

The Zest S11Bonus2

Lisa: [00:00:00] With fitness competitions and with radio it's show business. So it's a lot of preparation that goes on behind the scenes to show off the final product.

Dalia: I'm Dalia Colon and this is, you guessed it, another bonus episode of The Zest: citrus, seafood, Spanish flavor and Southern Charm. the Zest celebrates cuisine and community in the Sunshine State.

Today we are getting to know one of our very own colleagues, WUSF Lisa Peakes.

She's the familiar voice to thousands of us across West Central Florida as the midday host for Tampa Bay's, NPR station, WUSF 89.7. Lisa Peakes keeps us company while we work, eat lunch, run errands, sit in the school car line, cannot get a witness or. Whatever you happen to be doing in the afternoon. Lisa reads the news, shares the weather report, and tells us about local events.

All in that [00:01:00] friendly, soothing voice that's a constant companion. Now, as her colleague at WUSF Public Media, I can tell you that she's even more fascinating than the information. She, and you know, when you're listening to the radio or a podcast and you're wondering, what is this person actually like? What do they do for fun. You know, what's their backstory? We're here to give it to you today. This is a bonus episode where we are diving into the superhero origin story of WFS Lisa Peakes. I am so thankful to Lisa for the vulnerability that she brought to this conversation. She reveals why radio became so important to her as a child, and I have goosebumps just.

Thinking about it now. She also explains how she developed a passion for, Wait for it competitive fitness. Yep. The woman behind the mic is buff. Okay. She's a St. Petersburg resident and she talks to us also about some of her favorite local restaurants and what she eats in a typical [00:02:00] day. I always love to learn what people eat in a day.

I hope you do too. Okay, so here's my conversation with Lisa Peakes.

Lisa: I am Lisa Peakes, and I'm a long time broadcaster. Currently the midday host at WUSF here in the greater Tampa Bay area. So I'm from, um, Lexington, Massachusetts. I'm 65, or I will be 65 now. And I grew up in the seventies.

Dalia. And my mom was really, um, sort of peripherally interested in all the faddish things.

For example, in the seventies there was something called textured vegetable protein or TVP. It was a soy byproduct and it was a sort of along the lines of hamburger helper and my mom put it in everything. And we hated it. I grew up on like Velv Vita and all the convenience foods, macaroni and cheese, and Chef Boy Rd and DTI Moore beef stew.

There was always food on the table, but it was, [00:03:00] it was convenience food.

Dalia: I feel you. I'm an eighties baby and we had like the Rice-A-Roni and hamburger helper and then I guess my generation kind of swung back around to eating more. Natural food. So that was your early food career, and we'll talk more about that later, but your actual radio career, how did you get started in radio?

Lisa: Radio is so personal for me. It's deeply personal. I grew up with a, a lot of turbulence in my home life and somehow I was blessed to come across a transistor radio and I just glommed onto it, all the top 40 tunes in the sixties. And there was a radio announcer called Dale Doorman on uh, WRKO in Boston, and I took that radio to bed with me.

The spots, the commercials. Everything just felt like a vibrant, happy, affirming world where I belonged, and that became a safer place for me than my home life. [00:04:00]

Dalia: Mm. Oh, that's so good. You're making me think now because as a host of the podcast, you know, we are people's companion and we are sort of a constant for people, so I love that and I know that a lot of people feel that way about you.

I feel that way about you. Wow. Okay. What's your favorite radio show currently?

Lisa: I have always liked Radiolab, but how I got into radio as a profession was, um, by accident. I went to Emerson College in Boston to study acting, and I became so terrified of rejection and auditioning that I found a safe place.

In the radio station.

Dalia: I don't know. A lot of people would be afraid to do what you're doing.

Lisa: Yeah, I read that fear of public speaking is like one of the number one fears ever, but for me, I was always a strong vocal performer in, uh, junior high school. My French teacher would take me out of classes so that I could read to the students.

I would read, uh, Edgar Allen Poe and [00:05:00] other things. Um, I'm not sure why, maybe it got him out of teaching a lesson or something, but. Um, that was always a strong point for me. So in acting, I gravitated toward that. I was rewarded for it. So of course you, you go where you feel the love.

Dalia: Wow. You could be reading audio books, by the way.

I would totally. I listen to a lot of audio books. I'm a minivan mom, and I would love nothing more than to hear Lisa Peakes reading an entire book.

Lisa: You're so kind. Thank you. So, so what I listen to for radio programs, I mean, I really love Radio Lab because of the qualities of craft. It's lots of quick clips in and out, and it's very nimble and agile.

For subjects you cannot beat all things considered. You know, little quick hits of everything that you need. And more and more we're hearing, like Florida stories pop up in the news. We're hearing our health reporters right from the WUSF newsroom very recently, Giuliano Hazan, uh, the son of, uh, Marcella Hazan, the famed chef was right on All [00:06:00] Things Considered Sarasota resident.

So, you know, it's a great way to get Yes, we had him on the pod. Right, right. So, so like. That's great too. It's great company and you can do it while you're, or you can enjoy it while you're listening to other things. Um, yeah,

Dalia: for sure. Now, do people, when you're out and about, do they recognize your voice?

Lisa: It's happened once or twice. Yeah, in in 40 years. So generally, no.

Dalia: Okay. Maybe you wanna keep it that way. Yeah. Now, I know you have this side of you that a lot of us know that the public knows, but then you have this other whole fitness side to you, which is what I really wanna talk to you about. I think that is so inspiring.

How did you get into this fitness lifestyle?

Lisa: Not in the most healthy way. When I was 12, my mother entered me in a competition for a department store in downtown Boston called Jordan Marsh. And um, I won, I was one of 20 girls in the greater Boston area who represented Jordan Marsh. [00:07:00] We would go in once a month for little fashion shows.

It was the Jan Jordan fashion board. And one of the signature things about Jordan Marsh is its bakery. They are famous or they were famous. They're outta business. Now for these. Big blueberry muffins with that fancy crystal sugar. And I love those. I would, I would live for those.

Dalia: I live for those now.

Lisa: So then what happened?

So the woman who was coordinating it a, a, a model took me aside and said, you need to go on a diet. No, I was 12.

Dalia: Oh, my daughter just turned 13 and if anyone told her to go on a diet at that, the mama bear would come out. Yeah. Unbelievable. So

Lisa: I didn't tell my mother, but, but the mental note was so profound that I made it my business.

To be perfect, the perfect model. And so I started studying up on [00:08:00] what it meant to be a model and, and what you would do. And when I got old enough, I, I took out every book in the Carey Memorial Library in Lexington, and I was so happy when I found out the periodicals. Could circulate because I took out, you know, you can only take out like 10 at a time.

So over the course of a year or so, I took out every single edition of Prevention Magazine and anything nutritionally adjacent, like Mother Earth Magazine or Yoga Journal, I just stuffed my brain and, and with the magazines and, you know, Vogue and 17 was really big. Then you get all these tips on how to diet, yeah, eat the hamburger, but without the bun.

And, and so I just inculcated myself with that. And, you know, I developed, uh, I think what at that time could be considered an eating disorder. Flash forward to this point in my life, and I would say the way I practice tracking things is, uh, highly ordered rather than disordered. You know, spin it [00:09:00] any way you want, but, uh, I, I, uh.

I can't not pay attention to that because those seeds were planted. So yeah, let a kid be a kid. You know, for better or for worse, I've been able to find out a lot, uh, anecdotally about nutrition, and I'm grateful to still be kicking.

Dalia: Wow. Oh, I'm so sorry that happened to you. And the words we hear as kids stay with us forever.

Oh my gosh. Okay, so, so talk to me a little bit about what you eat in a day. You're probably gonna make me feel bad 'cause I would be wanting that muffin still to this day

Lisa: I have that muffin. So what I do now, um. Diet and nutrition becoming such a big part of my life that at age 59, uh, I became a, a professional.

I got my pro card as a physique athlete, finally, after years of weightlifting and, uh, observing nutrition and so. My goals right now for nutrition are lifestyle. I'm not in competition mode. I don't have to be strict with my prep. Um, so I [00:10:00] eat that muffin. And even during contest prep, if I wanted to eat the muffin, I would, I practice something called I-I-F-Y-M and that's if it fits your macros.

And the macros are carbs, fats, and protein. And I have a budget every day, you know, so I eat whatever I want.

Dalia: Mm. So like what did you eat yesterday?

Lisa: Let me check my food journal.

Dalia: Oh my gosh. She has a food journal.

Lisa: Let me tell you, Dalia, I've had a food journal for 20 years. I have a record of every single thing I've eaten for 20 years.

Dalia: That's actually very cool. And a lot of these people who write memoirs like Stanley Tucci and you know, the late Anthony Bourdain, they're sort of organized around what they ate. So if you ever wanted to pursue that, you have the record right there now. Okay. As someone, I mean, especially as women, it's easy to.

Develop disordered eating and I know that me personally, if I [00:11:00] were to track everything I ate, it would probably make things worse in my head. How did you decide to keep a food journal for 20 years?

Lisa: So I, I decided first when I wanted to make changes in my physique, it was pointed out to me that, you know, if you wanna improve something, you gotta track it.

Right? That which gets measured gets improved. And honestly, I became habituated to it. When I moved to the greater Tampa Bay area. I was surrounded by some of the people that I've relied on for smart advice because I. Have been through it all. Um, I, I had a career in the natural food business for a long time prior to radio.

And so I've seen, you know, macrobiotics, I've seen, uh, raw food is, I've seen every kind of food fad there is and everybody's looking for a quick fix, right? But fortunately in the greater Tampa Bay area. There is a good core of people who are [00:12:00] practicing no nonsense science-based, uh, approaches to eating, and they have evolved.

A lot of the folks who are coming out of the, uh, physique enhancement laboratory at the University of South Florida have established coaching practices and. They're increasingly focused on the mental health aspect of things. So you know that, that scalability, you know that, that personal ownership of something.

Yeah. Try the fad if you want. If you have ownership and you're taking direction of your diet and your nutrition. That's empowering. Um, is that gonna be sustainable for you, you know, only eating bacon or, or whatever, you know? And you had Dominic D'Agostino on, uh, with, with the, uh, ketogenic diet, um, Dr. Dominic. Oh, yes.

Dalia: Years and years ago. Yes, I believe we did.

Lisa: Right. And the keto diet is really indicated, uh, for cancer, for example. So advances in research are approving that for daily sustainability. Can you sustain it? That's a good indicator [00:13:00] of whether or not you wanna adopt something. And so Lane Norton had some note somewhere, no doubt, science-based, that people who track their nutrition over time did a better job of maintaining their weight.

Right. Um, for me, I'm just habituated to it. It's like brushing my teeth or anything else. I just do it, you know, do I really need to? No, I'm okay without it. I know what a portion looks like. I know how my body feels when I exceed my calorie goals after some time. So maybe you need to be mired in these things first in order to throw them out.

But the mental health aspect is really key.

Dalia: Definitely.[00:14:00]

Okay, so gimme a typical breakfast, lunch, and dinner when you are just. Being Lisa and then when you're in competition mode.

Lisa: Alright, so just being me, you know, maybe 200 grams of blackberries, a hundred grams of strawberries. Uh, okay,

Dalia: I, I don't even know what that is. What is a hundred grams of strawberries?

Lisa: Uh, 200 grams of blackberries is a lot. I think a lot of people use these nutrient dense high volume. Low calorie foods as a garnish and, and for me over time, I, I do the inverse. I will have a high volume of low calorie nutrient dense foods and then, you know, I have protein. One to one and a half grams per pound of body weight in a day.

These are [00:15:00] goals, I'm not saying I actually do them, but serving of cottage cheese with that. Blackberries for me, uh, will gimme some good protein. Um, it'll, it'll last a bit longer because it's, uh, milk protein. Broken down a little bit more slowly. Now I have a banana there too for extra carbs. I'm real big on carbs.

Never used to be. Carbs were like the enemy, right? All, all those girl diets in 17 saying Avoid carbs. Well, for the bodybuilder, carbohydrates are the most muscle sparing nutrient there is. Uh, they also keep your, uh, water follows carbs, so to keep, um, your muscles. Full and moist. You want good carbohydrates to retain that fullness anyway, so you, you asked about what I eat in a day.

Um, so, you know, fruits and, and cottage cheese. Usually in the morning, midday I'll have a, a chicken with, uh, you know, Brussels sprouts and uh, whole grain rice and a little something, something every day. Like a, a, a, a fun protein bar or a piece of, you know, a [00:16:00] chocolate bar or a, there we

Dalia: go. Yeah, that's what I wanted to hear.

Oh, yeah, it's like a fun protein bar.

Lisa: Oh, it's sustainable. You know, you gotta have something because if, if you're restricted all the time, there's nowhere to go. But during contest prep, the calories they have to go down at some point. At, at that point, I really will restrict carbs. The, the priority would be on proteins I might.

Bump up my protein goal to be, you know, closer to 1.5 grams per pound of body weight to maybe even two. Dr. Bill Campbell at uh, USF with his physique transformation laboratory has done research showing that, uh, higher protein help favors muscle retention and muscle protein synthesis for women more than men.

So that's, you know, go USF, go Local science. Yes.

Dalia: I love that you're saying that because I'm in my forties. I joined a gym last year and they encourage, especially the women to lift [00:17:00] and lift heavy. Yes. And as I'm getting older, I'm seeing the value in that. You know, when I was in my teens, just like you, everybody wants to be skinny and now.

We wanna be strong. At least I hope we do. So how has your routine both fitness and nutrition changed since you know, the decades that you started this journey?

Lisa: I started this journey like so many being a cardio bunny, right? And so lift as heavy as you can in safety, but vary it up, you know, um, maybe some days, uh, because lifting heavy is great.

It's the holy grail, it's gonna build your muscle, uh, your bone density, and you know. It depends on why you're lifting too. I mean, do, if you're lifting for just overall better metabolism, the muscle is gonna help. But if, if you're doing, like I did for aesthetic purposes and a, a physique goal, you really wanna build those muscles and, and not obscure them with fat.

So they show off. Um, [00:18:00] you know, it's, it's kind of counterintuitive. Let's, let's work harder on less fuel. It kind of doesn't make sense. So you wanna lift as heavy as you can in safety, but you could go for volume, which might some days mean higher reps of a lower weight. Or you might wanna mix it up with, you know, fewer reps of the heaviest weight that you can lift.

You know, using good form. Do you have a trainer, did you, did you get someone to show you through the ropes to make sure you're using good form?

Dalia: Wow. Okay. Well shout out to Burn Bootcamp. And Brandon, the trainers, they make sure they've got eyes everywhere and they're always correcting my form, so I appreciate that.

Wow. Okay. Okay. Here's my question. I'm doing a food podcast, but you are doing hard news and when I'm stressed, I just want a snack and. Hearing the news stresses me out. Right? So how so? What do you do to relax? I mean, you've got this competitive side to you, but you're also [00:19:00] dealing with like some pretty heavy news every day and you don't have the option of turning it off like the rest of us.

So what do you do? Just kind of for fun?

Lisa: To deal with that, I've had to relentlessly rewire my brain to look for the good stories, to search for those moments of joy. You know, there was a recent story about the cat cafe in Brandon that WUSF did. So focusing on the moments of joy that helps endure, you know, the, the.

Overwhelmingness of the volume of news that is coming our way. Meditation helps. That's a new practice in the past three years that my husband and I have really doubled down on, and it, it pays off big time.

Dalia: Yeah, I agree.

Lisa: And as far as food goes, carbohydrates are great. They're, they're a great antidepressant and there's, they're, they're legit.

You know, just to have a, oh, well have a snack. You know,

Dalia: I am thrilled to hear you say that. [00:20:00] Okay. I, I do have sort of an inside baseball question for you because we both use our voice a lot for work, and I know other people do too. You know, I just mentioned the gym and last week one of the trainers was.

Struggling. She was losing her voice, but she still had to teach this class. And whether you're a teacher or so many people have to use their voice all day, every day you're holding up a water bottle. Okay, tell me the routine. What should I eat and drink? What should I stay away from for all of us who just wanna keep our voices strong?

Lisa: Alright. So the goal for me is like 120 ounces of fluid per day. I would say 20 to 60. Ounces of fluid is a mixture of ginger and lemon balm tea, lemon

balm, just for my outlook and for mental health. But I pound a ton of water. So to keep those fluids, you know, to keep the tissues moist, you just wanna stay really hyper, hyper hydrated.

Um, especially as we age. Those tissues get read. I hear it in my voice a lot. So. [00:21:00] Moving around, keeping the blood going. Oh, oh, uh, that exercise called a fonated yawn. Oh, hey boo

Dalia: boo yawn. For real.

Lisa: Hey, Yogi. Hey, boo boo. So you're just like doing an overly Oh. Talking through a yawn and, and that you

Dalia: got me doing it.

Lisa: Yeah. Yeah. And that's just a way to keep those bolds from, you know, banging up against each other or that vocal fry that, that you hear. You just, oh, we don't like the

Dalia: vocal fry.

Lisa: You got it. That's one of the best examples of vocal fry ever. Yeah. Yeah. What

Dalia: not to do. That's very helpful. Okay. Dairy. Yay or nay for the voice.

Lisa: It's the classic. Don't, and it, there's a thing with it. You know, what you should avoid is raw spinach. Spinach. What? Spinach has, raw spinach has oxalic acid crystals, and the, that's a dessicant. It, it, it [00:22:00] attracts moisture and it takes it right out. So do not eat raw spinach before going on the air.

Dalia: Okay.

That is a fantastic tip. Maybe I'll just have a blueberry muffin before going on the air

Lisa: with sugar and sugar's. Good because carbohydrates bring the, bring the water up and keep you nice and moist.

Dalia: Oh, Lisa, you're my new best friend. We talked about your, your nutrition and fitness side. We talked about your radio side.

Do you feel that one informs the other? Like, does having this active lifestyle make you a better radio host? Does your experience with radio make you better suited for your fitness competitions? How do the two play off of each other, or do they?

Lisa: Well, for competitive bodybuilding, that is a highly regimented, disciplined thing with lots of goals that you've gotta hit.

And with live radio. There has to be something fresh every 10 minutes, you know, and everything has to be broken down into 15, 30, 60 second bits. So [00:23:00] there's a craft to it. You've gotta really be disciplined and tight. And also Dalia with fitness competitions and with radio, it's show business too. You know?

Mm mm-hmm. It's a lot of preparation that goes on behind the scenes to show off the final product at the end for whoever may be there to, to wanna see it.

Dalia: Wow. So cool. Oh, I just admire you so much. I'm so excited to hear you on the radio again. I'll be like, that's my friend Lisa.

Lisa: Can, can I say like the zest is like the, the most wonderful product.

It is. So life, it is so mission oriented and it is so full of the greater Tampa Bay area and the fascinating people I've got to know through listening to the Zest. Um, who's the woman with the, the Florida Vanilla?

Dalia: Oh, Stephanie Webb. Mm, yes. Who knew with the vanilla symposium she just had, I know. I had no idea.

I feel like we need to be going on Jeopardy or something with all the stuff we're learning. [00:24:00] This is so cool. Oh, well it's just a love fest. What part of town are you in, by the way people might be curious.

Lisa: I live in the historical Northeast District of St. Petersburg and it is such a wonderful neighborhood.

We're just fascinating people, uh, young and. Old, um, you know, we, we'll see one another along, uh, the walk, you know, waving to the dolphins beyond the mangroves. Oh, a coffee

Dalia: pot drive. Yeah. All the best. Oh, that's so nice. And I don't know how often you eat out. I mean, people will ask me my restaurant recommendations and I'll go, uh, I, I eat out like almost never.

I wrote a cookbook. You don't write a cookbook by eating out. And I know you're so careful with your food. What does that look like? Do you get a chance to, to go out and. I don't even know what you would order. Would you bring your food scale?

Lisa: Oh, I've, I've done that. I've been that person. Uh, you know, right now it's, it's such a blessing in life to feel a great synthesis of everything.

So I eat everything. I've always been omnivorous and I'm, I haven't [00:25:00] competed in four years and I, I hope to again, you know, in my late sixties. We'll, we'll see. Um, I always try to Amazing. Try to stay within striking distance so that when I wanna tighten it up, I can. So, you know, um, order takeout from Bella Brava, they, it's here.

Hot and piping for special occasions. Um, you know, Mazzaro's, we love going there and, and getting some unusual things. There is so much, um, Bodega on Central. There's just fascinating fresh salads, you know, there, there's so many options and. For drinks and beverages too. I mean, there's just so much here in St.

Petersburg.

Dalia: There really is no spinach salad though. Right before you record. Amen. Wow. Thank you. This was so much fun. Really appreciate it. You're the sweetest. That's. WUSF's own Lisa Peakes. Don't you just love her? Just when I thought I couldn't love her [00:26:00] anymore. Oh, Lisa, thank you so much for that inspiring and vulnerable and honest conversation.

And shout out to our colleague Alex Ebron, for suggesting Lisa as a guest. Now, who do you want to hear on this podcast we're talking about? Food and everybody eats so nobody is off limits. Send your Zest guest suggestions to info@thezestpodcast.com. I'm Dalia Colon. I produce the zest with Alexandria Ebron and Andrew Lucas.

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