Emotional Vitality: Obsessing About Your Health Isn’t Healthy Transcript

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Opening on health anxiety and awareness

The problem isn't having the data, the problem is obsessing over it. There's a world of difference between, okay, that's worth a closer look and lying awake at night convinced that one number means something is seriously wrong with you.

So when something's off, get educated on it instead of scared by it, learn what that marker actually measures, find out how much it naturally swings day to day, blood test to blood tests, because a lot of these things move around more than you may actually realize.

and then bounce it off your own symptom picture. How do you actually feel? Does that number match anything real you're experiencing? That's how you can often tell the difference between a number worth focusing on and a member that just spiked your anxiety for maybe no good reason.

Welcome to Vitality Radio, the podcast that helps you make sense of natural supplements and thrive without pharma drugs. I'm Jared St. Clair. I grew up in a health food store and spent over 40 years now figuring out what works and what doesn't so that you could make confident informed decisions about nutrition, supplements, and your health.

Hello and welcome to Vitality Radio, the podcast where we help you master natural supplements, enhance emotional vitality and thrive without the use of pharma drugs.

I'm your host each and every week, twice a week. And today's episode is a little different than most of my episodes, not supplement based. It's not. food based, it's not news based.

It's based on a conversation I had via email and text with a client of mine. And it got me thinking about you listening to this show and the impact that this shows and other shows by health influencers may have on you, that your doctor may be having on and how you are responding to the information that you receive from places like Vitality Radio and beyond.

This is an emotional vitality episode. I want to start with something that I think is one of the strangest contradictions in modern life. We are living in the most health aware moment in human history.

we have more information, more testing, More tracking, and more data about our own bodies than any generation has ever had ever before. You can strap a device on your wrist or around your finger that counts every heartbeat and scores your sleep.

You. Can order a blood panel that measures a hundred different markers. or the body care product that you're looking at at the store. And yet we have never been more anxious about our health, even though we now have all of this amazing data.

We're more afraid, we're overwhelmed, more convinced that something somewhere is quietly or sometimes noisily going very seriously wrong inside of us.

We've got more tools than ever and somehow more fear than never. And that's the paradox that I want to talk to you about today. Because here's, the thing that, I've come to believe after a lot of years of doing this, awareness is good.

Awareness is the whole point, but awareness was never supposed to turn into fear. When it does, when being informed, curdles into being afraid, it doesn't make you healthier.

It actually makes everything potentially worse and works against the very thing that you're trying to protect. The title of this episode is obsessing about your health is not healthy.

Why fear-based health messaging backfires

And I mean that quite literally all the way down to your biochemistry. We're going to get into exactly why. So this episode is an emotional vitality episode.

These are the ones where I step slightly outside of my usual lane of supplements and formulation and we talk about what's actually happening in your mind and your nervous system.

A lot of this is mindset stuff because You can do everything right on paper and still feel terrible if your nervous system is running the show from a place of fear, anxiety, trepidation.

These episodes are free, practical, grounded in physiology and psychology. And they are not therapy and they're not hype. They are tools, tools that I can't sell you, but tools I that can offer you education on for free.

And the single idea about doing these shows came from my wife, Jen, and myself working through some of this mindset stuff ourselves. When we met eight years ago.

She and I were both coming out of a very challenging divorce, obviously not from each other, from our exes and all of the stuff that comes with that. Plenty of people in this audience.

Perhaps you have been through that or possibly been near that in your life. And of course, all us have experienced our own level of trauma in his life, So none of us gets out of this life alive, literally and metaphorically.

And that was the state that we were in and Jen, of course, as you probably know, if you're a regular listener was in pretty bad shape, health wise, As well as mental, emotional, I was dealing with my own issues and stresses and things like that on different levels than she was.

But what we determined. pretty early on is that we needed to work on our own beliefs about our health, our beliefs, about self-worth and so many other things.

And from that sprung this concept of emotional vitality, things that, we don't sell in this store, but that are probably of more value than anything that can sell you from a vitamin, mineral, herb standpoint.

That's saying something coming from someone who makes a living selling you those things, But we wanted to get this information out there because it's been so powerful for us.

I was having a conversation with a wonderful client of mine. And as I said earlier, it was the conversation. With her that dictated. the idea in my head that we must do this show.

But if you like what you hear on this episode, go back and look for episodes of Vitality Radio called emotional vitality. These are episodes that I think have incredible value and that are not designed to sell you a thing.

They're just designed. To make you aware of how your brain works, how it plays a role in your physiology and how the psychology that as powerful and as potent of a I'll say nutrient that we could possibly change in our bodies, just simply how we think about our health.

So that's what this episode is about. And like I said, I hope that you'll not just enjoy this Episode, especially those of you listening who really need to hear this, which I think is a pretty high percentage of my audience, but that by the end of this you may be able to feel and see the fork in the road and choose the right one when it comes to what I'm about to talk about.

So all the ways that we can get scared. Let me describe the landscape that were all walking through because I

you'll recognize most of these things. I am going to move quickly because the point isn't any one of them.

The point is the pattern. There's the fitness tracker, the wearable. And look, I'm not anti-data, but a lot of people have handed their sense of wellbeing over to a little screen.

You wake up feeling fine, you check your sleep score. It says you slept badly and suddenly you feel tired or you start stressing about, well, why didn't I sleep well?

The number told you how to feel. I've watched people get genuine anxiety from a low readiness score on a morning they were perfectly fine until they looked at that score, That's the tyranny, or at least the potential tyrany of the metric.

There are the blood panels. Good lab work is a gift and naturally you're going to zero in on what ever is out of range. That just being engaged in your own health.

Nothing wrong with that. The problem isn't noticing it. The problem isn't having the data, the problem is obsessing over it. There's a world of difference between, okay, that's worth a closer look and lying awake at night convinced that one number means something is seriously wrong with you.

So when something's off, get educated on it instead of scared by it, learn what that marker actually measures, find out how much it naturally swings day to day, blood test to blood tests, because a lot of these things move around more than you may actually realize.

and then bounce it off your own symptom picture. How do you actually feel? Does that number match anything real you're experiencing? That's how you can often tell the difference between a number worth focusing on and a Number that just spiked your anxiety for maybe no good reason and then there's supplement marketing and I say this as a guy who sells Supplements for a living a huge amount of marketing in my own industry works by manufacturing a deficiency in your mind so it can sell you the fix make you afraid you're missing something, then hand you the bottle that resolves the fear that you didn't have 10 minutes before you read the ad about that thing.

I don't run my business that way, and I want you to be able to spot it when it's done to you. There's also symptom Googling, the 2 a.m. search that starts with a headache and ends somehow with the diagnosis of something potentially catastrophic.

And there's the big one for a lot of you who found this show, The Toxin List. glyphosate in the food, endocrine disrupting chemicals in, the plastics and the personal care products, mold, yeast, parasites, SIBO, bacteria, viruses, heavy metals, and so on.

In fact, this is such a big point of emphasis right now that Jen and I, when we were at EECO, just a few weeks ago in Boise, Idaho, we enrolled in something called Toxin University.

because our goal as much as we possibly can here at Vitality Nutrition is to help you fill the deficiencies that you have and detoxify from the things that are bogging your body down.

So yes, all of these things are real, but hear me clearly because this matters. These things our real. Yes, I'm not waving them away. In fact, we're digging deeper into those things.

Glyphosate is a real problem. Endocrine disruptors are a serious issue in our society. Heck, I've built a big part of my career on helping people lower these burdens.

So I'm not telling you that these threats aren't real. I am telling that your relationship to these threads is where the damage can potentially be done.

You can know about every one of these and live in calm, steady action, or you can now about them and life in a low grade state of dread. And that state dread has its own physiology, which we're going to get to.

Let's talk about where a lot of us learn to be afraid of our own bodies. Because it didn't come up out of nowhere. It was modeled for us. We were shown at the highest levels that the way you move people on health is to scare them.

And it goes deeper than any one illness. we've been made afraid things that are completely normal and natural. Take germs for instance. One of my favorite things to say is germs are our friends.

We've been trained to treat the entire microbial world as if it is the enemy. Now, everything is antibacterial, antibasterial soap, anti bacterial wipes, and antibacterial everything, sanitizing our kids and ourselves down to a sterile shine.

When the truth is that our bodies are built to live in a world of microbes and a huge part of our immune strength and our gut health actually depends on that very exposure.

And it's the same story with childhood illnesses.

Client story: improvement, fear, and nervous system responses

We've been scared into believing that the normal childhood, illnesses kids have moved through for all of human history are actually diseases. They're not.

For most healthy kids, those are the normal expected ways a young immune system meets the world and grows stronger. But fear repackages the norm as the dangerous.

And once you're afraid of the normally workings of your own body, you are afraid often all the time. Think about just a few years back. COVID. Think about the tone of it.

The daily fear porn, the case counts on the screen, around the clock, Fauci and the rest of those criminals. I mean, officials in Washington and in our local governments.

the messaging was not, here's how to be strong. Here's, how, to support your body. here is how the thing clearly the, messaging, was fear comply or else.

Be afraid of your neighbor. Be Afraid of the air. be afraid Of each other. And here's the part I want you to really see because that fear was not aimless.

It was pointed at a very specific bullseye. A frightened population is a compliant population. When you scare people badly enough, they will take the remedy.

Take the shot. Follow the mandate without question because a brain in fear isn't weighing evidence. It's just looking for relief. That's exactly what we talked about with the research.

Fear with no real sense of agency doesn't produce clear thinking. it produces people desperate to make the fear stop because it doesn' feel good. And a population in that state will accept whatever they're handed.

Now I'm not going to sugarcoat this at all. I think that was the most destructive public health experiments of our lifetime. Not because the virus wasn't real, but because of the fear itself did enormous damage to people's mental health, to their trust, their ability to think for themselves, and as we're about to see, they're actual physiology.

And then of course, the remedy made a lot of people sicker, not healthier. But here's what I want you to understand. And this is the part that surprised even me.

Fear-based medicine doesn't even work on its own terms. We have the research. There's a large body of work on what scientists call fear appeals, messages that try to scare you into changing your behavior, including a major meta analysis published in 2015 in the American Psychological Association's flagship review journal that pulled

together decades of these studies.

And what it shows is pretty fascinating. Fear only motivates a person when it's paired with a genuine sense that they can do something about it. And that's what they used during the COVID years.

This is what researchers call efficacy. When you give someone a real threat and a really doable action, they'll often move. But when you get someone, a big, scary threat, and no sense of control, just fear, with no clear achievable path, the mind does something protective.

And a little tragic. It doesn't spring into action. it defends itself. Psychologists call it defensive avoidance. The person shuts the message out, denies it, or freezes.

That fear becomes so uncomfortable that getting rid of the feeling becomes the goal instead of actually addressing the threat. And the most striking finding of all, the people who need the help the the ones most at risk are often the more likely to shut down and avoid when you hit them with pure fear.

Think about that. Scare tactics fail hardest on exactly the people that they are supposedly trying to save. And we can all take this to heart because people who listen to my show, you are probably one of those people, who's very well informed about these things.

I don't know if you're doing this to yourself with the fear thing that we're talking about. We're going to go a little deeper on this too, cause this isn't just about fear.

If you say, Hey, I'm not scared of any of this stuff. This isn' for me. I've got some more information for you that might fit you a bit better here in just a minute.

So stay tuned, but you may also be working unintentionally. and from a place of love, concern, and compassion towards scaring other people about all of these things, particularly people that are less well-versed in these thing.

Perhaps it's your adult children. I have a lot of those between me and Jen. And I think sometimes we probably do put a little bit too much fear into them, not intentionally.

That's never been our goal, but just talking about the things and then they get overwhelmed and so they don't do anything. We're gonna talk about that as well.

So let's kind of put this into typical terms, I guess, in the modern day doctor's office. You see it in these doctors' offices every single day. The patient gets told point blank, if you don't get the cholesterol number down, you're going to have a heart attack or a stroke.

And it feels responsible to say it that way. It feels like you are taking it seriously. But for a huge number of people, the threat with no real sense of agency doesn't produce change.

it produces a person who is now terrified, who avoids the follow-up appointment, and who stops stepping on the scale. Who doesn' want to think about it all the time because thinking about, it just floods them with fear and anxiety.

that they have no way to discharge. Fear without a clear path forward doesn't create action. It creates paralysis and avoidance. So here's the bridge I want to build.

And it's at the heart of this whole episode. They have done this to us, the institutions, officials, marketing. But if we're honest, most of us have taken that same fear-based playbook and we often run it on ourselves.

We are our own public health officials standing in our heads, reciting the threats and offering no calm. But the good news is if we're doing it to ourselves, then it can actually also be undone.

We can stop doing. And here's the other piece of this. I have to say it here because it hits very close to home for our crowd. People that believe, but I think most of us believe fairly similarly about, you know, public-health officials, whatever that means.

Because I think a lot of us lost faith in those guys a long ago. Like I said, we don't just do this to ourselves in a vacuum though. We also let other people do it to us.

And a of the time, those are well-meaning people. It could be me sometimes. I'm talking about the influencers, the accounts that you follow because they care about clean living just like you do.

Many of them have good hearts and good information, but fear porn online is real. And it is everywhere in the health and nutrition space. The post that tells you the thing in your cabinet is poisoning your family.

the real that says, if you're not doing this one protocol, you are falling apart on the inside. And here's the trap. We think because we're the awake ones, the informed ones.

One's reading labels that we are immune to it. We're not, it happens to us precisely because we care and the algorithm has figured out that fear is what keeps us scrolling.

So we freak out about things that aren't perfectly clean. When in reality, a lot of those things are still a hundred times better than the alternative would have been.

And sometimes at least in my book, It's perfectly okay to not eat organic. It's okay to sometimes indulge. Let me give you a real example from my own life.

Not long ago, I was out and I found a place that made their French fries in beef tallow. Now, were they organic? No. Was the potato some pristine heirloom potato?

fresh, hot French fry from a restaurant in so long. So I ordered them and they were good and I ate them. And I enjoyed every bite. You know what? I didn't die.

My health didn' collapse and i didn''t kick myself in the butt for the rest of the day thinking Jared, you know better than that. And now I'm good for a while.

I don't need to have a French fry for another many months. That is what a healthy relationship with food and with our own standards can look like. High standards most of the time and freedom to enjoy your life without a cloud of guilt and fear hanging over a plate of fries.

Now I want to tell you about a client that I work with. This is the one I mentioned at the beginning of the show. The reason that this show exists. And I believe she's probably listening to this episode because she appears to be a regular listener of my show, so if you're listening, this is for you, but thank you for the information that you gave me and the, and for permission that gave to share this anonymously with my other listeners, because I think there's a lot of people that need to hear what happened between us.

All right, so this is one of the clearest pictures of this whole idea that I've seen in a while. And as I said, I'm keeping this completely anonymous.

The only thing I am going to say is her or she, which obviously doesn't narrow it down too much, but I Specific words that she used and specific words, that I used in our messaging back and forth.

So when she first came to me, she was already doing a lot of good work. After talking to, me she cleaned up her diet even more and decided to go grain free on my recommendation.

And based on experience that, I'd had specifically with my wife, Jen, to going grain-free and reducing her pain significantly by doing so. She also added some targeted support from some supplements that I recommended and

things started to improve.

About a month later, I heard back from her and her chronic pain had backed off significantly. Her digestion, which had been loose and inconsistent for a long time, started becoming regular for the first time in a longer time.

By any objective measure, her body was healing. It was working. And here's what she wrote to me about that improvement. She said that she'd been having regular, consistent bowel movements, something that, she hadn't had for a long time.

And then she said, and I'm quoting her, if I am being honest, it makes me nervous. I start overthinking it because this isn't my normal. Now sit with that for a second.

Her body was getting better and the improvement itself scared her because it wasn't familiar. And then she wrote something that honestly broke my heart a little bit.

She said, I feel stupid. Even saying that, honestly, and I'm holding back tears as I type this because I want to be better. She's improving and she's crying because some part of her feels she should already be fixed.

And she is exhausted from how long it's taken to get to this point. Now I want you to understand why that happens. Because it is not irrational and it she not broken.

Our nervous systems are not actually wired to detect good or bad. It's wired. To detect familiar versus unfamiliar, safe versus novel. And so a change in the right direction, a body that's suddenly working better can still register to your threat detection system as something is different here.

We're not sure that we're safe. Her health improved faster than her sense of safety could catch up. The good news arrived and the alarm system hadn't yet gotten the memo.

A little while later, she wrote to me again on a rough couple of days. And this time she described without knowing it, a perfect textbook picture of the human stress response.

She said she had a feeling like a brick in her stomach, no appetite. she forced down a protein bar and had to run to the bathroom immediately afterwards, loose this times, she felt crampy.

And then she wrote this line, which I think is the wisest thing in the whole exchange. He said, my breathing is all in my chest, Which I know is my nerves because of how I feel.

She diagnosed herself correctly. She felt the fight or flight in her own gut and her breath, and she traced it straight back to its source. And she even noticed the cause.

That is the loop. That's the whole thing named perfectly by someone actually living it. And she was hard on herself about all of it, she told me a long weekend, shouldn't, and I want to tell you something, we've got to, as humans, stop shooting on ourselves.

We do it all the time. What you should be doing, what you shouldn' be, doing what, you, should, be, doing what, you, shouldn't be.

Perfectionism, analysis paralysis, and progress

Stop it! It's not healthy. It just isn't. Again, awareness is the key, but the should and shouldn't game doesn't get you anywhere. She told me a long weekend shouldn' affect her the way it does, that she shouldn be tired after a nine hour day at her son's ball tournament on her own, followed by two days of family gatherings.

she was scolding herself for being human. and having a nervous system. And I want to tell you how I answered her because it's a model for how we should talk to ourselves.

I didn't pile on, I told her the truth. Your digestive system simply doesn't work well under stress. So if you're overthinking it and stressing about it, That all by itself can be the problem.

I told her it's completely normal to have an off day after a different routine. And I got down off any pedestal that she may have had me on and told the truth about myself that I'd just gotten back from my in-laws cabin.

A clean, but I ate differently than I usually do. So I tried some new recipes and some of them were a little weird and my own gut was not very happy that day.

The very day that shoes riding to me and I fully expected to be back to normal tomorrow. Now, listen to that. I ate differently, my own gut wasn't happy, but I fully expected to be back to normal tomorrow because that's how I look at it.

It's just a moment. And in moments, our body has to adjust, especially if you do something a little bit differently. So my situation was the same as her situation.

Except she was probably way more stressed than I was because she doing all that family gathering and son's ball games. And I just up relaxing in a cabin in Island Park.

It's so important to trust that your body wants to rebalance and will. Just give it a little time sometimes, but underneath all of the physiology, there's something even more important going on here.

And I'd be doing you a disservice if I didn't name it, because I think one of most critical under-rated factors in anybody's health is what they actually believe.

If I'm being honest, I don't think this client has fully embraced the belief that she is going to get on top of her health. And I get it. I do, because she's tried for a long time, ups and downs.

She spent a lot of money. she has tried a lotta things and gotten limited results. So somewhere in her, it's likely she just doesn't quite believe she is going to be fully healthy, maybe ever.

And that's a big part of why she expects something to go wrong, even when everything actually seems to going right. When you don't believe wellness is coming, your mind goes looking for the catch.

And I'm telling you, we can believe ourselves into or out of optimal health. I've watched it up close. There was a time when my sweet Jen didn't come anywhere close to believing she could be even halfway healthy.

She was broken or so she said. And so she believed. And today, while she is still working toward optimal, she has come a million miles from where she was.

The belief had to move before the body could. In my client's case, and now I'm speaking to you, my friend. The success you've had can be something different.

If you choose it to be, it can signal that your body is healing. Even if it's slow, It can signaled that you can have faith in the process. It could signal you will find balance and have all of this fear, pain and emotional turmoil behind you.

IT CAN if you allow it too. I know your Body can heal. I know that you can find what you're after and now it's time for you to believe that too. Now, I want to widen this out because I think this actually might even catch a higher percentage of people listening to this show.

Because there's a close cousin to health fear that traps a lot of really thoughtful, careful, intelligent people. And I bet money it some of you. It's the trap of waiting for perfect.

Here's how fear disguises itself. When you're a smart, conscientious person, it doesn't show up as panic. It shows up. As diligence, you tell yourself, You're just being careful.

You just want to get it right. you want the cleanest option, the best practitioner, The perfect protocol, least toxic version of everything before you'll commit.

And that sounds responsible. But a lot of the time that carefulness is actually fight or flight wearing a lab coat. Remember fight-or-flight isn't the only option.

There's a third one and we've talked about it before on this emotional vitality series. It's called freeze and freeze is not laziness. Freeze is inhibition.

it's your nervous system deciding that when the path forward isn' perfectly clear and safe, the safest feeling move is. Actually no move at all when you can't feel or see the guaranteed right choice, they just make no choice.

It's kind of like that rush song, free will. I don't know if you're a fan of rush or not, but I am. Neil Peart said it really, really well when he said, and if choose not to decide, you still have made a choice it feels like prudence.

it even feels virtuous. but it's actually just a stress response. Psychologists have a name for this. They call it analysis paralysis. And the research on it is clear and a little uncomfortable.

There's a famous line of work, a lot of it popularized by psychologist Barry Schwartz in his 2004 book on the paradox of choice and reinforced by many studies since that divides people into two types.

there are maximizers who need to find the single best option before they'll act. and there our satisfacers. who decide that good enough looks pretty good to them.

And then they choose it and they move on. Here's the kicker. The maximizers, the one chasing perfection, consistently report worse moods, lower life satisfaction, more regret.

Some of the research even found that their scores on certain measures of unhappiness creeping toward clinically significant ranges. Chasing perfection doesn't make you happier or even get you better outcomes.

Past a certain point, more analysis doesn' improve the decision at all. It just feeds the anxiety. And the trap underneath it is this, delaying feels like safety.

You can't makes a wrong choice if you don't a choice. So not deciding gives you this little bit of relief. This little hit of, I'm okay. But that relief is a trap because it hardens into a habit, the habit of when in doubt, do nothing.

And on a health journey, that habit is enormously expensive because while we're waiting for the perfect protocol, perfect practitioner, or the clean version of everything, you are living the whole time with the lower quality version.

or with no version at all. The cost of waiting is invisible. So we never put it on the books, but it's real and it compounds every single day. Let me make this concrete with a real story.

A dear friend of mine, someone in this health conscious world, somebody who thinks exactly like a lot of you do. Well, she needed a new mattress. Her old one was really old, really worn out.

She was genuinely uncomfortable, waking up sore, not sleeping well. It only took her two years of analysis to finally find the mattress for her. Two years.

Not because she couldn't afford it, but because he was so determined to find a least toxic option on the market that she froze. He was afraid of buying the wrong bed, the one with the materials, wrong chemicals, getting the right price.

that she's bought no bed at all. And I want to be so clear here because this is the whole point. Her instinct was good. Wanting a low-tox mattress is a completely reasonable, healthy thing to want.

The value wasn't the problem, but the pursuit of the perfect version of that value cost her two full years of genuine daily discomfort and bad sleep, which by the way, is probably more, quote unquote, toxic to her health.

than had she bought a more toxic version. Hard to say for sure, but I think you get the point. And I'll tell you, I do this too. This is interesting because we talked about all the fear stuff.

I don't think I really deal with a ton of that. Oh boy, do I get that analysis paralysis though. Especially when it comes to a lot of money, which I thought was part of the thing with my friend because I also happen to know that she's a bargain hunter like I am.

But you know what? We just bought this new store in South Ogden and it has a big sign that says health foods on both sides, healthy me, health, foods, doesn't say vitality.

And it says help foods. We're not a health food store. Were a supplement store primarily. and I got quotes right away on what it would cost to change out the signs.

I've got artwork that looks really, really good. And I put on the books a budget to buy these signs so that I could put them up there and guess who hasn't ordered the signs yet.

As I'm telling you these, this story, those signs are not ordered. In fact, as I was writing this and over the last couple of few days, I have texted the sign guy twice and said, Hey, i'm going to get that order over to you now.

The last two days hasn' been analysis paralysis. It's just been, been really busy. I've been gotten it done, but you know what's happened? Not ordering the science has nothing to do with health.

But it does have to do with the health of my business. I've got people seeing health foods on the sign, walking in saying, Hey, do you guys have, you know, frozen dinners?

Do you have sandwiches? You have smoothies? They don't know what health food means when they see it on a big sign. So I'm confusing those people. And then I had a bunch of people say.

Where's Vitality? You said there's a new store up in South Ogden. I can't find it. They call me on the phone. It's going to take six weeks to fabricate the signs and get them hung.

So those could have been up two weeks ago and instead they're still not up. You see the problem? Because here's the principle. Progress beats perfection every time because perfection was never actually on the menu anyway.

It just fears most convincing disguise. A good enough step you take today beats a perfect step that you never take. Okay, so I've been promising the physiology and I'm just about ready to wrap up this show.

So let's go to how this really works in the brain. It starts in a little almond-shaped structure deep in your brain called the amygdala. The amygdola is your threat detector, your smoke alarm.

Its fast, its ancient, and it does not pause to evaluate evidence. When it senses a threat, whether that's a bear or a scary blood test or 2 a.m. spiral about a symptom, it sounds the alarm before the thinking part of your even gets a vote.

And when it does, it effectively turns down your prefrontal cortex, the front part of your brain, right behind your forehead, The part responsible for planning, perspective, weighing options, and calm reasoning.

So one of the first things fear does is take your wisest, most rational brain partly offline. That's why you can't think clearly when you're scared. It's not a character flaw.

The circuitry is literally doing that on purpose. At the same time, your body dumps stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol into your system and your sympathetic nervous system just takes over.

This is fight or flight or freeze in action. And it is brilliant by the way. If you were actually facing a predator, this is exactly the cascade you'd want.

Your heart rate jumps, blood rushes to your large muscles so you can run or fight.

How fear affects the brain and digestion

You're breathing moves up high into chest fast and shallow to load oxygen quickly. Remember my client's chest breathing? That was this. She felt it. And to her credit, she recognized it for what it was.

Here's the part that matters most for so many of you who came to me through the gut health world. When the body thinks it's under threat, it pulls resources away from anything that isn't survival in that exact moment.

The digestion is the very first thing on the chopping block. Your body figures quite reasonably that there's no point digesting lunch if you're about to become lunch.

So blood flow is shunted away from the gut, stomach activity changes, motility, the movement of your digestive tract gets scrambled. It can stall up top, which is the brick in the stomach, The lost appetite, and it can speed up and loosen lower down, Which is urgent run to the bathroom.

Your gut becomes more sensitive. Your normal sensations register as cramping. You're digestive system essentially goes offline. It is the exact opposite of rest and digest.

So look at what that means for my client and maybe for you. Every single physical symptom she described, the brick, no appetite, loose stool, cramps, chest breathing, every one of them is a predictable output of a body in fight or flight mode.

None of it was disease. It was physiology doing exactly what it's built to do. Her fear about her gut was creating the gut symptoms that she was afraid of in the first place.

The loop was real and it ran through her biology. And then there's the long game, the part that should make every one of us take this very seriously. In the short term, cortisol is actually anti-inflammatory.

It tamps inflammation down, but when the fear never really shuts off, and when you're living in a low-grade state of dread for months or even years, something changes.

The research on this is very well established. There's a landmark study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences back in 2012, a lot of work since, describing what's called the glucocorticoid resistance model.

Here's the plain language version. When cortisol is high all the time, your immune cells essentially stop listening to it. They get desensitized. It's kind of like insulin resistance.

And once cortisol can no longer do its anti-inflammatory job, inflammation comes off the leash. The very signaling pathways that drive chronic inflammation start running unchecked.

Do you see the terrible irony in this? Many of you are afraid of inflammation. You're afraid to the toxins and the chemicals because the inflammation and disease they can drive.

And that's a legitimate concern. But chronic fear itself, the constant dread about your health is one of the most reliable ways to keep your body in a pro-inflammatory state.

The fear of inflammation becomes a driver of information. The very thing you're scared of, the fear is actually helping to create your body is on your side.

And I want you to hear this very clearly. It means so much to me and to my lovely wife, Jen. We talked about this a lot at the eco-conference. Your body.

Is not working against you. it is not broken. And it is not your enemy. It is always, every second of every day, trying to bring you back to balance. Symptoms aren't the body failing, symptoms are the the talking, communicating with you.

They're how it tells you something needs attention and it's how to ask for help. Even in the hard cases like autoimmune issues, chronic inflammation, that machinery is still trying to protect you.

It may be confused, it may overwhelmed, but the intent underneath it never changed. The body is on your side. And it always has been. When you actually believe that, down to your bones, it changes everything about how you respond to the symptom.

A number, a piece of scary news, because you stop reading your body as a traitor that's out to get you, or that has failed you. And you start reading it as partner that is trying to tell you something.

You can listen to partner calmly. You can't listen to anything calmly when you think it's trying to kill you. So how do we actually live in awareness without living in fear?

It comes back to that word that researchers kept using, efficacy. A sense that there's something you can actually do. Fear with no path forward becomes paralysis, but awareness paired with calm, doable next step action That's the goal.

That is the entire difference. And it's available to you on every single health fear that you've got. It works better, like measurably better because of the physiology we just walked through.

When you act from a calm, regulated, parasympathetic state, your prefrontal cortex is online. So you actually make better decisions. Your digestion actually works, your inflammation signaling stays balanced.

Your body is in the rest and digest and repair mode where healing actually happens. When you act from fear, you're trying to heal a body that's biochemically braced for a predator attack.

It is just a fundamentally worse environment to try to get well in. Calm isn't just nicer and more comfortable, it's more effective. So awareness of glyphosate is good.

And the calm response is to steadily move toward cleaner food, one swap at a time. Awareness of endocrine disrupting chemicals is Good. The calm responses to replace your products as they run out or possibly do a detox from time to time, but not with panic.

awareness Of gut issues or leaky gut. That's good. We need to be aware of these things. And the calm response is steady, supportive steps, trusting your body to rebalance.

Same awareness, calm action instead of fear. Step by step, one thing at a time. That the whole game. So here's a practice that you can try. I'd really like to see you do it if you found yourself in this episode.

First, name the state that your in. When the urge, the fear, this scary article, whatever it is comes up, name the state, just say it silently. My nervous system is in fear right now.

I'm in fight or flight. Not broken. There's nothing wrong with me. Just my system as in a state and states are temporary and workable and changeable. That naming alone starts bringing your thinking brain back on.

And we know this. Scientifically, this has all been proven. Second, regulate before you do anything else. Down-regulate the body first. Take that chest breathing and move it down, low, slow breaths into your belly, longer on the exhale than on inhale.

You cannot think your way out of a state you did not think you way into. So you don't start with thinking. You start. With the body, get yourself out of fight or flight before you make a single decision.

And third, then and only then. Take one small, calm action. Not the whole plan, not the perfect plan. One step, trust your body to rebalance and give it one good thing to work with.

State first, behavior second, and only then the action never the other way around. So here's the bigger picture and what I really want you to walk away with.

Awareness is a gift and we have a ton of it in our society today. That's what this show is about. It's, what your fitness tracker is, about it's. What all the influencers on Instagram are about and it's important to keep it.

Stay informed about your food, your products, you body, Your supplements, the real things in your world that deserve your attention. I'm never going to tell you to put your head in the sand, but awareness was never meant to become fear.

It was meant become action, calm, steady, step-by-step action taken from a body that's on your side. And I want to be really honest with you about my own role in this.

Calm action, trust, and closing takeaways

I talk about parasites. I talked about heavy metals, liver toxicity, deficiencies, endocrine disruption, leaky gut. And I do it to educate and to empower you.

That is the only reason I did it. Because that was never the point. The point was always to hand you understanding so you could act from a place of strength instead of dread.

Because ultimately it is up to us to decide how we respond to any information. Do we freeze? Do you become anxious about everything we already did in the years before we knew better?

We punish ourselves because we did or didn't do certain things for ourselves or for our children back when we were less educated than we are now. Or do we move on with a greater understanding and a desire to improve one non-anxious step at a time?

That choice is the whole thing and it's your choice to make. The toxins are real, the chemicals are, real fear we heap on ourselves does its own damage every day in our guts and our brains and immune systems.

And that fear is one thing in this whole equation that we actually have the power to put away. So put it down, trust your body to rebalance. Take the imperfect step today instead of the perfect one, maybe never.

And remember that the body sounding the alarm is not your enemy. It is your partner doing its best to bring you home to balance. I hope that this episode has been helpful for you.

If you heard yourself in this. Please listen to it again. Really get aware of how you feel when these things are happening to you and go back and listen to more emotional vitality episodes of Vitality Radio.

Because I think these episodes can truly help you in a way that no supplement that I sell you can. And I absolutely believe that. I hope this has been useful.

If it has, if it's moved you in some way, If there's been a shift for you, share it with someone that you think needs to hear it as well, please. That would not just help me, but hopefully it will help them.

Remember, we're on YouTube now. And if you have questions about anything on this show, call us 801-292-6662 or open up a chat at vitalitynutrition.com.

And of course you can check us out in person if your here in Utah or driving through like some of you do from time to time, which I greatly appreciate when you stop at our bountiful location at 107 South 500 West or our South Ogden location is 1735 East Skyline Drive.

I'm Jared St. Clair and this has been Vitality Radio. Thanks for listening to the Vitaly Radio podcast. If this episode helped you, follow the show, share it with someone and explore trusted education and resources at vitalitynutrition.com.

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