

Laura B. Folkes Interview Transcript

Interview Breakdown:

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Smita: Hi everyone! Smita here from Simply Smita. I'm here today with Laura Folkes, who is a certified holistic health coach. Laura and I met last year at a wellness event actually here in Wicker Park, that we both participated in. And, I was really drawn to Laura and her approach to her services and coaching, um, because she focuses on something which we don't talk about enough, which is our emotional relationship with food, which I just find fascinating. So I invited her here today to tell us about what that means and what she does in her daily work.

Laura: Thanks! I'm so excited to be here.

Smita: So can you tell me a little bit...let's start by kind of telling everyone what exactly is a health coach.

Laura: Sure. So, a health coach in general, we look at people's lifestyles so we can help them across all different areas of their lives. So it's not necessarily really giving specific advice, but it's more about helping guide them to find what works for them and their lifestyle, and also looking at what's keeping them stuck. So, a lot of health coaches, we look at any area of their life so it can be their financial relationship, their relationship with friends, family, or themselves even. It

can be around general nutritional guidance, fitness, um, in their career. It can really go across a range and a breadth of different areas in their life.

And, each health coach really specializes in a different aspect. So, some health coaches will focus more on fertility, some will focus on autoimmune conditions, and, just in general, it can be, it can run the gamut.

Um, I specifically work with people, like you were talking about, around their emotional relationship with food, and helping them to really uncover what some of their patterns are that are leading them to feeling like they're lacking willpower or are sabotaging themselves, and really getting to the bottom of what is leading to that pattern, so we can start to break it down and experience some relief and then freedom from food as well.

Smita: So, that's fascinating. Tell us a little bit about your approach.

Laura: Sure! So a lot of my clients have a lot of information and they have had some success in the past. But, for some reason, they haven't been able to stick with it long term, and a lot of times, they're really confused as to why because they've had success with so many different areas of their lives that they are really confused as to why they're feeling like they're lacking willpower or don't have the discipline around food. And, so, what we do is we really look at what is, um, lacking...what's leading to them feeling like they are lacking their willpower and really digging into that to understand that a little bit further.

And, it's not about giving some new tactics or strategies for them to use. It's more about really looking at...I use food as a window into what's happening in their lives. So a lot of times we'll start out by talking about how somebody ate out of alignment with their goals, and from there we'll identify what actually led to that because it's not typically just about the food. So, my approach isn't really just another tool or tactic for them to use, it's really helping them see that their "bad eating" is a tool and a protective mechanism that they've been using. So we want to look at and see where that's coming in so that we can, um, find some new tools that will work for them so that they're not resorting back to food for that.

Smita: And, I love that because there's so many things that we do on a daily basis that have a far deeper, um, kind of root cause, or meaning, or, you know, something that's causing us to act this way that we don't really think about. Food is a part of all of our lives, every day, a huge part of it. So it's just really fascinating to see the things that correlate and affect our decisions that we don't even think are there or know are there. We're completely oblivious to it.

Laura: Right. There's actually a saying that I really love and my clients are always like, 'huh, that's an interesting one!' is "how you do anything is how you do everything." So a lot of times how we're showing up around food is also how we're showing up in life, so to be able to make those correlations can be really helpful. And, we're gonna get to this, but because of that, people not only see results that...a lot of my clients not only see results around food but also

other areas of their lives as well. So their relationships start to shift, they start to simplify things in their lives. And, just because they're focusing more on what works for them, and their lifestyle, and their needs, it really shifts in various areas of their life.

Smita: That's amazing. So what can someone expect in their first session with you?

Laura: Sure, so I offer free 30-minute Q&A sessions. And, that is really an opportunity...they're a really laid back type of phone call that we do, and it's an opportunity for them to share a little bit more about what their goals are, what their current situation is, I answer any questions they have and we go through the gist about, in general, what health coaching is and my approach to seeing what's right for them.

And then from there, either they'll...some people sign up right away for a program and other people will want to go into a [Discovery Session](#), which is a 75-minute session, that goes into a lot more detail about what's been working well for them, what are some of the challenges that they've been facing, and just going more into their history and where they've been, and also where they want to go, to figure out what the right approach will be for them moving forward.

Smita: Wonderful! And, that's awesome that you offer a 30-minute free consult. A lot of people will do 15 minutes. You can't really get a lot in 15 minutes, so, if anyone's thinking about this, or you feel that you're curious, 30 minutes is a lot to kind of find out what this is all about. And, it's free so you're really not losing anything!

Laura: And, we can cover actually a lot of ground in 30 minutes, too.

Smita: Awesome! So I have to ask, what inspired you to do this and focus on this aspect of coaching?

Laura: Sure. Yeah, so, I really struggled with my weight most of my life. I struggled with it starting probably around the age of 12, went to my first weight loss program with my parents when I was 12, and, um, just...food was really a batter for me. It was in 2008 and that I lost 60 pounds and at the time I was working in corporate and was really losing my passion for my job and my career at the time.

And, I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do, that was outside of corporate, I kept thinking about going through my own weight loss journey, and a lot of my friends, my coworkers, my family, would come and ask me about how was I staying disciplined and how was I keeping up my willpower. And, a lightbulb kind of went off for me at that point. I realized that that's really where my passion is and I really like working with people on that, on that area.

So, I, in 2015, or 14, sorry, I went to School for Integrative Nutrition and started getting my certification as a health coach. And, at that point, now I had more information than ever but I was also doing what I felt was working the system. So, even though I was maintaining my

weight for a few years, I would eat well for awhile, then I would say screw it and just eat what I wanted, and go off track. And, then, I would know that I have to weigh in, freak out that the scale was starting to creep up, so then I'd reign it back in and lose the weight again. And, it was a really exhausting pattern, and was something that, as I was getting my certification, I was like why am I doing this and why does this keep happening especially since I know what I should be doing.

So, I actually starting working with my own health coach and we started to explore my emotional relationships with food, basically, and what was triggering me and leading to that pattern and it was extremely life changing, and also what really helped shape my approach with my clients now because it helped me realize that those patterns are so impactful. And, we can get so many tips, and tricks and there's so many strategies out there, but if we're being triggered emotionally, none of those tips and tricks are going to keep your willpower up or keep you on track to being successful. We really need to understand what that root cause is. And once I was able to do that, it was a game changer for me.

Smita: Yeah, and I think that a lot of us can really relate to that right, like whether it's with food or a work out goal, or any goal that we have, we're really on, but then slowly you creep back and you're just oscillating back and forth, and it's really tough to kind of, just, solidify that foundation. The fact that you've been through it, you've gotten your own coaching so you understand the benefit of all of it, and you're implementing it in your daily life and have been for years, I think that's what draws me to you because it makes you such a powerful, and kind of, empathetic coach, which is really important, especially when you're dealing with emotions, right, those can be really tender and to get to the root cause of it is a little tricky if you haven't navigated it yourself.

Laura: And my clients really appreciate that about me too is that I have been through it and I'm still going through my own journey. It's not like I have arrived, I don't think I'll ever arrive and I'm still working through my own, my own relationship with food to this day. Um, and, I, because I've been through it, my clients really appreciate that because I know what they're going through. And, when they're really struggling or if they're feeling stuck then I can, they trust that I know what it's like to get to the other side and that they will be able to get there, as well. So, it's really helpful to be able to guide them and also to know what they're feeling and what they're going through.

Smita: Yeah, and then speaking of your clients, I'd really love for you to share, like, one of your favorite success stories so people can get an idea of how, um, your clients respond to you.

Laura: Yeah. So, it's kind of a loaded question because I don't know if I have a favorite success story, I mean I really, that's the thing I love about this work is that I love to see the evolution that people make throughout the program and the process. Um, but I can share one example of, or one, uh, scenario, of what somebody experienced.

So, one of my clients she came to me, she was, um, told to go on a gluten free diet by a naturopath. She was also somebody who found herself bingeing a lot, and would, just like overindulge and eat a lot at one, at any given time. And, she was really concerned that she wasn't sticking to the gluten-free diet that the naturopath had put her on because she has MS, and she didn't want that to flare up or make it worse, um, but yet, she wasn't sticking to it. So, we started working through what was coming up for her, and pretty quickly realized that she was really feeling depleted in many areas of her life and so she literally was feeling empty and filling herself up.

So, using the food was a way to like fuel herself and try to replenish her feeling so empty, like depleted basically. So, we were then working on, what did she need to not feel so depleted and realized that she wasn't checking in on her needs, that she wasn't, she was accommodating her job and she was also in a relationship that she had been accommodating as well. And through, just by her checking in on her needs and focusing on what she needed to replenish herself, she ended up, um, leaving this relationship that was really unhealthy for her and was no longer serving her, and, um, she got promoted in her job, she ended up moving back, moving closer to her family, and she ended up saying at the end of the 5 month program that she got so much more out of the program than she could have ever thought, and that she grew so much more. And, we're still working together to this day and she even, um, just told me last week that she's even off of her anxiety meds now, so.

Smita: Wow! I love this example because it's exactly why I love you, right, because it's so much more, guys, than just food and your relationship with food. Like look at how much, it's really about your whole life! Like, when you get to that emotional root cause, it's like you said, it affects so many more areas, that same root cause. And, so, you're really transforming lives that you work with outside of food, just holistically. That's amazing.

Laura: Yeah, one thing I should also mention, I mention that she was bingeing on food, and those binges have gone way down. She's still having periods where she's overindulging in food or indulging in certain things, but I mean we went from...

Smita: Yeah, we all do.

Laura: Yeah, it's still going to happen but if we look at the delta, the change that has happened, she went from bingeing on like bags of chips and cookies and ice cream to, she just told me last week, that she "overindulged" and ate a full sub. And, that was her overindulgence. And, I was like look at how far we've come! From all these other experiences that she had, so it's incredible.

Smita: That's awesome! It's powerful stuff. So, if anyone wants to learn more about you or is interested in signing up for your services, how can they find you?

Laura: Sure, so on my website...My website is [Laura B. Folkes.com](http://Laura.B.Folkes.com), and also on social media on Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook, it's at, um, on Instagram it's [@Laurab.folkes](https://www.instagram.com/Laurab.folkes) and then at Facebook it's [Laura B Folkes](https://www.facebook.com/Laura.B.Folkes) but you can find me on there. And then, if anyone is interested in one of those Q&A sessions, you can sign up for that on my website as well.

Smita: Wonderful. And, we are also gonna be, in the future, hosting a couple blog posts from Laura to learn more about our emotional relationship with food and kind of how to navigate that a little bit so it will give you a little more insight into what she's doing, so stay tuned for that! Laura, thank you for being here and sharing all this with us.

Laura: Thank you for having me!

BONUS: Laura is offering our readers a free 45-minute session to learn more, ask questions, and discuss how she can help you on your own journey! You can take advantage of this free opportunity on her [website](#). Simply indicate that you watched our interview!

Happy Eating, Folks!

Love + Light,
Smita :)