Like that's emotional eating. That's social and emotional bonding. Like that's supportive of our health because yeah, it's connection and community.

Kendra 05:04

Well and I'm just like what are the verses you all are pulling from to tell people to not emotionally and I'm gonna tell you right now if it's Jesus in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights, I'm gonna burn the book. Then there's the Daniel plan may be one of the most prominent of these nonsense books. And my favorite thing about the Daniel plan is that it's written by three dudes one of which is Pastor Rick Warren, who absolutely knows about what it means for nutritious like for people to have nutrients so totally qualified to write a write

Megan 05:42

just a just a megachurch pastor, right?

Kendra 05:44

just a big old mega church pastor.

Megan 05:47

So I'm sure yeah, like in his in depth studies, he covered a whole a whole section about nutrition. Yeah, it's

Kendra 05:54

real prominent in seminary and education. Yeah, right.

Megan 05:57

Yeah.

Kendra 05:59

Ben, okay, then we get into some books that are more modern. So a lot of those were written. You might look at the cover and go oh, that was written like in the 90s. Don't be fooled y'all. This stuff is still getting written. And these book covers are like that. They look like boho with like sweeping letters. And y'all know what I'm saying...

Megan 06:21

They are getting hip to the times.

Kendra 06:23

The next book is called full. And the tagline of this book, food, Jesus, and the battle for satisfaction.

Megan 06:34

Huh.

Kendra 06:35

And the author in this one talks about their quote unquote, sugar addiction

Megan 06:41

nananananana and their sugar detox.

Megan 06:46

Speaking of Ander our guests on this episode, you can revisit season two episode one where Ander takes us through why you cannot be addicted to sugar. I'm gonna say it again. You cannot be addicted to sugar, because you cannot be addicted to food, because it keeps you alive,

Kendra 07:07

correct? Yes. Okay, the next book is called fulfilled. So we got a we got a theme here, full, fulfilled, let go of shame, embrace your body and eat the food you love. Now, this book is written from a faith. What kind of claims is that it is a faith based perspective on intuitive eating to which my question is, why,

Megan 07:36

why?

Kendra 07:37

Why can't people just read intuitive eating?

Megan 07:39

Because it's secular, secular kinja. Then

Kendra 07:43

there's another one similar called grace, food, and everything in between also written from a faith based quote unquote, faith based perspective on intuitive eating.

Megan 07:55

You know, do you think that the whole premise in intuitive eating about not moralizing food, do you think when we put a word like grace next to a word like food that that is supportive and sort of dismantling the moralizing food because I just don't think that i think that that actually reinforces the morality of like putting moral value on food?

Kendra 08:18

Yeah, absolutely. No question about it. Okay. All right, y'all buckle in. Couple more for you. Made for paradise. Okay, paradise referring to before the fall of man quote unquote, of Adam and Eve. Oh, eating from a tree

Megan 08:38

Okay, so it's not even about heaven.

Kendra 08:41

Well, I mean, I guess you could interpret it that way to. Gods The reason I say that is because this is the rest of the title. Okay. original plan for healthy eating physical activity and rest and they use the bodies the temple like not correctly I'll just say not correctly

Megan 09:01

right? Because like like as we know and Leviticus 4:23 God does lay out a nice exercise and eating plan for us all to follow.

Kendra 09:11

Yeah, that's where we get these like stretches that we do lunges and

Megan 09:15

these yeah, because God told me stretch stretching. We forgot about the sacred stretching chapter

Kendra 09:20

forgot about it. original plan for healthy eating. I can't,

Megan 09:26

I can't What does that mean?

Kendra 09:29

You know what, how they don't even know what that means?

Megan 09:31

No. They mean original, original. Original.

Kendra 09:37

I mean, I could go on about the original like Genesis, the text of that the two different accounts that are in Scripture and the accounts that are not in Scripture that account for the creation of the earth and all these other things.

Megan 09:49

Heyyyy,

Kendra 09:49

there is it enough actual understanding and data for you to be able to claim that you know what healthy eating was and what that means for us in the year 2021

Megan 10:00

yeah, lightly like we don't even have time to talk about like, healthy eating as a concept and like it being almost meaningless. But also the original plan makes me think that like, are we preparing food with no electricity then? Because there was none a long long long time ago so like, Are we just eating all raw food? Are we killing our own protein if we're eating animal food like what? I just what?

Kendra 10:34

Well, there are and I don't know if this is part of this particular book, because I will never be picking this book up but I do know that there are some claims that veganism is how we should be eating or we should only be eating raw, like a raw diet and they make a similar connection to like, the garden the original. Yeah, before the fall like

Megan 10:56

Just I love my microwave. I love my stove and oven. I love my refrigerator?

Kendra 11:04

What woman wants to live in Genesis? No, no,

Megan 11:07

none none women?

Kendra 11:10

Probably no man either.

Megan 11:12

And get blamed for the fall of man again. No thanks.

Kendra 11:15

No. been there done that.

Megan 11:18

It didn't work out well.

Kendra 11:21

Once shame on me for me. Shame on you fool me twice.

Megan 11:25

You're never gonna fool me again.

Kendra 11:29

Okay, the last book is called win crush. And maybe this is the worst one to be fair, is when Christians get sick. And it's written by a guy. I think a guy who had cancer and then makes some connections to what we need to eat. So we don't get cancer.

Megan 11:53

You know when now I have gone from sad to mad and other

Kendra 11:57

things. But yeah,

Megan 11:58

and rage as a as a daughter of a man that had cancer and then a stroke and is now passed. I want to fucking slap this person. I'll probably slap them in my dreams tonight. Honestly, Oh, wow. How problematic.

Kendra 12:22

so problematic. And here's what we have to say to these people who continue to manipulate and profit attend to profit off the vulnerabilities of society in the name of Christianity in the name of Jesus. I would like to on behalf of Jesus say shut the fuck up!

Megan 12:48

Did you hear that everyone Kendra is now speaking on behalf of Jesus. And she and Jesus say Shut the fuck up. Okay.

Kendra 12:58

I'm just joking. jokes, jokes.

Megan 13:00

Sure, sure, sure. But also it's a fun little experiment in your mind a thought experiment to think about like, if you've heard the story of Jesus overturning the tables in the temple because they were selling things like just picture all these books on all these tables and Jesus like running through turning them over turn them over left and right like he's Theresa judaize and just taking that shit.

Kendra 13:25

he was big mad Jesus was big mad when that happened. Yeah, because they were doing exactly what these people were doing. Which was taking advantage of the vulnerable in the in the temple. Right so just you know, hire everyone just like Shut the fuck up. Okay, thank you.

NBAFT S3E3 Ander interview- 9:29:21, 6.37 PM

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:00

Megan: Hi, we're here with Ander Wilson of Nashville nutrition partners.

00:08

Ander: I'm so excited to be here!

00:11

Megan: You know Ander from our first episode of season two, when we talked about

00:17

Ander: All the diet BS.

00:19

Megan: We did, like what was a diet?

00:21

Ander: Yeah.

00:21

Megan: And why is it problematic? Tell us your qualifications.

00:26

Ander: I'm a registered dietician nutritionist, a licensed dietitian in the state of Tennessee. That means that I've got a bachelor's degree and a master's degree and have completed a dietetic internship which is really similar to like a residency. My undergraduate degree is in nutrition and dietetics. So that is how individual nutrients affect your body. And then my master's degree is in sustainable food systems. So that is looking at the context in which people make food choices, the combination of the micro looking at individual nutrients, and then the macro at the big picture, influences the way that I work with clients and my own interests and study.

01:15

Megan: So you do one on one?

01:18

Ander: I do one on one, nutrition therapy with clients in our office in East Nashville. I specialize in women's health, and eating disorders. I love helping people figure out how to take care of themselves without using diets. I also love helping clients figure out complicated puzzles. So like when you've got a few things going on, and it's not so straightforward. That's, that's my favorite.

01:45

Megan: So when we talked about doing an episode with you, we were like, what do you want to talk about? And you were like, religion and culture, you know, two like, pretty neutral.

01:58

Megan: Super controversial.

02:00

Kendra: Everybody agrees on all the things related to those topics. Yeah, totally.

02:04

Megan: Ander, what made you curious about the connection between religion and dieting>

02:10

Ander: So a few things. First, I am just always curious about new takes new and interesting ways to view food. So because this is my profession, and because I'm an 8, like I go all in, which means that I can also get burnt out on certain topics. So I get bored. And I just love any new way of looking at health, nutrition and food. And I saw that one of my favorite scholars, her name is Dr. Emily country, ah, she had written a paper on the theology of dieting, and I was like, Oh, my God, let me go dive into that. And then secondly, I think it it also helped me to go back and understand my upbringing differently, and the church. And then third, my clients, I see a lot of clients, I mean, a few times a week who come in and have had some interaction with either a faith based, or like devotional dieting thing, that week, or since our last session, or they're unpacking those connections in their past. And when...when, you know, religion, when when your religion is tied up or connected at all, into you know, weight loss, and we do the work of trying to dismantle this fatphobia and understand health differently. So when we start to remove some of those things, if they're attached to religious ideas, then that can be super unsettling.

03:56

Megan: Yeah.

03:56

Ander: So it's relevant in my clients lives. And so that means it's relevant in my life.

04:03

Megan: Tell us a little bit about your religious background. And then I want us to sort of chime in with our backgrounds just to bring clarity to the conversation.

04:10

Ander: And yeah, I think that's really helpful. Because so I grew up Christian, Southern Baptist, in a small town in an all white church in the suburbs of Charlotte, North Carolina, so outside of there. I was also homeschooled, which brings in a whole different religious element, and we were definitely homeschooled for religious reasons. Currently, I consider myself a Christian. I would not consider myself evangelical. I don't know that everyone else would consider me Christian, but I think that's a personal thing. And my family and I attend a really progressive church sporadically that's right down the street and faith is a big part of my life, because it's how I was raised and the lens in which I was taught to see the world. And so I, the practices are different. But I would say that the core components of who I know Jesus to be, as the central character and element of Christianity is the same.

05:21

Kendra: I was raised close to Southern Baptists, but fundamental, but I call it fundamental Baptist, they would call it independent Baptist. So the big difference

05:32

Ander: Jean skirt

05:33

Kendra. So the big difference there would be that Southern Baptist is a much larger convention connection kind of nationally. Whereas if you're an independent Baptist Church, you are it, you know, so your leadership is, all your checks and balances are in house, basically. the big is one of the big

05:54

Megan: there's not like a convention or anything,

05:56

Kendra: but independent Baptists was is much bigger up north than it is, obviously, in the south, where Southern Baptist is really prevalent. So there are connections of the independent Baptist Church, however, the kind of governance that comes with what the Southern Baptist Convention or some of the other national denominations brings, it's not there when it's an independent church. Similar theologies and backgrounds. I was not homeschooled, but I had, I had a lot of friends who were homeschooled for religious reasons growing up, so I'm, like, very aware of that world. And I have since then been kind of a hodgepodge of a church, Christian person. I've been a part of all kinds of different churches in a lot of different places. And I'm currently on staff at a church. I think there are people who would look at the way I understand my faith, and say it's not Christian. But I think similar is it sounds similar to you and or find Jesus to be the central element of it. So I start there, and my theology comes out from Jesus. So yeah, so I very much find the practices of kind of spiritual formation and development and the spiritual disciplines important and part of my life, and I believe the church can be a good place. And I want to work towards that in. Megan, what about you tell us about your little your journey of the church, and religion.

07:33

Megan: I also grew up Southern Baptist. She grew up

07:37

Kendra: looking at us, well, not anymore, I guess. Look at us. reformed Baptist, I don't know what would you say?

07:46

Ander: recovering, recovering,.

07:50

Megan: My grandfather was a chaplain and then also a Baptist preacher. Let's see. I went to a Christian school from third grade through ninth grade, and evangelical and cut to today. I don't really have a label for myself. I would say that I am more spiritual, than religious. I feel like such a tool thing.

08:20

Kendra: Don't.

08:20

Megan: Yeah, yeah, there's no shame in it. I go I gather with the community here in Nashville, like every other week that's called Imaginarium. But I don't know like I still think obviously, that my upbringing shapes a lot of who I am and my decisions. And I'm from the Church of anti diet culture. I don't know.

08:50

Ander: I'm a member card carrying.

08:54

Megan: Yeah, so those are the lenses that were coming through. So in your background, your Southern Baptists background Ander, how is food used?

09:04

Ander: I would say. So first. I'm white, I grew up in a smaller body, able bodied. And because of that, I think my experience with food was really positive, I didn't have the same pressures that I think some of my peers and larger bodies would have had growing up in the same church, like I remember there being weight loss programs at my church. But that wasn't something that I ever had to worry about, or anybody encouraged me to do or approached me about. So my experiences, not the same of, you know, all Southern Baptists. But food played a mostly positive role in my experience. I remember church potlucks, like church cookbooks and fundraisers. I've been really interested recently in getting my hands on, you know, the church cookbooks that are like my mom has or like falling apart of the head, my favorite recipes. My mom was diagnosed with cancer when I was in middle school. And I remember, whenever she started treatment, for a solid year, we had dinner brought to our house, I want to say almost every day.

10:15

Megan and Kendra: Wow.

10:15

Ander: There were four of us, like my mom was young, she was in her 30s for kids. And so food was a way that I definitely felt loved and cared for. And so that was huge for me. I also grew up really gravitating towards hunger and poverty and food insecurity, stories that I heard about in terms of like missions, and like, Hey, there are these, quote, unquote, helpless people on the other end of the world, here's what we can do to help. And I was all about that. That's actually how I got into nutrition is I was really interested in world hunger. But I didn't know what on earth do you do to study that? I should have studied public health, but I didn't know what public health was right? Growing up in a small town. So I studied nutrition. And I got into that and learned that actually, that's has nothing to do with lack of nutrition information. Lack of democracy on the other end of the world. So in that aspect, food was really positive. On the other hand, I remember fat jokes from the pulpit, I remember way down workshop, which is a diet program that was in our church. I remember there being a lot of talk, of course, in youth group about like bodies, and we can get into bodies later. But yeah, it was mostly positive. But I think that has a lot to do with my privilege of the body size that I occupied. I think that other people probably had different experiences. Yeah.

12:08

Megan: I'm just remembering a church sponsored diet that my mom did, it was called first place, first of all, and I remember

12:16

Ander: because Jesus is a winner. And you should be too.

12:22

Megan: And it was all women. And I wonder if that was specified in the curriculum, or if that was either either way, that's an interesting thing to think about. I think.

12:32

Kendra: I was just saying this to Megan. Like, what two days ago I was watching Grey's Anatomy and there's this great scene at the end of this episode, where it's the directorial debut of Ellen Pompeo who's the lead of Grey's Anatomy? Well shout out anyway. Because she needs it. haha. She's got a \$20 million deal Highest Paid anyway whatever. And it's the what's happened is one of the lead characters mother's has passed, her mother's passed away. And these other two that her sisters have brought her home and they call themselves sisters. And the scene is this this Maggie's her name the one who's lost her mom is sitting at the dining room table with a pan of half eaten lasagna in front of her and a fork but she's not doing anything or moving and the other two sisters come into the room to find her there and just with no talking sit down grab forks and start eating the lasagna which then prompts Maggie to start eating the lasagna. Just it's really beautiful moment of how like food was really central to that like they didn't need to say anything they just were being present with each other and it got me thinking about how often food is used in the church for I mean just like you were saying and or you were brought meals you know for a solid year when your mom was diagnosed with cancer and it's like what do we do when people get married in the church? We eat cake. What do we do when a baby is born or somebody is ill you take them food What do you do when as a sacrament? What do we do as for the Lord's Supper we eat bread and drink wine or juice right? What do you do I mean it's just on and

on like these food really kind of ritualistic things that we do around food and I similarly to you have have a pretty positive experience with that. I mean I remember like ice cream socials are like the best thing in the world. You mean I can have multiple kinds of ice cream and you're gonna have like a table full of toppings for me to choose from? I mean you know.

12:35

Megan: and and was yours Whoa, man. Like our ice cream socials people brought homemade ice I heard the tune going so

14:45

Kendra: I think ours was like I'm sorry Kroger brand or something. I don't care is ice cream.

14:49

Megan: Still Good.

14:50

Kendra: But yeah. So it's like the such a mixed message. I mean, I feel like because what was happening and so I'm wondering if there are examples like food restriction or just food in general, how it was used in your religious context growing up.

15:05

Ander: certainly communion. And when I think about Okay, what is the purpose of communion? And you as like, the official religious person...

15:16

Kendra: oh gosh, I don't want that title.

15:20

Ander: But from my understanding it was so that we can remember. So food as a way to remember. And that's kind of how I feel about the church cookbooks is like, I want these recipes. So it's a way for me to remember. I also think there I can think about other ways in which food was used in a really problematic way. Can we talk about that?

15:41

Kendra and Megan: Yeah

15:41

Ander: So certainly the dieting and like the way down workshop and restricting food. I think also just conversations about dieting, very similar to you know, the, the same conversations have happened in secular circles as well. And then do you guys, Did any of you ever have the 40 hour famine or the 30 hour famine?

16:03

Megan: Um huh.

16:04

Ander: That was like, we're going to raise money for our like, World Vision or something? And we're going to ask teenagers,

16:11

Megan: teenagers

16:12

Ander: teenagers, like, think about teenage girls to fast there

16:16

Megan: for 30 hours?

16:16

Ander: Yeah, I think it used to be, I looked it up. Because I was curious about it. And it used to be like 40 hour fast, and then they moved it to 30.

16:25

Megan: Because somebody passed out.

16:26

Ander: Probably. I also think it's really interesting that we thought, hey, there's this, here's this big problem that we care deeply about, that's connected to our faith. And we think that the best way to bring attention to this and to address it isn't to push for policies or elected officials who might actually be able to change that thing. But to fast for I don't know how many days and I think we had like a lock in. So it was also like, it was like we're fasting but we're also playing Nerf gun games, and video games.

17:00

Megan: Yeah.

17:01

Ander: So like you're playing while you're also trying to dip your toe into this very real like humanitarian crisis to lay it off. To try it on here. So you're appropriating and you're you're there suffering

17:16

Kendra: And you're centering your yourself in the problem

17:19

Ander: totally.

17:20

Kendra: As opposed to trying to center those actually affected.

17:22

Ander: Yeah, yeah. So there was that thing. And I don't I don't remember participating. I don't think I had a desire to as much as I cared about that issue. Nothing about that didn't make sense to me. I do remember thinking like that doesn't make any sense to me.

17:42

Megan: I did it.

17:43

Kendra: You did

17:43

Megan: And I was really hungry. I did. Oh, yeah. There was a concert to concert.

17:49

Kendra: Yeah, I never knew this was a thing. We didn't do this. We did fasting was definitely a thing we were we were taught and encouraged to try for, you know, half a quarter of a day or half a day or even you know, work yourself up to a whole day or whatever, like, and was definitely something that felt like was taught from a lens to youth in particular of like, well if you're if you're able to do this, like you're holier right, like you have a deeper spiritual life if you can fast for it, you know, it's just kind of a how some of that some of those spiritual disciplines were co opted for morality and for worth, you know, but anyway, yeah. Whoo.

18:30

Megan: Tell us about specifically the weigh down weigh down what?

18:34

Ander: way down workshop

18:36

Megan: and that's a W e i gh?

18:38

Ander: Yes. Whoo. So way down workshop, I remember in our church growing up, and it was like a few weeks ago when Annabeth, who works here at national nutrition partners, said something that made me make the connection that the founder of weigh down workshop is still like, alive and well with a thriving community. And actually, it's just like, 20 minutes from where I live right now. So it's Remnant Fellowship Church. GWEN SHAMBLIN.

19:12

Kendra: Sham. haha.

19:12

Ander: There are Yes, sham. She has a nickname of Guiza us.

19:18

Megan: I thought that was self given.

19:20

Ander: I don't know. And I don't know enough about it. But I will say that it's categorized and referred to as a cult by a lot of people in and around town, whether I know if it like meets the requirements of that, I don't know. But it is a church where I mean, one of their central quote unquote ministries is this weight loss program. Yeah, I mean, it is the thing that they lead with.

19:50

Megan: How they attract people.

19:52

Ander: Yeah. Yeah. And it's very much turn away from your the language is turn away from your sinful desires for like drinking and whatever, Yes, right. And instead, we're going to connect you to God.

20:10

Megan: Instead, what

20:11

Ander: we're going to connect like, you're going to instead rely on God. And so it makes those things mutually exclusive, like sustaining your life. And then also, like having any type of spiritual life, it's basically like you could do one or the other.

20:27

Kendra: I'd really like to know. And I'd really like to know what their theological, how they've come to the theological position of eating as sin. But it's sinful...

20:38

Ander: I mean, I think that that is not, that's not just in weight down workshop

20:44

Ander: That's Everywhere. Yeah. And I think that's from, you know, what we know about food and how it interacts in the body, and metabolism and physiology is newer, but our religious understanding and values and scripture is ancient. And that has a stronger hold this is, I guess, the meaning that I've made my experience with clients is that has a much stronger hold than newer science. So the view of food as good or bad, or the desire to eat as a human desire, so inherently sinful, and, and then having shame and guilt around that. That is a way that they make meaning of very normal biological experiences of hunger and fullness and cravings. But instead of seeing this as like, Oh, this is how, like, our bodies are made, and this is my body taking care of me. And this is a very normal reaction. It's the ties to morality, are much stronger, and much more deeply rooted. And also consistent with the way I mean, we've got Protestant, Christian undertones in like everything.

20:44

Kendra: for sure.

22:04

Megan and Kendra: Right, right.

22:05

Megan: So you've talked a little bit about how, when you tie food rules, let's say to something very deeply ingrained, like religion, and something that is so much a part of our identity, it's really hard to separate those two. And so I'm wondering what sort of beliefs and feelings about food and about body image you hear come up with your clients, and how that's tied to their religious beliefs. So you've talked a little bit about like sin, the word sinful and temptation? Yeah. So could you talk a little more about that?

22:42

Ander: Yeah. So most of what I understand about the theology of dieting comes from Dr. Emily Contois and her paper, which is guilt free, and simply delicious, I think temporary theology of weight loss dieting, and it's fascinating. The messages that I think come across are that the human body's desires are simple and wrong and cannot be trusted. So if you think about natural human desires, like lust, that's a big one that's like, No, you've got to, like, deny yourself. So there is this... So my personal experience was I was taught to, like, distrust my body really, really young, that your desires and your wants what you think, or you know, needs maybe aren't, but it's the sin of the flesh. Okay. And that carries over into hunger, and how we how much we eat, whether we allow ourselves to eat whether we should quote should or shouldn't be eating. And so I see what I hear from a lot of my clients is their understanding of why they quote unquote can't diet is that they don't have the willpower they don't have the discipline something is wrong with them. It's, it is the story, the story of the fall of man, which is that I am broken, I am inherently broken or sinful, and that I yeah, that I'm not going to be enough and I need salvation from you know, some set of rules some system to help me because I can't trust myself,

24:34

Megan: Right.

24:35

Ander: Whenever my clients come in, and they're, you know, explaining to me using words like guilt and shame and I should be able to do better. I need to be worked disciplined, I need to have more willpower than I could to have a conversation with them like hey, do you know about how the body works, how the body uses carbs and fats and proteins and how it whenever you are restricting food, how it makes those hunger cravings stronger. And that's actually your body taking care of you because you need carbohydrates for your brain to work, you know, so we get to have a feel, I know a fun science lesson, where they start to see that this is not about my, the failure of my character. But this is actually my body taking care of me.

25:27

Megan: That's beautiful. I was just got this, or I guess I'm remembering like, how we're sort of taught to just be in this, like, fight with our body because of that, like, sin of the flesh or whatever. And some things through working with people like you, and Jen is like, to have a dialogue with your body. Because you, you turn those things off, you turn those hunger cues off, and you turn, like, just the wisdom of the body off. And that makes it really hard to relearn how to listen, I think.

26:03

Ander: And if you think about it, if you grow up in like a fundamentalist Christian religion, where it's, you know, the reading the Bible, literally, and they're saying, turn off all of your wants, needs and desires. And we are going to do everything. according to Scripture, however, you are interpreting that because we all have a lens in which we interpret scripture, we also have a lens in which we interpret science, health, like that's not just a Bible thing. That's everything. And so we're like, okay, shut this off, talking about like, shut off, you know, your connection to your body. And instead, I'm going to defer to the Bible, well then were looking for it literally for everything, right. And I so I get it when somebody comes out of that culture, and they're looking to the Bible to learn how to eat, because they've been taught that what I feel is not credible. And this book is supposed to have every answer for my every day, like needs. And so you know, you're searching and trying, trying to find, alright, what what am I supposed to be doing? And there are a lot of sermons and devotional weight loss books that try to provide those answers. But we know that they don't work.

27:26

Megan: Right? Why not?

27:28

Ander: Why don't they work? Because, yeah, I don't think that that interpreting scripture as a nutrition plan is what God had in mind. I don't know

27:41

Megan: It's like funny when you say it outloud!

27:46

Ander: I also think it could be a shift like you could, I'm not asking someone to not all my clients are Christian or religious. It's interesting though, how Christian and religious themes permeate, like, ever, everybody.

28:02

Kendra: So how are the tenets of religion? How are they used to create diet programs like these ones we've been talking about and, and really just this kind of overall permeation of kind of religion among all this?

28:15

Ander: Yeah, so there's two different ways that religious themes show up in diets. One is what we've talked about, which is like Christian dieting, or like devotional dieting, where we're going to take scripture, the Bible and use it to create some diet plan and say, This is God's will for you, or whatever.

The other category is secular diets that use religious themes. And this can be...in Emily's paper. She looked at the South Beach diet and the Atkins diet. And it's like these things have all of the words phrases, images, icons, everything that is used to qualify something as a diet.

29:06

Megan: So like, what symbols what words?

29:10

Ander: So there's, there's a central theme, so dieting, it orients itself around a central theme, which is thinness, which is like salvation, and it creates a system of beliefs to help you attain that there is even language and I'm gonna say specifically the Atkins book about how this will help you be like born again, I think there's a testimonial and like I've been born again in this diet.

29:38

Megan: I wish you could see mine and Kendra's faces listeners. Born Again,

29:45

Kendra: born again, that's a term I haven't heard in a really long time.

29:48

Ander: I I wish I could say I hadn't heard that. I wish I could say but the rituals and practices Like counting, calories, measuring, tracking, how do we live up? That is all really similar to everything that makes up a religion. So you've got the endless deadness as the ultimate goal there is good and bad food, which is you can think about like good and bad behavior. And then what happens whenever we've had bad food? Well, we fall off the wagon, and there's guilt and shame. And then there's like this repentance. Sometimes there is confession.

30:33

Megan: Yeah.

30:33

Ander: Yeah. Can you think think about like check ins and like a weight watchers?

30:37

Megan: Accountabiity.

30:38

Ander: Yeah. And dieting. In these diets, what's considered good and holy is the newness in the body. And then conversely, you've got the fat body that is more linked to the evil,

30:52

Megan: Right. So that also just assumes that we have complete control over our weight,

30:58

Ander: totally.

30:58

Megan: And that is something we can change?

31:00

Ander: Yep.

31:00

Megan: And we know from research that that is not the case.

31:03

Ander: And again, I think that if I'm being generous, and giving the benefit of the doubt, then I can say, hey, like this, these religious themes are ancient, and our understanding of the human body and science is new. I don't know that if they came about in the same time that it would be any difference, right? The central theme that really hooked me into being interested in this is the theme of restraint. Mostly because I'm not good at restraint. And I think that's something that made me not good at religion growing up, there was a lot that I just didn't, I couldn't connect with, or I had a hard time with. And I also wasn't good at diets, when I grew up, like, again, as somebody who doesn't want to be controlled, and I don't like rules. And I certainly don't like arbitrary rules, I don't understand them or don't think that they're worthwhile, like, I just wasn't good at either of those. And by good, I mean, like, go with, like, following directions and sticking to it. And so it was really interesting to me, this theme of restraint. And then I think bringing in also a feminist lens of like restraint and how women are taught to practice restraint in all areas, and our voices in our bodies in our activities and the way that we show up in the world. I think that's the thing that hooked me in because I definitely resonate with that, and the struggle of my faith. And then I see restraint being something that, that my clients are constantly striving for. And my question is why? Because I know from what I know about the body, and the science of the body, how your body responds to restraint, which is it will rebel, right? Yeah, like me. And so I guess the question that I come to my clients with is really like, why where's this idea of restraint coming from? Like, why? What does that root rooted in? Is that? Is that really serving you? Is that really in line with your other values? Like, is that coming from your faith? Or is that coming from something else that somebody has attached to your faith and sold to you?

33:28

Megan: Yeah, I know why I've read that. Even the thought or the plan for restriction of food leads to benching

33:38

Ander: it can Yes,

33:39

Megan: it can. Okay.

33:40

Ander: Yeah.

33:40

Megan: So you think about like all the, what's it called? I think there's a name for it, but like when you're about to go on a diet and so you have your last meal, the last last supper that the last supper? Hello, welcome to this conversation. Because you're like, I'm going to eat all the foods because I know I'm not going to get them. Yeah, later and so it's not Well, I mean, I see what you're saying about like, your need to rebel anyway. But anyone trying to restrain Yeah, like it's it's a setup for failure.

34:10

Ander: Yeah, your body will. It's going to fight back because it wants to keep you alive. Yeah. Like it's serving you and it's taking care of you like it's a it's not a bad story. It's a really good story.

34:25

Megan: Your body has the best intentions.

34:28

Ander: I I love in my job that I get to religious reference. Share good news.

34:35

Kendra and Megan: Yeah. Yeah.

34:38

Ander: Which is you like, I like that I don't have to be the food police that I actually get to come in and say, Hey, we we can we can worry less about this. You already have enough to worry about. This is irrelevant. This isn't true. So yeah, let's like go and focus on something else.

34:58

kendra: And I think if it's a church were doing their its job. It would, it would be doing the same thing of, you know, let's let go of some of this other stuff. And let's This is what the good news. The good news is, and I think it was Nadia, I've heard Nadia Bolz-Weber say this before. Lutheran minister

35:17

Megan: is she the one who talks about purity culture?

35:19

Kendra: Yeah. But I heard her speak at a conference once and she said the statement of like, I'm a, I'm a minister, my job is to, it's to help you understand that God loves you that you know, it's to understand the gospel, the end, it's not to worry about your quote unquote, moral choices or your you know what I mean, like, this is, this is my job. That's what I'm, that's what I'm ordained and called to do. And so often, I think there's like more to that for a lot of other ministers, or kind of within the church, like we're talking about, like, well, but if you understand God's love, then you will also do all these things. You know,

36:01

Ander: I think that's a, the word to bring in here is consumption and consumerism, and how that influences that. So how do you? How do these weight loss programs come out of churches as products to be consumed, and then also, the tension between this value of restraint and also the American identity as consumers? And we're doing both of that and wrestling with those multiple those? Yeah, multiple identities.

36:34

Megan: because production rates plays a big role in that, like, the the obsession with health is leads to dieting, because we think that those are the same things. And we want health so that we can produce more and more and more and more more, and we want to produce more and more, more and more because capitalism, yes. And so that we can consume more and more and more.

36:54

Kendra: Thank you so much, Andrew, for joining us and for having this conversation. It's such an important one, and it's so nuanced. I feel like we only scratched the surface.

37:04

Ander: Thank you so much for having me and for being conversation partners.

37:11

Percy: (bark);

37:11

Kendra: We're almost done, Percy. Just hold on. You can bark in a minute!

37:19

Everyone laughs.

Megan 18:52

Another fantastic interview on the books with Ander Wilson. Wow.

Kendra 18:59

I always learn another new thing when I go back and listen again. Like every every pass of the interview.

Megan 19:07

Yeah, right.

Kendra 19:09

I'm like oh yeah, that it's like that new thing another new thing even though I was there for the interview.

Megan 19:16

Yeah.

Kendra 19:18

But sometimes it takes some time to process so we just want to let you know Nashville nutrition partners is which is obviously in Nashville. But Ander is one of the co founders of Nashville nutrition partners. They have a ton of dietitians on staff, all with different specialties, you can go to their website and fill out a form and they will help you get connected to the right fit for you. And all of their dietitians are weight inclusive and they work from a weight neutral approach, which is what we love to see.

Megan 19:48

Yes, we do.

Kendra 19:49

Yes, they do virtual options as well and they did virtual before the pandemic because you don't have to be in Nashville. You can be anywhere and you can be Part of the practice, and one of the coolest things is that they take insurance. If you're in Tennessee and you have Tennessee insurance, they will take it. So let them know because they will help find out how much of what you know the cost can be covered through your insurance. So go to the website it's linked below, check it out. They've also got some really cool resources and good book recommendations as well. So we're always here for national nutrition partner. Yeah, where we hosted our season two premiere party, a dozen ages and ages ago. And we're just so grateful to Ander. And really just Nashville nutrition partners for all like all of their support of our podcasts.

Megan 20:39

Yeah. And Jen, Jen Fletcher. Okay, so if you've listened to season one and season two, actually, mainly season two, I think we asked you for a favor at the end of every episode. And that was to subscribe rate review, if you learn anything. And if or if you just enjoyed yourself, or if you did neither, if you neither learned anything, or enjoyed yourself, we still asked you to leave a review or a rating. And so we want to ask you again, please. This is the way that we can spread our influence gain listeners. And it lets people know if they look it up like oh, people are into this, I might be into this. So we want to ask you again to subscribe rate and review. And if you are stuck thinking what am I gonna write for this review? We want to give you some ideas. Now listen, we're not saying please go write this. We're saying if you would like to, here are some options. It could just be, hey, I like this podcast period. end. it could be, hey, I like this podcast. And I also like fall period end. take it one step further. As Beyonce says, Hey, I like this podcast. And here's why I like being fat in the fall season. If I was writing that, I would say, Hey, I love this podcast. And I love being fat and the fall because I'm less sweaty, except we're in Tennessee, so it's not really less sweaty. But it will be

Kendra 20:45

soon soon.

Megan 20:46

Maybe in November.

Kendra 20:57

If I were writing a review, I would say I love this podcast. And I love the fall because of sweater weather,

Megan 22:29

sweater weather.

Kendra 22:31

And if you get the reference, we should be best friends.

Megan 22:36

If you're if you're 35 and over and get the reference.

Kendra 22:41

We should be no best friends. sweater weather sweater weather.

Megan 22:44

Can I tell you something that's really gotten me in the fall mood over the past few days.

Kendra 22:49

Please!

Megan 22:49

Okay, I started doing simmer pots on my stove. So.

Kendra 22:55

I know exactly what you're talking about. Yeah,

Megan 22:58

I realized we had a lemon which like Wow, we had a lemon I mean that's a big deal. It also means that there's a recipe that I was supposed to make that I didn't but so cut up the slices of lemon, put them in a pot with some water had some cinnamon sticks didn't expect that to happen but you don't need the sticks you can just do ground cinnamon in the pot. ground cloves in the pot. We happen to have Rosemary growing in our yard so I got a couple sprigs of that and put it in the pot I think that's everything those four things bring it to a boil once it's boiling put it down on simmer. you've got hours of fall smells aromas floating through your house gently inviting you to this season to slow down and rest.

Kendra 23:58

I am here for it that's like a party trick but I that a lot of people do especially in like the fall and winter but I'm here for doing it just for yourself.

Megan 24:07

Yeah. it's it's just been for me and in turn Eric and the dog doesn't we all love it.

Kendra 24:13

I love it. I love that for you. I what's gotten me in the fall spirit is the fact that I have a deck and my tree is just starting to turn leaves on my big old tree and I recently actually instead of just sitting in a camping chair out on my deck,

Megan 24:31

yeah

Kendra 24:31

I got some actual like deck furniture so now actual place to sit on my deck.

Megan 24:39

yellow orange Maroon What color are we talking?

Kendra 24:43

What the tree or my deck furniture?

Megan 24:45

The leaves.

Kendra 24:46

Oh, so the trees green.us I should be able to tell you what kind of tree it is. And I can't

Megan 24:52

oh not expected.

Kendra 24:54

It's gigantic though and the

Megan 24:57

It's a yard tree

Kendra 24:58

currently mostly green to you. tree here. And it is just starting to turn yellow. Like just some of the leaves, like mostly exposed to the sun are just starting to turn yellow, and they'll turn yellow and then they'll turn orange and then deep red and then they'll all die.

Megan 25:16

All day.

Kendra 25:19

Winter we'll be here. And hopefully that won't take only two weeks to happen. But yes, like, I get to enjoy it. Okay, listeners hashtag fat girl fall. We love to see it and be safe out there. We'll see you next time. We'll talk to you next time?

Megan 25:34

We'll see you we won't see you or talk to you. We'll talk at you and you'll hear us

Kendra 25:41

talk at you next time.

Megan 25:44

Bye.