Food As Medicine That Actually Works: Gut, Stress & Real-Life Balance with Ali Miller Transcript

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Introduction to Food as Medicine

Welcome back to Everyday Ancestral. I am your host, James Berry. And this is the podcast where we take the best from the past and we connect it with our modern day.

Allie is a powerhouse in functional medicine and she's the author of the Anti-Anxiety Diet. We dive into food as medicine, stress, gut health, and really how to take back control of your body.

Yeah, I love how you make food as medicine real and doable, since that's exactly what we're about here, you know, talking, like really just taking ancestral wisdom and applying it into modern life, whether it's mud, mental health, or just building resilience.

So I'm really excited to dig into that with you. Awesome. Yeah. So with that in mind, I'd love to start by just asking like, what does food as medicine really look like for you in a daily life, both as a clinician and as mom?

Sure. The way I describe food is medicine is like a double-edged sword. I find that it is equally important to focus on the removal of those chemical additives of those pro-inflammatory foods of, those gut irritants or hormone disrupting compounds.

And everyone listening is going to be at their own place in their continuum of as they go on their wellness journey more and more, and starts to kind of shed in that space.

But then I believe equally there's the abundance swing on the other end of the spectrum. This is where we're looking at getting variety of cuts of animal, following that snout-to-tail philosophy.

So we're getting the nutrient density of organs and the glycine in our slow-cooked meats and in connective tissue for GABA, for brain function, let's say.

Or getting a variety phyto compounds and anti-inflammatory antioxidants in the diet. So I believe both in the idea of like, these are the things that we are looking at proactive prescriptions based on the individual.

And then these aren't the irritants that really want to limit and based the area of focus if we're talking about adrenal insufficiency or leaky gut or dysbiosis, based on the shifts of the pathology or the infection or disease progress, as well as the healing of body, some of those might come back in, but maybe not as frequent as flyers, or we may break up with some particular foods and at least, I would say, the food-like substances need to go completely, and I think that's the really crux of food as medicine is.

You can't follow food as medicine lifestyle if you're not eating whole, real foods to begin with. So we have to first be able to confidently identify, is this a whole real food?

Whole Foods, Removal, and Nutrient Density

Is this God food, Is there something that was growing, had a mother, or is there a chemical shit storm or a processed product that is made by a food scientist to manipulate our satiety, create addictivity, creating cytotoxins in the brain or inflammation in our body?

Yeah, really all such good points. I'm wondering, so I went from the West Coast to the East Coast a couple years ago and I drove across. And so, I feel like I got to see a lot of a very specific part of the U. S.

and would go into communities where the local grocery store was like a 7-Eleven, you know what I mean? It was all convenience foods, very little fresh food, and very few options in terms of if you are aware of what foods to not eat, there weren't really any there weren't a lot of options other than kind of mainstream stuff.

And I'm very aware that we all are trying to do the best we can and we are only able to what we know. So if you're in a community where you are not getting exposed to that stuff, then how do you know what to change?

Yeah, you I'll answer that in some sense, but I feel that this can be sometimes politicized and utilized to disempower lower income populations and inner city areas where there are food deserts.

This idea of, well, this is too pure of a concept and this wouldn't be accessible for these populations. And I think honestly, the reason that that is is that we have unfortunately lost our sovereignty of preparing food in the household.

If we look 50 years ago, that was not an issue anywhere because we were not sold that convenience is superior to being connected with your food system.

We had victory gardens. It didn't matter the income of the individual. In fact, the more lower income, more likelihood they were connected to their food systems.

And we're just seeing actually the full opposition today. And we're seeing this reliability on, if we are dealing with SNAP or food stamps, where we were subsidizing soda still, that's being discussed now, but we subsidized soda, well now we also governmentally funding OZEMPIC, GLP-1 injectable weight loss drugs for 8 to 12 year old children.

And so we creating these perpetual I hate to say it, but almost like a handicap, if you will, or a lock and, you know, ball and chain type of relationship, when we disempower and say access is limited, I just like to tread lightly on that because of that reason.

So I think that, yes, there are areas where we've lost sight of produce. There's a lot of lovely initiatives that we're starting to see finally ground up.

I used to work in Houston in the fifth and third ward in school districts where we would do garden initiatives. And, you know, kids that literally have not, would never imagine that a carrot grows in the ground because they weren't having access to this and they're eating their spicy Cheetos, et cetera, instead.

and we would have them with chalk on the chalkboard rotate through the entire class of 26 to write down the ingredients in a hot pocket. And then we'd go to the garden and harvest tomatoes and show them olive oil and take basil and smash cloves of garlic and actually with an induction pan show how to caramelize onions and garlic to make a marinara sauce.

and write down the seven ingredients, salt and pepper included, in that. And the thing is, with disempowerment and suppression of access or trying to shelter people to say, oh, well, they don't have access, those kids changed the way that their families ate.

because they were motivated, they understood, and they we're open and excited about it. And the reality is that when we nourish ourselves with Whole Foods, we feel better.

But again, We've been sold and lied to with Big Ag and Big Pharma that that's disempowerment and who has time for that? Yeah, it's a really great point.

Yeah, it's such an interesting point as well about how back in the day, eating real food was actually, if anything, cooking from home was if any thing associated more with your economic status.

Like if you were poor, that's what you did. And it is really fascinating that that is not the case now. I think you are

dead on. It is the subsidization, the marketing.

And it really is fascinating. Cause now you're even seeing this huge push away from cooking at home. Even for no matter what, what economic class you are, just because of, and it's being sold to you as it is cheaper.

It's been sold as like it easier, obviously. And, it such a mixed blessing of like the technology. We were sold like technology was going to make everything easier.

But I don't think anyone's lives are easier Right, right. And, you know, we were sold the TV dinners so we could sit in front of the tv instead of at the table.

What do we lose there then? The sovereignty of this spiritual connection of our kids, of ourselves, our marriages. I mean, that's a whole nother. But for real, now we're allowing public programming to get into our brains four hours a night instead.

The hearth, the heart of a household used to be the kitchen table, and I think that is a huge cultural shift. And this idea that we're too busy, Shape Magazine actually just this past summer did a piece on the maha movement is sending women back and we are losing feminine freedom because of the idea of bringing parents back into the kitchen.

And it's just really wild, the backlash of, you know, I think honestly, we're seeing a cultural shift.

Food Deserts, Access, and Family Cooking

I'm a full-time working mama, I am a functional medicine practitioner and I run a clinic, have a supplement line, a podcast, and a YouTube channel. So I have been a very busy woman, but there's nothing that brings me more pride in cooking a nourishing meal for my household.

And I just think part of it is rewriting that ethos, re-writing the priorities and the values associated with it, because I know the impact of food as medicine.

That to me is more important than you know, taking a shortcut. So what is the balancing act actually look like behind the scenes for you? Where do you feel like you've really nailed it?

And where do feel you still find yourself struggling, particularly, you know, because you're mentioning like, hey, I'm a business woman, an entrepreneur, but I am also a mom.

And it sounds like don't have someone who's hired out to do that work. You're doing it. Or maybe you and your partner. My husband, yeah, he's awesome.

So it's a good marital relationship, a partnership in that sense for sure. And meal planning, I think, as a family is really important. And I, think even more important, if you can bring your children into the process, maybe they don't need to sit at the kitchen table for the whole, for me and Brady, it takes about 45 minutes.

The way we go through meal-planning, because we really believe strongly in supporting our local ranchers and growers, that's where you get the most nutrient density and also the best relationship for food security, you know, and supporting these members of your community, is that we have a deep freeze.

And so, you know, every Saturday we literally we get our coffee going, Stella's painting or doing something fun, and Brady and I go out to the garage, we pop open the deep-freeze, And we say, hey, let's pull one slow cook, so we're going to sear and pop in the slow-cook.

So that could be pork shoulder for carnitas, that can be beef shoulder, for a barbacoa. I'm in Texas, clearly. So, you know, we're going to do some kind of fun type of spicy, crispy protein in that sense.

Probably use bone broth in slow cooker, cilantro, herb seasoning spices, right? We're gonna do two grinds always. And so the grind can either be a very simple taco skillet, which for me, because I tend to lean into a little bit more of a ketogenic lifestyle, and I like to make ketones, they feel really good in my brain.

I might do that as a taco bowl salad and, you know, my husband might that with a masa tortilla and my daughter might some black beans. Then we do another grind that we would incorporate ideally as an organ blend, so an ancestral blend and we'll use that for either like my superfood chicken nuggets in Naturally Nourished Kids or a meatball or meatloaf.

So something's being formed, something is being quick skilleted. And then the other three things are a sear. And when people say they're too busy to cook, I say, have you ever cooked a ribeye?

Like, because have ever seared salmon? The reality is we're talking four to five minutes in tallow or lard or grass-fed butter. You pick your choice. Flip it for four-to-five minutes, pull it, rest it.

cut it in four to five minutes. There's just no excuse for that. And so for the busy nights, we do a sear with a sheet pan of veg, super simple. That is really like an honest 15 minute of on active action.

The roast of vegetables might take 40 minutes, but a lot of that's passive in the oven. You're not looking at it, poking at. It and that how we lay it out.

Then we literally pick with each other, I'll knock out the meatloaf. I only have two interviews and four people and clients. you have that buy in of like, we thought that we have to it doesn't matter how tired we are how, you know, burned out how stressful the day was we're committed because that meat is ready to be prepared.

That vegetable from the farmers market is wilting and or we've harvested something from our gardens and it's ready To be eaten. And that creates accountability.

So the classic plant, plan to stay ahead and successful. And I think having your kids be aware of the meal plan, this is a really equally important part.

Towards the end of it, we'll jive with stels on it. My daughter and so we will say, hey, uh, We're going to go by Blue Horizon Seafood. Do you want to do snapper or do you wanna do scallops or a golf strip?

And so she can pick the seafood. And then we plug that in and we say, Hey, should we make the spaghetti squash curry shrimp or the, you know. Um, and so you can bring in autonomy with guided choices and then kids also know all day at school what to expect for dinner.

I think that helps acceptability. It helps a willingness. There's not a battle at the dinner table. Yeah, that's great. How old is your daughter? She's nine.

Okay. So are you, so is there anything that, uh, are, Are you dealing with any picky eating yet? And how are are dealing that? So we have a whole section in Naturally Nourished Kids called Being a Taste Adventurer.

And I find as early as ages two to three, this is a very early food, is very very power struggle for parents and a way for kids to assert power and control.

They watch parents get frustrated and they know and hold that power. Kids are stinkin' smart. We don't give them enough credit, I really believe, often.

As early on as that age, we would start with those guided choices of like, hey, Stella, We're going to do a red produce. Can you pick out what red produced item you want?

We have, let's name them, apple, raspberry, strawberry, bell pepper. Okay. And she picks it, brings it. You know, and so as soon as you can get them involved in the process and give them autonomy and guided choice, you

would never want to ask even at any age.

what do you want for dinner? Because that's setting up for pizza and french fries, right? And so it's about a guided choice of hey, for our vegetable, would you prefer this, this or this?

Or for the protein selection, Would you like this are that? Do you want the superfood chicken nuggets or the bison meatballs? And so that allows though, I'm finding enough autonomy and ownership that she's into it.

And when we have to navigate something at age four or five, we would have a lot of things coming back in the lunchbox. and I found again, everyone wants to be heard and understood.

This starts at an early age. I think it helps mental health for parents to give their children that respect of honoring their feedback and listening and trying to troublesolve with them.

And so instead of dumping those lunch boxes and making assumptions, it's figuring out the why behind things being left behind, you know? So tell me about the bell peppers that you left.

What's the deal? I thought you liked crunchy bell pepper. It might be a color thing. I might use too close to the yogurt and it retrograde it and then it tasted sour.

You know, and so we have to be able to understand the feedback on picky eating. and then work with them on how would they be willing because it can take 8 to 15 times of a reintroduction of food for acceptance on the palate and when we explain to our kids why we want them to eat them that's equally important as the what.

They actually have the capacity to understand. We started talking about what an antioxidant was at age three. And we would do like I have in the book with the lemon juice on the apple slices and show what oxidative damage and browning is and what vitamin C and the ascorbic acid does to protect.

This is why we eat the rainbow. It's wild. They pick up and if we can empower them and involve them, they're so much more willing and I find so less battle.

And the other reason a battle happens is because we're burned out, we are tired, and we don't have a plan. We let them ride the bus without guided decisions and then they find themselves in a food jag of just chicken and cheese quesadilla, just the organic Annie's Mac and Cheese or just that whatever.

And we have to stop short ordering cooking for them because that is not going to empower our children with the most nutrient density. Yeah. Now, do you ever have days where it goes sideways?

And if so, how do how you manage those? She hasn't yet. And, you know, we right now are quite tight about it.

Meal Planning and Kids in the Kitchen

Like she's very empowered by her whole food diet. For instance, she had a dance celebration and the teacher brought a cookie cake classic, with like the frosting and such, and Stella said, Oh, well, I'm fine.

And they were like, oh, do you have a food allergy? And she's like no, just don't do gluten and food dyes and a lot of other things. That's how she says it in her cute little way.

The teacher comes running out and she has roll gold pretzels. She's got a handful of snacks. Like she is freaking out that my kid is going to starve without this cookie cake.

What can I feed Stella? I said, is Stella upset? Do I need to check on her in there? She goes, she was just dancing with her friends. She's okay. She knows that she eats a whole food diet and you don't need to find anything for her.

And then if she ever feels left out by it, we make something special together. I used to always send something to

school as a proactive treat of like a Whole Food item or at least an organic popsicle with just fruit juice or something like that for the teacher to have on hand.

And now that she's in fourth grade, she like, I don't need that special treatment. It's just food. Um, it's really wild. And so, so far it is like that.

She's about to go to her second sleepover party and, uh, you know, we'll, will see how she navigates all that, but at this time I didn't want her to have anxiety and fear.

I did not want to hear her have judgment. I want her to have empowerment. And when she was asked by the kids at the new school about why she's in a group of 197 fourth graders and the cafeteria, and she is one of the probably, I would guess, 15 that packs their lunch versus eating the cafeterias food, she said very limited.

She said, the girls asked me why I don't eat the cafeteria food. And she said, instead of telling him why I don't eat it, because it might come off judgy, which I was like, good discernment, sister.

Like, she processed that, you know? Like I, don t eat soy lecithin and I dont eat chemicals. You know, She was just like instead telling them what I can't, mom, I just thought about it.

And I said well, my mom's like really passionate about food. She's a dietician and she likes to make everything from scratch. and She said they just said oh, and they went along their way.

But had she answered why she didn't? She'd probably have pinned herself into maybe some drama with new friends or again, judgment, shame stuff. And so we just try to be the light.

We try live as pure as we can. Um, we know it's different from the cultural norm. Same with screen times, same with how I hope she doesn't bully friends, the same way, you know, many other elements.

It's okay for her to stand out. I think that as long as she feels empowered by it and not victimized by, that's the plan. Yeah, that's really advanced how she responded to that.

I know. That was the most proud, honestly, over the food. It was like, discernment. Yes. You mentioned you're a dietitian. Now, I'm under the impression that not all dietitions are integrative, nor have a functional medicine background focus.

So what made you veer from the dietition norms? Well, so I started, I went to Bastyr University, which is a naturopathic college of medicine. And so that's where I trained.

So my foundation was actually in natural medicine, and then I had to go through that program and, you know, skip through all the loops. I do wear the credentials of pride, it's interesting.

It was considering at Bastir the ND track, the natropathic doctor track. When I start to learn about functional integrative medicine I have an awesome mentor, Michelle Babb, who was an MSRD.

And she worked with Dr. Jeff Bland, who's actually like the grandfather of functional medicine. And he had lectured to our school. She said to me, if you go RD, you're going to be able to swing both legs of the banks of a river.

You can work with cardiologists, endocrinologists. I am a certified diabetes educator, which is pretty cool access that I get to work in that sense. And there were many states in 2009 when I completed there that weren't giving ND credentials credit.

And Texas, where I am right now, was one of those. So I feel very blessed with that shift of focus. I will say I think that absolutely the dietetics field was funded by General Mills.

It started through big food, right? But also, we would argue that about the entire standardized medical system being

funded by pharma. And so, you know, all medical colleges are.

Just like sending my daughter to public school, I like being rogue. I liked being on the inside out and the outside in and kind of knowing what's going on on both worlds.

and being able to have impact. And I have lectured to thousands of RDs about functional integrative medicine. I CDEs, or CEUs, credits, medical credits on my book, The Anti-Anxiety Diet, that RD's are able test on and get 32 credits.

So I feel that this choice has allowed, it's not a public known, dietetics are moving this way, but I can still have the impact and the ripple that I And even as an intern, I remember I was putting files in doctors' folders.

I'm sure they loved me as a intern in the hospital because they were recommending skim milk and I showing them how conjugated linoleic acids in whole milk actually support insulin sensitivity.

And so our diabetics should be getting whole-milk and here's the research why. You were basically putting propaganda and using the air quotes because that's probably what they looked at it like, propaganda in their files.

That's hilarious. And then I lectured at that same hospital. They were actually a pretty cool Methodist hospital in Houston. And they actually invited me in to do a lecture on probiotics.

I was talking about natural killer cells. This is early 2010. So I think that it served me well, and I would encourage listeners, if they're considering it, sometimes you go through the loops to get the credentials, you answer things to pass a test, then you use your clinical credentials to practice in the way that is scientifically sound.

Well, that's fantastic. I would love to, I think you're more qualified than most than to answer this question. Cause I, think a lot of times people don't know where to go.

So, right now, A lot of people, they get sick, They immediately go to a doctor and it's probably something that's more connected to their lifestyle, what they're eating, and then their doctor doesn't know anything about that.

And so a lot times people don't really know where to start. So I think a lotta people because dieticians are licensed, think that that where they should start, but I you're probably more qualified than anyone to kinda say, well, actually this is what you should look for.

It's not necessarily dietition or nutrition, But look this type of person. Right. So I do like the IFM, the Institute of Functional Medicine, and they have a, you know, search by my zip code, an IFN certified practitioner.

so like I'm listed on there. I find that their education is quite sound. I will caution, though, in the world, just like anything, right? In the word of functional medicine, you'll find a lot of VIP docs, it costs $5,000 to get established, and also, like everything, an algorithm at many times.

It's like, oh, everyone has leaky gut, everybody needs this protocol. And I do find, I think that there is both a skill set based on the strike of curiosity.

A good functional medicine practitioner has to be extremely curious to a detective of the body. And, there are some good conventional doctors that are very curious and are detectives of their body, and so I really do think it comes down to more of an individual, their passion for their job.

their desire to really understand and listen to their patient, to see the complexity of the human body.

Picky Eating and Taste Adventurers

And I would just say I'd caution that even in the world of functional medicine, I see all too often just this protocol of these 10 formulas, do this, come back in this time, we're not going to modify, and sometimes you can end up

wasting a lot of money in that way too.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Okay, so let's dig into some other things that you tend to focus on, which I know you talk about mental health a lot with and functional nutrition, like basically kind of bridging the two.

So what do you think are some of the biggest root causes that most practitioners still miss when addressing anxiety? So for certain, and I would even probably say the functional world, but most definitely in the allopathic kind of standardized medicine world the connection to the gut, you know, twofold.

In my book, The Anti-Anxiety Diet, I use multiple Rs just to kind have a little alliteration of how to approach anxiety. And I always say you have to consider all six potential causes and you might have partial impact of let's say so we talk about reducing inflammation we talked about resetting the microbiome repairing leaky gut rebalancing adrenal and hormones.

There's another R for the neurotransmitters. I can't think of what R I used for that. But so, you know, it could be any of these and then micronutrient deficiency, addressing micron nutrient deficiency.

And so for someone it might be an imbalance of B6 and zinc. The reason being is that they were on birth control for 20 years and that suppressed these nutrients in their body.

And that's also made them have low progesterone. So we have to think for them in those two kind of banks of the river. I think a lot of people would move a lots of milestones forward by focusing on the gut first, that repairing leaky gut and that resetting the microbiome.

And microbiomes may be even most impactful because we know that in the micro biome, we produce serotonin and GABA, which are our inhibitory mellower out compounds for the brain.

help us to feel safe. We think of serotonin as the most popular, but I would argue GABA for sure, which is an inhibitory mellower out. It basically like vents the steam train of an epinephrine adrenaline surge.

So a lot of people are feeling keyed up right now for good cause. and getting ample GABA and serotonin can help to regulate that. And then we also look at the role of the gut, where if there's a gut infection with candida or parasite or a dysbiotic flora like klebsiella or E.

coli, any of these gut infections are going to send through that bilateral feedback of the gut-brain access, it's going send feedback that shit is not right.

And basically. So we'll see a huge surge of adrenaline. I've had people come to me with panic attacks, really severe anxiety and mood disorders, and a lot of that has to do with the fact that there's an active gut infection and that pathogen is creating a surge or survival from the inside out.

And then the brain is trying to manage that. And so I find huge impact on doing strategic gut cleanses, you know, really supporting with more of a Paleoish based diet to help to rest the gut from any gut irritants.

probiotics, following gut cleanse, eating probiotic-rich foods, supporting gut lining with bone broth and glutamine, aloe, DGL. And I find that that can be really huge on impacting mental health as a huge harness.

Then the other one that isn't one of those Rs, not as sexy, is blood sugar regulation. I think that's the biggest one we talk about in Naturally Nourished Kids and, of course, with my work in the ketogenic space.

Just getting off the blood sugar roller coaster helps with mood stability and regulation. We see three to five times more likelihood of depression and anxiety with those that have an A1c of over 5.9. So when we can keep our blood sugars stabilized, we're creating less oxidative stress, less inflammation, and less irritability jags, a less manic excitatory or slumping irritabilty.

We feel extremely grounded in a low glycemic diet, and then that amplifies when we make ketones. Because if we actually adjust our macros to make key tones, these cross the blood-brain barrier, they reduce intercranial inflammation, so inflammation in the brain goes down, which is a huge marker also that we see with mental illness, And those keytones are gabernigenic, So back full circle to the GABA, Ketones actually help us to feel that ease and that's why they help inhibit seizures.

So if you think of the idea of a seizure being super reactive, the ketones also can help just on a daily basis feel solid, grounded, and can really harness the stallion in the brain.

Is there an age that you wouldn't put, let's just say if it's your kid, is there an age that believe they shouldn't be put on keto foods or is their any distinction?

I love that question because all babies in utero are making ketones. all babies in utero. So it's really the question of when did we decide that we should rob babies of the excess of ketones because breastfed babies also are making ketone formula with high fructose corn syrup.

Those babies are not making key tones, right? So right away we're starting to moving from that traditional God food into that ultra-processed product.

And then what are we recommended by the AAP to feed our kids as the first food? Processed refined carbs that are synthetically enriched, and that's cereal, rice cereal and oatmeal.

So we're giving them a high glycemic naked carb, because a lot of mamas aren't adding breast milk to that, a lotta times just water. We're given them naked carbs and crash, we are creating an insulin response right away starting to handicap their metabolic health and rob them of those ketones.

Kids, you know, I haven't finger-stuck my daughter just because I don't find it's worth stressing her. And now she's pretty metabolically active. But I would guess probably up through age five that Stella had a light ketone production.

Her first food was avocado, followed by salmon, follow by smashed blueberry, but only eaten when she had fat. I believe that we have been designed to be a hybrid using ketones and glucose, and I feel that what has been a huge misstep is robbing ourselves of that access by overconsumption of ultra-processed carbs.

And then in the book, so that's kind of the subset is, yeah, I believe ketons are good for all. I will say kids are incredibly more metabolically flexible than adults, you know, as we age.

We lose our insulin sensitivity. And I will say that, you know, in my sections of macros, I recommend half of the amount of carbs than the AAP does throughout the age ranges and double the protein, maybe no surprise, than that A. A. P.

recommends for good cause, research-supported cause. Uh, and yet, many of those kids, when falling naturally nourished kids the athletes, they're likely in still light nutritional ketosis.

And then I state in the book, if your child is, you're considering a drug intervention, go keto first. So I'm talking ADHD. I am talking anything on the spectrum in, in autistic spectrum world.

Your child has been followed by the doctor for non-alcoholic fatty liver, or we're looking at hypertriglyceridemia for that child or obesity. For all of those reasons, get those carbs tighter because they're showing a need for that benefit of the ketones.

Do you, what's your view though on dairy? Like, cause a lot of times with keto, people just kind of overkill with, you know, just cheese, cheese cheese butter, butter butter.

So do you see there being, is there more of a balance for you in terms of how you say it? Or you're like, no, it's a free for all for what, as long as you keep within the percentages.

Training in Functional and Integrative Nutrition

No, I'm not like a does it meet your macros kind of gal. I might, is this whole food? Is this a food kind a gal first, right? So we're not, like, stacking up burger patties at a drive-through.

Right. Slathering them in butter. Yeah. So, you know, I think dairy definitely offers a lot of nutritional benefits. I have some raw milk in my banana bolt coffee protein shake right there.

And I that dairy can support bone growth development, no doubt, and that also, especially in the perimenopausal age group, we need a I like dairy as an offering for protein, like cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, grass-fed whey that's non-denatured.

I think those are all very beneficial foods. But yes, I'm not a big fan. You think of cheese as a condiment, right? And so it's more about the just structure of the nutrient density of it.

So no, we're not doing like the classic high meat, high cheese. It's a more of a Mediterranean keto where I am also pretty focused on two to three cups of leafy greens.

I want to get phyto compounds and antioxidants throughout the process. Yeah, so that's an interesting thing to talk about because because I'm sure you're similar to me in that, you've been in this for a while and then all of a sudden vegetables are the devil.

And like all these influencers like, no, cut vegetables out, the oxalate stuff, yada, and it's like it so doesn't sense check with not even just how I was raised, I am not talking about that but just more of just my emotional intelligence around this stuff of like when I've gone 100% carnivore, like I crave Certain greens like and the body does know a lot, right?

So it's like what's your position? Well, I mean you're already sharing a bit, but can you go a little bit more in depth around? Yeah, you know your possession on That you no vegetables in general Yes.

I think I have like now four or five podcasts with different names that sound like, are vegetables going to kill me? Because yeah, I'm happy that you asked this, James, because I it's really important to discuss.

So just like the tone of me feeling that we're designed to use both glucose and ketones, i believe that there's also a similar swing of we are supposed to eat animal and plant.

I don't think that veganism is right. I think we need to find a swing. And there's going to be different seasons where we might have to go more meat-centric, like when we're healing the gut.

still retaining ample protein for those amino acids and muscle-sparing effect, of course. But we might need higher phyto compounds to support detox, to help with providing, again, more antioxidant boost to the body if we're seeing oxidative stress.

And I would argue, as we are seeing more and more impact of industrialized chemicals, you know, and like, Asprey or whoever is saying oxalates will kill you and spinach is the worst, Oxalates, their argument is that they create, they bind, right?

And so they can demineralize and that those can be inflammatory cages, if you will, for the body, and they cause a lot of joint pain and, of course, kidney damage if individuals are prone towards and have high uric acid, etc.

With that being said, do you know what else they cage? Glyphosate. You know, what? Heavy metals. So it's like, dude, we're we are exposed to so many industrialized toxins.

I'm good with something caging and helping to remove things that are in my body. And I don't find oxalates to demineralize when I am looking at a micronutrient assessment.

But I have seen a lot of gaps in individuals that have been, especially in the world of calcium, especially in the world of certain phyto-compound-rich nutrients like vitamin C, of course, when we're seeing a tighter carnivore.

And so I do find that swing of both, and at the same vein, don't eat 10 cups of raw spinach, right? There's a reason why these vegetables have some anti-nutrient, yes.

to protect us to, protect the animal from, you know, completely decimating the crop. So there are some gut disruptors, but there's also benefit. And when I look at something like broccoli, I've talked to Paul Saladino at my dinner table about this, and it was an interesting debate at best.

But I was like, bro, If eating broccoli increases my body's production of glutathione, right? So if my buddy makes more glutatthione which is the master antioxidant when I eat broccoli, I don't care if you're telling me that that's because that was a hormetic stressor, that a toxin that stressed my bad to make this disease fighting.

reduces all-cause mortality compound endogenously in my body. That means eat a little bit of broccoli to do that. You know, just like we do hot and cold plunges, Just like, we lift weights.

Finding the Right Practitioner

Sometimes a stressor actually, as long as it's creating a beneficial outcome, I don't think it makes sense to villainize it or to completely create a fear association with it because there's a net benefit.

That is such a good and interesting point, because I think we talk socially, politically about, oh, don't be so extreme. There's gray areas of life, but that's true within the nutritional and food world, right?

You could basically demonize any food. You could say a pro or con for literally everything. So it's really like, it, It's not necessarily about like picking a side.

It is more about finding the balance, which I think you're doing a very good job of. But you also really in capture something here. And I know you talk about it a lot, but you talked about building resilience because that's what you are talking about is resilience instead of just removing triggers, which is what a lot of, you know, influencers out there are really pushing for is like, just go all meat or go, all veg.

It's like cause they're just in a sense saying remove that trigger, but you're like no, no it's resilience we want. So what does that look like? Yeah, and why am I not tolerating it?

You know? What's the condition in which I'm not tolerate it. And someone with leaky gut or gut damage will have more intolerance to veg and so they have to heal their gut to tolerate.

Right, so you got to take it case by case. But anyone that's like, you know, some people feel like their body's constantly on the edge. So for that person, they're told a lot of times just remove, just do an elimination diet.

But where does resilience fit into that? Is it just focus, like you gotta go get tested. I mean, obviously you're big into getting tested, right? And so you get test and then you focus on the healing of whatever shows up.

Is that kind of step one? Right, so I think if you are looking at like a cost affordable entry point and you know something's off and your doctor keeps telling you everything's fine or everything is within range and generally a doctor just runs a comp, which it's called a comprehensive metabolic panel, It's just looking at really what's passing transiently through the body on an electrolyte level, a little bit of liver markers, kidney markers.

But it's not telling us comprehensively what going on in the by any means. And a lot of people are just getting a comp of CBC and, you know, maybe lucky if an A1C and a vitamin D and of course, everyone's getting their lipids run because the multi-billion dollar statin industry wants to make sure they're staying on top of that.

So, you know, I think the disadvantage is a lot of people don't have access to the information. I tried it in the anti-

anxiety diet with those, multi approach entry points, if you will.

provide quizzes, I try to provide various assessments, symptom associations, so people can at least say, oh, this is me. I'm the adrenal insufficiency person because I had to evacuate during a hurricane and now I can see how it was a stressful trigger event and I am dealing with brain fog, chronic fatigue, you know, and so this me, then that person hopefully atleast has the guidance of not just saying, where do I start, but says, I need a salivary cortisol.

I actually give lab recommendations in each chapter of the anti-anxiety diet. Again, we don't want people self-diagnosing, but the reality is, is you know yourself more than your doctor does.

They've just spent maybe 15, 20 minutes with you. And so it's important to when you're reading through it, If you have that, ah, this is me, or that resonates strongly, that's what I would suggest is the first place to kind of bite off or to request a lab for.

And I try to provide, like I said, both conventional lab assessments as well as functional, and even note companies, et cetera. That's why I kind of bring up the, where do people start a lot?

Cause I feel like, um, most people are living with chronic disease and they don't even realize it, right? So they realize that whatever they've been experiencing every day is a chronic illness or something, something's wrong.

Root Causes of Anxiety and Gut Health

So for the sake of that, like what are some things from your experience that people may not even realize is connected to their nutrition or to something they're eating that you can kind of help them become more aware.

For example, like dandruff, for example. Circles under the eyes like can you kind of highlight some symptoms and what may potentially? Be the causation so that people better understand of like oh, this is what it what I see in myself and then maybe What they should potentially do or kind a veer them where they go or who they look to for that Yeah, so, you know dandruff I think of really dandruff as well as any derm issue usually ties back to fungal or bacterial dysbiosis.

And so that's a big area of focus. Then when we look at like circles under the eyes, we're looking at liver health as the first thing. For instance, my daughter genetically has a GST1 mutation which impacts glutathione levels.

I had mentioned that with the broccoli. It's the grandmama master antioxidant with vitamin C being kind of the baby. sister and then CoQ10 is in the middle and selenium and such, but glutathione and right below it is NAC, an acetylcysteine.

And some individuals are going to have lower ability to make glutothione, and so like for Stels, I would rub it on her liver transdermally whenever I'd see dark circles under her eyes.

As she's grown older and she is eating a lot more phyto compounds, we're seeing less of except for when she's in the pool a lot, because again, that's a chemical toxin.

The chlorine, right? Right, so we do vitamin C then to offset the chlorine metabolites, and then we add in glutathione orally now for her. And so I look at liver health with the eyes, I would say if people that are listening are dealing with stubborn metabolism and they're eating clean, but they just feel like it's their hormone, Sometimes it is your hormone, but most of the time, I'll tell you what it was stubborn metabolism.

It's insulin resistance and that you have an excessive level of insulin and leptin. So those are two labs that I recommend requesting, you know, looking at the thyroid, of course, But all too often we're seeing insulin goes up way preceding an A1C.

And so you might have in A 1C at 5.4 or 5 5, so your doctor's not even talking about pre-diabetes. but your insulin might be 27 or 32, and I like it under eight.

When insulin levels start to creep up past the teens, literally insulin puts a lock on our access to go through lipolysis or breaking body fat, And we are more prone towards lipogenesis or bodyfat storage.

And so in my approach of unlocking your metabolism, I do a six-week tight keto reset to get that insulin down as rapidly as possible. We can see pretty remarkable decline in insulin just by pulling carbs to just the residuals from like almonds, from the asparagus, the broccoli.

So not selecting any carbs staying at 30, 45 grams a day. And that literally unlocks metabolism. Then we look at their leptin level and if their left in is above 10 or lower than five, I'm going to treat that individual different in food frequency.

So if they have a higher leptin, I am going encourage them to fast longer, more food scarcity, the body's perceiving a state of being overfed. If their lepton is a three, i'm gonna fat feed them actually and i am gonna have them start their day with olive oil and salt to actually tell their body.

fat is coming in and get that leptin up so the body feels safe to drop the weight again. And so those two biomarkers I think are really important and not run commonly for individuals frustrated with body composition or change.

I use those very strategically in clinic to dial a protocol. Well, I love that. That's really gold information. I hope everyone listening or watching like really took notes on that, because that's, that really the key is like, we only know what we know.

Right. And so my hope is that we're opening people's eyes to potentially recognize like oh, this thing that I thought was caused by XYZ is actually something that can actively deal with by working with someone that is knowledgeable, but also through my nutrition and through So to that point, so if you had to create like a food is medicine starter kit, but not products but principles, what three ideas would be a non-negotiable for you?

Because the first is you have to eat whole real foods, right? So we have be talking about foods. The second is getting ample protein. So starting with a simple calculation of one gram per pound of ideal body weight.

So it might not be actual body weight, but an ideal bodyweight, one gram per pound. And so that might be, for me, something like 120 grams that I'm looking to get every single day.

Reason for that is especially, and this starts in children. So if your kiddo is 60 pounds, you're trying to them 20, 20 20 in their protein goal throughout the day, This is important because we see in research that the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that plays a role with socialization, with executive thinking, reducing impulsivity, helping with learning and attentiveness, The prefrontal cortex thrives when we get ample protein, and there's research that I use in naturally nourished kids to support that, as well as the anti-anxiety diet.

And so protein being broken down into amino acids, those amino acid make our neurotransmitters. Then, of course, we got the benefit of the protein in the diet for our immune system because we need ample proteins to actually make an antibody when we're presented with an antigen.

So whether that's a seasonal pollen or that a viral infection or mold, we need ample circulating amino acids to help our body to build those immune responders, if you will.

We also need the protein, of course, for muscle protein synthesis and metabolic health. The more muscle we have, not only favorable for looks, but literally a factor in also all-cause mortality.

The more muscle we retain, the better our longevity is. So protein for sure and meeting your minimum. That should be the first question is like, where's my protein on my plate if you're making it for yourself or your kiddo?

And then the second one would be to aim into keeping my carbs in check. Am I keeping low glycemic enough based on my metabolic flexibility, my level of insulin resistance or sensitivity?

Am i eating a low enough carbs that I can tap into the magical production of ketones intermittently or chronically depending on where I am in my goal set?

But I always want you to have access to them.

Ketones, Kids, and Dairy in Keto

I was gonna ask, what does that look like in your house? Cause I know you mentioned you make things from scratch, but like, so do you guys, does your daughter, do guys not, for example, have, you ever make bread or do have like are there constant things?

Like I'm assuming so protein, fat, vegetables are consistent. So what, is there anything else that's consistent that maybe you know, is a little outside of that kind of carb thing or, I don't know.

Like, cause there's some people that are like, oh, we still always make sourdough bread, for example. Right. Yeah. You know what I'm saying? Like like or are you like no, if for us it's truly like we rarely do it or we don' do, it like where do you stand with that?

On sour dough specifically. So, you, know as far as carbs, Fruits and starchy vegetables, you know, like sweet potato, right? Yeah, beets. And I mean, kind of like you can see the book cover behind me.

That's kind a meal, so we have chicken kebabs. We have a salad, it looks like, with avocado and strawberry and sprouts. And then we have Greek yogurt cheesecake bars, which yeah, those actually do have two tablespoons of honey for the whole recipe and Greek yoghurt and eggs and then a nut-based crust.

So still even low glycemic and pretty, so again, there's carbs that sprinkle in and I find carbs do best in my philosophy of when they're partnered with high antioxidants.

And so typically that's the produce on our plate. With that being said, I have a retired sourdough culture in my fridge and we've played with it. My husband and I went to a class at, we have lovely mill out here called Barton Spring Mills.

They work with all US growers, heirloom variety grains. I myself went really tight gluten free in I think like 2015. And when we went Italy for my 40th birthday, the non glyphosate, you know, non synthetically enriched grains and like be able to really surrender to this.

And so we started playing a little bit with the Barton Mill Springs. My gut was fine. I felt resilient. I tested my antibodies, my thyroid, all good. And so, we did our thing and just kind of moderate bites of things here and there.

Then came to make sourdough and we get back and then I'm like, Oh, Well, two months later, I had to do a keto reset because I gained 15 pounds. Right.

It's a slippery slope. Now it's retired because that didn't serve me. And with sourdough, the problem I find, just personally, for now, how I look at sour dough is twice a month.

So if I twice-a-month do an open-faced slice, or my husband makes garlic toast and it is super delicious with spaghetti squash casserole, and that's the salty, crunchy element, Okay, in moderation, I feel resilient on my gut, but metabolically it doesn't really serve me and it is a little bit more of an addictive food.

And when you're perpetually making loaves, it's easy to cut off of. It's a stimulus too. So I'm not staunch about it. I just feel like it depending on what your body comp goals are and where that would fit in your diet.

But you have to have a resilient gut and ideally it an heirloom grain. Now it is interesting because I'm sure there are people that are going to listen to this and they'll be like, oh, she just sounds so restrictive, right?

They're going label what you're saying and judge it. But I don't personally hear that. Like how I identify it is like, even for myself, I've done so many different diets throughout my 20 plus years, you know, and I tried all these different things.

And I have found for my self, am not good with like that cheat day. I'm better just all or nothing. So that's my choice and my decision that I made over time.

It sounds like where you are at as well. You found what works for you. But for the person that's like going, oh, this sounds so extreme, can you kind of, you know, defend like, well, it's, what mind shift has to happen so that the doesn't hear that you don't choose these things and not see it as extreme?

Like, What is the mind that changed that has Yes. So I do run, my biggest program I run is called a keto reset. And so people are curious. It's a 12 week food is medicine program.

I think one of my favorite phrases of it is, I will help you redefine your relationship with food and I'll help to crave savory again. And those are wins.

If you can crave savory, not force, I'm talking about like an organic, like you're salivating thinking about Brussels sprouts and a ribeye, then versus a cookie cake pop at Starbucks, right?

Like, it's actually rewiring your reward system, your palate. And a lot of that also comes with getting off of the mediocre to shitty slope. That's, like you said, you know, there's a lot of people probably listening that aren't feeling thrive mode.

Vegetables, Resilience, and Testing

And so if you're hanging from mediocre to crummy, not sure if I'm allowed to swear, but if your hanging for mediocre or crumby, it's like, then you don't care.

What's the difference of feeling chronically inflamed, more bloated, a little bit less bloating? Once you realize what awesome feels like and you're like wanting to chest bump someone in the parking lot and are feeling just rock and roll in your body, nothing is worth that shitty.

Like shitty is so dramatic from optimal that you are not messing around. There is no, you know, processed product or food that is going to take you off of that optimal state.

And I think that that's where I really feel I experienced food freedom. And again, when you're channeling savory, you can still totally indulge. Like I'm a fan of sashimi at restaurants as an app starter.

I love raw oysters from the East Coast as a nature's multivitamin, I mean, we eat really well. We eat steak and lobster and all of these things and occasional glasses of quality old world wine.

And I find those indulgences to really serve my goals and yet to still feel indulgent. different than what I'm preparing at home, maybe. And I find enough freedom in that.

I truly authentically feel zero restriction. That's what look for in my daughter, and I am constantly watching, because if she starts to feel victimized or restricted, we're going to have to pivot in our approach.

Because that is not something that I want. It's worth the investment. Life comes with discipline. Discipline usually yields good things, generally speaking.

When I think that's key, like your mindset shifts. away from the norm when you start to realize that the normal potentially is what's keeping you from thriving.

And so once you actually start, to feel like you're thriving, it's like, well, you'll do, It's almost like the pendulum

swings the other way and you were like oh my gosh, I'm gonna do everything I can now to stay in that thrive mode.

So suddenly these things that someone else who's in norm would go like Oh, that's so, You're so extreme. It was like no, no you are extreme because I am now thriving and I just wanna stay there, you don't even realize that you might not be thriving if that's the case, right?

Right, and you're continuing to handicap yourself by those choices that perceive as freedom. I was kicked out of, yeah, I mean, full circle from our early conversation about food deserts, et cetera.

For the first time ever, this was before 2020, even kicked off of a panel in Austin because I asked about all foods fit. about where Oreos fit. And I just, I answered it very bluntly.

I was told that that promotes disordered eating. Uh, and I think again, that all foods fit and saying that there's health at every size is a co-op to disempower and keep us connected to Big Ag and Big Pharma.

You can choose to be in that. That's okay. Um, but if you're choosing freedom in your body, it's going to require some discipline and it is going require resetting all of those relationships.

I love it. That's a great place for us to just cap this. I think that food freedom and health freedom, it's just, It is a choice. And I'm hoping that those watching or listening to this have gotten a little bit closer to expanding what's possible.

You know, and I that's really what key is we only know what we know. So if we can expand that perspective a bit, then I believe we're on the right track.

Absolutely. Um, how can people do your programs? How can they find you? Where should they start? So the website and social media handles are, uh, Allie Miller RD.

So AlliemillerRD.com, which is A L I M I L L E R R D dot com. And then at Alli Miller, RD on a social. And yeah, definitely follow on Instagram.

Food Freedom, Mindset, and Where to Start

I'm the most active and I have been sharing every weekly meal plan as just like a real, like this is what I am writing down, this what it is. So if you're looking for inspiration, that's great.

I launched my next 12 week, the last one of the year keto reset on September 24th, so I'd love for you to join. And that whole program is only $449. It's 36 bucks a week.

You get my brain and you're in a private chat group where Becky, my business partner and the co-author of Naturally Nourished Kids, we're the direct moderators.

So you are not like farmed off to some chat bot, it's real support and we see phenomenal outcomes. I would love you for to you join that. And then you can get Naturally Nourished Kids, the Anti-Anxiety Diet, The Anti Anxity Diet Cookbook, anywhere books are sold.

So support your local bookstore. And if you're not going to support local book store, buy on my website. If you need to, you could buy it on Amazon if your prime member and you get it overnight and all that stuff.

Then you have a podcast. Yes, I have podcast NaturallyNourish and then I've a YouTube channel Naturallynoursh as well. And you've done over 460 episodes of that podcast.

As a last parting question, is there something from your interviews with the guests from the very beginning that has changed? Is there's something that you learned along the way from those 500 or so episodes that, you're just like, oh, that's not where I started out, but that is different?

Yeah, I think that a great question. And I that that sign of intelligence, right? Being able to adapt and pivot and apply critical thinking. I mean, before I started my podcast, as you'll learn in the anti-anxiety diet, I was a vegan, right?

And so I had to totally break up a doctrine. I have a phrase, doctrine creates disconnect, because if you become indoctrinated by your diet you're not gonna listen to the feedback of when your body's saying, this isn't serving us anymore.

So since I've started the podcast, I think that that was 2016. I that probably my connection to metabolic flexibility and understanding that we can really incorporate often more grams of carbs while still staying in a light nutritional ketosis.

And I in the earlier stages, that pretty staunch. where if I was giving my daughter an apple, I would take that bite and then I'd spit out the piece. I'm like, oh no, this might spike my glucose.

And I've come to learn through CGMs and being in the field longer and seeing, wow, we're a lot more flexible. When we check that insulin and leptin marker, We can really determine where that flexibility lies.

So it sounds like you're little easier on yourself. Yes. little less staunch around principles and dogmatic concepts. Yes, yes. I think even the perfect diet, if we're too white-knuckled on it, can create a stress response that works against us.

Stress response, yeah. Yeah, so we gotta find that need. We cannot forget. That's great. Well, thank you again for joining us, Allie. It's really been, I'm really excited by what you shared and I truly hope we've helped some people with this episode.

So thank-you. Awesome, awesome. Thanks for having me on, James. And thank y'all for participating. Please stay curious.