From Surviving to Thriving: A Pharmacist's Shift from Pills to Peptides & Functional Medicine Transcript

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Introduction to Lisa Faast and Independent Pharmacy

Hey, everybody, it's Mike McNeal, and I want to welcome you back to the Peptides and Bioregulators Summit. I have one of the most incredible and amazing women I have ever met in our industry.

She just has such a unique approach to healing, a unique approach to a program for a group of healers out there that I feel like kind of get lost in the source and that's pharmacist.

And so today I want to welcome Lisa Faast with us. She has an incredible company called Diversify Our X and some of the most intelligent and incredible conversations I've had Lisa, are with your crowd.

So thank you so much for joining us. And why don't you get started by telling us a little bit about yourself? What does it mean to be a pharmacy badass?

Well, thanks for having me, Michael. Yes, I come from the drug world of pharmacy, so I've been a pharmacist over 20 plus years now. It's getting getting getting old these days. So.

And I've been in the independent pharmacy space as a pharmacy owner for the last 15 plus years. Independent pharmacy is such a unique world because we, you know, we get everything.

You know, it's anybody can walk in at any time with any kind of question. It's kind of like that, that catch all. And so but my passion is independent pharmacy.

I truly believe that patients get better care at independent pharmacies. And so I'm on a mission to help them all survive and thrive and diversify. That's what I do, is I help pharmacy owners help make better businesses because it it ain't as easy as it used to be.

I think anybody who owns a business out there knows that it's tougher than ever. And I think in particularly independent pharmacy, you know, is that ten times.

So I do I get to I get to work with some of the best pharmacists, the, the brightest, most strategic pharmacy owners out there. And it's definitely a never dull day in life.

Dang, I feel that. That's incredible. And so I know you have like you are like because you have all this experience in the pharmacy world, what is it that your program has to offer?

If there is pharmacists listening to this, or even if you have something for like a practitioner that wants to know more about things that they're not familiar with, maybe compounding or things that are in your world, is there is there some way that your approach that you're using to teach them?

Yes, when you're a clinician and then you go into business for that clinician expertise, you don't generally need help on the clinician side. You know, there's lots of support things out there, whether it's associations or C's and stuff like that.

But running a business is completely different than being a good clinician. And so, you know, and just like with independent medical practices of all kinds and independent pharmacy, it used to be good enough.

If you were a good pharmacist, a good doctor, a good fill in the blank, there's this was good. You made a living. You made a good living often.

Business Challenges in Pharmacy and Clinician Mindset

And in especially in our world, in independent pharmacy per year, profit margins just get slashed. More and more people don't realize that 10 to 20% of prescriptions filled by a pharmacy are actually negative margin.

No, I'm not talking like operational margin. I mean, we pay $100 for a drug and we get reimbursed $80 for the drug. Like it's, you know, we lose money filling prescriptions.

And so it's really hard to be successful as an independent pharmacy owner these days. And so, for whatever reason, God put me on this earth that I know how to solve those independent pharmacy problems.

So what I work with, although everything we do is through that kind of filtered lens of clinical, because obviously, if it's good for the patient, that's number one.

But beyond that, it's it's the business strategies. It's almost a little bit like business school for clinicians. So everything from KPIs and financials to marketing to operations, hiring, firing, training your staff, you know, all those kinds of things that you need, those kind of other skill sets, those non-clinical skill sets that you need to run a successful health care business.

And that's really what we do in the pharmacy space for independent pharmacy owners. Well, that's incredible. I think the number one thing that I find with all of my friends who are in a clinician space is that they're horrible business people because they want to be healers and they're afraid of money.

And if you're like me, I come from like a ministry background where I watched my parents do 99% of things in my life for free, and I literally had a health coach client when I just graduated as a health coach.

Write me a $7,000 check and say, don't ever settle for less. You're worth more than you understand. And for me, that flipped my business mindset because we are worth the labor and the higher that we provide, even if we have a heart of healing for others.

And I love that I was available to be a part of one of your webinar series, and I love that. And I was just one category of many categories you offered when we were talking about the power of peptides as being like an over-the-counter type of slash between a supplement and a powerful medicinal substance.

But a pharmacy could offer what really it was a great revenue driver for the whole pharmacy community that, like you said, they constantly bombarded with this ability to not really even have prescriptions or compounds or things that they're created for, come in to have profit for them.

And so it was just cool to see that because I feel like, you know, that's something that I used to go to a pharmacy here in Dallas. I got all my supplements from there.

I got everything that I would use because they had the highest quality you couldn't get in a grocery store. And so I just really I appreciate that because there's very few who lay out a business strategy, even when it comes to sales or helping support business owners.

And I feel like it's such a unique space when it comes to the pharmacy world. So I'm curious, Lisa, what 20 years ago, what was the moment? I know you said God gave you that ability, but what what actually got you into pharmacy and what was your route even into the holistic side of things, because you were one of the smartest holistic people I know too.

So like, how did that come about? Yeah, one of my isms is prophet is not a four letter word. And I think that's important for particularly health care professionals to hear, because I do think many of us go into the medical field because we have such a giving, selfless frame of, you know, reference of the world and it's okay to be to make a profit.

You should make a profit. You can't be a reliable healthcare professional, a reliable source for solving your community's problems, unless you can pay your bills and put food on the table and plan for the future and all those kinds of things.

And so there is a mind shift. Seth and I don't see this in any other space, working with lots of entrepreneurs, and I've owned lots of other businesses.

I'm a serial entrepreneur myself. You know, you don't see those problems and that there's been health care. You almost have to, like, get over the guilt of making a profit.

You know, it's you're doing something bad if you're making a profit. Unless, of course, you're like the PBMs and stuff like, then it's okay, you know, if they make billions.

But so my journey into pharmacy, honestly, I probably would have gone to medical school, except I'm old enough that back in the day, you know, when when, you know, smart people were chattering, all you heard about were the horror stories of having to be awake for like 24 and 48 hours, like in residency.

And here I am, my 17 year old self graduating high school. And it terrified me. It terrified me that if I went to medical school, I was going to be forced to see it for 24 hours and I needed my sleep.

I felt like my 17 year old self said, I need to pick something different. And so, you know, I it was actually going to be chemical engineering. I had an affinity for chemistry.

And then they went to pharmacy school. And so because I figured out I could graduate in five years with my doctorate because there were some special programs.

And so I was like, that sounds like a plan, you know? And back then there was a shortage of pharmacists, unlike today, you know. So there was there was good money because I was a poor little girl and good money sounded really good.

And anyways. But yeah, my fear of not sleeping or not being able to sleep as opposed to be the pharmacist or as opposed to medical school. And then, you know, I I've been very blessed in my career.

From Pharmacy to Functional Medicine and Hormones

I sometimes, often feel like Forrest Gump, like when I tell all the things that I've done. But I honestly think it was just like I was at that right moment in the sense of I was in California.

So California, you know, they're a little ahead of the curve than in a lot of other people when it comes to health and wellness and longevity kinds of things.

Before I opened my own pharmacy, I was able to spend the week in Palm Springs with Doctor Michael Platt, who was like one of the original people with hormones, and I just shadowed him for a week.

And that was that was mind altering, like amazing. And then, you know, plastic surgeries and longevity were really big in California. Happen to know a person, you know, a person, you know, like, and it was just kind of weird, like how I found myself in some certain situations.

And, you know, when it comes to peptides, I was talking with peptides with medical providers, you know, decades ago, you know, like and so it's not that I've been an expert for that long, but it's I've been surrounded by that just because of, you know, the world that I happen to get to get into, in that, in that network.

And then I call myself a functional medicine junkie. I love testing, I love being able to take control of your own health, being able to understand your own insights.

Before I sell anything, I try it, obviously, as long as it's appropriate for me, you know? So I'm constantly, always trying different supplements and for tests, different things because I just think knowledge is power.

And, you know, truly with health care, I think the more information we can get into the hands of the patients, you know, not to offend any medical doctors here on there.

But, you know, this, this history of just do what your doctor says, you know, kind of blindly is, you know, good and bad. Obviously, there's things good things that can come from it, but there's also bad things because doctors are humans too.

And they don't they don't know everything. Right? Like you can't be an expert in everything. That's why they're specialties. And so I think the more that patients are enabled through knowledge, whether it's testing or whatnot, to be able to do their own information, do their own research and, you know, become an expert on themselves, I think then they become an advocate for their own health journey, whether it's they're talking with a pharmacist or a life coach or a doctor or whatnot.

And so, you know, just us as kind of like the journey of where, where was it actually really started? One of my best friends, when I opened my first pharmacy was an OB Ob-Gyn.

We opened our practices around the same time, and he was trying to differentiate himself. And so he went into, you know, kind of the fertility side of, oh, would you buy it?

And had it for the fertility side. Is any of, you know, her clinicians? It's a it's a complicated web. There's a lot of things that can be done. And so that's really kind of what started the Alice down the rabbit hole of, functional medicine and understanding cortisol and hormones.

And, you know, that I got into the hormones and the weight loss and HCG and, you know, all the different things that have come throughout the last, you know, 15, 20 years in our space.

And I'm one of those people that like, I'll try everything. So like, the answer's yes. And so that's why sometimes I feel like for stuff because I've, I've kind of done it all.

You know, like, I'm always willing to try it, and, so that's fun. It gives me it does give me a breadth of knowledge and a breadth of experience that when I'm working with clinicians, whether they're pharmacists or I do a lot of work with, with medical doctors and other types of providers to with different adjunct things that I do.

But, you know, so it definitely gives me a different perspective having at least some personal experience with those with those journeys. That's incredible.

I can completely resonate with everything you're saying. In part of my career journey, I became an integrative health coach. I was no joke working at sprouts in the vitamin department, and I was actually getting clients because I would say, hey, I have real knowledge, but I can't help you further because I'm I get in trouble with corporate and I and lo and behold, I had a biological dentist who was like, you're the smartest guy I've ever talked to you and gas me up.

And I wanted to helping her whole family with C diff and all these different conditions that they had. And so that led me actually to have an integrative coaching experience inside a compounding pharmacy.

I don't know if you know that, Lisa, but I was recommending supplements with the best your health coach doing consults that were really powerful to help a patient heal.

And so I'm somewhere where there's collaboration over competition. I think that there was a resurgence in the fact that we're all getting woken up to we need to spend more time listening, more time on patient histories, more time on understanding the journey.

And so I just I appreciate that you have this whole kind of allure or backstory or super mom, you're super wise. You have all the attributes of someone where if I was a business owner, I would definitely trust you because I feel like that long track record.

I like to see that experiential knowledge becomes your superpower. Yeah, and it's not about what you regurgitate in school, it's about what you're actually taking.

And so I'm curious because you're having peptide conversations 20 years ago, which I find absolutely powerful because Doctor Holdsworth was into peptides like 30 years ago.

And I feel like they've been out there. But now we actually talk about them. And I think the most common, especially in the pharmacy space, would be all the GLP ones.

Absolutely. But do you have anything outside of that realm that you really like, or that's impacted you or your whole client base? Like what what what's your approach when it comes to peptides and in association with compounding hormones and all the other things that you guys.

Yeah. So there's this, you know, I always look at life is like a Venn diagram. And when it comes to pharmacy and peptide, unfortunately there's very little overlap.

You know, pharmacies are under very different regulations and rules than what medical practices are. And there's some great organizations out there. I have some friends that teach these organizations that teach all about peptides and all the different kinds of things.

But when it comes to reality, when we come back to the real world of like, what a patient can get their hands on or what a doctor can prescribe in a in a pharmacy can dispense, it becomes a very, very short list, unfortunately.

And so there's so many things that are great out there, but pharmacies can't legally touch them at least is the way the rules and laws are now. The FDA came in greatly reduced the things that like we can compound.

You know, they have to have been a part of an FDA approved drug. Well, how many of the great peptides I've ever been a part of an FDA approved drug, you know, like that immediately, like, you know, takes most of them off the board, but that doesn't mean that they don't work.

And I think, you know, for Covid, better or worse, whatever you want to say. I think one of the things that the silver linings to come out of Covid is that, you know, the FDA isn't isn't God, it isn't black and white.

If it's approved by the FDA, that doesn't automatically mean it's amazing. And if it's not approved by the FDA, that doesn't automatically mean it's poison.

Peptides, Compounding, and Personalized Care

And so there's they're we're creating this this area in between. And, you know, I could get on a soapbox and talk about how I wish it would be from a legal standpoint, but for the for the time being, pharmacies and pharmacies cannot participate in most types.

And that's what I love about integrated peptides is it brings some peptides that pharmacies can actually bring in and sell and not get in trouble with their board of pharmacy.

Like, you know, that's what a great concept. But I mean, BPC is probably one of the ones that are most well known. I'm also been a lot in the sports pharmacy space.

I've done a lot of consulting with professional athletes and professional teams and, you know, it's it's one of the things that I mean, you've seen people I've seen people avoid surgery.

And, you know, I'm actually taking it now. Talk about favorite products. I'm taking your gut product because I fell down the stairs and tore my Libra, my hip labrum.

And so, you know, in addition to doing some PRP, I'm also doing the BPC and trying to avoid surgery. And so, like, I've seen it change people's healing process.

And, you know, you can get into the conspiracy theories and whatnot. But it's like something like that is probably never going to be a drug. You know, Himalayan mountain that the FDA requires for a, for a drug is makes a lot of things just they're not going to go that way because not everybody's comfortable with, you know you talking about peptides GLP ones.

You know whether you want or govi or whatever, Brandon, you want to call it by, you know, $1,200 a dose. So we're talking thousands of dollars while you're on this side of 1000 or that side 1000.

But why? Why is it so. But yeah, I think what compounding brought to light is these drugs are not expensive because the chemicals are expensive. And that's what most people think.

Most people think, oh, $1,000 drug. That must be a really expensive chemical. But when us compounding pharmacies, can buy it for, you know, $100 a gram and all of a sudden, you know, they're charging $1,000 for these doses, you know, the math marketing.

And so it's like, what will what's making up the cost? Certainly the R&D cost. And where does that FDA, you know, it costs tens of millions of dollars to go through that.

And so, I think as pharmacists, we feel frustrated most of the time when it comes to peptides. I've actually even stopped going to a lot of the peptide conferences because it just also just pissed me off.

I would go in and I would learn about all these things, but I couldn't do anything about it as as of, I still own pharmacies, even though I don't practice, you know, as a pharmacist anymore.

My pharmacies can't sell these. My, my pharmacists that I employ can't help the patients with these. And so really just it just it I ended up leaving negative as opposed to positive.

And so I think that's the biggest thing is, you know, as as clinicians we want to fix the world, right. We want to fix the problems. And I do think peptides bring in a unique thing.

And they work obviously. Right. There wouldn't be the craze over the GLP ones if they if they didn't work. Do they work for everybody? No. But show me a drug. Who does? You know that.

That's that's the nature of our of our human bodies. And honestly why I got drawn into compounding and nontraditional kind of medicine, even though I'm a pharmacist.

Pharma, you know, like, nobody knows pharma better than we do. But I think I've learned very early on that, you know, three doses of drug X does not meet the needs of the entire human population.

And, you know, for pharma to think that it does is just kind of silly, like, you know, so I've always been drawn to that kind of personalized, customized medication.

And obviously we're going to be getting there more when it comes to like DNA and stuff. But to me, peptides is just an extension of that is it's another alternative that that patients can use to get the outcome that they're looking for.

I know there's lots of people when it comes to GLP one's obviously weight loss. You know, it's like a diet and exercise. And if you don't do dynamic side, if you take a drug, you're, oh, it's a gimmick.

It's you know, you're cheating or whatever. And it's like, I've always thought like, man, if I can help a patient achieve

their goal, it's all like, that's really all they care about.

Whether they want to get surgery, they want to do drugs, or they want to do diet and exercise or fasting or meditating or whatever. I'm here as a clinician to support their journey and their goal.

And if I fundamentally don't agree with how they want to do it, then, you know, it's time for me to pass on and they won't be my patient anymore. But I just think it's a tool in the tool belt.

You know, the tool, the tool chest I'm a big believer is, you know, especially on my standpoint from terms of business strategy with pharmacists. I feel like it's my job to prevent like the, the buffet of options.

And just like a dinner buffet, you're going to go down the buffet and you're going to pick some things up and you're not you're not going to pick some other things up.

Same thing with business strategies. Same things with health solutions is I feel like it's our job as the experts to present the options and then the people you're serving to pick what fits them.

Right, because nobody knows them as intimately as they know themselves, you know? Oh yeah, I, I agree, I feel like that's also why they shut down. So I'll call it the name.

But there was a pharmacy in Dallas called Abraham's Royal Pharmacy. I don't know if you remember them. They were around forever, but I used to go into because the people who were talking about nutrition there actually could guide you the right direction.

And it just shifted my concept of like, wow, if you go higher quality, if you go into even a place of higher quality, then you're going to get kind of tailored service.

And I know you and I were about like the biological blueprint of the human body. That's why maybe cheese appetite works on somebody, but. Right, a true time. Absolutely.

Or you have to find and yes, we want to get visceral fat down and yes, we want to get inflammation down and your insulin levels to not be spiking all the time and have to, you know, hold on to all that.

And once you do get your life back, I like how there's sort of fast track ways like peptides to get into a state of healing. And you can bring in all other kinds of things from nutrients and supplements and things to help bring balance and homeostasis.

They all work in synergy. And I feel like if you go to an intelligent pharmacy like your place or you know, and talk to somebody, that's a good way to start on your healing journey.

And I know for me, I had a functional medicine doctor, I had a funk neuro chiropractor, I had a great pharmacy for compounding. I had all of the the basically the arsenal of healers in my tool belt that in four years I'm overcoming things that I told I'd have my entire life.

And it wasn't a super long journey, it was just one I was dedicated to. And so I just really appreciate that you're bringing we've interviewed a lot of doctors on here, and they all have different expertise, and they're all incredible in their fields and their research and things.

But I think it's really cool to bring the voice of the pharmacist, you know, you know, because there isn't a doctor on the call that I talk to you that doesn't send out to one of you guys to get the customized things into the hands of someone like me or our clients to help them.

Kind of fast track their healing. So I just like to see the synergy return to, you know, everybody kind of rising together in the functional medicine community.

Yeah. Thank you for that. And I you know, anybody on here who's a medical practitioner in some other field, you know, if you're not working with a local independent pharmacy or pharmacist, I'd highly recommend it.

They're smart people. They're some honestly the best people on the planet that I know. And they have so much knowledge, honestly, that many of them themselves don't even give themselves credit for because there's this level of like, perfection.

Like perfection is like the the floor. So many of them have this, you know, chip on their shoulder, frankly, from the way we're treated, oftentimes from other health care professionals that being a pharmacist isn't good enough.

But man, I have seen some pharmacists like do some amazing things. But now if you're in anywhere of the the holistic compounding hormones, weight loss, you know, anything where you want positive health comes your local pharmacist.

They're going to be able to help your patients choose better prescriptions. You know, that maybe fit their particular needs, whether it's financial needs or clinical needs.

You know they're going to be able to help guide them through that process, just like you would guide them through which lab test taker you know, what kind of medical decisions to make.

And so having that pharmacist, they can actually take a big burden. As I befriend a lot of medical practitioners, they're like, oh, I hate that. Like, you know which bra, you know, which drug is covered?

What is this? What is that? You don't actually have to do that.

Supporting Pharmacists and Closing Remarks

Like shifted on over to the pharmacist like independent person, independent out your chain. Pharmacists are not going to help you with that. They're overworked and overburdened.

Please don't bother them anymore. But your independent pharmacist like that's the kind of stuff that they absolutely love. And, you know, as we talk about health care and we talk about health outcomes, I feel like it's important to say I see this a lot in pharmacies, I see other other practitioners.

But we become so selfless as health care practitioners that we often forget to take care of ourselves and sometimes the most unhealthiest people we meet is ourselves and our fellow colleagues.

And we we know all the right things. And I'm preaching this to myself just as much as anybody else. We have to take care of ourselves. We often forget to get the annual blood work done and get the annual scans done.

And you know, I've been feeling tired for six months. Oh, I'm just overworked. And you forget to think that there might be something else, you know, that's causing that.

And so I just want to encourage everybody who's listening here. You're probably a health practitioner of some point yourself. Take care of yourself too.

And especially if you're layering on that, on top of that, an entrepreneur, entrepreneurship is one of the most stressful things you can do, on top. And then you add on the health care provider angle to that.

But I think so often we forget to take care of ourselves and drink our own medical advice. And so I would just remind you to, you know, to do that, you have a counter to, you know, integrated peptides.

What do you take? Right. Like what do you take and how do you feel? You know, I just think sometimes we, we forget that an important part to bring out because, being an entrepreneur is tough.

Being a health care providers tough. And, we need all the support we can get both from outside and internal sources. I agree, I've had I've had many Wake-Up calls, even even the the medical director over integrated peptides is always telling me, take care of yourself.

You know, come into the clinic, use whatever you need like or run tests. Well, they're always at the forefront of making sure we're okay, especially being the voice of the representation out in the world, you know, of what we offer.

And so I think that's the most beautiful message I've had many, many up calls in my career journey where it was better for me to take care of myself than to die on the vine while trying to help a patient.

And I'm literally getting sick while they're getting better. And it just doesn't make sense to put the oxygen mask on yourself so we can breathe, put it on your patients and other clients and don't feel that pressure.

Just I love that message. Just for podcast. We all, we all can put our Scout's honor up and say completely logical. I completely agree with that. But then how we live our daily lives does not reflect that 100%.

Yeah. So I and I, I feel like the things that we overlook are like the basics like drink, clean water, go exercise, eat whole foods, get sunlight like sunlight every now.

But he's like literally the basic don't be glued to your laptop. Like wake up 30 minutes early to meditate. Like there's little things that are cost effective and free and they can shift everything in your life.

So I think that's like the most beautiful message we could leave people with, Lisa is that they just, you know, take care of yourself, take information from this summit.

How do how do they reach out to you if they're a business owner? Lisa, if they want to get plugged in to diversify, what does that look like? Where do they go?

Absolutely. So I'm all over social media. You might get sick of seeing my face if you touch on anything on me. But I'm on a mission to save pharmacies, and I got to do that by putting out a lot of information.

So if you just search Lisa fast, you will. You will find me. Diversify our X.com is is our is our main website. Even if you're not in pharmacy, you know, you just want to connect with what's another entrepreneur or whatnot.

I, I know it's often feels like a little bit of a lonely pedestal that we are on, but, happy to always connect with anybody. If you want to know anything behind the scenes, you know, in pharmacy or ask questions, obviously with all the legal stuff sometimes going on, I have a lot of doctors that will call me and be like, okay, help me understand this, because pharmacy is different than, you know, the medical side of things.

And so I'm always happy to have that chat with anybody. Okay? I freaking love that. And then I also do one more plug because I'm so excited about it. You have an event coming up next year.

Do you want to plug that to you. Because I just yes. So our pharmacy profits summit again it's okay to make a profit. It's in Dallas. It's March 28th 29th.

And I've got one of my wonderful speakers right here. So Michael Michael's going to be speaking out there along with lots of other really great, speakers.

But again, we focus on operating better, good clinical outcomes, helping pharmacies make a profit because it's okay to make a profit because they need to keep the doors open.

Too many pharmacies have closed in the last year it's been thousands actually. Pharmacies have closed in the last few years. So yeah, if you're in the pharmacy space at all Pharmacy Profits summit.com, it's our eighth summit.

You know, it just keeps getting bigger and better. And I'm here to make an impact. Like I don't do fluff and woowoo and theory and proven stuff that you can actually, like go and do, you know.

So let's go. Oh, I freaking love that. Well, Lisa, thank you so much for your time today and I look forward to seeing you soon. Yes. Thank you, thank you,