

Podcast: [What If World](#)

Episode: 40: What if candy were good for you?

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Transcription by Keffy

[Rising harp scales followed by the What If World theme song.]

Lyrics: What if kittens played the glockenspiel? And what if unicorns were real? What if you could fly or travel back in time, we welcome you to What If World. What If World. This is What If World.

Mr. Eric: Hey there, folks, and welcome back to What If World, the show where your questions and ideas inspire off the cuff stories. I'm Mr. Eric, your host, and today we've got a question from Naomi.

Naomi: Hello, my name is Naomi and I like to invent things and play with my three siblings. And my question is, what if candy was good for you?

Mr. Eric: Naomi, did you say three siblings? That's a big family. I'm glad you get along with all of them. I only have two siblings and we didn't always play nicely together. Naomi, we're going to get right into your story involving candy being good for you, siblings, and inventing things. Awesome.

[Rising harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Now, back in episode 12, what if there were a never-ending bowl of ice cream, we met the Whendiana Joans. One who traveled back in time to live in the past, one who stayed in the present, and the third who went to the future.

Now, since most stories behave chronologically, we're going to do the opposite and check in on our future Whendiana.

Whendiana: All right, Learninator.

Mr. Eric: Said Whendiana, bent over a microscope, looking at a tiny little chip that she was working on with two tiny little tools.

Whendiana: If my calculations are correct, then this chip will allow us to activate our GMC machine.

Learninator: Yes, and we will be able to make big cars.

Whendiana: No, Learninator. We will be making genetically modified candy, that is perfectly healthy for all.

Learninator: Okay, but then can we make a big car to drive around the candy in.

Whendiana: Yes, fine.

Learninator: I like cars.

Whendiana: Of course you do.

Mr. Eric: With a spark and a crackle and a beep boop bop, Whendiana made the finishing touches on this tiny little chip that she installed into a box barely bigger than a printer.

Whendiana: Now we just need to insert a piece of candy and the GMC will splorkify its molecules, thus creating healthy candy.

Learninator: All right. There's just one problem.

Whendiana: That's impossible. My calculations were perfect.

Learninator: But you failed to calculate how much candy there was in the future.

Whendiana: You're right. I'll need to invent a candy calculator that—

Learninator: It's zero. There's no candy in the future.

Whendiana: Why do you call it the future? Isn't it sort of your present.

Learninator: But everything's chrome with lasers and rocket ship cats.

Whendiana: I know it seems futuristic, I'm just saying that—

Learninator: And all food has been replaced by a well-balanced paste.

Whendiana: Well, why didn't you mention that before I started inventing the GMC?

Learninator: I thought you knew. You need to get out of the laboratory.

Whendiana: You're right. I haven't seen my sisters in ages. Literally.

Learninator: And I miss my Learninator brothers.

Whendiana: I didn't realize robots could miss things.

Learninator: Only in the future. That's probably why the other robots never visit me.

Whendiana: Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

Learninator: Road trip.

Whendiana: Time travel.

Both: Oh.

Whendiana: Road—

Learninator: Time travel. Okay. I mean.

Whendiana: No, I've got it. Time tri—

Learninator: Road travel, I—

Whendiana: Can you just take us to the present, already?

Learninator: But this is the present.

Whendiana: I thought you said it was the future.

Learninator: Let me just check my laser watch.

Whendiana: Okay, just take me to see the past Whendiana.

Learninator: Very well. Time travel, ahoy.

Whendiana: Time travel, ahoy? That does not sound very futury—

Mr. Eric: [Futuristic whooshing noises] But they were already blasting back in time. Not to What If World's present, but all the way to the wild west time that the other Whendiana now lived in. They were in a run-down old schoolhouse where the past Whendiana, wearing a faded blue dress, walked up and down a row of cafeteria tables.

Past Whendiana: Now students, if you don't finish your greens, I cannot continue the day's lesson.

Child: That just means we get to leave early.

Child 2: Hooray!

Child 3: Hooray!

Past Whendiana: That means you won't hear any more stories about the future today.

Child 2: Aw!

Child 3: No fair!

Past Whendiana: And I have one piece of butter scotch for each and every one of you when you finish your broccoli.

Child: Well, why didn't you say so?

Child 3: Yeah, you should have started with that.

Mr. Eric: And all of her students, with grimacing faces, started to shovel down their vegetables.

Learninator: Seriously? I am a teleporting robot. Why isn't anyone paying attention to me?

Child: Oh, we seen your kind every day.

Mr. Eric: A little girl pointed to the exit where another Learninator paced, wearing spurred boots, a long duster jacket and a wide-brimmed hat.

Past Learninator: What are y'all talking about. I'm as much a part of the past as chicken soup or metal other than chrome.

Mr. Eric: The future Learninator walked up to his brother from the past.

Learninator: Your accent is giving you away. It's terrible.

Past Learninator: You are one to talk, y'all.

Mr. Eric: And Future Whendiana ran up to Past Whendiana.

Future Whendiana: Whendiana, why are you acting like a schoolteacher? You are a brave adventurer, and brilliant inventor.

Past Whendiana: Oh, I know. And I still do all that on the sly. But back in these times, folks aren't comfortable with a lady who can do all those things so I spend the days teaching children. And I like it, too.

Future Whendiana: Well, I think everyone will respect you after you show them this.

Mr. Eric: And the Future Whendiana held up the GMC. [Triumphant music]

Past Whendiana: Oh, Joan. Give up on that genetically modified candy. We were never able to get it working.

Future Whendiana: That's because you never had access to future technology, Whendy. And I prefer Dr. Joan.

Past Whendiana: Well, I prefer Ms. Whendy.

Child: Hang on, did I hear something about candy?

Child 2: Yeah, we finished our vegetables, now we want—

Child 3: My momma says I can't eat anymore candy on account of I'm on the bigger side.

Future Whendiana: Well, that's okay.

Mr. Eric: Said Dr. Joan.

Future Whendiana: Because this candy helps big people get slimmer and slim people get bigger.

Learninator: Just dump all your candy in this box and it will come out healthy.

Child: Aw, but healthy stuff tastes gross.

Past Whendiana: Now class, that is not always the case.

Hess: Yeah, Ms. Whendy steams a mean broccoli.

Past Whendiana: Thank you, Hess.

Hess: Thank you, but I'd like to try that healthy candy, all the same, if it's all right.

Past Whendiana: Very well, Dr. Joan. You've already disrupted my class enough.

Mr. Eric: And all the kids tossed their little hard butterscotch candies in that box and—

After one bright flash, the Learninator dumped all the candy back out.

Child: Mm! Just as good.

Hess: Oh, [crosstalk]

Child 2: We can eat all the candy we want!

Past Learninator: Just remember, y'all. That every healthy habit is about moderation, eh?

Mr. Eric: But the class wasn't listening. They were already pulling out every little hidden piece of candy from the classroom. They had bits in their pockets, in their backpacks, and stuffed inside their desks.

Child 3: This is where I used to hide all my candy before I got too big.

Mr. Eric: Said Hess, pulling up a floorboard to reveal a whole heap of sweets.

Future Whendiana: See, Ms. Whendy. Now you won't have to have a battle with your students every afternoon over what they eat.

Past Whendiana: Oh yes, Dr. Joan. You have solved all of my problems, I'm sure. Why don't we just take a trip over to that present and see if this changes anything, hmm?

Past Learninator: One of us should stay to teach the children. I elect me seeing as I don't age, beep.

Future Learninator: Your accent was almost believable that time until the beep.

Past Learninator: Oh, beep.

Mr. Eric: So the future Learninator took himself, Dr. Joan, and Ms. Whendy to What If World's present. As they were warping through space-time, Dr. Joan said,

Future Whendiana: Everyone just be ready for action. If I know my present self, she's probably off on some daring mission right now.

[Futuristic machine noises]

Mr. Eric: The three of them appeared in a room that was nearly pitch black. The only light was a tiny TV screen playing behind them. There was a commercial playing and a man dressed up as a shiny green superhero shouted very loudly with blasting graphics all over the screen.

Ad Hero: Snap into a celery stalk! It's the cool food because it's not quite as good for you as candy!

Mr. Eric: The celery man shot a thousand celery stalks straight at the screen.

Ad Hero: Want to gross out your friends? Eat something that grew out of the dirt! Now in five flavors! Plain! Celery salt! Less celery salt! More celery salt! And plain double!

Mr. Eric: Then the screen flicked off and they were in darkness.

Present Learninator: Hello, brother.

Mr. Eric: It sounded kind of like the present Learninator.

Future Learninator: Presenator, where are you?

Present Learninator: You were just looking at me.

Mr. Eric: They looked back at the TV and it turned on and off in a way that kind of looked like a robot winking.

Past Whendiana: Robot, why are you a television all of a sudden?

Present Learninator: Our Whendiana had to sell her TV.

Future Learninator: Understandable.

Mr. Eric: Said Dr. Joan.

Future Learninator: The present was a time of rampant screen time saturation.

Present Whendiana: Oh, that's not why I sold it.

Mr. Eric: They turned around. Whendiana was laying on a couch in the dark, surrounded by candy wrappers.

Future Learninator: Whendiana, what have you done to yourself.

Present Whendiana: Nothing. I'm as healthy as ever.

Mr. Eric: The present Whendiana stood up, a blanket of candy wrappers falling off her to the ground. And did a standing back flip with a perfect landing!

Present Whendiana: See, now everyone's perfectly healthy all the time thanks to the GMC. She gestured to her little box beside the couch jam-packed full of tiny candy bars, half-melted ice cream, and stringy cotton candy.

Past Whendiana: Oh, Ana. That looks just disgusting.

Present Whendiana: Oh, I assure you, all of my candy is local, sustainable, and organic. That's why it's so expensive I had to sell half my stuff.

Mr. Eric: They looked around Whendianna's apartment. There were no pictures hanging. Her bookshelves were more than half empty. She didn't have a rug on the ground or an appliance in the kitchen other than a refrigerator and another GMC.

Present Learninator: You should all try some. It's delicious. It even powers my robot battery.

Future Learninator: I need to think.

Mr. Eric: Said Dr. Joan.

Future Whendiana: I thought our invention would make the world a better place.

Present Whendiana: Oh, it's a fine place. Everyone's happy and healthy and can eat as much as they want.

Mr. Eric: Said Ana.

Past Whendiana: But Ana, when's the last time you did any exploring?

Mr. Eric: Asked Ms. Whendy.

Present Whendiana: Oh, Ms. Whendy, you need to relax. Let me just make you some tea.

Mr. Eric: Ana got up and grabbed a coffee mug and reached into the fridge and pulled out a whole jug of maple syrup.

Present Whendiana: It'll just be a minute.

Mr. Eric: [Squelching noises] She squeezed the syrup into the mug. [More horrible squelching noises].

Past Whendiana: Honey, that's a little more syrup than I usually take in my tea.

Present Whendiana: Oh, don't worry. I'll make it better.

Mr. Eric: She stuck it in the GMC, pressed the hot button. [BING!] And that mug of syrup was steaming. Then, with a squelch, she plopped a little celery stick in there.

Present Whendiana: I know, I know, it's not as healthy, but how often do I get to see my brothers and sisters. And she handed the sticky, hot mug to Whendy.

Past Whendiana: Mm, oh, that's very nice. Thank you. I'm just going to probably save this for later.

Future Learninator: Whendiana, you've got to snap out of this. All the timelines are in danger.

Present Whendiana: Huh?

Mr. Eric: Asked Whendiana, looking up from a cake she'd just shoved her face in.

Future Whendiana: If you don't continue inventing and exploring, then the world won't be as good of a place as it is in the future.

Present Whendiana: I'm sorry, I'm being rude. Does anyone else want to stick their face in this cake?



Present Learninator: Please, I would like that.

Mr. Eric: Ana walked up to the television and [SMOOSH!] left the whole cake smooshed up against it.

Present Learninator: [Smacking noises] Yum. Yum. Yum. Yum.

Past Whendiana: The only sensible thing to do is go back to the past and never set up that GMC machine in the first place.

Future Learninator: Right. I'll just use my time travel powers and—

[Record scratch] [Sad trombone]

Future Learninator: It seems my power cells are depleted. I guess I should have some candy.

Future Whendiana: Please do.

Mr. Eric: Said Dr. Joan.

Future Whendiana: But just enough to power your cells. The longer the past timeline is in place, the greater an effect it will have on the present and future.

Past Whendiana: Well, that don't make much sense.

Future Whendiana: Listen, we didn't make the time travel rules, we just follow them.

Mr. Eric: The future Learninator was stuffing his face full of all the candy in the house. But it was mostly just empty wrappers.

Future Learninator: I'm afraid we're going to need more candy.

Present Whendiana: Sounds like a great idea.

Mr. Eric: Said Ana.

Present Whendiana: Hmm, now what can I sell this time.

Mr. Eric: She looked around the house. She didn't really have anything of value left except...

Present Learninator: Why are you looking at me that way?

Mr. Eric: Asked the TV-nator.

Present Whendiana: Oh, no reason. Want to go for a walk?

Present Learninator: You know I cannot walk in this form.

Present Whendiana: Great! That means you can't run away, either.

Mr. Eric: And she picked up the TV-nator and walked out with him.

Past Whendiana: Oh, Ana, no.

Mr. Eric: Ms. Whendy said, following her out.

Future Whendiana: We must do whatever it takes to fix the past.

Mr. Eric: Said Dr. Joan, rushing out beside them. The world outside was an ocean of ice cream with just a few tiny buildings sticking up from the waves.

Future Learninator: What happened here?

Present Whendiana: Oh, we went and got the never-ending bowl of ice cream and turned it upside down.

Past Whendiana: But you flooded the whole world with ice cream.

Present Whendiana: Oh, it wasn't just us. It also started raining candy a while back, and well, instead of fixing it, we just let it keep going.

Future Learninator: But if there's oceans of ice cream and candy falls from the sky, why do you spend all your money on sweets?

Present Whendiana: Ew, can you imagine how dirty this ocean of ice cream is?

Future Whendiana: But if you were to stick it in the GMC—

Present Whendiana: Listen, if I want something dirty, I'll just buy a \$40 celery stick from the mountain farms.

Past Whendiana: Learninator, is this here enough candy to fuel your power cells.

Future Learninator: Mm, it's good. But I still think I need the fancy candy from the store.

Present Learninator: Yes, it's really good.

Mr. Eric: Said the TV-nator, sticking his dog-eared antennae down into the ice cream to suck it up.

Present Learninator: Much more fuel efficient than this dirty ice cream.

Mr. Eric: They hopped in Ana's chocolate boat and started paddling it downstream towards the candy shop.

Past Whendiana: Doesn't seem like much has been affected since we left our time.

Present Whendiana: Oh, they've invented thousands of kinds of candy. And candy boats and houses and—even candy oars.

Mr. Eric: Said Ana, taking the last bite of the chocolate oar.

Future Learninator: Oh dear, without that oar, we will surely be sucked into that candy whirlpool.

Future Whendiana: Quick! Learninator, TV-nator. Suck up as much candy as you can. All you need to do is get us back in time as far as you can, even if it's just a few years, we can avoid all this.

Future Learninator: Oh, we've both forgotten how to time travel.

Present Learninator: In the future, we don't need it. We just need candy.

Past Whendiana: Oh dear.

Future Whendiana: Aw, I didn't calculate for this.

Mr. Eric: The chocolate boat was spinning and careening towards the deep whirlpool. Ice cream splashed into the boat over the sides and a storm of hard candy start falling overhead.

Future Learninator: All is lost [eating sounds]. But we'll be fine because we're robots.

Present Learninator: Oh yes. [Eating sounds]. Om Om. Too bad for Whendy, Ana, and Joan, though.

Whendy, Ana, Joan: [Groaning]

Mr. Eric: And their chocolate boat got sucked below the ice cream waves with all of them aboard. And then—got spat out at the bottom of the ice cream ocean! They were inside a little glass globe barely big enough for the five of them.

Past Learninator: Well, welcome.

Mr. Eric: It was Westernator, the Learninator from the past.

Future Whendiana: How did you know we would end up here?

Mr. Eric: Asked Dr. Joan.

Past Learninator: Oh, well I had no clue.

All: Huh? What?

Past Learninator: Just kidding. We Learninator brothers can always sense each other through the time stream.

Present Learninator: That's very interesting. Where is your candy?

Past Learninator: I let in just enough to keep my circuits fueled. Are you all ready to go back to the past?

Present Learninator: Only if you're ready to drop that ridiculous accent.

Past Learninator: Says the pot to the kettle.

Present Learninator: What? Kettle?

Past Whendiana: Well, a kettle's what you use to make kettle corn.

Present Whendiana: And a pot's what you'd use to make peanut butter brownie caramel ice cream chocolate soup.

Future Whendiana: We can discuss your eating habits when we set the time streams straight.

Mr. Eric: And Dr. Joan pressed the Westernator's time travel button and—[science fictional noises]

They all got sucked right back into that time stream bubble and with a splat of ice cream, they landed back in the middle of the class room like they'd only been gone a second.

Past Whendiana: That was a quick trip.

Past Learninator: You can say that again.

Mr. Eric: But now there was an extra Westernator.

Westernator 2: Listen, maybe you should go back in time a little farther.

Past Learninator: Me? But I'm the original.

Westernator 2: Not according to my perspective.

Past Whendiana: Oh, hush up. There can just be two of you. Now, class, we need to clean up this ice cream.

Child 1: Yay!

Child 2: Yay!

Child 3: GMC ice cream for me!

Mr. Eric: And the whole class got down to lick ice cream up off the floor.

Past Whendiana: Uh huh huh!

Mr. Eric: And she got out a bucket full of sponges and mops.

Past Whendiana: And while we all clean together I'll tell you a story about a world with too much candy.

Child 1: What?

Child 2: I don't believe it.

Child 3: No such thing, Ms. Whendy.

Future Learninator: Not this time. Hasta la vista, boxy.

Mr. Eric: And the Learninator crushed the GMC in one hand and then set his timer back to the future.

Past Whendiana: Just where do you think you're all going?

Mr. Eric: Asked Ms. Whendy handing mops and buckets out to Dr. Joan, Ana, the Learninator, and even the TV-Nator.

Present Learninator: Just put the dust pan on my head. Now I'm helping.

Mr. Eric: The end.

[Falling harp scale.]

Mr. Eric: Naomi, I hope you liked your story. Time travel is always so confusing, but obviously a story about candy being healthy had to have it, right?

I'd like to thank Karen Marshall, my editor and producer. Craig Martinson, my theme song writer. Jason O'Keeffe, for our wonderful new artwork. And all of you kids at home who try your best to eat healthy at least most of the time. That's about all I can ever do.

Until we meet again, keep wondering.

[What If World theme song plays.]

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