Introduction to Menopause and Nervous System Health

Hello ladies. Welcome back to mess during the Menopause I am your host doctor Sharon Stills, and I am I'm always honored and humbled to be here with you and help guide you through this important time in your life where there's so much misinformation out there and as you know, I see menopause as this wonderful time to actually pause and evaluate your life on every level, not just physically needing your bioidentical hormones, which of course, you know, I've got you handled for.

But it's really important that we talk about all the things in our life from our emotional wellness, our spiritual wellness, our lifestyle, and so on and so forth.

And today I got up nice and early because I am interviewing the one and only Alex Howard, who is in the UK, which you will soon hear when you hear his lovely accent.

And we're going to have a really nice conversation diving into the nervous system. Why your nervous system regulation is is foundational to any kind of healing.

You can put all the organic broccoli and all the bioidentical progesterone and do all the high intensity workouts. But if you don't have a regulated nervous system, I can tell you from my 23 years of practice, you are never going to actually heal and reach the optimal health that is available to us all.

So welcome Alex, I am thrilled to have you here and have you be a part of the summit. Darren, thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here. So maybe you could just give a little background.

I'm sure a lot of the ladies watching are already familiar with you. A man who needs no introduction. But for those who are new to the world here and online summits and online education, maybe you can just give a little background as to who you are and why you do the work you do.

I always like to find out from people like, was it a family member or a personal story, like how did you end up here? Yeah, well, it wasn't, it wasn't my original career plan.

So like a lot of people that work in this world, it was really through my own personal, journey and experience. So the short version of that is in my, mid to late teens, I was diagnosed with, me, otherwise known as chronic fatigue syndrome, which although in some ways very different to, to going through menopause.

A lot of similarities in the sense that your body is not responding the way that you're used to.

Alex Howardu2019s Chronic Fatigue Recovery Story

And there's a lot of medical either lack of information or misinformation or confusion as to what's happening, why it's happening, and really what you can do to to change that experience and I found myself a couple of years into that chronic fatigue journey, really reaching a point of rock bottom.

And and it wasn't that I was necessarily actively planning how I was going to end my life, but I had lost really any sense of hope of of my life changing for, for the better.

And at that point, I'd spent a couple of years suffering from severely debilitating fatigue, muscle pains, headaches, dizziness, going to bed completely and utterly drained beyond imagination and then not being able to sleep.

And this sort of strange confusion of that. You can feel totally tired, but also completely wired and unable really to be able to, to, to settle and reached a point where I was really helped to realize that if I wanted the circumstances

of my life to be different, I was going to have to do something different.

And that was really the beginning of a five year journey of doing everything that I could to find a way to turn around my health and really what I found along the way.

Well, you know, I was initially searching for the like, the cure, like the answer light, the pill that I was going to take or the protocol that I was going to do that was going to be the thing.

And I see your face smiling because I think, you know, you know what? I'm getting that there wasn't one answer or that was was it was many answers, right.

There were lots of different pieces of of of the jigsaw. And what I realized was that the things that helped one person didn't necessarily help another person, but also things that helped at one stage of the recovery journey may not be things that help at the next stage, and also things that hadn't worked at one stage may then work.

At later stages. And so after seven years of being ill and five years of being very active on this recovery journey, I reached where I where I realized that I had fully recovered.

And I think, you know, people have I think often when we're going through a really difficult time in our health, we fantasize about either how life have been before, like the things that we could do that we can't now do, or what it would be like in the future to then be able to do those things.

And for me, that was not just be able to physically exercise, but to physically exercise without a delayed fatigue response. So I could do things that I crash like a day later, two days later, three days later.

And so to be able to to run, to exercise and to feel better, not worse, and to have a sustained increase in activity, not the sort of crashes that would come afterwards.

And so I reached that point. I'd studied at this point for, three years around, psychology and I, I really set up the clinic that I had wanted to exist in the years that I had been out.

Right. Which was a clinic that specialized in a functional medicine approach, although we didn't call it that, 2010, 20 something years ago with a, mind body psychology approach, really focused on this idea that every patient is an individual, that you have to have a personalized approach, an individualized, approach, but also you have to integrate and pull together these, these different pieces.

And so I think it's now, what is it, 22, 23 years since, since I recovered. And that's been, over half my life's work in terms of working with people in different ways and different chapters on different types of health recovery journeys.

I didn't realize this is our first time meeting. I didn't realize we had so much in common because I too had my my children when I was in my mid 20s, they brought me home chicken pox, and I had never had chickenpox as a child.

And so when you, you know, it's great to get as a child, it helps build the immune system. But when you get it as an adult, how does it story right? I was on my back for three months and I was so ill, from chickenpox to pneumonia to what ended up as chronic fatigue.

And interestingly, in my journey, it was it wasn't the vitamin C drips or the, the, or the green juices, you know, those helped, but it was actually a mind body experience where I realized I couldn't get out of bed because I was a single mother at the time, and I wasn't happy.

I was putting myself through my undergrad to go to natural Catholic med school, and I wasn't seeing my kids. And like, while I was lying there, you know, taking one more vitamin C, I had this epiphany of what if I homeschooled my kids and went to night to, like, did my massage.

Like I rearranged everything I was doing. And it was that change that got me from laying horizontal to going

vertical.

Menopause, Hormones, and the Nervous System Connection

And in that moment I realized, you know, we give a lot of talk to the mind body complex, but we have to really pay attention to it because we can't juice our way out of, out of an imbalance in our, in our life and our emotions and so forth.

So I, I, I appreciate what you were saying and also that you were saying I never really thought of it until you were saying it, that there is so much overlap between the menopausal experience and a chronic fatigue experience, because you are it's like how many times I hear women say, you know, I'm doing the same exercise and eating right, but now I can't, you know, lose the 10 pounds.

And things are just different because we do go through different stages and there are different things for different times of our journeys. So I love that. Well, that was funny when you when your, kind invite came in to speak on the event and I was like, what's the why am I being invited to speak on a fat on menopause?

I was like, I it's clearly not something that, that, that I've, I've been through or will be going through. And then as I thought about it, I was like, well, actually, hang on a second.

You know, we had just done our own conference on hormones, so I'd had some insight there. But I realized that having him serve my wife, who's, kind of currently in a perimenopausal journey, it was like there's a lot of similarities, and a lot of the clinical work that I've done over the, over the last few decades, those nervous system pieces.

I really like what you said in the intro that for for many, many women going through through perimenopause and menopause that, yeah, identical hormones can be a really important piece of that jigsaw.

But just like in the chronic fatigue piece, it's not just one thing. One has to look at the wider system. And when we look at what's happening in the nervous system, sure, if there are hormonal imbalances that will impact the nervous system, but also when the nervous system is dysregulated, it's impacting the hormones and that relationship is really important.

So let's talk about that. You know, what did you find? Because there is no magic pill. I, you know, I was chuckling when you said that because it would make my job a lot easier.

Right? If I could just say, here's zinc and go on your way. And that's going to take care of everything. But we are so multi-dimensional and and disease and health are so multifaceted, Toriel, that we've really society has we've got to undo the the training of society.

Then it's going to exist in that magic pill bottle and people come to see people like us because they don't want the pharmaceutical, they want the the herbal pill or the vitamin pill or the homeopathic pill.

But it's really changing that thought process of realizing that health is a journey, and you've got to get on the you've got to get on the train to arrive at the destination.

Yeah. Well, you know, I I'm going to speak less around the, the kind of biomedical and functional medicine pieces, because I know that other people are speaking to those pieces.

So the fact that I'm not going to emphasize those doesn't mean I don't think they're critically important. I do think they're important, but I'm going to lean into the bit that's kind of my my specialist area.

And I think it's worth saying as well. When we started the Optimum Health Clinic back in 2004. So we have our 20 year anniversary coming up in the next couple of months.

We had, functional medicine. Again, wasn't that in those days, but nutritional therapy as it was called, the way we it in those days and people would come in for that because of exactly the reason that you said they'd be like, well, I don't want to take a pharmaceutical, I'd rather do a nutraceutical.

That's a more natural way of doing it. And then we would say, okay, that's great, but have you ever wondered why you're reacting to all of the interventions that you're doing, whether they're pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, whatever they are?

Or have you ever wondered why you're taking all of the supplements that are supposed to make a difference and then not making a difference? Or have you ever wondered why you do something and it helps and things improve, and then you crash back down again and you don't seem to get sustained and recovery moving forwards.

And often in these cases, what's actually going on is the nervous system is dysregulated and a dysregulated nervous system will impact all of the other systems that are happening in our body.

And so to give a little bit of context about how the nervous system works, put it in very simple terms. We can really be in one of two states at at any time.

We're either in a state of stress or we're in a state of healing. When we're in a state of healing, our body is able to do its natural repair process.

When we sleep, we sleep well. We sleep deeply. When we need to be alert, we can be alert when we no longer need to be alert. In that way, our system can calm down to a a kind of a less focused way of being in a way, we have real nervous system flexibility that we can when it's time to sleep, we sleep when it's time to be awake, were awake when it's time to focus, we focus.

But our system can calmly and easily respond to the needs of the environment. When we're not in a healing state, when we're in a state of stress, there are different levels to that state of stress.

Stress response is designed to primarily respond to sudden acute threats. So if you and I were walking, walking down, down the street together, and let's say we're walking down the street in London, we recently I say we London recently started having a lot of electric busses.

How Chronic Stress Dysregulates the Body

So those big red busses that you see in the movies, whatever, they're now electric busses, you can't hear them. So back in the day they'd sort of chalk make a lot of noise, and you can still see the steam coming out of the things without the exhaust.

So we're walking down the street. We don't hear the bus, we don't see the bus. Suddenly we see it last minute. And, you know, I grab you or you grab me and we leap out of the way and to respond to that sudden acute threat, we need a big hit of adrenaline.

We need cortisol. We need the blood to prompt to our arms and to our legs, probably away from our digestion, because the very nice, civilized lunch you and I had an hour earlier digesting.

That's unimportant in this moment. So we go into a state that allows us to respond to an immediate threat and danger in the environment. And then, you know, we kind of get we hope we both survive like a houseboat and see the bus stop talking and pay more attention as a walking down the street.

And then over time, like our system calms down again, like we kind of catch our breath. We might even off to sort of, you know, ten, 15 minutes suddenly take quite a deep breath and go, oh, God.

Actually, that that was kind of a thing, wasn't there? But we kind of we find our place back to a calm state, the same survival response that thousands of years ago we've suddenly got a sabertooth tiger leaps out.

And really, we can do one of three things we can fight the threats. Obviously we don't. You know, fighting a bus is probably not a very good idea. We can fly it, which is what we did.

We we leapt out of the way, or we can freeze and we can hope the threat doesn't see us. So we can sort of shut down and avoid interacting with, with, with the threat.

Whichever one of those three things we do, we need stress hormones to fuel that response. When the stress is acute, it comes and it goes and the system rebalances.

The problem is when the stress is chronic, when the source of the stress doesn't go away, and then a nervous system becomes increasingly normalized to a new homeostasis, like the new point of balance is a point of imbalance.

This is what I call a maladaptive stress response. So a healthy stress response becomes maladaptive. The part of the feel of that stress response is an excessive production of our stress hormones.

Adrenaline and cortisol being being the two kind of best known examples of that. When our adrenaline and cortisol are consistently overactive over time, we can actually find a fatigue response and a depleted response because we can't continue to fuel that response.

You may have people talking about how the downstream impacts on other hormones and sex hormones, and so on that happen from from being in that dysregulated state.

The challenge here is one of the great things about the kind of human organism is we would learn to adapt and respond to whatever becomes our normal. So if, for example, you know, we get, I don't know, we get sent to prison and I'm going to assume that we're innocent in that scenario that first time, first few nights, it's going to be super difficult and challenging to adapt to.

Anyone that's seen The Shawshank Redemption, so many examples of that in that great film. But then we adapt, we figure out a way to sort of normalize to that environment so we can be in a fairly severe state of maladaptive stress response and not even recognize that's what's happening because we've normalized, you know, I remember certainly back in the early days of the clinic when we had everything was kind of in-person consultations.

Someone would come in and sit down and I'd be talking about the importance of the stress response and how it impacts on, on, on our body. And as an empathetic person, I would find my nervous system dysregulated because they were so frenetic, like they'd be talking so fast that they'd been on one of those kind of, you know, sort of office swivel chair, and they'd keep swiveling back and forth, and the whole system will be completely, utterly dysregulated.

And then they would say, yeah, what you're saying makes so much sense, but I just don't think it's true for me. I don't think I'm in a maladaptive stress response because they normalize to the state that they're in.

So when we live So when we live in a state of maladaptive stress response reasons might be unprocessed. Childhood trauma may be that we learned that our way to get our needs met is by always being the best and always achieving, constantly pushing beyond our limits.

Maybe we learned that the way to be safe in the world was to rescue and take care of everyone else. Maybe we have what's called a fawning response, or a kind of people pleasing response.

Maybe we learned that we get love from other people when we have. We do everything perfectly right and we attend to every single detail. But these are all things that can cause our system to become and sustain a state of dysregulation.

But by the way, But by the way, when you don't when you don't know when you have physical symptoms. So let's say someone is, is is in menopause and you've been gaslit by your doctor, you've been told, oh, it's just in your

mind you're just depressed or you're just getting a bit old and you know something's wrong because you can feel it in your body, but you don't know what's wrong. You don't know why it's wrong.

You don't know what you should do about it. That alone like suffering. What from what would be a medically unexplained illness. Although for many people watching this, it's probably very clearly explained. And hopefully watching the summit is what's giving them the clarity around that.

But that alone triggers a maladaptive stress response. Like what's wrong? What? Why is it wrong? Should I do this? Should I do that? What if this happens? What if that happens?

Why have I got no energy? Why do I keep crashing in the middle of the day? Why can't I follow through all my projects at work and I haven't got the brain power left to do it?

So the fundamental problem is that we end up living in a state of dysregulation, which we normalize to, but starts to impact everything. It impacts on our energy.

And if we have time, we can come into some of that science and examples around this. But it impacts our energy. It causes our immune system to be hyper reactive.

This is where people have either very low immunity and they get every bug that goes around because their systems crashed, or they react to everything and there's often mast cell activation that's going on or on a histamine intolerance and so on that's going on.

And so we find this let's go back to my example earlier. The supplements we take, the foods we take, we start reacting to that. The chemicals in the environment.

So learning to reset the nervous system, learning how to bring back a state of regulation, in my experience is critical to other interventions really being effective.

Amen to that.

RESET Framework for Nervous System Regulation

And yes I, I appreciate what you just said because I have that conversation with patients all day long because sometimes women are so detached because the nervous system is not regulated at all.

And they're stuck in that. And they think it's normal. And we've normalized like one of the big things is normalizing premenstrual issues. It's normal to get bloated.

It's normal to feel like you want to kill someone. It's normal to crave. And these things are common, but they're not normal. And so I a lot of women don't even realize that they're stuck in that stress.

And they're, you know, I look at some of their lab results and I'm like, it's a miracle that you're off the couch, okay? You know, there's nothing happening there.

It would make sense if you said I can, you know, function. But we just especially as women, right? We just push, push, push. And we've got to be the perfect little girl or whatever it is that we're we're carrying. So.

So what would you say? I mean, we're not going to cure nervous system dysregulation in the next 18 minutes or 10 minutes or whatever, but what are some tips or tools or things for women who are listening?

Is there any like checking in tips that to see if they, you know, they haven't realized it, but they are stuck in that maladaptive state or and what are some things to start letting it relax and having a new normal.

Yeah. So the framework that, I find useful, as a psychologist, one of my talks that I know that this is not I said we

got. So she has a very strong opinion about about that question.

It's because she thinks of my wife as my wife is arriving home, which is the best part of the day. But unfortunately, that's not what's happening. But anyway, forgive me.

So there, I look at it from a five step framework. And so the word reset is a description of what it is that we're trying to we're trying to reset the nervous system, but it's also an acronym of of five steps, along the way.

So the first thing is so the art of reset is we need to recognize what's actually happening. Right. And hopefully just you and I having this conversation and some of the women that are watching and listening go, wow.

Actually, now I think about it, I do recognize that I'm often living in a state of of dysregulation. I feel my mind's always racing, or I find that I always need a couple of glasses of wine at the end of the day to actually try and get things to sort of settle and to calm, or I recognize that I feel kind of numb a lot of the time, and maybe that numbness that actually everything's running so fast, but then it sort of got in a in a frozen state.

So we first just have to recognize what's happening. It's sometimes a helpful way to do that is to write your nervous system on a scale of 1 to 10, 4 or 5 points during the day, like how calm or activated you feel like when you wake up.

How do you feel mid morning? How do you feel after lunch? How do you feel mid-afternoon, noon? How do you feel in the evening light just to start to bring some awareness to like where on the on nervous system actually is.

And then the second step. So the first every reset is we need to examine like why is that happening. What are the triggers. Either the historical triggers or the thought patterns or the environmental triggers like examine what is driving that dysregulation?

I touched very lightly a few moments ago on, you know, some of the, personality patterns that we can develop as ways to survive our experiences in childhood.

So being someone that like an achiever, where we define our self-worth by what we love and what we achieve, or being a helper, where we define, we create safety and define our self-love, self-worth by how we rescue and take care of and help other people.

So there's a number of ways that we've learned to respond that are activating and driving that dysregulation in our nervous system. The third step. So the Ace of Reset is we've got to stop.

Like we've got to find ways to break those patterns, like to think about it like if every time we walked through a field, in fact, there's a, there's a where I'm at the moment is a is on a farm outside of London and there's a field as a pathway through a field, which is not a path. It's it's a field of crops.

But there is a walkway, and everyone because you can sort of see from the gate one end to the gate, the other end, everyone just walks down. So there's a certain point in the years become like a ditch and a path because everyone's walked through, down, down the same path.

And so if we want to go to a different destination, maybe we start going down one path. We've got to change direction. And in a way, like it's a metaphor for neuroplasticity, like the way that the brain works, that the more we have a certain thought and a certain habit, a certain pattern of thinking, we're building a connection between neurons in the brain.

And the more we do it, the stronger that connection becomes. So we've got to learn how to stop those patterns of thinking. And there are certain techniques that that can be helpful to do that, but also practices that help bring more regulation to our nervous system.

So meditation, yoga, breathwork, tai chi, qigong, anything that helps the system to better regulate will be helpful to

stop and to, to break. Those patterns.

The fourth, the fourth step. So the second a of reset is we have to look at what's happening with our emotions. So one of the reasons why our system goes into this maladaptive stress response is, is it's a way of avoiding or disconnecting from what we're feeling.

Or more typically what we're not feeling. So if we have feelings of anger, sadness, disappointment, grief, whatever it may be, if we don't know how to hold and to process and to feel those feelings, what happens is we go into what we try to escape into our mind and the the.

In a way, the fuel of that escape is our maladaptive stress response. To see lasting change in our nervous system, we have to process and metabolize the unprocessed emotions that are held and stored in our body.

So, like we all walk around our life with a kind of black sack full of all the stuff we haven't dealt with, and then something happens and the like, the top comes off and all that stuff comes out, and then we sort of shove it back in there again.

So to really reset the nervous system, we also have the process to metabolize to work through those with those emotions. Then we can really be in our body, our body at a higher emotional body.

And our physical body actually feels like a place that we can find home, and we can find peace if we don't do that, that what I see is people are constantly working to reset their system, and as soon as they stop, it reactivates again.

And to get that lasting change, we really have to do that emotional work as well. And then the T of reset is to really transform the way that we relate to ourselves, the way that we relate to other people, the way that we relate to the world around us.

And really what I mean by that is we learn how to cultivate a generous, kind, warm, supportive internal environment. And often what we've done is we've modeled the way that we were related to in childhood has become the model for how we relate to ourselves.

So, for example, if our caregivers weren't particularly interested in our feelings and emotions, we've probably learned to not be very interested and not give space to our feelings and emotions.

And so to get lasting change, we really have to work to transform that relationship. It's it takes time. It's not a kind of magic pill. It's not that you learn one technique and everything miraculously changes, but when people really commit to doing the work to reset their nervous system, the changes that you see in their lives are extraordinary.

You know, changes in physical health, in emotional health, in relationships. And if someone's going through menopause, you know, I really like your frame, that it's an opportunity to pause in one's life and to, like, really like, assess, like, you know, I met this chapter, I've come from here.

I'm going to like what is most important. And one of the things that I say to people is that so much of the suffering we have in our lives is unnecessary.

You know, we can't control the events of the things that happen, but we can we can influence how we respond to those. And if we never learn how to really support ourselves, how to build healthy regulation in our nervous system, the world is just a much more difficult place to be.

Joy, Aging, and Where to Learn More

And so, you know, when one has, you know, one of the blessings of having a chronic illness in my in my late teens and early 20s is it forced me to really learn some things and, to investigate and understand some things that has meant that my life on the other side has been so much richer than it otherwise would have been.

And so my, my real kind of, in a way, I'm not sure it's my place to invite people. I guess my invitation to people is, is to think about it in a way of, okay, well, my life is now.

It's tough. It's not how I want it to be. Learning to reset my nervous system would probably make this chapter easier, but what could that mean for the later chapters?

The things that have been hard for the first 40 or whatever years 45 or 50 years could be really different on the other side, but they're only going to be different if we do something different.

So I'm going to cry because I think you just summed it all up like, you know, life and what it's really about and what is what our opportunities are as we're aging.

And I too, was fortunate to get on this journey at a young age and then to make it my profession. And I had to look deeply at, you know, being the fixer and say, you know what?

Whatever those of us that need to fix, you know, we go become doctors, right before we go, you know? So I've had to do my own making sure that I'm doing this from a regulated place and not, you know, for the need to be seen or to be, you know, to be accepted and so forth.

And so but like when I, you know, I'm 56 years old now, I went through menopause. By the time I was 48, I was standing on top of Kilimanjaro saying, yeah, I'm coming for you, menopause.

I'm ready for this. This is the next sacred second act. And but the thing that I'm so grateful for in my life is just that I can sit and feel my system is regulated, that all the years of meditation and soul searching and therapy and tapping and eMDR and family constellations and all of these things, lots of great stuff.

You just listed, by the way, have enabled me to, you know, sit and feel it. It's like this joy you get to feel and you get to feel. And I grew up in a very trauma filled home.

So my my set point was, you know, trauma and drama is, is safety. That that's that's where I feel comfortable. And so I and I know I'm not unique in that a lot of us grow up in that.

And so what you just described is really the beauty of being able to be in a human body and enjoy this next stage of our lives. And it's a little more work than rubbing your estrogen cream on or popping a progesterone pill.

And, you know, not saying not to do that because we are physical bodies. But when we do these, when we marry these two journeys, it's like you just can then, you know, we are a force.

I forget, I always forget the statistics. I'm not a statistic, girl, but it's like by 2030, the amount of women who are going to be menopausal is ginormous.

It's very large and if we can handle these things in ourselves, we can be this force to be reckoned with. We can really change what the experience of aging looks like, and we can share that with the younger generations so that they grow up thinking that aging is a privilege.

Aging is an opportune city, and aging is awesome. And it doesn't mean the end. It really just means the continuation of a beautiful journey. And so what you just described is just, you know, it's it's the true medicine.

It's really the medicine we all need. So thank you. So that's why I invited you so so welcome. And and if I could just echo, I just amplify one thing that you just said as well, which is that, you know, one of the most important things in life is, is joy, right?

Like to actually feel the joy of being alive when a nervous system is dysregulated, we don't fully feel because we're not fully there. We're either in the past or in the future, or we're in the anticipation of what's going to happen.

Like our system is primed for action to help us move away from what's happening. When we learn to bring better regulation to our nervous system and we drop more into our bodies, we actually feel our hearts and we actually feel like joy is not a concept or an idea or something that we talk about.

It's something we actually feel. And that is the rich. That's the true richness of life. Absolutely. So do you still have or is it all your work online now like or is there a clinic people like how do the women find out more about you.

And what are, what are the opportunities to get to know you better in your work. Yeah. So the best place to go is my website which is Alex howard.com.

And that signpost towards a bunch of things. So it's signpost towards I have an in depth, a 12 week coaching program called the Reset Program, which is where that that framework comes from.

So there's there's some free video series at the website where you can sign up and you can find out more about these principles, and then you'll find out more about the program, the optimum health clinic, 20 years later, you know, we've got patients in 50 countries.

So there's information on that. We also train practitioners in, in therapeutic coaching, which is a psychology approach that we use. I have books. I also have a YouTube series where we show people's we film people's therapeutic journeys, both in the clinic from an outside of the clinic room so that that's a great way to say a lot of my work, in a kind of real world, environment.

I love it. So go check him out, ladies, because this is this is an important piece. You know, this whole summit, I'm building all the pieces for you. And this is this is a key foundational piece.

So grab, you know, listen to this again. Listen to it again and again. Because we hear things as we change, we hear things, we digest them differently.

And there's so many golden nuggets in here that can guide you on your way so that joy can be be your existence. And it's okay. I always say all emotions lives matter, right?

Like we shouldn't shun anger. All the ones that we claim are bad. We just need to experience them when we experience them, when we get curious about them, when we investigate them, they don't take place in our body and cause disease.

They just flow through us. And it's okay to feel those things. It's the it's the whole full catastrophe of being a human being. So thank you, Alex, for being here.

And thank you everyone for for listening. I know I feel a lot of joy just from having had this conversation, and I hope you all do too. So thank you. Thanks for being here.