Introduction and Guest Background

Hello, ladies. Welcome back to Mastering the Menopause Transition Summit. I'm your host, doctor Sharon Stills, and we've got another fantastic conversation coming for you right now that I am super excited to have because I selfishly fund women I want to talk to to share with you.

And I did that today. So I have tracked down the very busy doctor Maya she treat. She is an MD, she's a neurologist, she's an herbalist. She's an urban farmer.

She is the author of The Dirt Cure, which has been translated into ten languages. She's been featured in The New York Times, which I just found out. She's a New Yorker like I am.

She's been in the Telegraph and PR skin is Doctor Oz. She's the founder of the Terrain Institute, and you know how I am all about terrain medicine. So we are going to have some fun today.

She teaches earth based programs for transformational healing. She does professional training programs for psychedelic assisted approaches. She works and studies with indigenous communities and healers from around the world.

She's a lifelong student of ethnobotany, plant healing, and the sacred, and she is just a wealth of information. So we are very fortunate to have you here today. Welcome.

Welcome to the summit. Thank you so much for having me. And I love that necklace. It's just beautiful. Yeah. All the chakra colors been right there. So, maybe you can just start.

I mean, I know I read your bio, but just tell the listeners a little bit about. You have such a varied and interesting perspective on medicine. You're certainly not your everyday neurologist.

So how did you go from neurology to what you're involved with these days? You know, I think that we live in this world that really wants to box us in and define us in various ways.

And, you know, I started out long ago thinking maybe I would be a doctor, but then I was an English major. I became really interested environmental studies.

And, and then I got really interested in med school because I watched a Bill Moyer special, which maybe if we're talking to people of menopausal age, then they will not, you know, like, who the heck is that?

What happens when I talk to millennials or Gen Z? But I saw this special called healing and the mind, and, they were talking to, these doctors who were treating the little girl who had lupus, and she was having kidney failure from her meds, but when they stopped her meds, she'd flare in her lupus.

So, they started to give her castor oil with every dose of her meds. And then they stopped giving her meds eventually, and just gave her castor oil and her body responded as she was still getting the medication, but with no kidney failure.

And, they said this is called psycho neuro immunology. It's a field of medicine. And I thought, great, that's what I want to do. I want to do psycho neuro immunology.

And I went, I wrote an essay about it and got accepted to medical school somehow.

From Neurology to Terrain Medicine

And, we could say karma, maybe that, and at that time, I really didn't know how my interest in the environment, my interest in being an English major, you know, and reading and literature and writing and my interest in medicine would kind of all intersect.

And, you know, I really learned because I went through this whole training right, which is a very, intensive and kind of brainwashing to some degree kind of experience.

And, we could say for good and for bad. Right. And I came out the other side. So I had three children over the course of my training, my many, many years of training, and towards the end.

So my, my third child, my youngest, got sick in the middle of my neurology fellowship and, he started to have breathing issues that seemed like asthma.

But he was also having a kind of developmental plateau or even regression. He was he was sick, you know, he was really sick. And when you're a resident or a fellow and you're training, nobody is interested in your life, your kids, your health, ironically.

So, yeah. So I, you know, and I didn't really get a lot of help. People just said, oh, he's a reactive kid. Oh, he seems fine. And ultimately I had to do my own deep dive and discovered he was allergic to soy, got him a lot better.

Ended up kind of going deep into the whole idea of where food comes from. Wrote my book, The Dirt Cure, around that time. And, suddenly realized, wow, all these different boxes are coming together, right?

The English major and the environmental books. I was learning about GMOs, and I was learning about pesticides and all of that and health. So, to answer your question in a kind of long winded way, really, what I really try to trust that we can be in a lot of different boxes at the same time, or in no box at all, and let those things sort of come together.

And that's continue to happen for me since that time now, my son, that all started when he was a year old. He's turning 17 and another month and is a healthy, thriving young man who is taller than anyone in my house, is over six feet tall and doing great. But, you know, for me, I've continued to have big life transformations and kind of learn all these new parts of myself.

And so, you know, I'm really passionate about embracing all these different parts because I think there are a lot of gifts in them. Yes. An important lesson for, for everyone listening, because we, we are so many different roles in so many different parts.

And, and it changes as we go through different life passages. So the Dirt Cure, love that title. Maybe you could just give the the listeners a little overview of what that's about and how that could relate to them.

Yeah. So really the book was written at the time, it was sort of about my journey with my son, and I was, I practiced as an adult and pediatric neurologist, but really saw, as we all do, if we're paying attention.

Right. You're not just looking at that one system that you were trained in. For me, I'm looking at, you know, the whole person. So I would see a lot of mystery cases, people, kids and adults who had been to, you know, all the different medical centers.

And you know, institutions and so on. And what I discovered, really, I think largely through my journey with my son, but it really expanded to my patients and then expanded to even more than that was this idea that there's a foundation to health and the foundation is in, in dirt, and I use dirt in a very, like, multifaceted way and sort of tongue in cheek.

But it's really about being exposed to germs and microbes, eating fresh food from healthy soil and getting out into nature. And those things sound, well, maybe a little counterintuitive now that we've been through the last few years.

And you know, maybe being exposed to germs and microbes doesn't sound as appealing to people or it doesn't sound appealing at all. But actually, that's really important for, our health, our hormones, our brains, our mood, our, you know, cravings are everything you can imagine.

And obviously, the eating fresh food from healthy soil. It's not just about the food you eat, but where it comes from. And and being in nature is actually one of the most profound and complex medicines that we can possibly experience on a physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and ecological really level.

So, you know, I go into all the science of it. I go into a lot of take homes and practices and, yeah, that's what the book is about. I, I love, yeah, nature is nature's one of the greatest cures and one of the greatest healers.

And we are we forget that we are of nature and we we are. We shouldn't. We are not separate, but we often separate ourselves, staying in these artificial environments behind our computers all day long.

And I, I love the dirt here because I think about when my kids were young, and I also started out as a pediatrician and how I would prescribe, go play in the dirt, go build your brilliant system.

And so do you. Do you think for the women listening that still pertains, that they need to get out there and garden or roll around in the mud or something just to kind of be prolific in the microbiome and the the bacteria they're coming in contact with.

I mean, I don't think that ever ends now. The relationship with the natural world is ongoing and it's lifelong, and we need to have, you know, for mental sharpness, for better sleep, for happiness, for cortisol levels, for anti-cancer proteins.

Really like there are a lot of studies looking at, let's say, something like forest bathing, which is just immersing yourself in the beauty of the forest.

There are a lot of ways you can do it. I lead people through lots of different kinds of experiences of that nature. And, and really there's tons of studies on the benefits and they're not limited to, oh, if you're five and under or 16 and under, it's, it's actually a lot of the studies were done in, in Healthy women volunteers.

The Dirt Cure and the Medicine of Nature

And both subjectively and objectively, all the measures that they looked at improved significantly. There's no pharmacy protocol, no supplement, no diet that you can do that can offer the things that, let's say, just immersing yourself in the in the forest or like sitting by the ocean or gardening, you know, can offer a really our health.

And that's in every body system. So the, the medicine is all around us. It doesn't I always say not all medicine comes in a pill bottle. And I, I think that we, we get so focused on the supplements and the hormones, which I love and are important, but the real medicine is everything that surrounds us.

And then those are just what we're saying. There's supplements supplemental to being in tune with nature, to to get dirty. So you I would even say that supplements are you know, what's around us is actually in supplements and herbs and all those things that we are taking.

And pills mostly come from plants and soil, right? Antibiotics actually, for example, are derived from soil microbes. You know, minerals come from you know, those are eternal minerals are like here we don't make new ones.

They just keep, you know, we extract them. Right. So if our soil is really rich and nourished then food grown in that soil for example, is going to be really rich and nourished as well.

And have, you know, dense minerals that actually can change how we feel. And, you know, I grow a lot of medicinal herbs. I'm very lucky that although I live in New York City, I have green space.

I grow a medicinal herb garden and food garden. I keep chickens, so I have, you know, access to my own plants. And so when I want, you know, when I cut myself or I get like a, a bee sting, like I go outside and pick plantain and chew it and make a spit poultice and slap it on the, you know, the sting and the pain is gone in a minute and move on.

You know what I mean? So it's like actually all these things that we think we need and I mean, to some degree, maybe we do. It's not to say that those are bad at all.

I mean, I, you know, I, you can't see on my desk, but I do have supplements here. I say, but, you know, I think also it's just important to, to recognize like, even when the pandemic kind of began and I thought, oh, what if we can't get XYZ?

I was like, oh, I was walking through the woods and I was like, well, there's turkey tail, there's reishi mushroom. You know, I see here plantain, I see here goldenrod, I see here jewel weed.

All of you know, I teach herbalism courses and I have a whole series and a really awesome, I think, Intro to Herbalism course that I, that I just sort of drop everything that I can think of in it.

And, you know, for me, it's like, so joyful to know that we have so much medicine and, you know, healing right at our fingertips all around us. Right? So it doesn't have to come in the pill bottles.

Yes, exactly. And it's, it's I think when we do the lifestyle choices and get our foundation set, then using all the beauty of nature and the herbs and everything around us really just makes for an ability to have full healing.

I, I'm so passionate about shifting that thought process that we can heal just by taking an herb, but we don't have to change our lifestyle or connect to nature, or move our bodies or any of those things.

That it's all holistic, that it's all together. And so I as a physician, I love herbs. And so we haven't talked a ton about herbs. I'd love if you would share for the listeners, maybe some of your favorite hormonal menopausal perimenopausal herbs.

And I'll say you mentioned mushrooms and just a little spiel on that as well. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think one of my favorite herbs, is mother work.

I just love it. She's such a wonderful herb for, for women and for older women. Which I think actually, I mean, I kind of, I just want to say because for me, I just think getting older is like the most wonderful thing.

I mean, it has obviously pitfalls, like, I have aches and pains I didn't have before. And so, but like to me, like becoming, you know, moving towards being an elder.

Not that at menopause people are elders, but I actually find that to be a very exciting thing. So when I talk about getting older, I just I want people to know as they're hearing we talk about it, that I don't have like baggage associated with it.

And so I just like to catch myself, you know that. But that mother word is incredible because it's great for mood. It's balancing of hormones. It's balancing of mood.

It can help with sleep. And I think, and it's and she's a gentle she's actually very gentle. She's a very gentle herb. So I love mother wort. I like Vitamix or chase tree berry.

For like perimenopause especially. I do want to say something about perimenopause. Perimenopause, if I could, which is, you know, when I was in my late 30s, I started to have or mid 30s, I started to have irregular periods and someone started to try to tell me that I was in perimenopause and which could have been possible, but I was like, wow, that's feels like a sudden sort of strange and maybe early time to start talking about perimenopause.

And for me, I thought maybe there are some things I actually ended up changing my diet and then my periods became very normal again. And now it's been more than ten years, you know, and to date, I still am not in perimenopause.

So one thing I just want to kind of put out there on unsolicited by you is you know, I'm certainly not the expert in perimenopause as you are, but I would just say, like the whole topic of menopause, I think, you know, can become an perimenopause in particular, can become just like, let's write off women's, health concerns that are coming up and just chalk it up to perimenopause.

And so I just kind of want to throw that out there that, you know, I think it's a really, it's really important to kind of pay attention to all of the systems and not just let yourself kind of get written off, even though sometimes it may be that I think that's a great point, because we have spoken a lot on the summit about how because often there can be perimenopausal issues and and you're not being told it's perimenopausal and you're left kind of just floating out there alone.

But what you just brought up, the flip side is also very true, that sometimes you can seem like you're perimenopausal, but once you are fed and nurtured and balanced, that yes, the cycle can regulate and you can go on for years then without being perimenopausal or having.

So I love that you brought that up, because I think there's always a flip side to everything. And often one thing gets spoken about more often than the other.

So great, great points. Yeah, I mean, I think both are so important and I love I love making sure that, you know, I think a lot of people want to hear a very sort of simple like, oh, if this is happening, it's this.

But what I've really learned, you know, both in my medical work and in the other work that I do, is that lots of things can be true at the same time, and that, like, we're going to be better served by asking questions and living in that nuance, you know?

And so not making assumptions is a really a really important part of it. Which means, yes, maybe there there's an explanation that is hormonally based and maybe there's an explanation that's other based, and your hormones will just regulate.

So, and the herbs are so nice for that, right? I mean, I think, I also love mugwort, which is an, I think as popular, these days, but it's actually a really important women's herb that I, I really love.

And mugwort is really great for relaxing. It does balance hormones and, mugwort is a really wonderful, or for dreaming, lucid dreaming or just more, more vivid dreaming.

Not necessarily like melatonin, which can make you, like, have incredibly intense dreams, but, can help you remember your dreams and, you know, is considered to be a very spiritual herb, actually.

And I consider the cycles of a woman's, life and particularly menopause to be a very spiritual period. So I love mugwort for that time as well.

Herbs for Hormones and Menopause

I love those terms too. So I'd love to hear your views on how this is such a spiritual time and the transition. And I'm right there with you as far as aging, I consider it an honor and a privilege.

And to become a crone and to have that wisdom is a really important stage of life that we, could give more honoring and focus to in the Western world.

We can learn a lot from the indigenous. So I'd love to hear about your experience studying with the indigenous tribes and what this point of life means to you in this transition.

And also, we haven't really talked about dreams. So if there's anything you want to share with the listeners about listening to their dreams, or because I think dreams are such a powerful way that we speak to ourselves.

So I'd love to. So I'd love to hear everything. So what do you think? One of the key issues that comes up for a lot of, women, you know, particularly as we get older and certainly in periods of more hormonal shifts or disruption, is that sleep is difficult.

And so, the first thing about dreaming is obviously get knowing that you're going to get your sleep. You know, I don't want to get too much into like prescriptive verbs or anything like that.

But, you know, I do love things like Epsom salt. So I love oral magnesium for people who want to take that L-Theanine is really nice. These are not herbs, obviously.

L-Theanine is just an amino acid. Actually doing sauna, in the evening is an incredible way to actually get better sleep. And so I just, I mention these things, and then I, of course, love, like, passionflower and skullcap.

I'm trying to think, what is my third, like, big favorite, actually, you know, one that I really like, recently is, believe it or not, catnip is really, really nice for sleep.

And I have it in a blend with skullcap and passionflower and for, a sleepy herbal mix. So anyway, I just mention that because, of course, if we want to dream, we do have to sleep and it's nice to have a little toolbox.

I'm a big believer in having a toolbox, which hopefully you don't need, but if you do, and you know, I think these big transitions are really liberating if we let them be.

So for me so far, you know, as I've gotten older and I'm not saying that, you know, liberation isn't always easy and it isn't always fun, to go through the process of.

Right, because it means releasing things. So it means we have to let go of or release these parts of ourselves, or live, you know, parts of our lives or relationships or identities that maybe we were very attached to.

And, you know, whether sometimes it's intentional that we're releasing these things and sometimes it's does not feel like it's our choice. You know, and I can say this from personal experience, you know, I like I'm, I ended up moving out of my, you know, 20 year marriage.

You know, in my 40s, which was not expected, you know, and it was kind of initiated by me. And it was me really understanding that, like, sort of peeling back the layers of the onion, like, I wasn't I didn't feel like I was permitted to stay in that identity anymore.

So, you know, I say that not because I necessarily encourage people to, like, leave their marriage or anything like that, but because there's a lot of big leaps that that we have to navigate, if we're going to stay authentic and true to ourselves as we move into sort of this phase of life and, which is which is kind of we can either kind of get scared about it or we can get excited about it.

And so to your point about dreams, I actually feel that dreams are, yes, the way we talk to ourselves. But I also have experienced and one of the things that I teach in my trainings, we actually have a whole module on dreams is, you know, it can be also a way that, our ancestors can talk to us or we can get really spiritual guidance that may or may not be coming, you know, from us in, you know, in this way, but you know that it's a way to tune in and tap into kind of a bigger consciousness or a bigger knowing or, you know, bigger version of ourselves.

Even so, I, I really encourage, especially during big transitional times, to keep like a dream journal or just any journal, something next to your bed if you can.

And you can have the pen there or whatever, and just scribble a few lines as soon as you open your eyes. If there's something you remember. And sometimes there can be incredible guidance because those things can just

disappear many times, you know?

Yeah, some some people remember every dream and so on. But sometimes you remember it just for like, the first three seconds you're awake and there can be a lot of, you know, real nuggets of gold, that come from your, your sleep time or like, your dream work, I would call it.

So I love that. I think it's I'm kind of passionate, actually, about how to learn to listen in these subtle ways, these nuanced ways that I think for a lot of us in, in this culture that we live in this modern culture, you know, that intuitive knowing or that tuning in, to what's subtle or invisible is not really given a lot of respect or weight.

But in fact, the more people in my experience and in and the people who who train with me or who I coach, the more they tune in to that, the more, the richer their lives are and the more they can really see their path during these transitional times, you know, and come to themselves in a more authentic way.

And that liberation is actually, you know, it's sort of the I don't know if I, I'm allowed to say the F-word here, but like kind of the zero zero F's I do.

If anyone follows me on Instagram will know that I, I do drop F-bombs. And I actually think that's a really important part of liberation is to be able to kind of language things in, in, in big and sometimes really strong ways.

You know, instead of being like the nice, the good, right. Like embodying that particular identity that's so expected of so many women. Yeah, I think there's, there's a lot of rabbit holes we can go down from what you said, for sure.

And I do think that we, Well, kudos to you for for bravely stepping out of a relationship that wasn't serving you anymore. And I think that, we, we can be tied to to our identities.

And it's important to kind of always be checking in because as we, as we allow ourselves to grow and change, often it is kind of hard to look at and say, wow, this is this is not serving me anymore.

And and being okay with that. Ultimately, we we share our journeys with other souls, but ultimately it's our journey. We we we show up when we're born and we're there to take the last exhale.

And we have a lot of costars along the way. But ultimately it's it's our journey of life and what we're experiencing. And I think reminding everyone, as you did about the the subtle and the quiet is, is that's where the profound experiences of life occur.

I always say, if you listen, silence will speak loudly to you and can really guide your journey and and for for women listening the dream piece. How so?

You can have a dream and write it down. And then what do you recommend they do? Because they could Google and see what that means. Or do you do you like them to meditate with it?

Or how do you like women to kind of get the the nuggets out of their dreams?

Dreams, Spaciousness, and Life Transitions

If they're new to this? Well, so I'll just say, you know, to your point that. Being tuned in to silence, being tuned into dreams, being tuned in. You know, I teach a lot about ritual and ceremony, and I guide people through those experiences.

I even offer free ones to my community. And, you know what? It a lot of what that's about is spaciousness. That really, I don't think many people have in our society as it is right now.

Certainly women do not, because there's so much that so many women are taking on, have taken on and don't say no to, and understanding about how important boundaries can be.

And, you know, that's a that's part of like the the fun part of getting older is maybe recognizing that actually you can set boundaries, you can create a certain amount of spaciousness for yourself.

And all of those different things are about being in that spaciousness, because that's where messages come through. And so to your point of googling like a dream, for instance.

So I would just say, people are welcome to do that. But in reality, the messages are really unique and individual and for you. And so, for example, let's say you dream about like, a raven flying into your home or something.

Well, that could mean something very different to one person. Right? To one person. That could be. That's a message from, you know, my my mother who loved ravens.

And she passed. Right. It could be like that sort of thing. And for another person, it could be I'm trapped. I need to escape. Right. Like it's really individual and unique.

And so it really has to do with your own lens. And so I would say like what to to do is maybe nothing to begin with. Right. And and actually trust. Right.

This is where tapping into the divine feminine, the sacred feminine is really important. It's not that the divine feminine is passive, but it can be a much more receptive energy and sort of in that like moment before creation begins.

Right? So it's sort of like being in that void in a way, and allowing it's uncomfortable. I think especially because we're do, do, do, again, in our society is much more masculine energy.

But but being able to receive is like, okay, I trust that this dream is going to unfold. Maybe I'm going to do a little ritual now. I'm going to go outside, I'm going to meditate, or I'm going to, you know, make a little offering or I'm going to, you know, ask for more guidance and, and sit with that and understand that these things can unfold.

The key really is, in my experience, because I don't want people to think that, you know, when I say, oh, I was, you know, like a I had this big life transition and it was like liberating or something.

I mean, I can say that now, many years later, but in the moment it was terrible and it was scary and it was sad and it was, you know, I felt like I was being pulled, kicking and screaming, even though I was the one doing it.

Right. So it was, so I just want to say about that, that like, it's really I but the one thing I felt during that time was that I was tapped into my guidance.

So if you're tapped into that, whether it's through dreams, whether it's through meditation, whether it's through ceremony that you do, whether it's through moon circles or whatever it may be, whether it's through even some people or, you know, kind of tapping into plant medicines or psychedelics to be able to start to access those parts of themselves and maybe, like move past trauma and those kinds of narratives that have kept them in a certain, maybe stuck place.

So all of those things are really just for you to be able to find your guidance, and trust and be in that place of trust, knowing that even if you have to make difficult decisions or big changes or little changes that feel uncomfortable, that you're able to be present for that.

Because as you said before, I absolutely believe that, you know, we do have these soul contracts that we make with people. Maybe it's even before we get here, right?

Maybe it's over many lifetimes. It's even that idea. But, you know, I do think that those soul contracts don't always need to last or they don't always last for an entire lifetime.

And we see that. We see that with friends. We see that with people we lose in our lives in all different kinds of

ways. And sometimes there can be completion, you know, and it can actually be a success even though it's an ending.

Absolutely, absolutely. Even in even in cures, in medicine, sometimes an ending can be a success if that's where we're at with the journey of the soul.

And so I just want to go back because I think for those of you listening, what Doctor Maya just spoke about is, is really such at the heart of of healing.

And it's that word spaciousness. And because I think we are we're so programed to have an issue and want a solution. And now, I mean, I'm sure I'm, I'm sure we're similar age.

And so when I went through medical school a long, long time ago in the what was it, the late 90s, there was no internet. And so we didn't have cell phones.

Now, if we don't know the answer to something, let me Google it. Let me Google it. I can we we can always get the answer. And and allowing yourself as you're talking about that spaciousness to to let the wisdom come to you from other avenues and to be okay and sitting in the unknown is such an important piece of healing, of being a woman, of going through your hormonal journey.

And I don't think we speak to that enough. The importance we we just like we, we give gold stars, or at least we have in the older narrative of being productive, of, oh my God, you got so much accomplished and now and spaciousness.

And I know for me and for my patients, I'm always prescribing white space, whether it be a day with nothing on it or depending upon where you're at and what your responsibilities are, even an hour or 15 minutes in the morning.

But to me, that's where that exhale of not having to do and just allowing yourself to be is is such a gift and such good medicine. So I'm so glad you brought that up.

I really hope everyone listening really embraces what you're talking about. It's so powerful. Yeah. You know, I will just share if I can, a practice that I started.

So during the pandemic, I found myself waking up sometimes very early in the morning, and sometimes it would be as early as, like 5 a.m.. And I felt at first very, you know, upset and frustrated.

And, you know, I wanted to not be up at that time. I wanted to wake up later. I want more sleep. And I really felt a lot of resistance around it. How can I sleep later?

And then on time, I just surrendered to that rhythm that I was in. And so I tried to go to bed earlier, for one thing, so that I would actually get a reasonable amount of sleep.

And then I would wake up at 5 or 530 or whenever I woke up and, I would go into my office is my office is in my home. And I would, I would just give myself basically until 9 a.m..

And this is a luxury that not everybody has, because some people have to get to work early or some people have babies waking up at that, you know, whatever it might be.

But in my case, I said, okay, I have from now until 9 a.m., I can do whatever I want. I'm not going to work. I'm not going to do, you know? And sometimes I cheated on that, but mostly I didn't.

And so I would, I would sometimes I would go on like my rowing machine. Sometimes I would go outside and just like, watch the sun come up. Sometimes I paint and I have a practice I do called make Bad Art because I don't really know how to paint, but I have lots of paints now, and so I just paint.

And sometimes I actually make things that I think are really good. And a lot of things like I don't necessarily think are that good, but that's not why I make them.

That's the idea of make bad art. I'm just sitting with, with paint, letting whatever wants to come out, come out sometimes, like I'll sit and build an altar, sometimes I dance now, so I just have these, I have this time.

And that is actually that has become my spaciousness. So that now if I happen to wake up later, which often I do, as I move through whatever that phase was, if I wake up at 730 or at eight, I actually feel kind of disappointed because I've lost some of that.

You know, I'm not going to get to partake of as much spaciousness as I might have if I woke up at, let's say, six. So I think it's just, you know, a lot of this is really about surrendering to what's presenting itself and learning how to not fight it.

Like being discerning, right? There are things that we do have to really resist in our lives. But then determining when actually resistance is not the most fruitful, right?

And maybe reframing things so that we don't feel that sense of like victimhood, even though we could, because there's lots of reasons that we can all be in that role.

And we've been maybe in that role, maybe really, really good reasons. But to be able to reframe so that we can move through that and feel more agency, through surrender is I really, really valuable.

And so for me, that's been really important to have that spaciousness. It makes me a much happier and and nicer if I can say that, person, you know, in my life, I want to join the make that art club.

That sounds fun. It is, it is fun. Yeah. I had my my kindergarten teacher told me I was a horrible artist. Why? Someone would say that to a five year old.

But it's been something that I kind of recognized later on. Well, I guess I believed her and really started to own that. So I'd like to make some bad art and be okay with it and maybe make some good art too.

And it just reminds you of how often the stories we tell ourselves are not our stories, and spaciousness can allow us some time to kind of unravel all of that.

So I love that. So psychedelics, we haven't really talked about that. I'd love to hear. I know you're you're heavily involved with teaching and leading in that, and maybe you could just give us a quick psychedelic, assisted medicine and journeys one and one just for the ladies listening, who maybe have never even heard of this and are saying, are you going to make me drop acid or what are you talking about?

Yeah. Absolutely. So first of all, I'll just tell people on my website, just Doctor Macomb, super easy. There is a lot of free resources on this topic.

And for me, it's really I became involved in teaching about this because on the one hand, I don't think we should be criminalizing ancient natural remedies, especially because there's a lot of evidence that there's potentially tremendous benefit for certain people.

Psychedelic Medicine and Healing Narratives

And probably people have seen the cover of The New York Times and, you know, there's been a lot of scientific articles, a lot of big media articles showing how much benefit.

And so this is becoming decriminalized, things like psilocybin mushrooms and even things like MDMA. A and, you know, ketamine is legal, though it's not.

Neither of those MDMA and ketamine are not technically psychedelics the way psilocybin, or even or even LSD or, ayahuasca or San Pedro or these other kinds of medicines that have been around really other than LSD since a long time, since the beginning of time with, you know, and in my I have a whole program on it.

And I go into, like, you know, the Oracle at Delphi or like, why, you know, cows are sacred in Hinduism. Like, a lot of these things actually are probably centered around psychedelic plants and other medicines.

That said, you know, I do think that there is a lot of tremendous potential, based on scientific studies, even for major depression, for PTSD, for OCD, for addiction, and even very severe addictions like, you know, difficult to treat or even hopeless seeming addiction.

Psychedelics can create real improvement. Eating disorders. And even now, looking at things like dementia, and Alzheimer's, cluster headaches, migraines, trigeminal neuralgia, all kinds of chronic pain, there's just more and more and more and more literature.

I go into that in a lot of depth in the, in the programs I teach. And so to understand that this might be, you know, a medicine for what we call diseases of civilization, is it's a really incredible possibility and opportunity.

With that said, I don't think this is for everyone. You know, people will come to me and say, oh, world leaders should all be taking, you know, psilocybin mushrooms like, like, you know, breaking news, like probably many of them have actually many millionaires and billionaires.

And, you know, the whole silicon, the whole of Silicon Valley has probably either, you know, gone to ayahuasca ceremonies or taken suicide in or microdose or all kinds of things.

And actually, it doesn't necessarily make them nicer, better or more enlightened people per se. And, and these medicines don't do that. You, you know, all of these studies are.

Paired with preparation support during integration afterwards. And that even goes for microdosing. Microdosing is a sub psychedelic experience, meaning you can take a very tiny amount of, let's say, something like a psilocybin mushroom.

In a very measured, tiny amount where you have no journey experience so you can do your life, you can drive your car, you can do, but you're, you're having these shifts and so just, I guess the last thing I would say in terms of the neuroscience, like, why does this work so effectively for many people is that it actually disrupts something it takes offline something called the default mode network, which is a constellation of parts of the brain that all work together.

And they're part of what we'd call the mean network. Right. So it's kind of who you perceive yourself to be, like some people will talk about that as like ego related as well.

But this this default mode network is very responsible for something called predictive coding. So we think when we go into any new situation that we are seeing everything, every detail.

Right. And that's how we know this is this is what's happening here. In fact, actually we only pick out a few details and everything else we fill in with things that have happened from the past, what we know from past experience.

So we, through this default mode network, are constantly filling in the present with narratives from the past, which is great for survival because you don't want to have to be like, oh, shiny, sharp things, you know, big in state, you know, you don't want to suddenly realize, oh, the scary thing is here, and I'm not going to survive if I don't run.

But sometimes we might think there's let's say, the lion in the room when really there isn't the lion in the room. And then we are acting as if there's something terrible or scary happening when maybe there isn't, because we're projecting old stories onto the present day.

So turning off that default mode network in ways small through microdosing or larger through macro dosing in a supported environment, allows us to see through those old narratives, like what you were talking about, about the stories around art, right, that you have filled in this whole narrative around a particular gift you have or don't have that, you know, maybe could be reframed, maybe it isn't true at all.

And you keep saying, oh, well, I'm not good at that. And I have so many people that I coach and microdosing and in other ways that say, I'm, I'm not creative or I'm not, I'm not a good dancer or I'm not a good artist or I can't do right.

And so part of what these medicines can do and it transitional times of life, sometimes we really are more open, more fertile for sort of spiritual awakenings or releasing right, as we've discussed some of these stories.

So it's an opportunity, potentially to shed those parts of our identity or those old stories that might be interfering with how we can move forward in a bigger and better and more authentic way.

Yeah. I think it's, a powerful tool. I always say menopause is the the sacred second act, because I think there's a third act after it where we just chill on the porch.

But I think if we have this, if we are blocked and how we're thinking about aging, because I didn't go back to it. But the other thing you had said about acknowledging that your transition, leaving your marriage was, was challenging and that it's easy for us to, you know, it's easy for me to say, oh, it's the sacred second act.

And you could be sitting there saying, well, I don't feel very sacred. I don't feel very excited about this act. And I too have done a lot of deep work, not always comfortable to to get to this point of acceptance and excitement about this.

And so for all of you listening, I just wanted you. I'm not saying everyone go out and dose but but that I wanted you to have to know that this exists and we have a a great resource.

I'm kind of coming personally later to the table in the whole psychedelic medicine realm, because I grew up chasing the Grateful Dead and doing plenty of dosing on my own, but not in this sacred, ceremonial way and, you know, indulging in addictions.

And so when I first learned about this as medicine, I was so like, yeah, I've been there, done that, and I've been helping people heal for over 20 years without using it.

And I had a story that I was filling in and opening my mind and learning that all of this can actually be used to treat addictions, and that my story is just it's an old story.

And so now I've been really opening my mind to this as possibilities for helping patients or for using it as a ritual for transitions. And so I it's one of the reasons I wanted to have you here talking about it to, to open the conversation.

Just, you know, this is really about learning. There's so many different opportunities for healing. And this is a very viable one. And like you said, there's lots of studies that, can back it up.

And so it's really turning around the, the perception of what these hallucinogens and plant medicines can offer to us. There's a lot of a lot of gifts in there.

Yeah, absolutely. And I think it is an interesting time where either there are people who did partake of a lot of these kinds of medicines, maybe not in a supported or particular ceremonial way, or there's a lot of other people who have maybe this framing around these medicines as these are drugs, these are, you know, you know, an unsafe, unhealthy, you know, etc..

And I think in both of those stories, there's truth. And there's also, something maybe to rethink or reimagine in those narratives. And to be honest, I'll just say, I think even for the people who are very into this in a sacred, ceremonial

way, there can be stories that need to be reframed. Right?

I think there are some people who are like, I want to go do this every weekend, you know, and that is its own. I think, potential reframing that maybe, you know, I'm not going to tell everybody what's best for them.

But, you know, it's really important, I guess I would say in this and in everything, this is just one example to continue, as you said, not to try to Google the answer, but instead to sit with the questions and keep challenging yourself and asking yourself or going into that spaciousness and saying, which I don't mean medicine to do, sacred, spaciousness.

I just mean wherever. Right? Your own spaciousness, whatever that feels like, whatever that looks like to ask those questions and say, do I really should I really do this?

Like from my simply, people will reach out and say, do you think I should go drink ayahuasca? Or do you think I should go and, and I, I, I generally feel, I mean, I can look at like medical issues and say, well, you know, this might not be a great idea right now or something along those lines, but from the standpoint of like, should someone do it?

I'm like, if you feel called, then that's a thread that you will want to kind of engage with. Does it mean you're going to do that right now? Maybe. Maybe not.

But that's I think the key right is is there a call and how is that call playing out. Yes. And how are you like you said, I mean, you could be addicted to organic broccoli.

It's really the the energy of how you do things, who you are when you're doing things. And so, yeah, I may be wanting to do a ceremony every week can be trying to avoid something else that's going on.

And so we, we really need to to look at these things. I always think, you know, the, the what you're doing is easy, but it's the, the why and the how that are really the important questions to answer.

So, I could just talk to you all day, but our time is close enough. Any last little golden nuggets you just like to share with everyone listening? And of course, for those who want to continue the conversation with you like I do, where can we find you?

Yeah, I, I think just in closing, I would say just, In these times, which are very transitional times collectively.

Closing Reflections and Resources

And then, you know, for those of us going through transitional times individually and certainly like in our bodies, at the same time, I think it's really important to prioritize joy and pleasure and just moments of delight where you can find them, even if it's going outside and looking at the sunset or, you know, smelling flower, you know, or buying yourself flowers or whatever, just finding those moments to make your life feel like a celebration, I think, is one of the most important things that you can do.

Because transition and shifts and change and even loss of parts of yourself or your life, those are things that happen and the key for me is how do you write going to your idea of the how, right.

But the how, how do you navigate it? And having those tools and those gifts that you're willing to give to yourself and the grace that's, I think, really key.

So that would be my takeaway, my final takeaway and and again, not saying it's always easy, but it's worth it. It really is like each person listening you are worth you are worth it.

So to find information about what I do and what I have, available, just my website is really the best place. And it's Doctor Maya, Dr. Ma, Wired.com, and I have a whole page of free resources, including a psychedelics 101, including a medicinal mushrooms, including on foraging, on ritual, on plant brushing, a lot of different things on

grounding.

So all of that is free. And I have programs as well on psychedelics, the science on the sacred and microdosing and Q&A and all of that. Herbalism courses and of course, my certifications for Soul coach certification that, you know, people have calls in a group with me and we learn all about ritual and ceremony and how to become a leader in that way in your community.

Beautiful. What a what a wonderful array and wealth of knowledge you are. And I love that you ended with celebration and made me think about just a simple languaging shift I used in my own life that's like instead of saying I have to even like I have to go for my hike today, I want to get my.

Instead of saying I have to sing, I get to and it's just like, wow, I'm alive. And I get to do all these cool things and it just changes the energy right away.

And so, yes, celebration celebrating you and you being here and all the women listening and just all the work you're doing to help make the world a better place.

I so appreciate that. So thank you for being here. Thank you everyone for for listening to there were a lot of nuggets strewn throughout here. And so, I know I say it a lot that this would be a great one to listen to again and again, because as we change and we transition, we hear things differently as well.

So I so appreciate everyone and thank you for being here. And we'll be back again with another talk. And until then, stay well and be blessed.