

## About IBD Episode 88 - Leaning Into Pleasure With Passion by Kait

[Music: IBD Dance Party]

Amber Tresca 0:05

I'm Amber Tresca. And this is About IBD. It's my mission to educate people living with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis about their disease and to bring awareness to the patient journey.

Welcome to Episode 88.

Do you ever feel as though you're caught in a holding pattern? It can happen with our work, our friendships, and our romantic relationships. A feeling of staleness can crop up at any time, but might be especially problematic during times of stress. Situations such as raising kids, losing a job, or coping with health problems can all affect the level of happiness and satisfaction that we feel within a relationship. A lack of outside experiences might also leave us feeling as though we don't have much to bring back to a partner. The pandemic has put us all through various forms of stress and trauma and that will, of course, affect every relationship we have.

Couples are spending more time in proximity to one another but that may not translate into spending quality time. That's why I asked certified sex educator Kait Scalisi to come back to About IBD to talk about reconnecting in intimate partnerships. Kait was last on episode 42, where we talked about coping with relationships and chronic illness. Kait holds a bachelor's in neuroscience from Stonehill College and a Master's of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. Kait is an advocate for the revolutionary power of pleasure both inside the bedroom and out.

We tackle some questions such as why couples may find themselves in a routine and how to break out of it. We also discuss how to approach a partner and talk about spending time together that's more meaningful but also how to ask for time apart. Kait gives advice on how to approach these situations both during the pandemic and beyond.

I'm excited to welcome the founder of Passion by Kait and certified sex educator, Kait Scalisi. Thank you so much for coming on About IBD

Kait Scalisi 2:03

Thank you so much for having me. It's so good to be back.

Amber Tresca 2:07

Kait, I emailed you a couple of weeks ago about coming on the show and talking about couples who have been spending a lot of time together in the pandemic and what that can mean for their relationship. And it was so funny because I was having one of those IBD days that everyone who has IBD is going to recognize this, you just like can't seem to get anything going. And I have I used to push through it right. But now I'm just kind of like, Okay, let me just press

pause for a little bit. And I go and do something else. And so usually that means going and sitting on the couch for half an hour watching something dumb on TV. So I go to watch something dumb on TV. And you're gonna laugh when I tell you this. We have it. We have a TiVo, right? Okay. Yes, we still have a TiVo. So I open it up. And it's got this episode of The Office on it. Guess what it's about? It is about this exact topic. So the characters, Pam and Jim, right, Pam and Jim, at this point in the story and the journey, they have two kids, they're still little. So I'm guessing they've been married, like less than 10 years, right? They seem to be running out of things to talk about. And they think that they have heard all of each other's stories, and that they know everything about one another. And I thought it was kind of funny, because for myself having been married 20 years, I was like, Well, I don't think that that's like 10 years seems like a short amount of time for that.

Kait Scalisi 3:42  
Maybe.

Amber Tresca 3:42  
Maybe it's not I don't know. And then I thought to myself, this is TV, it's really extreme. So it was a really extreme example of it happening. I mean, they got to the point where they were like making up things to tell one another. They were so worried about this. But this actually does happen to people, right? That they feel like there's nothing left to talk about, or nothing new to talk about. How can people recognize that happening in their relationship? Because I don't think it's gonna be quite that simple for most people.

Kait Scalisi 4:16  
Oh, man, it's, you know, if life were a scripted TV show, we would all have like, perfectly resolved conflict, and so on and so forth. You know, I think there's, there's kind of two different ways to answer that are two different layers of answering this and one, I think, is just the general overarching response, and the other is like the COVID response. So I'm gonna get to both right. So the first is that what's really common for any couple and for any honestly, any relationship, right, this happens with friends too. This isn't just limited to intimate and romantic partners. So what happens with couples is a couple of options. Other things happens to couples. And these start to kind of get into this rut where they're only talking about the day to day stuff. And this may or may not mirror each of their lives becoming more and more focused on those day to day things, right. So whether that's kids work, etc, often it can be easy to just get into our rhythms and stay in our rhythms. That's just that's so incredibly human. It just is our brains like to take whatever shortcuts we can and focusing on the same thing, great, we love that. So it's really common in that space to feel like nothing is ever changing, and nothing is ever new. Even though alongside that feeling, it's true that we're always constantly growing and changing, even if we may not actively be seeking that out, or in the case of COVID, having a much harder time with actively seeking that out, right? or needing it to seek it out in new ways. We're always changing and growing. And so you can think about it from that perspective. And you can also think about, like, our emotional landscape is always changing and shifting. And that means like moment to moment. And so there's literally always something new to talk about. So that's part of it. And then I think there's the COVID response, which is to say, we've

had something new to talk about for the last year and a half. But it kind of feels like the same thing. I'm sure I'm not alone. And being at the like, sometime in December, I was like, I'm just not going to read COVID News anymore. Here's the lay of the land, it's bad. We're going to be in it for a while longer, especially those of us who are high risk, there's a vaccine coming. But you know, for me, I have a background in public health. I've spent the last many years thinking about how [bleep] our...I can swear, right?

Amber Tresca 6:51

I will just bleep you. [Laughter]

Kait Scalisi 6:53

I should ask that. Right? How awful There we go. I'll choose a kid friendly word. Our public health infrastructure was I'm not surprised that the rollout is a mess. And like, I'm just not because that is what our country has set up. So anyways, it's this like dichotomy between like, all of this new information, but that's overloading us. And that is not fun. And so we're but we're also all stuck at home and in various ways are stuck in patterns in various ways because of external circumstances. And without any of that novelty, it kind of leads, right, it goes to the exact same place of feeling like nothing is growing and changing. And yet, if you talk to anyone who can zoom out a little bit, and take a big picture view of the last year, so many of us have grown and changed and shed layers, and so on and so forth. Um, as part of my like, break. So each year, we close passion, vacate for two full weeks to take a deep winter's rest. That's what we call it, and we just, everyone is off, we don't post on social newsletter, like there's nothing we want to model a I need it. And B, we want a model that like taking time for yourself is important, and is okay to do and is possible to do right. And during that time this year, I did some reflecting and I you know, I found like a little Instagram post that gave me like a little structure. And so basically the 12 days between Christmas and epiphany, I spent one day looking at one month of 2020. And there was so much richness there and I don't say richness solely as like, whoo, yay, rich dessert. yumminess. I mean, just rich, emotional, big experiences that happened while I was home. Because I've been home since March 10 2020. Long before stay at home orders went into place. And it was it was hard. And it was rewarding. And it was really wonderful. So yeah, I think I think it comes down to this can really feel to go back to the question. Like there's never anything new. Sometimes that can be a sign that you do need to add some novelty individually or as a couple. And sometimes that just means it's about tuning in a little bit more to yourself and tuning into each other a little bit more. There's no, you know, there's no single like, direct way you can go it just kind of depends on what's going on for you and your partner or partners in the moment.

Amber Tresca 9:17

One of the things I think maybe that we get caught up in. And I think this goes for friendships as well as for romantic partnerships. In that we we have to bring novelty in organic ways. But I mean, there are ways to bring in novelty, that involve outside sources. And and you know, I'm sure you have lots of suggestions and ideas about this. But I'm thinking of things like oh, like those games that you play that ask you bizarre questions that you would probably never ask one another in real life. Yeah, you know, I mean, what are your thoughts on adding something

like that because I think some people might feel as though, oh, like, like, like this relationship cheating in a way.

Kait Scalisi 10:04

Yeah, for sure. You know, it's fascinating to me that as a species that uses tools for everything, literally everything, every part of our day, we are using tools. You and I are using how many tools just to do this podcast? Wait, we are tool using beings. But when it comes to our intimate lives, and I mean that both romantically and sexually, there is this sense of myself messed up. But pretend I said the other word in your head yell, because that's I want to like emphasize how strongly I feel about this. There's this messed up narrative that that is somehow cheating, or it's not real, or doesn't count. And another way that this shows up is like, well, if we have to schedule sex, and that just like takes away all of the spontaneity and all of the fun, and I'm like, I always compare it to like a kid's birthday party, where I'm like, when you were a kid, scheduling your birthday party every step of the way, getting there built your excitement. And of course, that's not universal, right? Every now and then people who are often when I share that example, there's someone who's like, I actually have severe anxiety, and that stuff stresses me out. I'm like, okay, right, because there's no normal, there's more or less common, but the point is, there's an opportunity to build. So we have this idea that like tools, cheating, and it's just not. And, you know, like, I don't think that's gonna change anyone's mind, right.

But what I can say and share is both, you know, research, right? Why is looking at the role that novelty plays in relationships and how it leads to increase dopamine. And that helps you actually tune into your environment, internal environment, interpersonal environment, right, like outside environment, more, right, colors are brighter, tastes and smells are more vivid. Everything is just a little bit amped up. Right? We have the research showing that is important. And I also just have, you know, I've been doing this work for almost 11, over 11 years, I'm losing count. And seeing the ways in which incorporating play and incorporating pleasure consciously into relationships, how that impacts my sex counseling, or sex coaching and couples counseling clients is also proof enough, right. And again, this is going to look different for everyone. So one of my favorite tools, and we can maybe drop this link in are these Truth or Dare sticks. And when I lead workshops, this is the icebreaker that I use, and we only use the truth because the dare require they often require stuff that was too complicated. But I often will, quote unquote, prescribe these to counseling and coaching clients and say, go get a set. And then you can just take you can play it like a game of Truth or Dare or you can like pull one in the morning and that'll be your dinner conversation. And it's just about breaking out of those boxes that we all find ourselves in because again, our brains don't like change, our brains like to streamline things and they like to stay consistent, because all changes our brains deem as a threat, even if it's change we want. So if we could add play and fun in there and pleasure, then it allows it allows the change to be made a little bit easier. And and it just again, it brings all those neurochemical changes that just they're working for you. It's like helping you from the inside out. And then it's just frickin fun.

Amber Tresca 13:30

Having little kids, I think scheduling your couple time.

Kait Scalisi 13:34

Mm hmm.

Amber Tresca 13:35

When we decided to do it, it was really the best thing. It really was. And I recommend it to just about everybody like I met like their baby shower going, Okay. [Laughter]

Kait Scalisi 13:47

Look at your calendar right now. Put it on the counter now. [Laughter]

Amber Tresca 13:49

Put it on the calendar, because otherwise you will not get to it. Although to your point. People who feel pressured or stressed out by that, like I understand that too, right? What can those people do? Because if having a formal schedule is problematic, but yet otherwise, you know, if you don't put something on your calendar, and a lot of us are like this, you don't put it on your calendar. You're never gonna get to it.

Kait Scalisi 14:14

I mean, there are people that don't actually use calendars which I know I wish I wish everyone watching this could see both of us right now because we're like so like our both of our bodies just like got a little like uncomfortable. [Laughter] So we're clearly calendar people. Clearly, and this is no shame, right? Like everyone organ, everyone's brain works differently, and everyone organizes their life and their priority differently. So one of the tools that I often will give to people which came to me from a coach years ago, I think it came oh my gosh, I think it was Hillary Rubin. So, you know, credit where credit is due is to draw out like your time priorities and seeing like what is and what you want it to be. And then doing some of your own goal setting around how To get where you want to be, and for some people scheduling is one of those action steps. And for other people, that's not going to be something that's an action step for them. It might be like, put my phone away at the dinner table, right? There might be out, there are always other ways to work it in. So it's about being really like honest honestly, with yourself and what works and what doesn't work for you. Because trying to like, write me telling someone who doesn't use a calendar to put it on their calendar is not frickin helpful. It's just not. And so it's meeting people where they're at. And however they prioritize stuff, is how they prioritize stuff. And so now how can they start applying that to, in this case, intimacy, or sex or couple time? My and how can you incorporate other things into the day, so that you're getting a little bit more of that connection as well.

Amber Tresca 16:03

So how do you deal with it when I say you, but

Kait Scalisi 16:09

Listen, I'm a couple within a pandemic, who we usually are spent one to two weeks, each month traveling and haven't had that for the last year? So me too. No, no one is immune from this, right?

Amber Tresca 16:21

Yeah, that's, that's accurate. I've spent probably the last five years with a pretty heavy travel schedule. So it has been very different. But I can imagine a scenario where one person comes to the other with, you know, like, like a card game and says, Okay, can we introduce this in to our routines, and it can help us either learn more about one another, or maybe be more adventurous in our intimacy, or, you know, whatever that person is looking for. But the other partner thinks to themselves, oh, gosh, am I boring? How do you sort of bring this in without triggering a response in your partner that you weren't intending?

Kait Scalisi 17:07

Yeah. I mean, if you ask 10 people, you're gonna get 10 different answers to this, you're gonna get a lot of, we're not responsible for other people's feelings at all, which I think was extreme, right, like, and they're gonna get a lot of, you know, we need to really tiptoe around other people's feelings. And I think that's also too extreme, right? The, the truth of the reality is really somewhere along the very long spectrum in between there. And I think number one is, you know, yourself and your partner best. And so you already know, you being whoever's listening. And also curious about this, like, you already know how to bring up things in a way that feels more supportive. So that that's the first thing I'm gonna say. And if that's something that you're struggling with, that's where I then say, like, it's worth reaching out to get support around that. Because just because we've all been home together, doesn't mean we're spending quality time together. Most people who are working from home or working way longer hours, businesses expect us all to be way more productive than we used to be somehow, even though we're experiencing a massive global trauma. And please ask me how I really feel about that.

Right, and so like, if you're in a relationship with someone, you're, you're committed to holding their heart with tenderness, right? That doesn't always mean avoiding every single thing that might bring something up for them. But it is creating a space where that can live and be brought up. And for that person to say, like, you know, actually, wow, I feel really boring. And you know, that might come out with a bit of defensiveness or that might come out with withdrawal. And the more that the more that you as an individual can learn yourself, and the more that your partner can learn themselves, and the more the two of you, or three of you, or any people in the relationship can learn those patterns. Right? Because I always say in every relationship, there's actually three people, right? If it's a two person partnership, right? There's the two individuals and the relationship itself is its own being. And so how can you attend to all three and create a space where you can share those emotional realities?

Right, and this is the part I'm laughing is in my head as I talk about this, because this is the part of the work that when clients come to me, or when they click on an article on [passionbykait.com](http://passionbykait.com), wanting better sex, they don't, they're not necessarily expecting and they're not always even wanting to and were there and are a little bit surprised by like, wait, why are

we talking about this because at the end of the day, like the point you just made, no amount of tools, no amount of tips, tricks, positions, toys, etc. can really heal magically heal shame or magically heal, self doubt, self criticism, you got to deal with that first. And then what often happens usually, like halfway through like a coaching package, someone's like, we haven't talked about sex much. And I'm like, I know. And then like, three quarters the way through, they're like, our sex life is great. And I'm like, I know...[Laughter]

Yeah, I know, cuz that's, that's the path that it goes once you start to unlock some of those pieces, other pieces fall into place. Might so so those often those problems are a little bit of a canary in a coal mine. And it's like, okay, what's the layer underneath it, that we have to look at and start doing some healing on. And that doesn't mean there's not going to be progress in all different areas. As the healing is happening, we don't have to be fully healed. And I think living with chronic illness, right, we friggin get that we don't have to be completely cured. And for many of us, there are no cures, in order to live really full, vibrant lives. And we get to decide what a full vibrant life looks like for us. For me, running my business is really important to me. And that's part of how I live a vibrant life. And so the same thing can be applied. And I want to just be really clear, I'm not saying like you have to be healed and totally best friends with yourself in this perfect place in order for improvements to happen.

Amber Tresca 21:08

Right. And it's up to you as an individual, or you as a couple, to decide how far those improvements go.

Kait Scalisi 21:16

And how happy you are with them.

Amber Tresca 21:18

And how happy you are. It's the same with chronic illness.

Kait Scalisi 21:20

Yeah, yeah, I often say like, you know, so I met, we're in the middle of doing in the middle of doing our annual survey. And I'm struck by the number of people who have written under dream under what would your dream sex life look like having sex three times a week? exactly three times three, three, that's what I just the number that keeps coming up is three, no other number has been named. And I'm struck by that, because it speaks to like, Where did that number come from? that so many people are honing in on it? And is that a number that you actually want? Right? And anything is like, is it that you actually want x? Or that you were told that you should have X?

Amber Tresca 22:04

Mm hmm.

Kait Scalisi 22:04

And told by society, family communities that were part of friends, etc, you know, media, etc. The only people that need to be happy in any relationship are you and the people you're in those relationships with, regardless of what that looks like, as long as you're not hurting anyone, right?

Amber Tresca 22:21

Something else like On the flip side, we might need space, some people might need space. So on the one hand, we may be asking for more inclusive focused time together, but then we might also be asking our partner or our friend or even a roommate for time away.

Kait Scalisi 22:43

Yeah.

Amber Tresca 22:43

And that can also upset some people when you ask for time away, depending on where they're coming from. So are there any thoughts you have around gentle way to: you know, it's not you, it's me kind of a conversation?

Kait Scalisi 22:58

Yeah, you know, throughout, like, from day one of the pandemic, I've had two rules, you can't be here for therapy, and you can't be here for church. Those have long been my times. And I said it just like that, because that's how I was like, you need to get out. But that right, and to your point, like some people are gonna hear that who are listening and be like, wow, yeah, she's a "B" that I will never talk to a partner like that. But like, those were very clear. Those are my time. Those are the two times a week that I go unapologetically. And I don't have to worry about anyone but me. The rest of my time, I'm, you know, taking care of my clients taking care of my business. My employees, my partner, my friend, right? No, no, those two hours a week are mine. And you will take that you will not take that away from me. Like if it's snowing, fine. You could put your I guess you could stay in the other room. But no. So I think it's first checking in with yourself with like, what, what would be supportive? I'm always going to start with the self, right? Because we can only control ourselves, like, what would feel supportive to you? What are you willing to compromise on? And what's feasible right now? Right? Like when the weather turned, it was a little harder for me to be like, No, you have to go outside and like zero degree weather when there's a blizzard, like, No, I'm like, okay, you have those like ear, noise cancelling headphones, and I'll set up three different white noise machines. And then you could stay in the other room. Also living in New York City apartment, right? Like there's, you know, it's not like there's a completely really we have a one bedroom, but that's it. It's not like there's another floor that one of us would go to anyways, getting lost in the story. So figuring those three things out what's feasible, what do you want, what are you willing to compromise on? And then there's two things I want to name here. Number one, when bringing up something that feels a little vulnerable to someone, I often encourage people and I use this tool myself as well to say like, Oh, I heard or I read or so and so many mentioned, or like, kind of have a little bit of a place to, to put the idea, right like this didn't come from me this came from that podcast I was listening to they were talking about this. And then asking a question that's not a



yes or no question such as what do you think about that? How would you feel about that? And the reason I really stress not asking Yes, no questions is because like, would you be open to that? If they just say yes. And that's it? It's like, yes, what? They just say no? Okay, no, what? Right? So being really mindful, you know, how does that feel? What would What do you think about that? What are your thoughts here? And the second thing is, whenever we're talking about practicing these skills, I always encourage people to start with a less vulnerable ask than a more vulnerable ask. So to use a unrelated example, just for example, sake, if you are someone who often says, I don't care when asked, like, Where do you want to order takeout? But you do care, right? If you don't care, then great, say that. But like, you're like, I'm really craving pizza. But you say I don't care, like start with those smaller pieces. To just like practice making those asks and feeling confident. And again, safe in those asks, and I think I might add a third thing here, too. Last year, like I said, was a big year for growth for a lot of people. And a lot of it had to do with boundaries. Right. And here, we were on a on a global scale, having to navigate masking and not masking. And for those of us who are high risk, having really hard conversations with people in our lives, losing friends, who were not, you know, willing to do the things that needed to be done to protect us, and so on and so forth. And one of the best pieces of wisdom that I took away from last year that was shared with me, from my teacher, Jane Clapp was the idea that you just have to expect a blowback. And so what can you do within yourself to like, right steel against, not steel against, but like, absorb, without taking it personally or without, you know, collapsing in or, or spiraling into shame, if you make an ask and that ask isn't received well, and what might be other person right also need to do to build up that resilience as well for so that it doesn't go into story and go into a wall, I must be boring, I must be this, when it's actually just the person saying like, we all need space, we all need alone time. We all need community time, regardless, introvert extrovert, whatever their human needs. And we're in a season of hibernation. Right now. At least in the Northern Hemisphere. Obviously.

Amber Tresca 27:48

I'm reminded of years ago, before my husband and I had kids, we were out with some other couples. And at the time, the the men were playing an Xbox game together or something. I don't know what they were doing. And I don't know what they were doing, because they had their scheduled time, it was on their calendars. This was the time that they spent together as friends having fun. And one of the other wives turns to me, and she says, and when they're doing this, what what are you doing? I'm afraid that I was a little, you know, brusque. I was like, whatever I want. Like, [Laughter]

Kait Scalisi 28:26

Amen.

Amber Tresca 28:26

You know, it took me a little bit aback because he had his boundaries.

Kait Scalisi 28:33

Mm hmm.

Amber Tresca 28:34

And I respected them. And I recognized that it didn't have anything to do with me. Yeah. And so it kind of surprised me that there was someone who saw another person's boundaries as like inflicting on their own in a way.

Kait Scalisi 28:52

I mean, it speaks to the the strength of this cultural narrative that our romantic partners have to be are everything. Right, and they have to fulfill all needs. And I remember, it must have been two years ago now. Oh, my gosh, at one of my I used to run this this month, a group called coffee, Kegels, and conversations and...pandemic, I'm just gonna say pandemic And one one of the topics was around friendships. And we really dove into this. And it was really fascinating to be in a room full of women who are all roughly in there like that, we'll just say 30s and 40s at various states of relationships and talking about kind of where their friendships fell in position to their romantic relationship. And I will own that this is something for me that I have very strong feelings around and isn't actually like this would be something where if it came up in like an intake call with with a potential client that I would refer out because I kind of can't put my feelings aside with how strong my feelings are here. And so it's important for me to right not bring in with a coaching session. And for me, and I think this is directly related to eight and a half years of long distance, right? I couldn't do the formative years of my relationship rely on my partner to be my everything because he would literally wasn't here. And honestly, I wouldn't want to, I often say I don't want my partner to be my best friend, I want my best friends, plural to be my best friends, I want my partner to be my partner. And so I think I will put my feelings aside as much as I can here, which is to say, like, each individual, person, and couple, like this is something to talk about, like I, my partner, and I actually are very aligned on this, that friends are not, you know, there are certain things that are complete, like, absolutely take priority period, hard, hard boundaries. But friends aren't that much below. And I remember when I had a few friends who went over to work on the on the front lines of Ebola, and one was coming back for a break, I looked at him and I was like, I'm going to DC to visit her for like it there. And back in a day. He's like, of course you're going like it wasn't even a question. And I know that that's not how every couple would handle that. So I think two pieces here, which is to say like finding someone who has shares a similar view, like this is one of those things that I think we all need to be talking about more as part of building a building a romantic relationship is like what role do friends play in your life? Because there really isn't a right answer, right? Like, there's as much as like, there's a right answer to this. So like, there really isn't, I can, I can see that my highest self can see that, right? And you want someone who's who's a little bit in agreement and shared, right, because that's a core value. So you want someone who shares those values to at least to some extent, and then kind of acting that out as a couple to seeing like, like, for us, again, we have those things that are hard boundaries, where it's like, absolutely not doesn't matter what it is, right, if you know, if x happens, we're together, right? But talking about those things within the relationship can also be really powerful. So that you don't have as much of that mismatch, because everyone's different. And the strength of that cultural narrative and the ways the insidious ways that that shows up in

relationships, is because of so much damage, not not even damage, because damage implies, right, that it's leading to something worse, but it causes a lot of harm, and hurt.

Amber Tresca 32:27

I think that's right, because the other thing that I think about is that friendships are one of those things that you experience on your own, sometimes together, but you might experience on your own. And then you have experiences that you then bring back.

Kait Scalisi 32:44

Mm hmm. Which goes back to the first question.

Amber Tresca 32:47

And absolutely does.

Kait Scalisi 32:48

Look at us come full circle. [Laughter]

Amber Tresca 32:53

Good on us. [Laughter]

Kait, do you have any just broad strokes of advice for folks as they're finding themselves, spending a lot of time in proximity to each other, but not necessarily having quality time, but also feeling like they might need some space from one another? Like, what what are the things that you're sort of telling your clients right now, as we're trying to get through these last few months?

Kait Scalisi 33:28

Yeah. From your lips, I hope it's just a few more months.

Amber Tresca 33:33

I'm owning it. I keep saying I've been saying it...

Kait Scalisi 33:35

Like you said so confidently. And I just, I'm gonna let you keep holding that confidence. And I'm gonna just borrow it a little bit. Yeah, you know, I think this is such a powerful practice of, of holding multitudes, right and holding this like, dual truths of like, black sheets, triple truths, right. Like we're together all the time. We want more quality time, and we want more alone time. And you know, again, I think just this process of going back to yourself and checking in with yourself and just being really brutally, but lovingly, right? I'm not saying be don't beat yourself up, but just be really honest about what you want and need in this time. And then carving out some space to to have like talking them and carving out some space to have it. And that is so much easier said than done, right? Because all of us are juggling so many things right now. So one of the things is the reminder that perfect, perfect is the enemy of good, right. So you might not be able to get exactly what you need right now. But can you can you think

creatively to get something that is there? This stuff doesn't have to take a long time. One of the one of the core tenants of everything that we do at passion by Kait is it has to be practical and powerful. So our like our main questions are like how does this help you experience more pleasure? How does this address systems and the role that systems play in the next issue? And like how practical is this? And of course, what's practical for one person varies, right varies person to person. But I typically define that as like less than five minutes or under \$5. And I think sometimes people think these small practical things, it's like too easy. So like, it can't possibly work. Because like, there's almost like a lack of trust. And first of all, five minutes can be a really long time, like five minutes can be really hard. And I don't just mean the five minutes when you're in the shower, on the toilet, although if you need to double up, that's fine. But if you can find five minutes elsewhere, that's even better. But a lot can happen in those moments, because it's less about the thing, then carving out the time, and saying yes to yourself and your needs, and supporting yourself in that way. Right? It's the practice of doing that, that ultimately leads to the long term change. More than, you know, I'm gonna meditate for five minutes every day, not the meditations, bad thing, right? We know, it's good, but it's more about being like this is happening than not, are then the actual whatever this is. So I would say think think practical, don't give up slash throw the towel. And if it's not exactly what you want. I think that's great advice. Is there anything that we missed or anything else that we should cover? And this is actually a good piggyback off of that last question, which is to, we have spent so much of the last year and really the last four years in just really traumatic state, like really in a trauma state. And I am not one to throw that term around loosely. I think it gets way overused, but right now we're living through a global trauma and the last four years, at least in the US have been hard. And mimicking, you know, I'm seeing so much conversation just like, Oh, yeah, I kind of feels like those moments when you finally leave that relationship and like, your body hasn't quite caught up yet that it's okay. And that means we've all gotten a lot of really good long term, repetitive practice in navigating those states. And navigating stress and navigating hyper or hypo arousal, or some combination of both. We haven't had as much practice necessarily, and leaning into pleasure. And so wherever you can take your like sips and iOS and say like sips and gulps of pleasure right now. And that may mean, you notice that you're calm. And you just sit in that for one more breath than usual of like, I'm calm, okay, something has to be wrong, right, which I think is, is really common right now. Because we're all like waiting for the next shoe to drop. Where's the next bet? Like, what's the next bad thing? So where can you actively seek out pleasure? And where can you lean into those moments of pleasure for just just like a beat longer, doesn't even have I mean, make it longer great, but like, just a bit longer and help to give those neural pathways a little bit of practice. Because all the other ones those grooves are real deep right now. So where can you just like and I hate that the term lean in has been co opted. So but I like I'm here where I'm like, like, Where can you just lean into that for yourself? recognizing it doesn't have to be long or intense. But just for that moment, you just breathe into that contentment, that calm that joy, right? Because for all the things that's been going on, there's gonna be the most pleased. For all the stuff that's been going on, right, like, there have also been really, really beautiful moments, people coming together. And what for me, I see a lot of within the business community, people who pivoted and actually found their passion.

Amber Tresca 39:00

Mm hmm.

Kait Scalisi 39:01

And like, would have never might not have ever found. I mean, they would have found it eventually. But like, got to find it sooner. And so there have been really beautiful moments. And can we just lean into those, knowing that it doesn't necessarily diminish the hard stuff, either.

Amber Tresca 39:13

Kait, thank you so much. I learned from you all of the time. I'm so grateful for how open and giving you are on your social media channels, because I've learned so much. And I love when you recommend products. Because I have such trust in you. And I've definitely gone on to check out and in some cases actually engage with the content and the products that you talk about because you are very intentional about your work. And I really do appreciate that. Thank you. So where can everyone else follow you so that they can take gulps of your awesomeness?

Kait Scalisi 39:57

Thank you. All of our stuff is passion by Kait and Kait is spelled K-A-I-T. That's about the usual way. And that's you know, Passion by Kait on all the social media platforms is perks of spelling. The downside of spelling Kait that way means it can be harder for people to find it. But the perk means that I have the same universal stuff across social media and Passion By Kait is where to find everything.

Amber Tresca 40:27

Thank you so much for your time, it's really been a great lift to my week to speak to you.

Kait Scalisi 40:32

Thank you.

[Music: IBD Dance Party]

Amber Tresca 40:38

Hey super listener! Thanks this week to Kat Scalisi of Passion by Kait for exploring with me this duality of needing both what I often refer to as "time ins" and also "time outs" with the people in our lives.

We didn't get to Kait's IBD journey, because she does live with Crohn's disease, but you can go back to episode 42, "I Just Said Yes" and hear more about how she manages her IBD as well as her tips on maintaining your intimate life while living with IBD.

Kait's background in neuroscience and public health makes her the right person to give us guidance during the pandemic and beyond. And I say beyond because most of us are focused on being able to go back to in-person interactions but there's going to be a long period of readjustment after that happens.

Sometimes we're not able to process what we're going through while we're going through it. This is true for the times we're currently in as well as with chronic illness in general. For example, our emotional needs and what we are looking for from our relationships with friends, family, and partners is very different during an IBD flare-up than it is during remission.

You can find Passion by Kait all over the interwebs as @PassionByKait and Kait is spelled K-A-I-T. Kait also offers private sex and couple's counseling to help people find their spark again. You can learn more at her web site, [passionbykait.com](http://passionbykait.com).

I will put links to more information about the topics we discussed and all of Kait's contact information in the show notes and on my Episode 88 page on [AboutIBD.com](http://AboutIBD.com). And I wasn't lying: she is a treasure trove of information regarding not only sex and intimacy, but also with reconnecting to yourself and finding freedom in pleasure.

Thanks for listening, and remember, until next time, I want you to know more about IBD.

About IBD is a production of Mal and Tal Enterprises.

It is written, produced and directed by me, Amber Tresca.

Theme music is from Cooney Studio.