Introduction and Summit Welcome

The amount of autonomic tone that it takes to keep our emotions depressed I think can throw us into that deep dorsal vagal of depression. The way through when I see people heal is they have to go through this like sympathetic activation stage.

It can feel like anxiety, insomnia, rage, all sorts of things as that emotion starts to break through the basement doors and through body. So it is the willingness to feel.

This is Dr. Talks. Hello, I'm Dr. Sharon Stills, your co-host of the Hormones and Mental Health Overcoming Anxiety, Depression, and ADHD Summit. It's a pleasure and my honor to be here with you all and we are in for a treat because I have Dr Kathleen King here, with me.

She is the founder and CEO of Primal Trust Academy and Community and she weaves together. brain retraining, vagus nerve toning, somatic movement, and trauma-informed attachment repair techniques in her online worldwide platform.

And so, as a physician, I love when I got to meet Dr. Kathleen and be able to share her work with patients because you can have anxiety, you could have depression, yes, maybe your hormones are off, Or maybe your thyroid is low or maybe you're nutrient deficient.

But if you don't do the real work of rewiring and regulating your nervous system, you are cutting yourself short. You're not really giving yourself the whole healing gestalt.

And so I'm thrilled to have you here. This is such an important topic. There's no one better than I would want to have this conversation with and share with everyone watching the summit.

So welcome to the Summit. Thank you. I'm so happy to be here with you Yeah, I am happy you're here too. And I just have to it's like when I when i think about you and I think About when we first met which was only a year ago and i had a patient who had Really bad anxiety and we had bounced her hormones or hormones were great.

It helped But she was still anxious and I didn't see her for a couple of months and she came back to me and said, my anxiety's gone. And I was like, awesome, did the hormones finally kick in?

And she said no, I'm doing primal trust. And I was like, what is primal trust? And that's what we're going to learn today. And she told me, and I jotted it down because whenever patients tell me cool things, I jot it and then I go research and find out.

Kathleen Kingu2019s Healing Journey

But I leaving to go to a retreat as part of a group that I'm part and I get to this retreat in Mexico last year and the first person I meet there is Kathleen.

And I say, hi, how are you? Nice to meet you. What do you do? And she says, I founded Primal Trust. I was like, it's a do list. It just wrote you down.

So I love when the universe just kind of cuts to the chase and makes it easy for us. Yeah. So cool. It's meant to be. Tell us, first of all, just who you are, how you got involved in this work.

You have such an interesting background and story. Yeah, well, I was somebody who was both chronically ill and had a lot of chronic trauma patterns, including raging, anxiety, and panic disorder for many, many years.

I somebody went from doctor to doctor. I was diagnosed with Lyme disease, mold toxicity, hormone imbalances, co-infections, all of that. And I kept trying things and I just wasn't getting better.

In fact, I would often respond adversely to most treatments. I felt like I You know, I had two little kids. I wasn't sleeping. An anxiety and panic all day long. I felt exhausted.

It could hardly function. And it just got worse and worse. And I felt more and more out of control. So I really had to go on a journey of learning how to self-manage anxiety, insomnia, panic, and illness because treatments weren't working for me.

It just wasn't my path. And it was my past to learn how self regulate my biology. That's what I did. Now I have a whole protocol of teaching people. how to consciously biohack their limbic system that's producing the anxiety and panic.

How to resolve the trauma inside and how ultimately allow their cellular health to come back into homeostasis through targeting the brain and the nervous system.

And so you said something that I just want to circle back to because I think it's so important that you were reacting. And when we see patients, they have paradoxical reactions.

So you give, say, valerian root, which is supposed to relax someone and make them sleep, and it makes them awake. Or you get B12 and that's supposed give you energy and makes you tired or they can't tolerate.

Can you speak to that a little because I'm sure there are a lot of women listening who are on this situation and how do you do that? Because it's not just going, right, we're going to give you a different herb, and give your different vitamin.

Yeah, I think it comes back to what's happening on a cellular level when we're stuck in something known as cell danger response and limbic system impairment that the body for some people will interpret almost anything as a threat and you know something that's supposed to maybe help to calm or something to help you detox the bodies like I can't handle that input as well and it goes into even more of a severe reaction and that was the case for me where my cells and the signaling between my cells was interpreting everything as a threat.

And that you know that it's not just about one thing. It's just the diet or the hormones or infection or toxins. Its a systemic communication issue that has gone offline because there isn't a sense of safety circulating through the body to be able to appropriately interpret what you're taking or what your feeling or sensing.

So it's like your interpretation has gone haywire and you need to teach the brain and the body how to come into communication and more accurate interpretation.

Why the Nervous System Matters in Chronic Illness

Now I can take anything. I mean I wasn't able to take homeopathics and now you know I could I've had to takes antibiotics, I had take herbs for different things I don't have those reactions anymore so it's not that I was you like my body was intolerant my system wasn' able too appropriately decide how to utilize those substances and the good news is you can absolutely change those responses.

So I want to ask you to jot down two things from what you said, and then I wanna dive specifically to anxiety, depression, ADHD. But you've said a sense of safety.

And so I guess I have a two part makes me think, so did we learn this to not have sense a safety? Is this all coming from childhood and adverse childhood experiences?

And is there anything you can recommend for the ladies listening? That they can do to start to invite that sense of safety. Yeah There's two main factors that I think have affected our sense Of safety a yes childhood trauma

adverse childhood experiences for sure those people tend to have a body that overreacts under reacts is immune confused because the setup of your nervous system your neurobiological development was influenced with a lot of stress.

And so the way that your body learned how to stay in a harmony in homeostasis was it wasn't appropriately developed. So those people, as they grow up, their cellular interpretation of the world tends to be a little wonky.

Yes, there's that. The second thing that's caused us to not feel safe on a deep level is the medical programming, in my opinion, where you're given a lot of diagnoses and lab tests and made to feel like you need something outside of you always in order to get better.

We aren't taught about the innate healing mechanisms of our body. by the practitioner when we first see them, what do you think your body is asking you with these symptoms?

You're taught, oh, you've got this, this and this. You need this pill, This thing, that, You are not actually being pointed back inside to discern what the body Is trying to give you a message of.

And so whenever control is put outside of us, That's going to make us feel unsafe. It's gonna make feel out of control. So those two things together, a childhood, upbringing of childhood chaos or trauma or whatever, plus being highly programmed by authority figures that your body is not wise, creates a real set point of I'm not safe.

My body unwise, my body broken and I need something or someone outside of me to fix it. Now, this doesn't mean that we don't use protocols and tools from physicians who understand how to work with the body.

It can really be a win-win to learn how calm down the the and use certain tools to continue to influence the of receiving signals of safety. But it really needs to be collaborative effort between the patient and the practitioner where the is working on their nervous system, their belief system their worldview, processing emotion, dealing with trauma, and a practitioner who understands the nervous system is a big part of this and knows how to carefully influence the body in a way where the system doesn't freak out that I think makes the best outcome for somebody who's dealing these issues.

Yeah, I've never met a patient who's been chronically ill that came in with a regulated nervous system. When we check the nervous systems, it's always sympathetic is off the chart.

There's no parasympathetic tone time in time. We still check, but I'm never surprised. It's, always that's what I see. And I think what you were saying, and made me think of one of my favorite, uh, if it says Zen saying but wherever you go, there you are.

And so it's like if you come to the holistic doctor, but you've come with a dysregulated nervous system, or you have come just thinking, yes, you're going to get the magic potion.

Safety, Trauma, and Medical Programming

But you know, if wanted to be an herb, not a pharmaceutical, step in the right direction. If you don't change the things that you are talking about, and I think we all Right?

We all have to work on this because I don't know very many people that didn't have trauma in their childhood, right? And I know not very people who didn' t grow up influenced by society and thinking our answers to everything, and especially our health, lie outside of us.

So don't beat yourself up if you're listening, right? This is just an opportunity to go, I can do some work here and I could re-regulate and actually feel better on all levels.

And so how does this apply to anxiety? What is your lens on anxiety. I know that journey well. What it's like to be crippled. not for months, but for years by anxiety and insomnia.

So first of all, my heart goes, it was one of the hardest journeys I've had to take. And I'm so grateful that I am on the other side of it. I want to say that, I was somebody who literally went almost 20 years on tons of medications, addicted to benzodiazepines, doctors to doctors, therapists to therapists, all sorts of diagnoses ranging from anxiety to borderline to panic disorder, to CPTSD and I am on the other side of it.

It's been many years since I've had a panic attack. Now I experienced the emotion of anxiety because it's a normal human emotion, but it doesn't get trapped and it does limit anything that I do.

So I want you to know that this is what's possible. How did I get here? Well, I got here because everything else wasn't working and it got so bad that it was hard to be alive to, be honest.

And I had to start taking radical responsibility for what was happening inside of me and learn how to feel. the feels and not revolve my life around the anxiety.

I used to revolved everything. Like I was afraid to do things because I didn't want to have a panic attack. You know, there's a therapy called acceptance and commitment therapy.

But I basically did that where I decided anxiety got to live with me as a companion, as scared little child within me, I literally personified it and said, you belong in my family.

You get to be here with me as I go to the grocery store and have to breathe through it and leave the store halfway through and calm back down and go back in to get what I need.

It became a companion that I allowed to me and that shifted everything. Because I included it instead of avoided it. From there I didn't need the medications and things to suppress it because I, my psyche learned that I wasn't afraid of it anymore.

I was an afraid, of insomnia anymore, I learned to enjoy the sleepless nights and find my favorite books and be like, Oh, good. Okay. To read my book at two in the morning.

That was my response. And it retrained the stress response to it. So you've got two things. You've, got your first reaction, which is the anxiety, or you can't sleep.

you have the second reaction which, is your resistance to, it you, have control over your second, reaction. As you allow the first reaction to be there, the anxiety, that panic, this sleeplessness, as you allowed it to there with your second reaction, which is your response, The first Reaction over time will calm down.

It will become integrated and eventually you will no longer be a slave to those emotions and those situations and you'll be free. That's so beautiful and it just, just to remind, like when you're saying that, I'm thinking it's really rewarding.

And I love hormones and I loved neurotransmitters and love all the things. It's rewarding to give someone hormones, and see things change and that's fantastic.

But what we're talking about here is like such a deeper level of who we are as women, as human beings, and as souls on a journey. And we do ourselves a disservice and I know it can be scary or time-consuming, right?

It's easier to just pop some gaba than it is. But the payoff at the end, I think, like you said, you're free. And we're not managing, we are really embracing.

I've been teaching mindfulness forever and I learned about it in naturopathic medical school and as a student I always said this is good medicine. This is medicine!

And it is, it's just about embracing, saying hello and letting it flow through you and not letting you get trapped. And yes, at first it can be, I don't want to do that.

That's scary, that's uncomfortable. But when you do the work, and I'm thinking to myself, you said 20 years and you look like you're 30. Trying to, trying to the math here.

I am almost 50. So you also, I think it also shows up in how you look and you just have this young, youthful appearance to you.

Healing Anxiety by Meeting It

It's the zoom filter. So it really is, it's so multifactorial, and this is such an important piece that I think is getting talked about more often now than it was, but it still, I believe it should be leading the way.

It should the head of the train, not the caboose. Yeah. So what about ADHD? What is your lens on ADHD. may be a bit controversial of a lens, but I believe it's a separation conflict.

I believed that what I mean by that is I think that based on research I've done, based in my own experiences and talking to a lot of people, it is a trauma response to lack of connection and a seeking of connections that you can't get from a human because you don't trust it will be there.

So the brain is looking frantically to connect with anything else so that it doesn't have to feel a deep sense of aloneness and isolation that probably was there very young.

And I think that there might be genetic factors that sort of lead the brain to doing that. But again, this is controversial. I see people heal from this when they find the ability to deeply connect with the present moment not being something they need to get away from, the ability to go through the experience of having to sit with all sorts of discomfort and not need anything outside of themselves to pull the mind outside one's own awareness of the moment.

That makes sense to me. That doesn't sound controversial. And so what about depression? Those are like the three main things. Depressed emotion would be a good relabeling of the word.

I think that when we haven't been given the emotional skill set of processing emotion, sometimes our family line doesn't teach us the neurobiology of feeling the feelings that it's okay to feel feelings, that's it okay process.

I think we develop neurobiological habits of depressing emotion and the amount of autonomic tone that it takes to keep our emotions depressed, I can throw us into that deep dorsal vagal of depression.

the way through when I see people heal is they have to go through this like sympathetic activation stage which doesn't feel good. It can feel like anxiety, insomnia, rage, all sorts of things as that emotion starts to break through the basement doors and through I think you need to have the resourcing, the nervous system capacity, that willingness to sit with those parts of you.

And that can be a journey in and of itself to develop the nerve system, capacity to start feeling the floodgates of what might be there. It can overwhelming and sometimes you can shut back down because you're like, well, I can't function with this.

I've seen people move from extreme depression into freedom, but they had to go through a period of a lot of anxiety, a lots of insomnia, feeling like they're losing their shit, frankly, to get there.

Now that's not everybody's journey, it might be more incremental, But I do see that as a pattern of those who do come out of depression, is that it can be intense to start feeling those depressed emotions and allowing them to move through.

And I think we spend a lot of time being told not to feel our emotions. I remember growing up in my house, we dealt with a lots of death. And it was like, I was young and we just never talked about it, and then you never said the person's name again.

That was how we were raised, right? We don't talk about things. our generation now that is raising were more open and more verbal but it was that was just the generational we don't talk about things and so we're afraid to sit with emotions we are not comfortable and then we never really get to heal if we were just doctor hopping or looking for the next magic pill and When we teach, I teach the eight-week mindfulness-based stress reduction course by Jon Kabat-Zinn, his work, and we always say taking the stress-reduction course is very stressful, right?

This kind of work is not a skip in the park, but when you do it, then you get to skip.

ADHD, Depression, and Emotional Processing

The end result is you did get skip the in park and play with puppies. So I'm curious what you think about community and connection. I always go back and forth, right?

Like we are here on Zoom. We're reaching all these women and having a summit. It's such a great way we get to impact and change lives and open minds. But what about that we are so on our…

I went to my chiropractor this morning. He goes, what's wrong with your neck? I was like, I think I'm just like always like this lately. Like, oh my God, looking down too much at my phone and my computer.

What do you see? What is the impact of the dark and the light of technology? Yeah, gosh, so I feel this. I always just writing about this in my journal this Every morning, this is kind of a practice.

You check in your body like, body, what do you need? What do need and I felt a strong need. It said, I want a live container of women to just be in person with and feel their energy.

I crave that, Sharon. You'd think I'm online all the time connecting with women, but there's something special about being together, dancing together or hugging each other, holding each, a transmission that we get from each from physical contact that isn't replaced very well by technology.

So, technology has its place and I am starving. I have starving for those circles and it's my intention to find ways to create that or to get involved.

It's literally my intention right now as we speak. And so I encourage you guys that are listening, same thing, like, how can you get outside your comfort zone and invite a handful of women over for lunch and whatever?

How can we start doing this again? Because we've kind of lost it. it's needed. Yeah, it's just, I run a worldwide community of thousands and I am starving for connection.

So it tells you technology cannot replace that in-person experience. We're opening a big clinic. I mean, i've been virtual for the last 13 years and i'm I'm stepping out of my comfort zone and taking on a lot more responsibility, but I was so excited to have patience in person and community and because it is, it's not the same.

Like we're connecting now, But if you were sitting here next to me, It'd be a little more meaningful, a Little more of the juicy stuff. I know. So, and so I guess just as we were wrapping up, could you just explain a little bit about this worldwide community about Primal Trust, about what it is you offer.

So the women I'm hoping by now are like, I want what she's having. Sure. Well, first of all, maybe a link below the book. that I wrote will help them understand it's free.

It's called How Healing Happens. And it explains my whole approach for our community called Primal Trust, as well as several practices and all of that.

You can download that for free on my website, maybe throw in a link. I don't know if we're going to put, we often don' put links in websites. Okay, sure.

Primaltrust.org and it is under the free resources section. So that's one easy way just to learn what I'm doing. But yeah, we have a worldwide community where we live Zoom classes every single day, sometimes multiple times a day.

Where we meet together, regulate our nervous system together. We learn how to take radical responsibility for our relationships, for boundaries, our health.

We learned the art of brain retraining, vagus nerve toning, somatic movement, trauma processing, inner attachment repair. And it's a process that I developed based on my own journey of what tools I use to walk myself out of the hell that was in.

It's spread worldwide and I would love to have you involved. So beautiful. I mean, I can just say as a physician that, like, stamp of approval, just think it's…

I'm seriously thinking of making it mandatory for patients who come to my clinic.

Community, Connection, and Primal Trust

Like, you have to be doing this work because it is going to make the work we do on your physical body so much easier, so kinder, gentler, more effective.

It really, when we say the mind-body, I think a lot of times we're giving it lip service, and this is a way to really embrace it. And you only get healing and benefit and deeper connection to yourself and others.

It's just so, so important. At the end of the day, often, what's that saying? Like at the of day when you slide in and you're done living your life, you want to look back and say, wow, that was a cool ride or whatever.

From this perspective, it's like you want to look back and say, I did it. I was curious, dove in, learned, stretched myself, grew. And this is a vehicle to get you there.

So I just adore you and love the work you're doing. It's so, so powerful. Thank you for giving us a different perspective than just You need to take some 5-HTP because you're depressed or you need some L-theanine because your anxious and those are things that I do say.

But in the combination with this and using this as the foundation, that's how you are really going to soar and really truly heal. There's a difference between getting rid of a symptom or suppressing a symptoms or truly healing and regulating.

And that's what Dr. Kathleen's work is all about. So thank you so much. Just say your website again. It's primaltrust.org. Thank you. I'm going to go download the free book.

Yeah. Very excited about that. That's very kind of you Yeah, I love being able to share this. So I just want to say that overcoming anxiety through meeting it is one of the proudest things I've ever done.

And it's available to each of us. There's a quantum leap moment of bringing that feeling along with you in your life and it is It's the most freeing thing I think I've done.

I overcome a lot of things, but the anxiety panic piece, it really is freedom because yeah, we have things happen, But it won't limit your choices anymore.

And I that the work you're doing, like of course, taking things can be helpful in that process, ultimately it's a deep decision to include it into your life versus fear it.

Yeah, I love that. It makes me think of… I loved the roomie poem. Is it room? It's roomy, right? The guest house. Do you know that poem where you guys can all Google it, but he like…

You know, it's like inviting depression in for a cup of tea, he says. Don't sweep it under the rug. Like, come sit and have tea. And that's what you're talking about here.

Right. So let's all have a tea party. You're making me thinking, oh, going to have to start another woman's circle at my new… So lots of just beauty in here.

So thank you so much for being a part of, such a meaningful part, of the summit. It's truly appreciated. Thank you all for. Being here, so go check her out, primaltrust.org.

She also, I follow you on Instagram. she always has my screenshotting and saving her Instagram post. You've got great stuff there. so be sure to follow her and check out her work.

All right. Thank you for being here and we'll have another episode, interview, conversation coming your way. Bye. Stay connected, stay healthy, and join us next time on Doctor Talks, real talks from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.