3 Years of Chemo, Zero Antibiotics: One Mom's Fight to Save Her Son Transcript

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Opening Story and Cancer Advocacy

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It's fine. Why would you want something different? And I said, well, can we just start with nutrition? I don't appreciate the advice and the food they're serving the kids.

So what would recommend? He literally started laughing and said, Oh, don't fall for that nutrition has nothing to do with how he's going to beat this cancer.

My husband was sitting next to me and I'm small. and not very confrontational. And I think he could feel my blood start to boil and he grabbed my hand as if I was going to reach across the desk and punch this guy.

Welcome to the Belgiansky Cancer Talk Show where integrative science and holistic healing come together. I am Sylvie Belgiensky and in each episode we explore nutrition, lifestyle, mental health and research-backed approaches to support the whole person through cancer and chronic diseases.

Hello and welcome back to the Belchansky Cancer Talk Show. Today, my guest is Susan Johnson. Susan is not just an expert in integrative cancer support.

She lived it. When her two-year-old son was diagnosed with cancer, she spent the next three and a half years navigating daily chemotherapy, countless surgeries, and the impossible weight of fighting for her child's life.

all while refusing to lose hope. That experience did not break her, it built her mission. Susan Johnson is a functional nutritional therapy practitioner, integrative health practitioner and current student at the Metabolic Terrain Institute.

She is the founder of the Thrive Through Cancer and Thrived Beyond Cancer programs and the owner of Biodynamic Wellness, a Functional Medicine practice in Solana Beach, California.

Alongside her husband, she co-founded the Kick Cancer Movement, a nonprofit bringing real food, detox, natural medicine, and community to children with cancer and the families who love them.

Her work has been recognized with the Western Air Price Activist Award, the Children's Health Advocate Award and the doTERRA Elevation Award. She was a health and wellness expert at the 2019 Oscars and she has worked alongside professional athletes, but her heart has never left the family sitting in hospital waiting rooms just like she once did.

Season. Welcome. Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here. Well, I am delighted to have you here and it's really emotional listening to you because you come from both a professional and almost patient, let's say, but experience.

And I think it means a lot and it transforms the visions that many professionals have when they have to go through the real thing. I wanted to ask you as I was reading your bio.

When this drama happened with your son, where were you in your professional journey? Were you already a health professional or is it that event that led you to start the study and become a Health Professional?

Yeah, that's an interesting question because it was very humbling.

Susan Johnsonu2019s Background and Sonu2019s Diagnosis

I was already a functional nutritional therapy practitioner and I had a private practice. And I decided actually to go back to school to become a Functional Nutritional Therapy Practitioner when Kicker, my son, was breastfeeding.

So I went back school when he was born. and opened my practice shortly after he was born. I was working part-time. And what's interesting, Sylvia, is I would not touch cancer with a 10-foot pole.

It felt very scary and intimidating. At this point in my life, I didn't know anybody with cancer and I just, so I helped families. I help with detox and weight loss and hormone balance and, you know, just different general functional approach to those different health conditions.

And so when Kicker got diagnosed, it was, I mean, It was so humbling because here I was this practitioner that people came to to get healthy and my own baby.

gets this cancer diagnosis. And I certainly questioned everything I'd learned, right? It was just a very uneasy event for sure. You keep saying the word humbling.

But at the same time, you did this thing that very few moms are able to do is to question what the doctor is saying and to really want, impose to be part of the team, the medical team who is going to take care of their child.

How did you do that? How came from this humbling feeling you are just mentioning to establishing your turf and make sure that you're doing more than just follow orders?

Yeah, my husband called it mommy beast mode. He said it was like a switch went off one morning and just activated. And, you know, I think we all have a choice when we're faced with something like this.

We can choose to be a victim. and just kind of sit back and let the circumstance happen to us, or we can choose to let this be an opportunity to grow.

And when it came to my child, I mean, i wasn't willing to just sit down. I think this is where God's story, just the timing of my story going back to school when Kicker was born, is really powerful because with that background and that knowledge and understanding of basic biology and nutrition, I knew that there was more we could do than just pump his body full of poison.

I was fortunate to have two incredible mentors Dr. Jorge Moreno and Kim Schuette. Kim is actually whose practice that I'm sitting in now and I purchased her practice.

We unfortunately lost her in 2018 to glioblastoma. But prior to her getting diagnosed, she taught me so much of what I know and her and Dr Morena came alongside us from the non-conventional approach and just locked arms and said, this is what we're going to do to support his body and keep it up while he's going through the cytotoxic therapies.

And so I had a team behind me. It wasn't just me, but it did wake something up in me that I, in those halls, I'm walking these halls with my baby who's never had a vaccine, never a toxin in his body, and never an antibiotic to this point.

A very healthy, he went from breast milk to bone broth, we joke, like he was such a healthy little boy and now I am pushing him through these hall, hooked up to chemotherapy 24-7 and passing these rooms of bald children that are vomiting, that miserable.

And I just remember thinking like, there's got to be something else. This isn't fair. So I think seeing these other kids and walking this journey, like just gave me this desire, I have to help these families.

Like, how do we help them? And Kicker did. very well through treatment. The doctors would just call us lucky, but

we were in the corner of his hospital room opening capsules of supplements and mixing them in applesauce and giving it to him by the spoon and doing castor oil packs and red light and detox foot baths.

We were doing all of this intentionally alongside the therapies. How did the doctor at the hospital react when, I mean, Generally, I mean, sometimes some doctors are very open and sometimes they just don't want to hear of anything else that would interfere with the official treatment, especially when they are going through a clinical trial.

Actually, they're looking for data and they don t want anything to interfere without data.

Challenging Standard Oncology Care

That's actually, I love that you mentioned that about the trial. So one of the things that I educate my families on now, when they're not in a unique clinical trial for a more rare type of cancer, When they are just diagnosed within the realm of a childhood cancer diagnosis, they immediately put into what's called the Children's Oncology Group, the COG.

That is technically a trial and what i learned six months into our diagnosis is if i opted him out of that. It gave me more freedom in conversation with the oncology team and I'll answer the first part of your question in a moment of how they responded.

But I teach my families opt out of the trial for the general children's oncologist group because that's where you have a little bit more leverage of giving supplements and potentially getting approval from your team.

But as far as how they responded, so this is really devastating. I remember I had a connection, a former employer of mine, who happened to know the head top oncologist of one of the most prestigious children's hospitals in California.

And at the time we were being treated at Loma Linda Children's Hospital. And I just thought, you know what? I think we should get a second and third and fourth opinion, right?

Like I wanted to see what other oncologists had to say. And at the time I didn't realize that they're just following the COG. There's nothing deterring them off that protocol.

Well, I was naive and hopeful. And so we got this meeting, which was a big deal. And we went to this hospital that was couple hour drive, sat down in this doctor's office with walls covered with pictures of celebrities and all of this stuff.

He's the top pediatric oncologist. I said to him, my son, here's his case, he's very healthy despite the fact that he has leukemia cells in his body. And he has no co-morbidities.

I would like to know if you would take a different approach with his care or if he would just follow the same standard approach. And, he kind of looked at me questioning like, this approach is proven, it's fine.

Why would you want something different? And I said, well, can we just start with nutrition? I don't appreciate the advice and the food they're serving the kids.

So what would recommend? He literally. started laughing and said, Oh, don't fall for that nutrition has nothing to do with how he's going to beat this cancer.

My husband was sitting next to me and I'm small, and not very confrontational. And I think he could feel my blood start to boil and he grabbed my hand as if I was going to reach across the desk and punch this guy.

I mean, I write, like I couldn't believe this is what the top pediatric oncologist is laughing at me for questioning nutrition. And it was in that moment though, honestly, Sylvie, that I just realized like, okay, so I need to now be the advocate for all these families because nobody's going to tell them that nutrition matters in this journey.

And we were literally watching it keep my son thriving despite the medication. Yeah. And so, how did it, I mean, do you were bringing food to the hospital?

What was, How did that happen really in real life? Or what tricks did you have to go through to bring, healthy food, to your kid or take away the bad snacks that they are serving in hospitals?

Yeah. Well, in most, you know, most pediatric hospitals have a McDonald's in the hospital. So what we did practically, and I actually have, I'll send it to you and you can include this as a free handout.

I have really cool guide that I built that's called Hospital Essentials. And it gives families kind of the list of things to bring into the hospitals to allow their meals to be more nutritious.

It gives them a list some of healthier foods that they could order from a grocery store to deliver to the room. So I'll send that to you. But what we did, and this is where community is everything.

It takes a village, right? When you're in a healing journey. And we were fortunate that the hospital we we're staying at was close to my sister's house.

Her husband was actually in medical school at Loma Linda at the time. and I'm happy to report that he is now a functional medicine doctor and is all on board with holistic cancer therapies because of our journey But we lived close to her in the hospital.

Her house was close us. So every single day between my sister, my husband, and my brother-in-law, they would take turns preparing meals and rotate bringing them over to the hospitals.

And then when they couldn't, we had other friends that were in that area that they knew exactly how we were feeding him. We actually had a friend that was a well-known cookbook author back at this time.

He brought my son liver pate, avocado mousse, and organic plantain chips, because he knew his hemoglobin had been struggling and he thought, well, this is going to help his haemogloban levels.

And so my son, who's barely three years old, is sitting in his hospital bed, I have a picture of it, with organic plantation chips with sea salt, dipping it in liver paté and avocado moose and eating it.

And the doctors just thought we were crazy, but this is, we literally just had a constant rotation of people bringing meals to the hospital. So obviously your son, I mean, got better and better.

Did that attract some attention from the medical team? Did they stop thinking you were a crazy or did they start to learn something?

Nutrition and Hospital Support Strategies

You know, unfortunately they didn't. And I don't blame them in the sense of, you know just these, I mean they're like, they have no time outside of just patient visit, patient, visit patient.

I just, y'know, blame the system, not necessarily the individual. But no, there was never a question. Like I said, the only thing that we were told is, oh, he's just one of the lucky ones.

to the point that he was so lucky that his absolute neutrophil count, which is the count they measure, right, to kind of see if the body's responding to therapies, they want your immune system to absolutely be obliterated through conventional cancer treatment.

Well, his immune system continued to stay in a healthy range and actually was the same levels of immune systems that a health child that wasn't going through cancer would have.

And he maintained this level for the most part through the duration of treatment. So what did they do? they increased his chemotherapy dosage because they just felt like it wasn't working.

And so we got to the point where he was on probably one of the highest doses of chemotherapy that any child had been given. So no, we weren't questioned and they weren' curious.

We were actually kind of punished, for lack of a better word, with the doses that they continued to hand him. That echoes, you know, stories that I heard from people taking the Belgiansky supplements also and their immune system is not destroyed or they go through radiotherapy without burn.

What doctors are doing is just increasing the dose to see how far they can go until they see the burns that they are expected to. It's absolutely horrible, horrible.

But I am not surprised in hearing those stories. And I know a lot of patients who just would not tell. their doctor what they are doing on the side because they just want to stay the lucky one without creating any animosity or any jealousy or curiosity.

Exactly. Yeah. When you are facing cancer, the choices can feel overwhelming, conflicting advices, endless options, and very little clarity. At Maison Beljanski, everything begins with science.

For decades, Molecular biologist Dr. Mirko Beljanski studied how specific plant extracts interact with cancer cells, work that continues today through independent research and real-world use.

Maison Beljanski offers carefully formulated supplements inspired by that research, along with targeted support for immune health, cellular resilience, digestion, detoxification and overall wellness.

You will also find educational books, organic teas, personalized health coaching and wellness programs designed to support the whole person, not just the diagnosis.

This is not about quick fixes. It's about informed choices, thoughtful formulations and supporting the body alongside conventional care. Explore the products, the research and the resources at maisonbelchanski.com because when science leads, wellness follows.

It is so, so sad to see that they would increase toxic dosage just because. And, you know, one of the things that, and this is something I do teach my families when I'm working with them.

I teach them about advocacy, how to advocate for their child, How to have conversation with the doctor, ways to ask questions. And actually, at your conference, when I had the privilege of speaking, I shared one of the things that I tell my families to say to their oncology team when they're bringing up a supplement or bringing it up.

I do encourage them. Say I want you to share with your team everything that we're doing here on the side. So when you bring it up, I tell them, don't ask them can we do this?

Instead, you show them the supplement or the detox therapy or whatever it is, and you say, tell me why I shouldn't do it. And generally, that's where they're like, they don't know why.

Well, yes, as I said, well, it's not proven to work until that was why I mean, this is so important to the work I believe we are doing at the Belchansky Foundation, doing all this research to back all the plant extracts that we're using and then People can download those publications and ask specifically, so show me the science doctor telling me why I should not use those plant extracts because they tend to dismiss everything.

as long as there is no science, and when there's science they just don't know what to say. They are not prepared, they don t read the science. So they are just not interested in anything else than what they're taught at medical school.

Yeah, it's a shame. It really is.

Treatment Outcomes and Medical Pushback

One of the most archaic practices of pediatric oncology today that I pray is gone in the next five years is they put every pediatric cancer patient on a prophylactic antibiotic for the duration of their treatment.

And this is where, and that was something we didn't do. And we also didn' disclose because I knew they wouldn't approve it. We just chose to not do that.

we were working closely with a functional team, right? Who was guiding us and advising us. But I believe that's why his immune system did so well. So when you talk about the research that, I mean, we know what antibiotics do to the immune systems, to mitochondria.

It destroys the microbiome. Can you do well? Absolutely. Yeah. So it's, yes, we're, I'm hopeful, but, Unfortunately, just a little bit pessimistic around advancements in pediatric oncology.

I think it just fires me up because it reminds me that I have so much more work to do and so many more families to support that don't get access to this in their clinic visit.

So before we speak of what you are doing now, As of today, I mean, everybody listening to your story will be delighted to learn that Kikar is 15 now and he's doing a lot of sports, he is doing jojitsu, is surfing.

So, looking back, what would you like to tell yourself, if you were able to look at yourself? during this, at the time of the diagnosis and at a time where you made those so difficult decision to interfere in a way with the medical treatment of your son.

That's good. It was. I was playing interference and it was very disruptive. You know, I think I would tell myself like, First of all, this is going to be redeemed.

This whole experience. just, I wish I had in the moments of making those decisions that we did, like to not give him the antibiotics, or when he spiked a little tiny fever to, not immediately take him to the ER for a dose of IV antibiotics.

And knowing that that little fever was a reaction to that toxic, you know, the cytotoxic therapy, his immune system was working, it was responding. In those moments, that was terrifying.

I would question myself, but I think I just would remind myself that This is exactly, his body was created intelligently. And when we can bring in the raw materials like we did to work alongside in support of the cytotoxic therapies, he will thrive.

He did. Today, yeah, a healthy 15-year-old. I remember one of my best friends came to visit us in hospital when he was first diagnosed. And it was one of the best things somebody ever said to me.

She said, Seasons, stop asking why. You need to stop ask why, and you need start saying, I can't wait to see what God does with this. And it was a really powerful mindset shift because I wanted to ask why.

I mean, my kid was so healthy. Like I said, he went into this cancer diagnosis virtually, you know, untouched by conventional medicine and just a very healthy child.

And so I was asking why, and it kind of, it, use slip into that victim mentality. Rather than pulling out of that and going, wait, I can't wait to see what you're going to do with this.

And here we are. We went from having one child with cancer to thousands around the world. I mean, loving on these kids is the greatest honor. So it's been pretty cool.

Tell me more about what are you doing with those programs, Thrive Through Cancer and Thrive Beyond Cancer programs. Yeah, so I actually created something that I wish I had when we were going through this.

I created group programs, one for active treatment families under 18 and one from remission families. And we meet a few times a week on Zoom. They have access to a whole library of resources and protocols and recipes and meal plans and video lessons.

and they get to jump on zoom with me and my other practitioner who's a pediatric oncology nurse and functional practitioner.

Lessons Learned and Hope in the Journey

And we get to support them, we got to answer their questions, give them suggestions, and to watch these families sit in this virtual room and look at each other and feel seen and heard and not alone is so powerful.

So that community is huge. And then we also, We started our nonprofit, Kick Cancer, when Kicker was about six months into treatment, When we realized like we have to get this information out.

And Sylvie, I have a really big dream and I don't know if it's going to happen, but Dr. Tony and Marcy Jimenez from Hope for Cancer. I've spent a lot of time at Hope For Cancer and my vision is to open here in San Diego, like I want to call it a refuge or a retreat, basically a space where we can offer red light, ozone, hyperbaric, all complimentary therapies and not charge families to use it.

And they get to come in. and just have a safe place that doesn't feel clinical and doesn' feel like a hospital but is a place for them to come and be in between treatments to recover after treatment to recovery.

And so our nonprofit currently has a lot of different initiatives but that's the one that I just had my mind set on and we're slowly taking the steps of fundraising and all of that but it's a big dream.

Yes, that sounds fantastic. When cancer enters your life, the questions don't stop at treatment. You start asking, why? What else? And what more can I do to support my body?

At the Beljansky Foundation, we believe cancer care deserves deeper answers. Answers rooted in science, not in shortcuts. For decades, groundbreaking molecular research by Dr.

Mirko Belzhansky explored how specific natural compounds selectively target cancer cells while spearing healthy ones. That work continues today through independent research, education, and global collaboration.

At belgianski.org, you will find evidence-based resources, expert-led conferences, books, and conversations that explore integrative approaches to cancer and chronic disease alongside conventional care.

Whether you are a patient, a caregiver, or practitioner, this is the place to learn, to question, Visit belgianski.org to explore the research, attend upcoming events and connect with the Belgiansky community.

Because informed choices begin with credible science. I really hope you will be able to attract the number of people you need to make that happen. So, you have your practice now.

Can you tell me more information about your practices and where people can find you? Yeah, so biodynamic wellness, it's a 20-year-old private functional practice.

However, we just took it over in 2025. And it was my mentor's practice, the woman who taught me a lot of what I know. Now our practice is we support families walking through cancer or in remission.

So this is where we work with clients one-to-one. So we have the group programs, and then we had the option of working with us at our practice with one of our practitioners who are all trained in pediatric cancer care.

And we see adults as well from a complementary perspective, meaning if an adult wants to get support with this, they have to be working a signing provider, whether it's a Dr.

Tony at Hope for Cancer or their oncologist. So, we support them from the nutrition perspective and some detox therapies. but we really specialize in kids.

And so we work, like I said, one-to-one, in-person, virtual, a lot of our clients are virtual. And you can learn more going to our website. We have biodynamicwellness.com.

That'll show all the different offerings that we have to support families. And then my website has so many free resources. I always direct people there.

seasonjohnson. com. It's where my podcast is. So many blog articles. A wealth of information. Actually, it was such a blessing I heard from a family not too long ago.

They sent me a message on Instagram. And they said, you know, our son, You don't know us, but our sun is now in remission. We never bought one of your programs.

we never worked with you. But we went off all of our podcast episodes, all the free resources on your website and our send thrived through treatment and he's doing so well.

And it was just so assuring to see like all that. There's so much information out there that we have to support families. That's even free. What is the one thing you wish every patient knew on day one of the diagnosis?

There's so many answers to that question. I think that the word hope is really powerful.

Thrive Programs, Nonprofit Work, and Resources

It's the most powerful molecule. And I wish that they just had this like constant vision that is right in front, like six feet in from of their ability to see, that was like this dangling molecule of hope and that they wouldn't lose sight of that.

Because the minute they lose side of, I think that's where we get consumed with what's next and what just happened. And so one way that we did that through treatment, and I encourage people to do, is live 15 minutes at a time.

Because if you're living in that present moment, you are living 15 minutes at a time, You can't get overwhelmed with anxiety. You're not anticipating what's to come and you not looking back on what just happened.

Your being so present in the moment. And so I would say living, 15 Minutes at A Time allows you to see that dangling molecule of hope and keeps you focused on that.

Yeah. A lot of people when they hear, I mean, you have cancer or your child has cancer, they are becoming instantly floated with a lot emotions and fear.

And it's really difficult at that moment to think through and actually to stay focused and to keep listening to what the doctor is saying. I believe, you know, saying you have time to get…

Second and the third opinion is really the way to go, to give yourself the permission to have time. It's not something, I mean, generally the cancer in children goes faster.

Their young cells divide faster than in people who are older, adults and older people. But yet you have the time to to get some other opinion and to visit a functional doctor.

I think that's very, very- Totally. That's a really good point. It is very rare that even in pediatrics that cancer, a

diagnosis is an emergency situation.

There are certainly those times, but what you said is so important that when you receive a You take a moment and then you make a plan of okay who do i want to contact you it's i say this in a encouraging way a cancer diagnosis is like your super bowl you are going to recruit the best teammates to walk with you and if you walk into that oncology office that you just got the diagnosis with and you feel unsettled in your spirit and feel overwhelmed with just not a good energy.

Find a different oncologist because that's the person you're working with for a long time and you need to feel a sense of peace in your spirit. And so yeah, this is your Super Bowl.

Take time to pull your teammates in and handpick the team members that you want on your team. Yeah, it's really, really important. So, speaking of resources and information, can you repeat where people can find you and get the first, I mean, guide, what to do first in your view?

Okay, so actually, if you go to seasonjohnson.com, right on my homepage, there is a Start Here guide. It is totally free and it is so incredibly helpful.

So go there, grab that guide, biodynamicwellness. com is where you'll find all of our services and our group programs, our one-to-one options. And then make sure if have a child with cancer or in remission, go and request one of our kits.

We send a kit out to every child that is a healing kit. It has detox supplies, some organic snacks, supplements, a little superhero cape, and it's a way to bless families and help them step into this healing journey.

So make sure to grab that. And then I'm on Instagram, Susan Johnson. Kit Cancer is on Instragram, so is Biodynamic Wellness. I respond to my messages, So reach out me, I would love to encourage you.

Thank you, thank you Dr. Johnson. That was really, really valuable and I think it's going to be appreciated by a lot of families all across America. Thank You so much for having me.

Thank you for listening to the Belgianski Cancer Talk Show. If this conversation supported or inspired you, please follow the podcast, share it with someone who may benefit and leave a review to help us discover these integrative perspectives.

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