Holiday Stress and Chronic Illness

Welcome back to the Get to the Root podcast with Hope for Healing. Today we're talking about something many families face during the season, navigating the holidays with chronic illnesses like SIRS.

The holidays can be beautiful, but they can also feel really overwhelming. In this episode, Dr. K shares practical ways to pace yourself, support your body, manage stressful environments, and focus on what truly brings joy.

Whether you're walking through a chronic illness yourself or supporting someone who is, we hope this conversation brings clarity and compassion. But first, a word from Dr.

K herself about our sponsor. We offer panels for eczema, athletes, autoimmunity, inflammation, and a comprehensive option called the Wellness Blueprint.

It looks at multiple systems at once. Learning about my own genetics has been truly life-changing for me and my family, and I hope it can bless yours as well.

We're grateful for Fagran Genomics' sponsorship of this podcast and for their commitment to empowering personalized wellness. Okay, Dr. K, we are here.

It is two weeks into Christmas and I feel like one of the things we need to address is what it is having SERS or any chronic condition during the holidays and how hard that can be.

And right now, like I said, it's week two in the holidays and I feel like people are probably already going, how am I going to make it the rest of the way?

Or they're in full on anxiety and panic over like the conversations they're going to have to have. And so we just wanted to create a safe space to talk about maybe some different ways of reframing it, different things they can do.

As someone, maybe you just start off with your personal, like kind of how you have to process the holidays. What are just some things that you do to prepare yourself?

Because you do have CSRS and you do have to prepare. So what are some of the things that you create a safe space for yourself? One of the things as I've kind of learned through the years is not setting expectations up that are too much.

Having been a physician, a mom, a grandma, not putting too much pressure on myself as far as decorating. People get into this perfectionistic mindset and it steals the joy of the holidays.

So I think removing inappropriate expectations and extending grace to yourself. So that's just one of the things. No, I really love that because I do think in this society and consumer culture and the way we intake social media, there is this hallmark level holiday that people try to create in their head.

And then it just isn't the reality. And worse, they stress themselves out to never get that show-stopping reality. So I love that.

What SIRS Is and Why Holidays Can Be Hard

Just to kind of for someone who either doesn't understand chronic illness and specifically SERS, what are some of the things that can happen or that they should do to like kind of pace themselves for maybe even mold exposure or let's just kind of take a look about what are things to be aware of when you have a chronic illness or SERS

specifically?

Well, maybe just a brief step backwards and letting people know who might just be hopping on what SERS is. It's an acronym for something called Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome.

And about 21% to 24% of the population, just round up to 25%, is susceptible. So think about the people in your life that have autoimmunity, like ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, Sjogren's, Raynaud's, rheumatoid arthritis, autoimmune thyroid disease, either Graves or Hashimoto's.

It's an environmental illness so that when you enter into a building, that may be water damage, you may not smell anything, you may not see anything, your body does weird things.

And the big part of it is you get tired. So it's not only physically, but mentally. So have you ever gone to a relative's house and everybody's tired all at the same time and takes naps?

Well, you might have that. So the other is just kind of odd pain, belly pain, headaches, shortness of breath, respiratory stuff. And let's face it, when you're coming up on the holidays, if you stress yourself out too much mentally, emotionally, and physically, then you start to get sick.

You're much more vulnerable to get a virus or a bacteria. So if you lower the expectations, lower the bar, and I think around the holidays too, lots of us have different family trauma and good things and bad things.

And it's more important that we focus on relationships and loving the people that we're with and being present. I love that you kind of explained what SIRS is, but what I love that you also listed is several other chronic conditions.

that can make the holidays really hard. And so I love that you kind of laid this platform for different types of people that are stepping into it. So let's talk a little bit about SIRS then, since you did a great explanation is one of those big things, like you said, is mold exposure, right?

When they get exposed to mold, are there any tips or things that people should have on hand if they think they're even going into a clean environment and then it turns out not to be, or maybe they know they're going to spend some time?

Is there anything they could do? Well, always having what we call a prescription binder with you, either colestyramine, or CSM for short, or Questran, or Wellcall, which is a tablet.

And then some individuals don't do well with those. Another binder that works pretty well is Okrapepsin E3, but the two prescription binders are much more potent.

The other is, of course, to stay well hydrated, but taking a small, mobile compact air cleaner. Like personally, I take a small air oasis unit with me.

So if I know I'm going to be in a bedroom or a hotel room. And when I travel, we always try to find the newest hotels in the area. And you can also look on VRBO.

And there's mold-free vacationing and mold-free travel on Facebook. And people can even post if they've done environmental testing. And I think maybe on some of the Airbnbs, they post that too.

So you're looking for the newest builds, and you have to have binders with you. And also because binders bind you up, taking something for constipation.

So, smooth move, glutathione, perpotency guard, magnesium, all the things to keep you moving and emptying your body of toxins.

Mold Exposure, Binders, and Travel Prep

So, those are kind of ways to kind of support yourself when you are going someplace where there might be biotoxins or water damage in a building. That's so good, especially because I think what you've mentioned in other podcasts and other conversations we've had is when you are using a binder, if you're not moving that out, all of it's doing is just building up in your body, which would just make the situation even worse.

So that's really smart. Let's talk about just in general, conic illness and SIRS causes a lot of stress. So let's not even discuss the stress that the actual illness is putting on your body, but those awkward conversations, there's hard conversations, uncomfortable conversations that I think we can play in our head more than we even have them.

Are there any supplements that can maybe help not necessarily support our medical conditions, but maybe support our mind and our stress levels? Yeah, that's a great great thing to segue into.

I love L-theanine. L-theanine is available in a liquid, but also a capsule. And it's safe and it's anti-inflammatory. It's derived from ECGC. Well, I won't go into details, but anyway, it's wonderful.

And I have a bottle here on my desk. Because as a practitioner, when I partner with families and I'm delivering this life altering information and I care about how they receive it and how I come across, because have you been to a doctor and they're just like, this is terrible.

This is awful. This is awful. This is all you can do. Nobody wants anything like that. And that's why we call our practice Hope for Healing. So L-theanine works really, really well.

And there's also something called N-acetyl L-cysteine, NAC. That helps drive down excitatory neurotransmitters. So taking a little knack along and taking some of that and just, you know, we always think of the worst case scenario and it's better to just breathe and remember to smile and remember that you want to love the people that you're with.

And it's not about It's about changing your dialogue in your head. So L-theanine and NAC really, really help calm the mind. Right. And I love that you're kind of partnering those two because as a health coach and having worked with health coach personally, that is a lot of that behavioral change that you kind of step into.

But what I love that you're saying is supporting the calm helps you step into being able to change your mindset. Because when your thoughts are racing all over the place, there's no way of just going stop.

Like that just doesn't work. But giving yourself tools and giving your body support to help that calm. Something you said is, triggered something else in my brain, which was one of those things that gets super compromised during the holidays is sleep.

Sleep is one of those things and you were talking about earlier the reason why this like kind of rang a bell is that you were talking about how when we don't take care of our bodies when we stress level our immune system gets shut down and then we end up getting sick and this whole big thing we've been like working up is I don't want to get sick I don't want to get sick and then we get sick but I know that sleep is a part of that so are there any supports or things that people can do to one prioritize sleep but also I think when my brain is going all over the place sleep feels impossible so what kind of support could we have to like healthy sleep during the holidays Well, it's about healthy sleep all the time, but if you can get sunlight in the morning, when it's wintertime, it's called seasonal affective disorder.

The sun doesn't shine as much in the fall, but when you get early morning sunlight, that actually helps you sleep better at night. So if there's any time that you can take a break at work or go outside or get by a window and get some sunlight, that's going to help.

But also raising the head of the bed because that helps the brain drain by gravity at night. also trying to avoid skimming on social media when you got that blue, you know, light entering your eyes.

And you're going to have to set boundaries. And even for little kids, they get knocked off and their schedules all messed up. So trying to maintain the same routine.

Trying to get up about the same time, trying to go to bed at the same time. It's difficult and don't wait till the last minute to do your shopping and don't go overboard.

Calming the Mind and Supporting Sleep

Try to make a budget. It's kind of late to be talking about this now. But yeah, so magnesium L3N8, it's so good for many things, but it's called OptiMagnuro, taking one to two scoops in the evening.

And if you do that around dinnertime, it's going to help you go to sleep better toward bedtime. That helps too. So it's all about being intentional and trying to keep that routine for the rest of your family instead of staying up crazy hours.

I love that. You know what I think when you said that is that we try our best to keep the routine that we have. How would you help encourage someone on a day that we didn't have really great boundaries, that we did just enjoy ourselves and let's be like, it's not even a boundary thing.

We just wanted to stay up and watch a movie with the family and that we had the fun. How would you encourage them to give themselves a grace for the next day and what that does to the body?

Yeah. Sleep as late as you can without, you know, if you've got to go to work the next day, that's kind of a bummer. But just remember the next night you're going to be sleepy, but focus on the joy that you had.

Focus on being present and with your family and watching a silly, stupid movie or just spending time together. And it's really easy to stress out on the food preparation.

Why not do paper plates? Oh, I love that. Why not do something simple like gluten-free, dairy-free pizza or chili or having you know, barbecuing instead of, oh my gosh, I got to get up at 4 a.m.

and put the turkey in the oven and all these things. Many years ago, we kind of gave up on those things. And some things are fun to have, but have some fun with some good gluten-free, dairy-free comfort foods, you know, like five ingredient rainy day paleo biscuits with butter or ghee and jam.

But when you do stay up, just focus on this is a fun time. This is a time that we love each other and that we need to lean into spending time together as a family and creating memories and being present.

I love that. Oh gosh, so many good things from what you just said. One I was thinking about is, and this wasn't a conversation we've ever recorded, and maybe we'll talk more about it later, is that before I had my aura ring, you would tell me, like, the cool thing about your aura ring was that it kind of prepares you like, hey, your sleep was not what it should be.

take a second to breathe, like take a second to understand the capacity that you're running at the next day. And so I remember you telling me about like, hey, I think this may help you like with your mindset because you like y'all have like sleep score contest.

So it's like having tools in your tool belt like that could be helpful too. I think you could call my husband and I the functional grandparents. I mean, it's like we look at our Oura Ring scores and it's like, why was yours so bad?

Oh, you had a glass of wine at dinner and I didn't, or you didn't get your morning sunlight, or look at the steps I had in for the day, that kind of a thing.

So, you know, it's fun, it's fun, ways that you can support yourself. But that's our newest one, getting morning sunlight early on is really important for your circadian rhythms later in the day.

I love that. And then the other thing you said really struck with me, which is that you've really been emphasizing this, what is going to bring you joy, like what is going to bring you connection versus what is going to look like the Hallmark movie, the Pinterest, the Instagram reality that are the Instagram versus reality way.

And one of the things that just feels like a different way of echoing that is to say, like, if you cooking your grandmother's amazing traditional meal is what is going to bring you joy, then do that, but at the cost of what else?

Like making sure that if that is going to bring you joy, then do that, but not at the cost of like your health or your wellbeing and like understanding other ways like, and I love that you said it, like paper plates.

Like we're not going to bring out the china because I said all this energy cooking food, I need the cleanup to be trash. I needed to be fast. And so that is so brilliant, Dr.

K. I really love that. When we talk about the stages of life that we're in, I became an empty nester this year. And then it was short duration. And for other reasons have had one of my family unit moved in with me and there's a grieving process that goes on.

And when you are in different seasons of your life, you reflect back and you realize, wow, I really wasted time on these things. And you want to change the future.

And something that some of my kids, which they're adults, call it is a cuddle puddle. So like I'll find people on a bed with the dogs up there and there's three or four people on a bed and we call it a cuddle puddle and having these little spontaneous times to just sit and talk and laugh or just be present one of my children is a personal touch and closeness and quality time and it's kind of funny one of her sisters makes fun of her but she'll just put her hand on yours and it's just that she just wants to be present and be touched and so Think about the love languages of the people in your family and how you can be present with them.

And that's another way to frame the holidays too, when you're dealing with chronic health conditions. I really love that. I think that also echoes to fun ways of like even gifting, right?

So if we're going to think of people's love languages, what is the gift that will actually love them most in the capacity, the time? the energy, the expense, right?

So if you are someone with a chronic health condition, your medical expenses are a large portion of your thing. So being able to cater, not cater, but being able to step into what they actually need from you versus what you think they may need from you.

And I love what you said, which is you are asking yourself, you look back and you reflect And that's a coaching question I'll ask people. Like, can you reflect five years from now?

What is the thing that you're doing right now that you would regret that you did? Or what is the thing, like, five years from now, what is the thing that you're like, man, why did I waste so much time?

Joy, Boundaries, and Family Connection

And then you can make that decision change right now. Like, you can make that change. And so I really love that you're reflecting and encouraging people to kind of step in and in the busy, right?

So there are two weeks into December right now. At the time of listening it, I think that in and of itself is like if we could encourage anything would also be the pause.

Like a lot of what you're saying takes time to what is going on. What are we doing? And not succumbing to, okay, well, this Christmas is already a wash.

We're just gonna have to deal with, we're gonna have to deal with and recover in January. And if you're chronically

ill, you know that that's just not the pace that your body will end up.

You know, using chronically ill, so many people define themselves by their illness. And we're not about that. And you get onto a Facebook group or website and it's all about my chronic pain and my chronic this and that.

And you need to remember I am a person that struggles with this condition or I am moving toward remission and I will get better and I'm going to surround myself with people that can be an encouragement to me.

And I am not defined by my diagnosis. But for some people, too, finding out they're not crazy. They're not crazy. And it's a real thing that's causing them to feel so poorly.

And, you know, they're not going to be on anxiety. medication or antidepressants the rest of their lives. They're not going to be in chronic pain all their lives.

And having that hope and realizing that there's ways to move forward is so important. I really love that. Well, and let's talk a little bit about that, right?

So if I am not my condition, I am someone who struggles with chronic illness. Let's talk about the benefits and the things that when you are chronically ill and you have SERS, And you're in a functionally minded, healthy environment of people pushing you to, like you said, towards recovery and towards hope.

Like, can you explain, like, aren't some of the things that we do as people who are chronically ill have serves just going to benefit us in the long run period?

Even if they didn't have it, right? Aren't these healthy choices just like a more fuller life? Can you talk a little bit about that? Yes, so when we think about things that help our bodies function better, we call those modifiable lifestyle factors.

So, you know, you already talked about the expense of chronic illness, so your finances are built a certain way, and the time that you spend is budgeted.

But when we look about community, Like, we all need community, so you have to find like-minded people that you can spend time in community with that aren't toxic and don't drag you down.

And then sometimes it's difficult and sometimes, yeah, so community benefits everyone. Healthy. Whole foods with adequate hydration, drinking enough water and eating healthy, non-toxic food benefits everyone, not just everyone with chronic illness.

Moving your body. I hate the word exercise. I think it's because I was in the United States Army Medical Corps and you had to run a certain amount in a certain amount of time, do so many push-ups and sit-ups.

And, you know, if you didn't meet this mark, it's like bad and you couldn't be promoted and all these other things. And it's just like, just shame, shame, shame.

What's wrong with you? So just movement, movement, like just moving your body, like parking far across the parking lot. If you've got a bad knee, I do take the elevator.

You know, it's being 300 pounds in the past, I kind of messed up some of the cartilage in my knees, so stairs are not my best friend. But just keeping your flexibility and your mobility up.

So we've talked about- Well, help everyone, right? Yes, yes. It's not just a- Yes. And stress management, learning to pause and breathe just like you said, Lauren.

And many times before we respond, it's hard when we're reactive and we just want to answer something instead of pausing and taking a breath and then asking, well, help me understand.

I'm not sure I understand what you're saying. If you really don't understand, I'm curious, can you unpack that a little bit more? Movement, nutrition, sleep, community, and stress management helps everyone.

I love that and even the communication piece I think like as someone who spent 10 years without a diagnosis of this weird like things like not explainable things and the doctors because and so frequently I let's kind of combines two things which you said which is you aren't your you aren't your label.

But I do think sometimes the reason why we like to become our label is we've been waiting for that label for people to validate our symptoms. And I really just want to encourage you if you feel like you're there, your symptoms are valid.

If you're feeling it, you're feeling it, and that is not necessary, which is where that kind of separation from that label began for me, which is like, Oh, I don't need that to say, Hey, I can't do that.

I'm sorry. I'm, I was like, I'm really, I'm sorry. I want to be there for you, but I'm really tired today. So the answer is no. Right. And that is fine.

And so what I think you were talking about, which I think is great, which is being able to have those really healthy conversations, if it weren't for being chronically ill, I don't think I would have learned that skill as fast as I had to learn that skill.

And as hard as that skill is to learn, I'm super glad that I now can advocate for myself in a way that I hadn't in the past. Before, I was a yes, if you asked for it, the answer is yes.

And sure, can I do it? Yes, sure. And so anyway, I just think in the holidays, we do say a lot more yeses than we probably should. And saying your best yes is definitely important.

You know, Lauren, as you talk about that, I'm just reflecting back at the transformation that's taken place in my life in the last 14 to 15 years because, like you, I didn't know what was wrong with me.

And I had multiple labels, depression, morbid obesity, all these other things. And that's where, and this is why again, and I know we bring it up, but this is all about precision genetics.

This is where…

Hope, Genetics, and Lifestyle Support

If you have a person in your household or your life that wants to get better and you have the means to gift them with the Hope for Healing Wellness Blueprint, please do so because it will help them know what's going on in their body and what they can give themselves instead of buying whatever supplement comes on the late night TV thinking, oh, this is going to help me.

Right. You need to know so that you can give yourself what you need and help pull you up out of that hole. Yeah, we're all about genetics, but when you face the holidays and you're chronically ill, you need people surrounding you that love you for who you are.

I love that. Well, and specifically the being about genetics where the genetics piece really comes in, and you can even touch on this a little bit more just as a medical provider, is if we're talking about the things that can, like the people to surround yourself, where we're talking about labels are not important.

What I love about is the wellness blueprint doesn't label you with a condition, it tells you how you can support a deficiency. And I think that's really important.

And that's the change where it's instead of trying to give people these labels to ultimately give them a pill for the ill, or yes, like a late night, like that's probably one of the more frustrating things for me.

take this pill, lose a billion pounds, and this will happen. And you're like, that's just not a reality. And those pills have things that can be really harmful.

But that's where the Wellness Blue comes in and says, hey, this is your deficiencies. And I mean, Catherine, we should definitely have one where Catherine kind of just talks about some of the stuff.

But as a medical provider, I'd kind of love to talk about how this is more supportive than dictating. And I know this is kind of outside of the podcast, but I just think it's still such an important thing when it comes to genetics and talking about how this isn't a death sentence.

right. I mean, and you can have really crummy looking genetics, but you can rise above that by giving your body all the systems to work like an orchestra and a symphony.

That's the case in my life too. Medically, I would not be where I'm at. if I had not been gifted with the gift of understanding my genetics and by beautiful people that poured into my life to help me learn what I've learned and to partner with other people.

And that goes for children who were given the label of autism. that were never given the hope to not be autistic, who have lost the label of autism, or people who are homebound that are now employed and thriving and have become a health coach themselves.

I'm thinking of a young man who came to see me several years ago who, Texas A&M graduate in finance and He ended up living in an apartment unbeknownst to him that was incredibly water damaged and he had to come home, live with his parents and he had no idea what was wrong with him and he was searching and searching and he has a brand new life.

And so, you know, when we've been in the dark and we've been at the bottom to be able to have hope and to come out of that And everyone has different ways of coping and giving your body what you need and providing yourself with the surroundings during the holidays to know that you can have joy and comfort with other people and to remember the gift that we've been given of new life.

And so that's what Christmas is all about. It's not about the gifts that you get. It's the gifts that we have been given by the God of the universe. And so we can have life and have it more abundantly.

That's amazing. Okay, there's three other things I really want to make sure we touch on that I think would be really important. I originally wanted to ask this question about SARS, but I think this is just general with people who have chronic illness have to eat differently.

And I think during the holidays, that can be really, really hard. I think it can be really hard as adults. So I do not want to negate that. But I think one of just talking with so many parents, being the adult who has to say no to children can also be like holiday Christmas parties that the kids go to.

So how can somebody dietary restrictions, navigate holiday foods and gatherings without feeling deprived? You know, that's a great question. And I'm one of those people who cannot have gluten and does not do well with dairy.

And something that one of my grandchildren says, he asked the question, is this poison? So he's been taught by his mom, this is going to make him sick, you know?

So I think you can ask your host, what can I bring? And if they say nothing, you say, well, you know, I'm going to go ahead and bring along some sweet treats that I would love to share with other people.

And we've posted these things in the past, like recipes, fall treats, and we'll be posting those again, but non-toxic options. So Christmas cookies, Mexican wedding cookies, gluten-free, dairy-free, simple mills products, where you can make from scratch Christmas cookies, cupcakes, and things like that that you can take to celebrations.

So when you have a chronic illness and you know you can't eat all those things, volunteer to bring them and don't make a big deal about it. You can bring the casseroles that are not full of sugar or processed products.

You're not going to be doing hamburger helper. or your traditional recipes, but you can make your own. You can make your gravies that don't have gluten in them.

And it just takes some experimentation and learning, but there are lateral shifts. And I love the Anti-Anxiety Diet Cookbook by Ali Miller. She's a registered dietitian.

And then also Michelle Keys. Michelle Keys is here in the Woodlands, Texas, and her son was diagnosed with leukemia. And they're at one of our premier children's hospitals and premier world-renowned cancer treatment centers.

They were giving the children with cancers brightly colored carcinogenic FD&C red dye cupcakes with sugar, which feeds cancer on the cancer ward. And at that time, they knew there's a better way.

So Michelle has published some wonderful cookbooks called The Keys Ingredients.

Dietary Restrictions and Holiday Foods

and Fix Your Plate is another one of her books and then Allie Miller's book and it's great. Danielle Walker also has a lot of really great ones and she's called Against All Grain and she has a lot of amazing ones and she specifically has one called Celebrations and Holidays that are geared towards things so I definitely recommend and it has keys to like okay because not everybody has every allergy right but for some people nightshades are not okay and so she has a this is nightshade free or this is how i would do different tips and tricks so there are options out there but i love that you mentioned the ways that you get to be supportive and even if you know that the person's going to say no um like oh no don't bring anything right because that's just like the thing i have also found like i've stopped asking and just been like hey and not in the asking in the sense of like i think it's a great question dr k because some people have like a spread and i know what i can do to match it um but having my go-to things that I can have on hand.

And if they subscribe to our newsletter, which follow the link in our bio, they'll get a handout for all of our favorite cookbooks and tips for surviving the holidays that you wanna do.

So make sure to check out the show notes. This is really amazing. So I have a final question. What if someone is listening to this because they love someone who has SERS or chronic illness?

And the question they really have is, How can I support a family or friend who is struggling this holiday season? You know, that's a beautiful question.

I would ask the friend, hey, I really want to get together with you, and I want to encourage you, and I don't want it to be a health challenge. Where is a safe place that we could meet and spend time together?

You know, maybe they know of a local park. Maybe their home is clean and safe. a restaurant or a coffee shop that they know that they don't react to when they go into it.

And just being open and willing. Something that I do, someone so precious to me, I cannot go into their home and I get sick. So when I go to visit them, I have found the newest hotel in the area and I invite them to come and spend time with me.

And I've told this person that's so near and dear to me, I love you so much. And I know you love me too, but I can't come into your home because I get sick.

And it's only because they asked. But if you're the person on the other side that wants to know, just ask, where can we meet? Where can we spend time together that won't harm your health?

Because if you have a family member that's really immunocompromised on chemotherapeutic drugs or a relative with cystic fibrosis or where they're just immunocompromised, they didn't ask for that.

And we're not victims, but that beautiful question that you can ask, where could we meet? What could we do? How can I support you? Not when are you going to get over this?

So it's that curiosity and that acceptance. So that's a beautiful question. I really love that you said that one, because you could just hear the emotion that it is hard for you to not be able to go.

And I love that in hearing that and in feeling that, I hope the person who is asking that question can go, hey, this is emotional for them as well. Like they want to show up and they can't in the ways that they want to.

And so how can we come with two people who really deeply love each other or a group of people who deeply love each other to see the other's heart is creeping?

And I think that that is so incredibly important in this season. for both parties to be able to see. So thank you for being vulnerable and authentic in that.

For people to see, I think sometimes, you and I talk about it a lot, is that sometimes when you have a chronic illness or SERS specifically, you can get very defensive and it can look very aggressive and I can't do that.

And so it kind of can come across that people are angry or just being stuck up or pretentious and that is not the case. I think there's a defense that we have to have to protect ourselves and there's a fear that we have that we will get rejected by saying our needs.

And so again, just thank you Dr. K for being vulnerable and expressing that because I think that's what people need to hear on both sides, right? You need to hear, we're not angry, we're not upset.

Well, we are upset, but not at you. Yeah, there's nothing worse than being separated from your children or your parents or your siblings.

Supporting Loved Ones and Finding Hope

and for a degree of being misunderstood. And so it's all about remembering that you want to love the person that you're related to or that you're interacting with.

And it's not about wanting to inflict pain or isolation or abandonment. It's about wanting to get well and to recover and to stay well. And life isn't perfect.

And the goal is to move into remission. And that's what we're all about here in instilling hope and extending grace. I love that Dr. K. Thank you so much for a wonderful episode and we hope that everyone has an amazing Christmas and we hope this just is a glimmer of hope in the midst.

And as always, I love following up with this final question, Dr. K. In the Christmas time, whether they're struggling with chronic illness or not, what is a glimmer of hope that they can cling to this holiday season?

Well, I'm just going to put it right out there that the God of the universe sent his only son, Jesus, to be born, to be made a human, to suffer just like we suffer.

And he understands and he empathizes with everything you're going through. And that's your hope. And that's what you can hang your hat on. So just know that you are loved, deeply loved by the God of the universe.

Thank you, Dr. K. You're welcome. Thank you for listening to today's episode. We hope it offered simple, grounding tools to help you move through the holidays with more peace and support.

Remember, you're not your diagnosis. You deserve to enjoy this season in ways that feel safe, joyful, and meaningful for you. And if someone you love is living with chronic illness, consider sharing this episode with them.

If this conversation encouraged you, it would mean so much if you left a quick review or rating Your feedback helps this podcast reach more people who need hope and support.

And as always, remember, there's hope for healing.