Volume 11, Issue 37: My Intermittent Fasting

In the "My Atomic Habits" article last week, I listed intermittent fasting as one of my atomic habits. I thought to elaborate further on that for you, hence this article. First of all, intermittent fasting ins't something out of this world or complex. It's a fancy name for what most people ordinarily do without calling it intermittent fasting. It's basically having an eating window and a non-eating window.

A simple intermittent fast is what happens naturally for most people. Most people eat during their waking hours and of course not eat when they are asleep. This in itself is intermittent fasting. The difference between this and the "fancy" intermittent fasting is that the later restricts the eating window during the awake hours. The easiest intermittent fasting method to follow is the one that aligns with your saccadic rhythm. This basically means eating during the day and not eating at night.

I mimic the 16:8 method. When I wake up in the morning, I don't consume anything aside from plain warm water until 9am. I usually have my breakfast at that time unless I am held up. I should ideally have my last meal by 5pm but I adjusted my window to 6pm as that's the earliest I could negotiate with my family for us to have dinner together every evening.

I am a foodie - I love to eat, and I eat more than anyone else in my house. Even so, my weight is constantly under 60kgs and my body mass index is 22. Now, you may be thinking, lucky you, right? But my health parameters have nothing to do with luck. It is sheer discipline. The discipline now isn't in what I eat because I enjoy what I eat and can't stand what I used to eat before. The discipline now is in how much I eat.

You don't need a lot of discipline when you sit down to eat if you don't love food that much. But if you are anything like me, you have to discipline yourself not just every time you sit down to eat but in determining what you are going to eat in the first place.

I love chapatis, and I must have dessert after dinner. The recommended amount for chapati consumption is once a week. I take chapati most of the week. It's my favorite carbohydrate for

dinner, and I enjoy it with any kind of accompaniment. However, the chapati I take is not the one most people take. I make whole meal chapati for myself - the healthy option. I love them. I make them thin so I can enjoy two at a meal. Most people don't like them before they are not as "tasty" as white flour chapati.

I also love to take something sweet after dinner. But my "sweet" is not the regular "sweet". I take sugarless hibiscus tea for breakfast and I don't eat regular cakes and pastries. Therefore my "sweet" is a different taste of sweetness. Once every week I bake for myself oatmeal scones. No one else in my house can stand them. But I love them. I enjoy them so much that I have to discipline myself every day not to overindulge in them.

For 3 cups of ground oats and 1 cup of sesame seeds, I mix in 4 mashed ripe bananas, orange zest and freshly squeezed orange juice from one orange and half a cup of grated coconut. That's it. Nothing else other than baking powder and cinnamon powder. No sugar nor sweetener nor oil nor essence nor nothing. I have come to love them dearly. It's my dessert of choice. I used to bake different kinds of oat cakes and muffins but these scones are my current favorite.

So for my intermittent fasting, I don't deny myself the foods I like. I enjoy my whole meal chapatis a couple of days a week for dinner. Because I enjoy food, I tend to eat until I am full. In fact I am working on eating a little less. But if it weren't for disciplining myself every time I sit down to eat, I could eat more every time. I just put a stop to it. I am also the only one at my dinner table who has dessert every evening - two small oat scones. I bake for my family regular cakes and muffins every now and then.

After I am done with my dinner and dessert, that's it. I don't taste anything else other than water until 9 o'clock the next morning. I have a light lunch, mostly a smoothie. I would prefer a heavy lunch and a light dinner but I kind of don't want to have a festive meal by myself. Hence the full dinner with my family when everyone is home in the evening.

For His Glory,

Lillian Chebosi