Summit Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome everyone to the Gut Health and Longevity Summit. I am so glad you are here, and I want you to settle in for this one, because we're going to talk today about something that touches nearly everyone listening in some way or another, and that is chronic pain.

We built this summit because the gut is not an isolated system. It's in constant conversation with your nervous system, your immune system and your brain.

And that conversation shapes whether your body stays stuck in a pain response or finds its way out. And my next guest has spent years studying exactly that conversation from a very personal starting point.

My next guest built one of the largest plant based health media platforms in the world, and then his own body handed him a problem. His reporting hadn't prepared him for him.

Years of unresolved chronic pain sent him back to the science, and what he found became a framework that he now teaches to thousands. Klaus Mitchell holds an M. S.

in genetics from Human Disease from the University College of London. He is the founder of Plant Based News, which I'm sure many of you guys have been reading and ever kind digital and co-founder of health and AI insiders.

His own experience with chronic pain led him into pain science, lifestyle medicine and mind body health. He has spoken at numerous conferences and organizations, and is a contributing script editing to the Netflix documentary sea and Plant based News Now reaches over 4 million followers across its platforms.

He's also the forthcoming author of built From Pain The Revolutionary Approach to Overcoming Chronic Pain, releasing in a 2027. So we're going to get into it and really talk about pain.

So Klaus, welcome. I've been looking forward to this conversation. And I know our audience has two. So let's first start with before we even get into this framework, because I know you've got a framework that you're going to talk to us about.

I want people to understand where it came from. You built your career reporting on other people's health stories, what happened in your own body that turned chronic pain into your life's work?

Keith, so much for having me. This is this so terrific to be here and part of this summit. So as you said, I'm founder of Plant Based News. And for many, many years, my focus was interviewing the kind of luminaries in this lifestyle medicine space.

But actually not many people know. And I'm kind of proud to reveal it here, which I also do in my book coming out next year, that actually the thing that precipitated plant based news, the thing that precipitated this media platform, was my own chronic pain.

I had a football injury in my leg when I was 17 that resulted in a condition called post thrombotic syndrome. I've had over 20 operations. I've had metal implanted and explained, and despite all of this, I still suffer from chronic pain in my leg.

And this has been the root of my obsession. I've been in search of a framework by which to live my life in a way that minimizes that pain. So, as you said, I launched a plant based news.

I've set up a business like in lifestyle medicine, which led me on to mind body medicine, which completely cured

my neck pain. And so I've been through this experience where I've been trying to manage my vascular issue in my leg pain from a very severe deep vein thrombosis.

And along the way, because of the stress of managing the business and stress of managing my own leg disability, I picked up very severe neck pain and that has been completely healed through mind body medicine.

And so through that experience, I've been, you know, talking about mind body medicine, talking about the power of lifestyle medicine. And it's great to share some of those insights of you today.

Yeah. That's amazing. I think many people listening can think about a time when they either went through experiencing chronic pain, or maybe they're even experiencing it now.

And I'll share briefly a little bit about my story, just very briefly, because it is totally what you were talking about. So in 2020, during the pandemic, I suffered a traumatic brain injury from being hit in the head with a golf ball.

Lever 1: Response and the Nervous System

That's the short version of the story going 150 miles an hour, which also caused three cervical disc herniation and chronic pain down my neck, arm, you know, amongst a thousand other things.

So pain. I am a very, very well familiar with, as well as the mind body lifestyle medicine that it took to get out of that pain. So like I said, I'm excited about this conversation.

I'm excited to hear your framework and how you dealt with it. Compare it to my own like and like, let's just see where we take it from here, because I think, you know, we never know.

And I always say staying healthy and preventative health is the key from any recovery that you can possibly even not even imagine in the future, because you can be blindsided by anything.

Just like probably you were blindsided by this injury as I was my injury. And it's like having that foundation and health is key. So let's talk about your framework.

You talk about this like you speak about it in the form of levers. And the first lever you talk about is the response. So for an audience that is thinking about pain as purely physical tissue level problem.

What do you mean by response and where does that nervous system fit into this? Yeah, such a great question. And we're going to get on to the lifestyle medicine stuff later, because I know a lot of the people you've been speaking to focused on, you know, gut health and inflammation and longevity from that standpoint.

But I just want to shine a spotlight on the power of mind body medicine. And I've been doing that through the prism of exploring this, this response lever.

And what I mean by that is there are kind of two ways to to respond to life events in adversity or indeed pain. Right? Or at least there are two ends of the response spectrum.

So on the one end you have catastrophizing and then on the other, what I call a kind of calm acceptance. So let's break this down. So let me give you an extreme version of what happens when you when you catastrophe.

So a bit of a story, right? Just to demonstrate this extreme end of the spectrum, there was a man in World War two who was a prisoner of war in Nazi Germany.

Right. Listen to this. So this guy's a prisoner of war in a place called Colditz Castle. Completely true story in World War Two. And he came to the conclusion that the only way he was going to get out was by deliberately losing his mind.

He believed that he did this repeatedly. He could convince the Germans to repatriate him back to the UK, and so he catastrophes over and over again, minute after minute.

They after a week after week and lo and behold, he was sent home. But the really scary thing was his conscious efforts. He changed his behavior became so hard wired that it became permanent and he wasn't able to stop feigning madness.

He became permanently own, required long term psychiatric care because what he repeated, he became. And that really shows the the power of this response lever.

Now, on the other end of the spectrum, as I've said, is what I call a kind of calm acceptance. And this is where it gets really, really interesting in the context of of chronic pain and chronic illness.

So the most comprehensive study done on this idea of calm acceptance was from 2021. Researchers listening to this at the University of Colorado recruited hundreds of people of long standing back pain.

Now, bear in mind, long standing back pain is one of the, I think, the leading cause of disability around the world is the leading cause of of chronic pain in many places around the world.

Now, these people were recruited into this study, tried what they thought was everything. They tried physio, they tried like injections, medication. Many of these people been suffering from back pain for over ten years, and they generally believed there was something structurally, something structurally wrong causing their back pain.

But what they found was the opposite. Once participants practiced calm acceptance through an intervention called pain reprocessing therapy, the results were extraordinary.

Two thirds of participants were pain free or nearly pain free. After just four weeks. Those results held at one year follow up and listened to this at five year follow up. These results have just come out.

It's just been published in pair of new channel. 50% of the people starting this trial who had long standing back pain, and now pain free or nearly pain free.

This happened with me. So there's this robust evidence and is also, for me, this personal experience of overcoming my neck pain. Because of this, what I call calm acceptance, we can get into exactly what that means.

But that's why I'm so passionate about it, because I've seen the data, which is just recently come out, and I've also experienced it myself. And it all is to do with the power of how you respond to your pain symptoms.

Yeah, absolutely. I think of it also from the perspective of what we focus on is where the energy flows. And it's like that energy we can't really see, but it's actually energy that's going through ourselves to our body.

And the way you are kind of describing it, the more we focus on something, and this is not about forgetting that pain exists as how are we addressing it, this response that you're saying, because it almost reminds me of the mindset of individuals who are like, I can't change anything in my mind.

But we know now, with the power of neuroplasticity and how the brain can actually change things. So the brain is a very key component, and the health of your brain is a very key component in your pain response.

And I know we're going to get to that a little bit later. But so we talked a little bit about the lever. So it's it's really, you know, about how we are responding to this as opposed to this direct tissue injury, even though we can have that at the same time that we start with the lever one as the response, how do we recognize it?

So how about lever two? So the second lever you mentioned is connection. And that might surprise people who assume pain. Something is you fix alone in a doctor's office.

But what does connection have to do with how much pain somebody feels? Yeah. So as as we said level one, I talk about his response. Lever two is his connection.

Now to demonstrate the power of this. Have you heard of the Rosetta effect? No. Tell us about it. So Rossetto is a small town in eastern Pennsylvania in the US, and in the late 1950s, researchers noticed something there that they couldn't explain.

His residents were living much longer than expected. The zero depression heart disease mortality was far low of nine times for your heart attacks compared to the neighboring towns, so researchers were sent there in 1962 to investigate.

Lever 2: Connection and Social Support

What would these people in Rosato doing differently? Was the question they asked. Was it their diet? Was it their genetics? Was it something in the water?

It was none of those things. It was connection. It was connection. Families lived in multigenerational homes. Neighbors kept does unlocked. They looked after each other's children.

Elders were involved in town life. Social gatherings were constant. And so there was this connection and interdependence between people and communities, which acted as a biological shield and a biological advantage.

So if we want to tackle chronic pain, if we want to overcome chronic pain, if we want to expand our life more broadly, right, we have to accept the power of connection and shared experience to lift ourselves up.

Who hang out with affects your thoughts, becomes your nervous system, becomes your ability to buffer pain. Audit the five people closest to you in your life.

Which people lift you up? Which people drain you? Prioritize people that lift you up because the link between connection and pain relief really is significant.

I know it can sound hollow and surface level and a bit. Obvious, but what's the word? Maybe not that powerful, but it really is. Like even in the world of sport.

There was a study on Rose right in 2010 that found that when 12 rowers trained together, significantly more endorphins were released compared to when they trained alone.

Bearing in mind the wide endorphin comes from endo meaning from the body and thin from morphine. So what the study found was that exercising in groups is like a natural painkiller, and it really underscores the importance of connection to lift us up in reduce pain.

Yeah. And I think, you know, we are seeing it more and more. You know, loneliness and social isolation is technically going to be the next pandemic if it isn't already epidemic.

And there is research that shows loneliness and social isolation increases pain sensitivity. Right. So what you're saying is that when we have a supported system and that supported system does not necessarily have to be a family system, this is just community we are talking about. Right.

So it can be any community. It can be your plant based community. It could be, you know, your mahjong community, whatever community you have. It's a regulation form of medicine, not just emotional comfort.

So think about it that way. It could be your community that you go and meet at the gym. You know, your yoga community, whatever it is. Humans were built to have more humans.

So let's because I know we're going to wrap this around into now the third lever. So third lever is environment.

And I know that includes food environment, which is kind of where our audience lives right now, is how does somebody and what they eat factor into the chronic pain picture?

And is that a gut story and inflammation story or both? And can you share as you as you talk about that maybe a little bit of what you did. Yeah, yeah.

So, I discovered the power of lifestyle medicine, specifically doctor Dean Ornish research and doctor s research showing he can reverse the progression of heart disease on a plant based diet.

Now, I didn't have heart disease, but I had something called post thrombotic syndrome. And that is also vascular issue caused from the long term effects of a very severe untreated DVT, which unfortunately happened to me, and it was in my leg at the top of my leg and my upper leg kind of in my thigh area.

And so the pain I was getting was because the blood wasn't able to travel up, back up the leg and through venous return back to the heart. And so I'd get this heaviness in my leg.

And so I looked at the research from these luminaries in, in the plant based sector and the lifestyle medicine sector. And bear in mind, doctor, honest work is reimbursed by by Medicare.

So this isn't some woohoo intervention. This is real science showing you can really improve vascular injury by switching to a plant based diet. Also worth noting in that intervention it was stress less, love more, and exercise as well as the food, so we can't forget that.

But the food was a massive part of it. Now, when you look at the places around the world where chronic pain is the lowest, do you know which country the country has the lowest rate of chronic pain?

Probably the happiest country. So and if I remember correctly, the latest data on the happiest country is one of the Scandinavian. Is it Denmark? It's not Denmark, but it's Japan.

Oh just yeah 2024 study. So this is just go and guess which part of Japan had the lowest rate of chronic pain. So overall Japan, Okinawa where they are community plant like eating more plants.

All of that lifestyle. Exactly. Fascinating isn't it, in Okinawa. And obviously, as you know, it's I can always one of the blue zones, one of the places in the world where people consistently live to 101, not because it's got the most amount of sense.

Let me say that again. So as you know, Okinawa is an established blue zone, one of the places in the world where people consistently live a decade or more longer than the Western average.

And guess what? In Okinawa they have, again, like Rossetto, the sense of connection. But it's also worth looking into Okinawa's traditional diet because it's one of the most anti-inflammatory across the world.

Lessons. This the sweet potato makes up in the 1950s, when it was even more healthy than it is now. Obviously, ultra processed food is coming into the equation now, but back in the 1950s, sweet potatoes made up 69% of daily calories.

Think about that 69% of daily calories from sweet potatoes. Because of this, the health outcomes of what extraordinarily heart disease mortality was eight times lower than Americans of the same age.

Now, obviously, that's changing today more and more ultra processed food, but it should remind us of the importance of diet, because if we look through the leading chronic illnesses, as you know, one is associated to poor diet, such as heart disease and type two diabetes.

What we find is that they're responsible for a huge amount of the global chronic pain burden, whether that be the chest pain of angina, the burning and numbness of diabetic neuropathy, the deep inflammatory pain of arthritis.

For many of these conditions, it's the food that sits at the center of the problem. And when something is the problem, as you know, it can also be the solution, right?

If you get rid of the ultra processed food and you get rid of the animal products and shift predominantly to plant based diet has massive benefits. It's been shown to reduce osteoarthritis pain by up to 50%.

Lever 3: Environment, Food, and Inflammation

It's been shown to reverse the progression of type two diabetes, Ali stage prostate cancer, outsiders and and heart disease. The number one killer around the world.

Nothing else has been shown to do this other than a plant based diet. Yeah, and I think there is so much confusion and misinformation out there, which is why I'm glad you you know, you have this plant based news channel really to help people amongst, you know, with all these experts in the space.

But I think about it from, you know, last week I was working at the hospital and the number of amputations, digit amputations I saw from, you know, ulcers, diabetic ulcers, all of this.

And I'm like, when did it become the norm for people to just have their their fingers and toes and, and legs chopped off? Because people don't understand the power of lifestyle, the power of all of this.

Right. So when you feel that early tingling in your blood vessels, you know, you need to think, all right. Every symptom you're experiencing is a signal sending a message to you.

And you can ignore it, and then it can become worse. Or you can start paying attention to and figure out how to address it. So you talked about ultra processed food, but what about toxins since you said in the third lever is environment like where where have you found?

Is there anything other than the food environment that also can influence pain that we might not be thinking of? Well, I want to go back to Japan because this is a it's a kind of exotic way to look at the topic of chronic pain, because as I said earlier in this talk, chronic pain has the or one of those rates of chronic pain in the world.

And so I started in a few places. There's, there's on sand which hold on, let me back up. So let me just answer that again. What I want to go back to Japan because this is where it gets really interesting.

Japan, as I said a couple of minutes ago, has one of the lowest rates of chronic pain in the world. So let's go on a little bit of an adventure and try and figure out why and how Japan has such a low rate of chronic pain.

So Japan sits on what's known as the Pacific Ring of Fire, meaning it has 27,000 hot springs. Bathing in these hot springs has been part of the culture for thousands of years.

They're called onsen ONSEN in Japan. But this kind of mixed evidence to support that this is anything to do the country's low rate of chronic pain. But what Japan does have is something called shinran yoku.

Do you know what Shinran yoku stands for? I teach forest bathing. Yes, absolutely. Really? Oh my gosh, not enough people know about this. It's, as you know, translated literally as forest bathing, right?

Which Japan has promoted since 1982. And how to tell us about what how do you teach people about forest bathing so that that that is the interesting part.

So I do retreats around the world. Right. And so always my retreats and their plant based, all my retreats are good food, good people, nature, environment.

So we go to all these magical locations. Our last year we went to the Azores. This year we're headed to Tuscany. So beautiful. Beautiful locations, nature based as well.

And so for our forest bathing or Shinra Roku sessions, I will literally take them out into the forest and, you know, we'll do a practice. You know, this is no cell phones.

This is quiet. You're listening to the birds. You're you're hugging the trees. And I remember last year when we went to the Azores, these trees were huge and the moss around them was so bright green, it was like out of a, like, children's movie where it's just, like, so magical.

And, you know, we just had everybody find their tree and just really be present. Now, the thing they didn't know is you're actually increasing your natural killer cells when you're there too.

So everybody's going and trying to find a way how to inject new natural killer cells into their body from, you know, all this biohacking and all this stuff.

But nature already built that in for you. So we'd go out there for a couple hours and just be in nature and just be present and improve our immune system, decrease our stress response.

And the amazing part of this location is they also had sulfur springs there and sulfur. They studied during the pandemic that these springs actually helped prevent virus attachment.

So it helped individuals that were, you know, during the pandemic really having a hard time. So nature really it's been built for us. We have to just preserve the nature, you know, so we can access everything we can get from it. Yeah.

And I mean, it makes sense intuitively, right? It's such an obvious truth that this environment that I talk about has such a profound impact on chronic illness and and indeed chronic pain.

I mean, think about the modern world. Everybody doom scrolling with artificial light and no nature. You know, it's let me just tell you about why this is bad.

It has a massive effect on stress levels. Now, what I found when I was researching my book is that between 1998 and 2004, the number of people going to doctor checkups because of back pain reduced significantly by 20% up until 2004.

Can you guess why? Reduced it reduced by 20% up until 2004. So what changed in 2004 is this when some cell phone became available? Well, it was off to 2001 and as a result, in the years after that, up until 2004, when the study period ended, it was 20% fewer appointments because of back pain.

And otherwise, people suffer from back pain, less stress levels reduced. And it's really interesting why this is nationwide. This obviously a generalized figure.

But number one the.com bubble burst. So in 2001 there's like lots of stress because of economic hardship. And then as things got back to normal 2004 you know stress levels reduced and back pain reduced as well.

The other thing was following nine over 11 people came together more. Now, whether you believe that or not, whether the researchers are right or not, it's an interesting possibility.

And it again goes back to that point about the power of connection, right. Can I can I tell you, since you mentioned 911? Let me tell you. So I am witness to that because in a 911, 2001, I was in a hospital in Brooklyn on a surgery rotation.

In the morning, I'm doing my rounds on patients, and I remember being in a patient's room and they had the TV on the news on, and we saw the first Hower.

And outside that patients window was the second tower. And I actually saw it where I was. And this was the first and only time I've ever heard something called Code Orange.

And Code Orange is basically evacuate everybody from the hospital. Anybody who's stable from the hospital send them home because we have a like, you know, major catastrophe.

And we're we need beds for all the people coming in. So that night, we stayed in the hospital all night waiting for these people to come across the Brooklyn Bridge.

These survivors, we we did not get as many as we expected. A few here and there. And, you know, we spend the night picking up glass shards from their arms and stuff.

And my father works in Manhattan. He met and he works downtown. He works right, like he takes a train right into the, the Twin Towers. He missed it by ten minutes.

Wow. So we didn't know where he was all day long, because what they did was they had everybody go uptown. Walk way uptown. I mean, we're talking, like, 40, 40 blocks way uptown and then take a boat across.

So it was insanity, and I've seen it. But what I will tell you is that two weeks, mostly one week and two leading into two weeks, that two weeks after that was the first and only time I had witnessed in New York, where everybody was holding doors for each other, where everybody was helping each other on the train, where everybody was actually, like taking care of each other.

And it was such a short lived, but it just reminded me that that is possible if we think about like, we shouldn't need an accident to make people like, wake up and be like, we're all humans, right?

So but but I do remember there was a change there for that short amount of time. That is fascinating. And it's because when you read the research studies talking about national levels of pain and stress, you're kind of thinking, okay, you got you got to believe it.

But actually hearing that first hand is really powerful. Wow. Yeah. No, I witnessed it. I remember because we were we had to take the subway to go to go to the hospital still. So yeah.

So it was it was craziness. But there was something to it where it's like and even now, like I was just recently in New York City and I'm like, things have really changed.

It's like nobody's even looking up at each other. It's like everybody's just on their cell phones. That connection is lost. Which brings me to our fourth lever, right.

Which is purpose. And this is all connected. Right. So which is the one that I think people least expect on a list of physical pain? So what is the connection between purpose and pain and what happens when somebody is working on.

So these are kind of two separate questions. Let's let's first do what is purpose and pain. But then after that let's talk about how all these four levers work together.

Yeah yeah yeah. So purpose and pain.

Nature, Stress, and Environmental Triggers

The truth is nobody knows the exact biological mechanism. Why? Having a strong sense of purpose reduces pain. I guess when you have purpose, it's associated so many factors, you're more likely to be connected with others, which we've talked about.

You're more likely to put your mind into something you actually care about that gives back, which takes your mind off pain. And I'm not saying pain is all in the head, but as we've discovered, mind body factors are very, very important.

So look, here's a bottom line. Good purpose requires three ingredients. Good purpose requires fast, something you can actually influence. So you're supporting a football team or a soccer team.

It's great if you're into that, for example, but it doesn't meaningfully influence anything. So it's limited. So it's not the best form of purpose. So the second ingredient, good purpose, requires a connection to something beyond yourself, a connection to the real world.

So going to the gym or working on your finances again, they're great if you're into those things, but they're limited because they're all about you. And so the third and most important ingredient of purpose, third and most important ingredient of purpose, requires contribution actions that serve others.

And this is really, really the key in terms of how it happened for me. I'll just go into the story of if we have time quickly. So one night in 2014, my leg pain was so bad I was going round in circles trying to reconcile the fact that my leg pain just really hurt.

And so what I tried to do was take my self out of the center of that spiraling thought pattern. I made a small donation to charity, and what I found was that almost immediately my leg pain reduced.

It was kind of what psychologists call the help is high, but I was a student at the time, so I couldn't really afford to keep donating. But what I did do is ask myself a simple question what can I do each week that makes a little bit of the difference?

I ended up setting up plant based news, you know, which led me to lifestyle medicine led me to mind body medicine, which completely healed my neck pain.

And so I think the thing with purpose is it allows you to do something as small action, which through the butterfly effect, leads to a much bigger result where you look back on anything.

Wow, that really changed the course of my life and with it the severity of my pain. Yeah. And you know when I do my patient intake forums with my when I onboard my new patients, the last question in my so pretty long like we're 90 minutes in and then like you know last question I'm asking them is what gives you meaning and purpose in life.

And they're like you know what? Nobody's ever asked me that before, let alone a doctor. And they're like, why do you want to know? And I'm like, I just I want to know, you know?

And some of them really struggle with it. And the ones who have a very clear meaning and purpose in their life, actually, from my own experience and seeing those patients go through their journey have a much easier time healing and following protocols and making changes in their life than somebody who's just like, I don't know what I'm doing, you know?

So I do think that we need to, even if you can't like, for the audience's listening right now, if I ask you this question, what gives you meaning and purpose in life?

If you don't have an answer today, that's fine. Write the question down, come back to it and think about it. Right. Because you never know, like when that is going to be the driver to your healing.

Right, right. And just like it was just like it was for yours. So now how would somebody work with all four of these levers, response, connection, environment and purpose together to help people actually manage pain and resolve pain?

How would they work through this? I mean, the more you do, the better it will be for your chronic pain. So you can stack these levers. But the key thing is remembering that the most important thing is simply to start somewhere, right?

The first step is often the most important, whatever lever that may be, because it cascades kind of like a butterfly

effect and allows others to follow.

But let me leave you with a couple of of quick examples of what happens when each lever, when every single lever, response, connection, environment and purpose come together.

So there's a Hindu Tamil festival called Tipu. Sam, have you heard of Tipu Sam before? No, no. Tell me about this. Even though I'm Hindu. Tell me how this is so cool.

So I was doing a speech on this and I was kind of. I asked the audience and I think one person put the hand up. But it's fascinating because it's celebrated by hundreds of thousands of people across Malaysia, Singapore, in India every single year.

And it contains what I think is the single most powerful demonstration of what the human body is capable of. So picture this, right? The votes have metal skewers pushed through their cheeks and tongues, large, highly decorated structures weighing up to like 30kg attached to their backs is mind blowing.

Some of the devotees walk on burning coals, are visible chariots by chains hooked into their backs, literally. And then they walk barefoot several kilometers through the streets, in the blazing sun to the temple.

And throughout this many report feeling almost no. How could this be? This has actually been measured by scientists as well.

Lever 4: Purpose and the Four-Lever Framework

They barely registered pain. They I think they're mean pain intensity when they're measured was only 7.86 out of 100. Bearing in mind the clinical threat.

So how did that work? I think about 15 years ago measured these people's pain thresholds. I'm not sure exactly how they did, but this is like publishing peer review journal.

And what they found right was it was 7.86 out of 100. And the reason for this is because these people did not expect to feel pain in the over 40 days of preparation leading up to it.

And this is a really crucial thing in the over 40 days of preparation leading up to the event. Every lever that we've been through respond to this connection.

Environment and purpose is simultaneously activated. So they did daily prayer and meditation leading up to the event. They did community support. They consumed a plant based diet, shared devotion.

So you put all of those together and you're in an extreme way putting together the for legal framework. It's in some ways a an extreme version of what the blue zone populations do more consistently across a lifetime.

Right? We talked about Okinawa early, but there's also a career in Greece, Nicoya and Costa Rica, Loma Linda in California, Sardinia in Italy. These are communities with remarkably low levels of chronic pain.

And they're doing these four levers simultaneously, right? That they're they're not too stressed if something happens in their lives that stressful or unexpected, they're just meeting it of calm acceptance.

They're connecting with others. They're consuming a predominantly plant based diet. They've got a lot of purpose in their lives. They've got this interconnection with other people, and this is why they live to such a long age.

And this is why they have such a low level of chronic pain. So it's fascinating isn't it. Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. So you've taught this framework to a lot of people now and through, you know your, your presentations and your upcoming book.

Can you tell us about someone without breaking privacy. We're working through these four levers was a turning point in their chronic pain. Well the truth is most people start with just one lever and then it has a ripple effect.

There's a guy called Anthony Evans, which is that interview that I posted on my YouTube channel. That stage for cancer, I can't remember the the specific type.

It had like a really long name, but you can look up the ends of Anthony Evans and Plant based news. And he did all four like he started connecting with others.

He started changing his environment, his food, and by him adopted a plant based diet. And not only did he defy his terminal cancer diagnosis, but he then became an athlete.

This guy was like doing pull ups. He's like ripped, had like this egg box kind of six pack. And it was just so inspiring. It's not only that he used this framework to reduce his pain, but he expanded his life.

Now, I'm not a medical doctor, but I can tell you that this nobody has said respond to pain or adversity in life calmly and accepted. Nobody said connecting above is as bad.

Nobody said improving your food environment is bad, or getting a good amount of purpose in your life is bad. So this stuff, there's no downside. It compliments conventional care, it provides tools.

Conventional medicine just can't solve them for many forms of chronic pain and provides an outright solution. Now, just quickly, there are two forms of chronic pain.

There's structural chronic pain driven by actual structural damage. So tissue damage, nerve injury inflammation. And then there's a new plastic pain or mind body, chronic pain common in back pain and other conditions that often feel like they have a physical cause but are actually driven by an over sensitized nervous system.

In other words, in overprotective pain system where the brain is misinterpreting safe signals from the body as dangerous, well, guess what the four levers cover today?

Tackle both forms of chronic pain. Yeah, and and for the audience that's listening, you can have both types of those pains at the same time so they overlap.

It's not one or the other. Just like I don't think that there's one lever that's going to work better than the other. This is why we consider it in the spectrum of lifestyle, right?

We're looking at your 365 degree of your body, your 24 hours in a day, everything that you're kind of doing. So last question for you and I would I want to be very concrete because somebody who's listening right now that's been living with chronic pain maybe for years and has tried everything.

Where should they start with this week and doing what specifically? So if we gave them something to do this week and they're listening to get them moving in the right direction, where would you want them to start?

Start with whatever is easiest for you. And that's either if you've got access to good healthful food, plant based nutrition, it's great for gut health.

It's great for longevity based on case control data based on epidemiological studies. Now, if improving your food environment is hard, maybe you are in a place where somebody else dictates the food.

Work on that. Work on educating them. Do whatever you need to do. But anyone and everybody can work on mind body medicine. Anybody can just accept their situation calmly.

And I just I really want to emphasize that this sounds really surface level, but what it is basically doing is anytime you have a thought or a pain symptom or even an emotion, any emotion, a good emotion and bad emotion,

negative, positive, just calmly accept it.

And the trick is to do this over and over again, to do this continuously so that it goes from the conscious to the unconscious level. This is what Lady Gaga did.

He's been very public about how she was raped at 19 years old by her music producer, didn't process it. And then, as she rose to fame, buried what happened to her.

And this then led to very significant pain. She adopted this mindset of calm acceptance and is significantly improved her pain. There are many, many examples of this, so I think you're an example.

I'm an example. It can happen, right? So, Klaus, this has been a genuinely eye opening conversation, the idea that pain isn't just something happening in tissue, but it's something that shapes your nervous system, your relationships, your environment, and your sense of purpose.

And that is a message I want everyone listening to to carry with them. Now. Klaus can be found at Plant-Based news.org, and I encourage you to follow plant based news across Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube and keep an eye out for his forthcoming book, Built From Pain releasing in 2027.

And here's a key takeaway for you guys. Chronic pain isn't just in your tissue, it's in your response, your connection, your environment, and your purpose, and all four are within your reach.

So thank you so much, Klaus. Thank you so much for having me. Yeah. And stay tuned for our next episode. Don't go anywhere yet.