Introduction to Oz Garcia and the interview

– Welcome welcome. You were gathered for another edition of Overcoming Long Covid and M. E. C. F. S. And today I'm gonna have a great time and I'm sure you will too. We're talking to Oz Garcia, Oz is a true thought leader in the world of optimizing your health.

I mean, he's been in this for a long time and has a lot of insights unfortunately for him, unfortunately for the rest of us, he wound up with Covid early on and and has had to claw his way back from his own experience with Long Covid. And so, welcome. Welcome. Welcome Oz.

I'm really excited to talk to you today. You know, we've been talking to a lot of practitioners and a lot of researchers and now we're having a chance to talk to somebody who has the research background and has the let's say, unfortunate gift of having to have a walk through this.

So right, so tell me just from the beginning, like what? Well, actually, before you tell me about your story, tell me a little bit of and so people will understand about your exploration in how to stay well.

– Well, Eric, first of all, thank you for having me on the exploration has history to it. I've been at this what it means to be in the best condition possible.

Oz Garciau2019s background in health optimization

Starting in the 1970s, I got very interested in long distance running. I wound up being a marathoner. I did my first marathon in New York in 1979. I was a kid and that pretty much defined my interest in all the things that could possibly impact my capacity to run, run well, run, better run fast recover.

So my career, my former career ended in the beginning of the 1980s, I was just completely absorbed with everything that had to do with running. I became a a lecturer at the New York Road Runners Club, I'm sure you're familiar with it. And that kind of started me off on a very different route. The first people that affected my thinking about aging and how to reverse aging were two scientists from M I.

T Dirk Pierce and his wife, Sandie Shaw. They wrote the original book on anti aging, I think it was called anti aging, something like that. And it came out if I'm not mistaken in 1981 And that was the Trailblazer and I couldn't put it down all the information about supplementation and nutrients and amino acids and vitamins and minerals and how they work. So I was fascinated with that.

And that took me in a very different trajectory. And I'm here 40 years later talking about it. – Yeah. You know, they were the pioneers because we I was working at that time in what I call regular medicine and I remember people bringing that into me and it was it was it was eye opening and I mean to this day um you know, I have to admit life extension uh is a very helpful resource.

So now, so after that you unfortunately were one of them were living in New York at the wrong time. So tell tell us what happened. – Well let's just say that I have a certain amount of hubris when the pandemic hit, I thought, given my background my knowledge, the fact that I have one of the leading consulting firms in well being, health optimization, nutritional self care, fitness and so on that, that I would be immune, that there was just no way that I could possibly get sick. Now I went in for elective surgery january.

The end of January 2021 Mount Sinai Hospital in New York to correct damage that was done to my neck. This is again up from years of running. So I had planned out, had it all planned out of my head, we're gonna start with correcting the cervical bones a little bit by bit, get the left hip done the right hip, done the lower back, so on, I was just, I was just absolutely delighted and when I woke up in recovery after having had the plate put in my neck at

Mount Sinai, I must have slept, I don't know, 89, 10 hours and my roommate was somebody who had flown in from England at that point, Delta plus was raging in England. This guy was a very well known rugby player and we were separated by as many people know in a hospital by a curtain, he would periodically come over and ask me how I was doing.

And I suspected that this was not proper etiquette at that point, right. The pandemic had kind of slowed down a little bit. People were able to go get elective surgery and I had requested to be released from the hospital.

I figured I need to be someplace safe. I can be alone. This guy's not wearing a mask. And sure enough, when I got home, as the days went on, uh, it's the beginning of February.

Hospital-acquired COVID and severe acute illness

I kept feeling awful and I kept contributing the awful feelings that I had the exhaustion, increased pains throughout my body to maybe the surgery didn't work out.

Maybe something went wrong and as often happens, we'll call our doctors and find out if uh something went wrong with this procedure. Is there anything else I should know?

And I was told, no, no, this is what your recovery is like from this kind of surgery. So I waited it out at home as the symptoms got worse and worse and worse.

I'd say by about day 12, I insisted on going in and having the department surgeon that I work within his department, do x rays on my neck, went up there was masked. They did actually on my neck.

The doctor spoke to me and I could hardly listen to him as he kept telling me that my next fine and at his suggestion I was wheeled over that point that must have been kind of keeling over in a wheelchair to the other side of Mount Sinai where they had the covid ward little did I know that that covid was about to take off brutally.

And the peak had just begun. The peak in New York was in March April of 2021. So I was right at the beginning of the peak itself. I asked once they saw me on at the covid side of Mount Sinai could I go home? And they said no you need to get up on this journey. They did a pet scan on my right leg.

I had three clots in my right leg immediately. They took me to the emergency room and and by then I was going in and out of consciousness. When my turn came up they did a cat scan on me, My lungs were filled to quote one of the doctors.

I had half my lungs filled with millions of micro clots and that was the beginning of my stay in Mount Sinai for three weeks trying to stay alive and subsequent to that when I was released, we've got I'll tell you how I kind of put my life together but it was one of the more brutal times I've ever experienced in my life.

I have nothing to compare it to there. There there were no hospital rooms left Eric at that point in Mount Sinai actually when I was in the emergency room I was seeing people coming in gurney's I'd say in about on average about every five minutes more or less.

So I knew something was really wrong. Certainly I knew something was wrong with me and when I came to I remember coming to I came to in a room not a hospital room but a converted storage room which is all that was left in Mount Sinai and I was sharing it with another gentleman. There were no windows, there was no temperature control if it got too hot, too cold, too humid. And the poor gentleman that was sharing the room with uh was also suffering terribly and I couldn't I couldn't make head or tails of what was going on, but I knew something was terribly wrong, I couldn't lift my arms, my breathing was terribly labored.

And that was the beginning of a three weeks day in Mount Sinai covid ward for all the world to no more or less how bad things were, – Wow, wow That is incredible.

And what's actually fascinating is that you really didn't ever have, it sounds like much in the way of any upper respiratory track signs or issues. – Not at all. When I was home what I wanted to do was just sleep.

So my breathing didn't become labored until I was in the hospital by then. I suppose the amount of fluid that was in my lungs, all viral fluid, all micro clots with one big clot heading for my heart, who could have ever believed that. And I was a candidate and we had spoken this about about this briefing before to go on a mechanical ventilator but we'll get to that, I'll tell you more or less what they did do with me and how I kind of survived the three weeks in the hospital, – Wow, Wow. So there there you are, this is in 21 now. Yeah and people forget, I think sometimes how how you know New York got hit so hard in you know, like twice.

– Horrifically so I remember before that, especially in the lockdown and throughout 2021 when 67 PM would come around, people would go on their balconies and open the windows and bang pots to thank all the E. M. F. Workers, the nurses, the medical staff and this is a routine, it was like an alarm that went off every single day as a reminder of what was going on.

So it was a peculiar time as as not only for me, but most people that lived through it whether in the country but in the city that was considered kind of ground zero again for the epidemic. It was pretty horrifying.

– God. And so and you got through the hospitalization. I mean they what did you, were you able to do anything for yourself during your hospital stay or you pretty much. – No. Finally, finally I spent my birthday up there. So as a means of getting products that I knew I could make a difference. They were smuggling in in birthday boxes, birthday cake boxes. So I have my staff from my brother bring them up and the nurses would bring them in so I was able to take different products that they wouldn't approve in the hospital. So like an snl 16 and a c assimilated glutathione, vitamin C, Vitamin D, nitric oxide inducers. They smuggled in a powder combination with argentine and situation and I could breathe better after I would use it.

But but in the hospital, none of that was recognized. I remember one day talking to the head pulmonologist and I thank God I have my iphone with me. And I just kept doing searches that's all I could do with whatever time I had. And I came across an article, I think it was in the Lancet, which is the British version of the American Medical Association's leading book of manuals like you know, Jama. And there's an article stating that vitamin D.

Could possibly be helpful in mitigating the effects of of Covid. So I remember I showed it to the pulmonologist and he said to me, well there's no proof.

And I think I lost my voice is I've already lost. I wanted I wanted to say, well, this is the lancet that that's saying. Covid seems to appears to have an effect on mitigating.

Covid 19. Excuse me, vitamin D Appears to have effects of mitigating Covid 19 effects. He completely dismissed me. I was not on a mechanical ventilator.

I was in a high flow oxygen. What do you call him? A calendula? So they put me on that because I had declined to be put on a mechanical ventilator. And I was told this by the whole pulmonary team that the likelihood is that they would have to make me do it. They contacted my brother, they contacted one of my business, but by the way that they were all well intended, they did save my life. I would have died had I not been in the hospital, but they were they were equally as overwhelmed.

They were equally as lost in the woods as to as to what to do. So they gave me an antiviral which was very popular at the time.

Surviving hospitalization and early recovery

I took a particular steroid, Dixon methadone, which actually allowed me to breathe a lot better my blood pressure at one point, probably from the fact that the virus had had penetrated my heart muscle. My blood pressure went up to about 2 20/1 20 at one point. So I was on high blood pressure medication.

They put me on antibiotics basically, I mean I could just go on my my stomach is just ripped apart. So the experience itself in terms of trying to save my life was was in many ways kind of looking like this, I could die here.

You know that this is the best that's available. And they're not thinking about probiotics, they're not thinking about any other potential nutrients. At one point they did a search on coffee and it turns out that coffee is a mild broncho dilator. So I just started drinking coffee.

I would I would beg for coffee. Can I get another cup? Can I get another cup? And that kind of defined most of the time that I was there. Unfortunately two individuals that I shared rooms, rooms with did pass away. They were they were elderly, older and I suspect they were not in all that good of shape.

So there's a lot that you walk away from the hospital from in terms of what do I do now that there's a lot of new trauma. There's a lot of pTSD stuff that you've now re plugged into your brain into your body. And nobody has an answer as to what to do with the fact that you can't stop shaking, What are you gonna do with your ravaged lungs?

I was putting an ox oxygen compressor, we talk about that. What should I eat? Are there any supplements? So my care in so far as what to do to regain my life back ended the day that I went home three weeks after I entered the hospital.

– Yeah. Well that is I mean the issue of modern medicine is we about 30 years ago we made this turn or 40 years ago really where where if there wasn't a double blind placebo controlled study, it was large enough. It's not proven and it could be dangerous.

So we're not gonna do it and I understand if you're gonna if that's a reasonable criteria if the intervention that you're gonna use has a very high likelihood of hurting.

But I think it totally misguided if what you're going to use is generally considered safe. You know, I don't think that we don't need, we shouldn't need the same level of evidence, especially in the midst of a pandemic, especially in the midst of a new a new health crisis.

We should be able to be a little looser. And you know, unfortunately not in America not unless you have you know like a billion dollars behind you. Like we did with Remdesivir. I mean that was probably one of the things yeah – I was given, I was given Remdesivir and like I said that's a method zone.

But nothing else, anything else that we now recognize may have an effect on speeding up your recovery. I certainly have an effect on whether you have post Covid syndrome long haul symptomology that I had to like fight for myself without much medical input. In other words, if you're, if you're looking to medicine to try and solve the problem of being a long hauler, your, you may miss the point now, this is just my opinion.

There are plenty of doctors that I admire that I think are brilliant when it comes to the management of long haul covid. Matt Cook is one, he's out in California, probably not too far from you who's got some remarkable ways of thinking about post covid and long haul Covid Andrew Levinson in Florida is a brilliant psychiatrist, has a clinic in Miami and South Beach where he uses hyperbaric tanks other approaches and so on. So I kind of started to, once I got home and I looked in the mirror, I went from weighing 1 42 to £98. So I was unrecognizable.

I didn't, I could not recognize what I saw in the mirror and I remember weeping just absolutely weeping one that, that I was home and I had my bed but weeping at at the person that I didn't recognize in the mirror.

I could count my bones. My gums were bleeding. I think I mentioned to you before, I had lost a couple of teeth. I was actually able to pull them out when, when I got home, just as my body was just decimated, had no strength And I was hooked up to an oxygen compressor at home where I was breathing six liters of oxygen 24 hours a day.

Down from 65 by the way when I was in the hospital. Right? And so I needed to figure out based on my history, everything that I knew, can I solve this catastrophe?

Can I get back to where I was before I had covid? Is that a possibility when, when, when nobody knew anything, there was just no way to address it because no matter what I did whatever searches you were doing at that time, nothing satisfactory came up online.

– Yeah. No, no. We were blind. I mean, except just going back to, okay, your body's just been through an incredible inflammatory experience. And is there still ongoing inflammation. And as you said, you know, looking at the, the clotting issues, there's, it's, you're really left to your own devices.

And but luckily you, you had a lot of devices to try. So let's go through some of them. What did you start to do to help bring yourself back? – Well, I knew that where I needed to begin with my breathing. So I couldn't, I couldn't get to the bathroom from my bed from the bedroom, my bed to the bathroom without being winded, right? And I would have to crawl part of the way.

And I figured maybe that's where I need to start. So they gave me in the hospital as parameter. I know what, you know what his parameter is, right? – But basically for the just something where you get to blow into a into a device and it can kind of measure how much air you're moving. But more importantly, it exercises your lungs and that's why they give it to you when you go home.

– Correct. So I took one home and I kept playing with it and I thought to myself, I don't think this is going to ever get me back to where I was before.

Right? So I began to investigate breathing approaches. Yogurt breathing. I spoke to a number of friends of mine. One is a very well known athlete who turned me on to a breathing devices.

It's funny I haven't here. By coincidence. It's called By the way. None of this is anything that I endorse or being paid for. This saved my life. This is called, Let me see if we can see it. An aero fit an arrow fit.

You can get an amazon. You put it in your mouth has an app and it can mimic anything from walking through a meadow breathing to running up a steep incline to being 11,000 ft above sea level.

Right. And I figured all right, let me try this thing. And this is the beginning of how I built back my my breathing capacity. So I use it every day. I really miss it. I started at at beginner.

One minute that was about all I could do without collapsing in exhaustion. To where now I can do 20 minutes at advanced on some of the toughest dialing that you can do on it. So now I can run up 456 flights of stairs.

Whereas I could hardly, like I said to you before even walk parallel to try and get from one room to the other without being fully exhausted. So that was the beginning. It's like, can I get control over my breath then? It was after everything that I've been through?

Is there a possibility that my immune system is still compromised? What about the possibility we don't know yet that there are viral particles left behind in my brain and so on. My thinking wasn't all that sharp.

So I could walk into another room and wonder what I was doing there. Just what am I doing here? Walk my walk, walk back, still not remember and go okay and then go back and sometimes it would take me two or three attempts to actually remember why, why I have walked into the other room in my apartment. So it was okay?

So what do I need to do to repair the damage to my brain because there's a lot of talk going on among the doctors and the articles that I'm reading that, that there's damage that can occur to the brain.

Rebuilding breathing and cognitive function

The protein extensions from the virus itself do move the virus into the brain. And even after you lose most of the virus after most of it is clear from your body a lot isn't.

There's much speculation even today that some viral particles, particles remain in the body. Maybe some of the virus itself remains in the body. And it may account for a lot of the problems that play post covid sufferers, certainly long haulers.

So I put together a whole protocol of different nutrients that actually could have an impact on my thinking. So that was part two. – Right? And you know, because we have to remember is that, you know, the breed, the thinking, you know, your brain depends on circulation and also inflammatory chemicals that still can be like while your body is repairing, there's often a lot of inflammation, inflammatory chemicals that are being released.

So whether, you know, and despite protein itself is so pro inflammatory, you know, so all these things, so anything that will lower your inflammation will hopefully help your brain. – No question about it.

Well, at the beginning I was so thin and I've been for a long time pretty much a pesca Terrian kind of leaning very close to classical Greek dietary guidelines meet once in a while, um a lot of, of intermittent fasting, but now I'm down £40 so what do you do, how do you gain back your muscle mass? Yes, it would have been great too, if I could have gained it back being on a more plant based diet, I would have done it, but that, that was out of the question and I was really scared that I was gonna fracture something because I was just so thin, so my diet, so I so that was the next thing, alright, what do you eat?

So it's going to be a combination of paleo keto ancestral dietary practices with a lot of plant based food in there, a lot of fruit, most of it cooked, in fact all my plant and fruit consumption was mildly steam poached so that I could digest it a lot better, and an enormous amount of fat, plant based fat nut butters, cashew nut butter, almond butter, hazelnut butter, a lot of meat, I was consuming an enormous amount of seafood, high quality organic beef, same thing was lamb, I needed to do anything that I can remember listening to watching a movie back back, it must have been back in, in the eighties with Arnold Schwarzenegger, it was his breakthrough film, I can't remember the name right now, but he talked in that film, he was at the peak of his stunning nous, how he had put on all the muscle, he did by eating as much meat as he could.

And I remembered that I thought, okay, let me speak to some of my friends that are experts in paleo or keto and I constructed a way of eating to get my my muscle mass back and it worked, – Wow, yeah and that is a good uh you know, let's us know that the inflammation in your system was getting under control because if you can, if you can build muscle, you know, you're there because when you have too much inflammation you're just not gonna you're not gonna your mitochondria aren't gonna process the fats and the protein, so it's really good. So we see that you are, you know, I think one of the things that that we see over and over again is people who start basically healthy, have a much, much better chance of recovering.

And you know, one of the things that we've seen is that even the people who are on a lot of good supplementation just have done a lot better. – Yeah, well remember what, why I got hit was because I had a 2.5 hour surgery on my neck, right? So my immune system was depressed from that, the anesthesia as you and I know, can knock knock your immune system out to um and being in a room with somebody who was like my, my ground zero, my main uh exposure under those circumstances, who would have thought that you could pick this stuff up in the hospital. – Yeah.

Unfortunately, hospitals are hospitals are again not even equity, but a den of bugs. – Yeah. – That's where the worst bugs live, unfortunately. But, but you know, but I think that's what speaks, you know, well, is that you you were, you were in a, you know, the immune system can only do so much time and your immune system was basically focused on healing. So getting that infection at the same time.

Yeah, your body just wasn't ready for it – No. And it was a double slam. It was like getting slammed to the end degree with the worst possible case of covid, you know, severe covid pneumonia consuming my body while I'm recovering from neck surgery. Right?

And it was an unimaginable state to be in while in the hospital being home, wondering trying to make sense of all of this. It was, it was not anything that you could put together and try and explain to yourself explain to other people. So I think a lot of, lot of long haulers need to deal with their thinking how it is that they can then construct put

together, their character so that they convinced the amount of suffering.

And so that was the next project. Right. How do I now get my thinking in line so that I'm not crying over spilled beer singing the blues. Why me? How could this happen?

It happened, it happened to you. And this is what I had said about a certain degree of hubris that I thought it would never touch me and here I am it with the worst possible outcome. In terms of Covid.

I had friends, I had acquaintances that had gotten Covid and they stayed home, drank some miso soup and quarantine. They were back to skiing in two weeks.

I'm like, I am completely screwed. I don't see an end to this. But as I got control over my thinking more through mindfulness practices. So I want to be careful. I was says I was a meditator before, but I didn't take it as serious as I did afterwards.

So now it's everyday, a certain amount of time is dedicated to mindfulness meditation practices. And there were there was a devices I could hardly control the voice in my head. It was the spinning, What does this mean? What's going to happen and things going to get worse?

Diet, muscle recovery, and inflammation control

And if you started Googling everything about long haul Covid and you know, kidney failure, pancreatic, inflammatory disease. It was like, oh my God, what? I'm not gonna make it five years and to quiet that. So I began to practice mindfulness everything single day and I did use the device for that, to the device that I love.

That helped immensely, was mused right, so so muse comes in different forms. I think the muse asked is the one that I got and I use regularly. And it allows you to regulate your thinking, it calms the voice in your head.

The neural default network where the voice tends to go by. The exercise is kind of like a neuro feedback device so that so that as it calms you down your work and you're earning your way through by using use new column which I love.

Newcomb is another application to get control over stress anxiety, a wondering mind, the neural default network. So between new com muse, I would spend certain amount of my day just training my thinking, getting control over my thinking all over again.

– Yeah. And this is crucial because people always forget that the brain does control the immune system and when you're weak and inflamed the the cells in your brain that normally will calm those that that noise will will keep those incessant thoughts from, you know, really being a big part of your life, those those will because they're not they should be damped down, but when there's inflammation and not enough blood flow, they have a field day, so you have to do that work and and and that's something I think that's so good to hear how you were able to, you know, to make use of your brain to regain control of the whole body.

– Thank Eric. Yes, and I would say that this had to happen, I gotta reflect back on, on how my thinking was prior to having been sick and the fact that I've been the kind of runner that I was the, the training that I had undergone for 35 40 years to become the kind of runner that I was served me well in terms of my recovery.

So in the absence of wanting to do anything, get up, meditate, prepare my food, use my supplements, um bothered to educate myself about my options, getting all the things put together and making the effort to actually rise above my condition. I have to credit the years of training to actually kind of pull it out of nowhere, because I didn't feel like doing anything.

There were times where I just wanted to stay in bed, not get out, and there were times where my thoughts went to really the dark side, like if this is the rest of my life, what's the point and to be able to get a grip over that and dismiss it, let it know that that it's gonna pass and get on with your affairs, pull out your, your spreadsheet, what's

the next thing you gotta do? What's the next thing.

So I would say that grit is critical to recovery? I think discipline and understanding at that point that it's discipline all the way out. This is what you said you were gonna do.

You're gonna walk 20 ft from your bed to the living room, You're not gonna crawl and you're gonna lower the oxygen compressor from 36 liters to three.

Can you do it? I was very influenced by James Clear and his book atomic habits. James is probably one of the world's leading thinkers on developing new habits and practices. He's all over youtube.

Atomic habits is a remarkable book and his story was very inspiring. I listened to it on audio books in the hospital and certainly at home, I would review it.

But his premise in large measure is the way that you changes. You do one little tiny atomic thing every day and you improved by a percentage point every day. I really took that to heart.

If it was like today, I can do I can walk 20 I can take 20 steps. Can I do 20.5 tomorrow. Can I do 21 the following day? Can I do 21 a half? And finally, until I could just completely walk without the oxygen compressor, right? And then sleep without it, right? And then not take a nap in the afternoon, which is months into the recovery, but but James clears approach and don't think you're gonna make a big leap all at once. It's just not gonna, right, it's do one little thing. Can you, can you do this other thing today? Can you turn up the the arrow fit from beginner to intermediate and do three minutes? So so it was earning back and I really admire that person that I I embodied at that time for the resilience I exhibited when I should have, I should have died.

– No, no. You know, once the blood clots start happening. Yeah, it's and you start losing oxygen and lung capacity. It's a hard, you know, I mean the those that's where the fatality the mortality rate went way up.

– Oh yeah. Well my ox right now you and I are at sea level unless you're you're not, but I suspect – Right here, – So we're breathing 21% oxygen, right? And at least that's the oxygen saturation in the air that you and I are breathing and then there's the oxygen saturation that's in our body. So it should be, you know, plus 95% 96 98 if you and I go for a long walk and we're talking and we're running we'll hit 100% 100% oxygen saturation. So my typical oxygen saturation was was typically at about 98% 98, and go work out, hit equinox or whatever you do, your oxidation is gonna when they took my oxygen in the hospital the first day that I was there. I was if I'm not mistaken, I had hit 76 in other words, I was dying. My brain was dying.

– Yes. No, no. That those I mean, that's what co you know, Covid seems to have moderated a bit. But when you got hit with it, that's what was happening. People, you know, they would be like, you know, 94 93 then they would precipitously drop into once you got below the eighties, it got really terrible.

– Absolutely terrible. Absolutely terrible. And I had no idea.

Mindfulness, discipline, and mental resilience

And thank God that I didn't have to go on a mechanical ventilator that did just said, everybody knows a mechanical ventilator is the breathing is so bad. And the likelihood of you surviving is really poor. They you will be sedated and a tube is put down through your throat into your lungs and oxygen is pumped in mechanically.

Through this device, a mechanical ventilator will do the breathing for you. And you can be on that device for hours, days, weeks, months. I couldn't imagine I already knew the statistics going into the hospital.

That if you went on a mechanical ventilator, your chances of coming out alive were less than two out of 10. So that's that somehow I had the the capacity to fight to not go on it.

They had the machine in the room, but here we are. – You know, it's, you know, the problems of the machine is just

that there it's traumatic to the lung. And actually, and yeah, there's lots of downsides. I mean, that that was one of the that was one of the things that the some of the early smart doctors noticed that people were, people were better off without it, you know, for most lung diseases, the ventilator is life saving. But in this particular case, it actually, the trauma was not usually worth it.

So, but you've crawled yourself back now more than crawl. You run back at this point, you're back with us. So, actually, so obviously the basic supplements.

But the big thing here that I'm hearing was the the the cycle, I don't call it psychological, but just being able to harness your will, Being able to get alignment with your will and your spirit to to do what needed to be done, you know? And also, yeah that is the most difficult thing because when you're, you know, it's one thing to harness your will, when you're strong and good and you're feeling great, it's a much, much, much harder thing to do when you're in bed and can't move. So, – Yeah, it gives you great respect Eric for people around the world that are suffering terribly in conditions that to you and me and many people that will be listening to this broadcast, don't have any experience of what that's like.

You know, if you're a refugee escaping from Syria, if you're being bombarded in Ukraine, if you're in Somalia now where we've got a famine, that's that's gonna, you know, top millions of people, the estimate is that that maybe 53345 to 7 million people may die. I, you know, having gone through what I went through gave me an insight to the condition, the suffering that that we do go through in this life, not the needless suffering that there's plenty of that, but the real actual suffering that that we endure.

So my value system shifted immensely. I went from being um a celebrity nutritionist and the kind of rock star clients that I had and flying the globe and thinking that I was, you know, the the S. H. I. T. And and and to all of a sudden realize that I'm in there with humanity with no exception that that I almost died.

And as a matter of fact recognizing that like everything in this planet, there's an exit point, there's a fin itude to my life and to recognize that to know that that I'm not immortal and and and many of us have carried that over from our youth.

You know, it's just gonna go on and go on and well it's not and being surrounded with people that were dying. And then seeing myself almost go down that two gave me a lot more interesting like, okay, you're going to do everything possible to make it through this and then you're gonna figure out how do you get back to optimizing your health? You make it as long as possible.

So that brought me to the next thing, which was the microbiome and and all the things that you and I understand are critical about the health of our bowel and and the role of the microbiome along with the brain in terms of determining our immune condition, how well the immune system will perform. Now I knew that my microbiome had been wiped out. The microbiome is the environment made up of a multitude of bacteria that live inside of us habitat within our bowel.

One that's very common that most people know about is is a sarcophagus, right? So acidophilus, lactobacillus, acidophilus is in many fermented foods, yogurts, cheeses, beverages, Campbell and so on. But there are many, many, many, many, many kinds of probiotics. We now know that there are probiotics that direct how immune cells within the body will behave.

White blood cells, macro fires lymphocytes and so on and and will determine in large measure how the brain will behave. So we both know that there's an intimate connection between the bowel and the brain itself, the gut brain connection.

So at that point I began to introduce a multitude of fermented foods and probiotics into my daily routine. Those are the first supplements that I began to use and every single day, handfuls of some of the most exotic probiotics, you can imagine. I had a friend that fermented something for me.

It was a combination of mongo and papaya and apricots and pears and just let it bubble over and I would take a

scoop of that every day and put it into a smoothie and that was critical and normalizing my bowels to my bowels were on fire coming out of the hospital where they feed you hospital food, you can't even imagine.

Breakfast was plastic, eggs and bacon. I'm going after the hospital. This is horrific. Cream and I'm lactose intolerant sugar to put in your coffee. That was one thing that I would have to have the coffee and pick up the food, lunch was Gmo, chicken, mashed potatoes and corn dinner was the same thing, This is the same thing every day.

And I finally got ahold of somebody who was able to bring up piece of salmon, brown rice and vegetables. And it was this hospital version of this, but it was like real food. I get to have one real meal.

So I'm very conscious of the fact these days of what it is that I do eat, given that and I'm not a goody goody, but, but in order to maintain the stability that I do enjoy the the way that I eat is just very very uh well thought out.

So what it is that I have in the mornings and the afternoons and evenings is critical to controlling my fatigue. Any lingering problems that I may suffer that are left over from when I had covid. So diet is critical as is a wide assortment of probiotics in terms of how do you build yourself back.

– Yeah. No this is so important. In fact we do have an interview with Dr. Hazan who's an gastroenterologist and a real deep interest in just how the bacteria in our gut actually help you know balance the viral loads that we have. There's so much that has to do with the gut and and you know that yeah you got it the god in the brain that they talk to each other and the and then the gut is often is the first step in the conversation.

Gut health, probiotics, and the microbiome

So it is crucial – Correct. And they're what you want to do is create the environment in the bowel where the probiotics can actually thrive and do what they're supposed to. So there's a category of nutrients called probiotics.

We have probiotics and then you have post biotics so too that's a conversation for another time but you want to make sure that you have all three and uh pre biotics, the one that that I love and I would recommend here is just a Jerusalem artichoke powder.

One of the best probiotics in the world. It sets the stage for the bacteria that you do consume to stick and adhere to the wall of the bowel better as best as possible.

And then there are post biotics. These are nutrients that feed the bacteria so that they actually thrive in the bowel wall. So it's pre pro and post post biotic supplements that I like. Our beauty rick acid butyrate.

I think it is remarkable um as the name implies, its source, its original source when it used to be source it would be from butter butter high quality but is very high butyric acid and that makes for a really healthy battle environment too.

So it's the pre the the probiotics that you take and then the post biotics I take. So I take Beauty ric acid in a form called tribe you to rate and it has a remarkable effect on lowering inflammation systemically and within the bowel wall. – Yeah I know you are laying out is just so crucial because you know basically I consider the bowel when people have once, once you're in trouble with it. It's a question of urban renewal.

You know you have to get the neighborhood healthy and stay again you know and you know if you just put in the good stuff but the neighborhood is unsafe.

They're gonna all be swallowed up and killed and you know because we see that we see people who've been taking probiotics for years but it doesn't change the bowel milieu and that's what's so important. And I like the way you laid that out with the pre pre and post support you need you need the right environment and creating that is crucial. So exactly and and so you know you you wrote a book after covid and so I'm in that book, you've outlined some of these you know your your steps forward. – Pretty much so I the book is in two parts Eric the first part of after Covid I'll hold up the cover again is pretty much the story, my story of being in the hospital. Part two is a

workbook.

So it has all the supplements that I use, all the nutrients that I used. The different protocols I got uh very interested in extremes of heat and cold. So I would do infrared saunas than do an ice cold water dip. Or I would fill up my tub with ice water.

I would do cryotherapy. This is the Wim hof approach to getting getting kind of shocking your body to better health. So shocking it in the right way is called or Missus. This is the kind of stress which is good for your body and it will do wonders, you know exercises is hore medic in terms of what it does is a certain kind of stress for your body that's good for it intimate and fasting under feeding is good for your body produces a certain kind of stress and your body's gonna swipe up a lot of dead zombie cells and essence cells and so on.

And I wanted to make sure that I hit all the things in the workbook part that mattered cleaning up my sleep which was a disaster. Are you wearing an aura ring by the way?

– Oh yeah it's made me more honest. – It does really changes here. It's the first thing I look at when I wake up put on my phone look at the app. I was my sleep.

It's like 94 HR V. You know 40. It's like yes you know ordering is terrific. So I talked about the different devices, everything from what I showed here before.

The ordering all the different tools, the bio hacking Euro hacking tools to get me to where I wanted to get sooner. And I knew that I needed to improve my sleep too. So there's a whole section in the book on the different nutrients and supplements that I use still now to put me into deep sleep and keep me asleep and wake up feeling refreshed and the supplements to build power to build better brain performance to get your muscle mass back up again to deal with with your psychological states. How do you indeed deal with your D.

N. A. Which maybe also damaged terribly. So all that's laid out in the workbook part of of after covid. – Yeah that's wonderful because it as you said it's a journey of many many steps and different paths for different people. So it's really nice you know and people have a chance to like pick and choose what resonates with them and what they're able to do.

I think that's one of the important things is that um you know what one of my frustrations sometimes with the biohack and field is that it's often made up of people who are mostly made of people who are athletes. And what the world forgets is that athletes are different than a lot of us. Other mere mortals.

After Covid book, biohacking tools, and closing advice

There are those people who like let's go for a run and then there's people like me. My favorite line is you know okay when's lunch? But but yet we have to in order to keep having lunch for many years in a healthy state we have to emulate and do some of the work that the people who are who are athletic and naturally push themselves. Do you know for some of us a little harder to do it. But it's important the modern world has made it has made it for the first time that many of us get to live a life of excessive leisure.

Maybe not leisure but excessive sitting and and so we really need to learn and take up the, the lessons that the athletes have have learned and that we know you spoke of harnesses the idea that, you know, basically um when you push yourself, you let your body heal, the body has to, you, you have to stress the system to get the body to kill off the weakened cells. Otherwise they stay around far too long.

– Very much so, and you know, we're very hedonistic culture. And when it, when you're dealing with what we've dealt with for the past three years, you've got to get off the hedonic treadmill and, and get active, you gotta get active, you gotta get educated, you gotta, you gotta use your curiosity, which is what I did to save my ass.

There's, you can't, you can't just lay back and think that it's all gonna wind up fine if, if left to its own devices, you and I both know things go into deep and tropic endings.

You know, it's just you got to participate in, in your health and well being, you gotta read, you gotta read a lot, you gotta get outdoors, you gotta, even in the winter, walk out to the street, look up even on a cloudy day. Andrew Huberman would tell us this right from Stanford that, that exposing your eyes to greenery will make a big difference in terms of how your day goes and so as cornball as some of these things sound.

It's important. It was important in my recovery and I suspect it would be many people that do watch this broadcast, whether they've got chronic fatigue, whether they're dealing with long haul, whether they're it's some stuff that's lingering from post Covid, there's an exploratory porthole you gotta get through.

And I think the book itself, after Covid gives you one door to go through with a lot of options on the other end. – Yeah. And that's I thank you for that because I think, you know, you can spend a lot of money going to a lot of doctors, but self care is your first and best step really is important. So, thank you so much for your time.

I mean, this is great and I'm so glad that you made it through this. I mean, a very lucky man and I really thank you for you know, sharing for sharing your experience. And especially like, because I said before, you're someone who has done the deep work for many years on on on what actually works for people. And so again, thank you because otherwise it would be very difficult to decide which way to go.

So, thank you. Again, pleasure talking to you. – Thank you. Remember if anybody wants to reach us. They can get us on our website. It's ozgarcia.com. Simple. And the latest book is after Covid.

It's on amazon. Thanks. Eric, I'm beyond beyond happy that we had this time. – Ah, my pleasure.