He Reversed His Chronic Illness Without Lifelong Medication | Garrett Pagel | Ep. 141 Transcript

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Intro and Garrettu2019s background

I've been constantly being told, you're going to be on these medications the rest of your life. You might need surgery down the line to remove the part of the colon that's inflamed if the inflammation doesn't subside.

It kind of started me on, like, is this really the only option for me? How did you feel at the point in time that that GI doctor, after you got your colonoscopy done, he says, hey, gotta be at his credits for the next couple of months?

I didn't really know much about it because… We have Garrett Pagle! Hey, Garrett! Alright! Meet Garrett Pagel, strategy director at the Maha Action and founder of the Vital Choice Project.

A mission built to change how the next generation understands health, food and medicine. Chronic illnesses are not forever. It really does come down to the fact that food is medicine and food can cure.

What made you at, at age of 20 say there's gotta be something else? Yeah, so after I was diagnosed, my co-founder and I, Ashton, decided on starting the Vital Choice Project, which its main goal is to empower the next generation of healthcare students and empower them with the mindsets and understanding of what food is medicine means, what is food curative means.

Why is this system so misunderstood right now? The reason the medical world is in this pickle that we're in is… Welcome to another episode of a Healthy Point of View podcast.

I'm your host, Sam Tahata. And as usual, we're bringing experts from all over the world to talk about health, wellness, beauty, and mindset. Today's guest, this young man.

He actually comes from my home state. Yes, he's also a cheats head. This guy here is heavily involved in the Maha movement, working with Maja Action. You know, I've had the opportunity to meet a lot of people and there's a lotta people with very kind hearts, but he has a little bit of an extra kind heart when it comes to this movement of us taking care of peoples' health.

Today, who we have here is the election strategist director for the Maha Movement. We have Garrett Pagel. Hey, Garrett, all right. Welcome to a healthy point of view.

Yeah. Thanks for having me on. I'm excited to talk about just some of the work that we're doing and all the cool things that are happening in the movement.

It's a really important time for this type of stuff and I am excited be here. Absolutely. And, you know, Garrett, man, I've had the opportunity to connect with you at a lot of these events.

I mean, these are not just in Washington, D. C. This is, everywhere. We were just, in Austin, not too long ago, for the food pyramid, right? But what was that real food the real Food Rally, so there's a lot of different rallies.

We got another one coming up the people verse poison That one's in DC and end of April April 27 so um exciting stuff, but you know you're always there man with such positive energy and I remember you and i connected and we were at um eudaemonia and We chatted a little bit more and see how we can further collaborate because that's what this is all about it's us really as people in the health and wellness industry getting together and really collaborating to bring this movement and all of this education out to the masses.

And throughout that time, you've been able to tell me about a lot of other things that you guys are doing, which, for

me, if I have a platform like our podcast here, I wanna be able go ahead and highlight those things and bring it to masses, right?

And put further emphasis behind it. But before we get into any of that, i want people to get to know who you are, and we're gonna go way back. We're gonna go way back from when you were about five years old.

What was your upbringing and how the heck did that get you to where you're at today? Yeah, so born and raised in Wisconsin. It's been my home state my whole life.

I only ever briefly left for when my wife went to school at Grand Canyon University when she graduates here this spring. So that's very exciting. Yeah.

When I was six years old, I involved in a dog attack that lacerated a good portion of my face and I had to have reconstructive surgeries and the whole nine yards antibiotics.

At six? Yes, at six. Oh, wow. Which is why I have like some scarring here and there's some in my eye and but the main damage was underneath the skin What kind of dog was it a husky husk?

Yeah, so not as common of a dog breed to have an attack, but it still happens in Um, and yeah, so the, the big thing there was being a young child ended up, you know, they needed to wait on certain surgeries because my face needed develop and, um, your bones and stuff need to grow at different paces and things like that.

And, yeah. So they put one of the main things that wasn't involved in the dog attack or animal attack in general is antibiotics. You don't want to make, want make sure that you don' get infections of bad bacterias and thing like.

But something that people I'd feel like don't ever really look at is some of the side effects of being on antibiotics for a long period of time. While you can't directly claim that the antibiotics led to what later led too, which was I was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis when I 20. But you know that through the science and stuff, it plays a role.

And deteriorating gut health is something antibiotics for a long period of time because it can't decipher between good bacteria and bad bacteria. I think something that has made the mainstream a lot more recently is the gut microbiome connection to the rest of your body.

And that is a microbiomes made up of good bacterias that your needs to for its immune system, for digestion, and for the overall health of GI tract.

Ulcerative colitis diagnosis and questioning treatment

That's where ulcerative colitis lives is in the second half of the GI So I ended up going through that, but that's when the medical system also hit me again.

I started having symptoms and the system, they want to admit you and they wanted to get you into some sort of prescription or whatever it ends up being.

So, I was actually misdiagnosed in the beginning when we first went into the ER for it. admitted to the hospital for a few days and then left and nothing was getting better.

Later on, the doctors told us I needed to get a colonoscopy and they said it was going to take way longer than what we were willing to wait. So my mom being a mama bear, she helped kind of push that needle forward and we ended up going down to Milwaukee, which is cool because that's where both of us have connections to.

And they basically confirmed to us that it wasn't pancreatitis and that was ulcerative colitis. And so the first thing though that they did when they diagnosed with that, was here's another prescription.

That prescription is called prednisone, which is a pretty dangerous steroid that suppresses your immune system.

And while it did help a little bit in the beginning, I later started to have side effects of that where I was just not as physically healthy with it.

I had a very high heart rate throughout the use of it and that's kind of what got me into the whole Maha world, the natural health revolution and what later led to me being able to cure myself of my chronic illness to where here we are two years later after the initial diagnosis.

So I don't have symptoms anymore. And that led from a gut microbiome reset and some detoxing and things like that. That came from outside the traditional medical world that were recommended from my co-founder at the Vital Choice Project's dad.

He's a chiropractor and helped kind of guide through that and like open our eyes to just some of the other systems and options that are out there. So it's a very cool time to be alive for this type of stuff.

I think we're headed in a really good direction right now on these things and I just want to help share with as many people that chronic illnesses are not Forever, right?

We don't have to live in a system where they're treated as you've now got this and you're going to have To take meds the rest of your life. You're gonna have two maybe do a surgeries later on in life and it really does come down to the fact that food is medicine and food can cure and It's just we have inject that back into culture and society Well, you know before we get into that, I want to highlight one of the things that you said because I You know, I want to go back to when you started having these gut issues, right?

Because the antibiotics, we already know that antibiotics affect your microbiome, you take antibiotics just for a few days and you end up having diarrhea, because it messes up your gut microbiom.

And through all of the health and wellness talk that you hear a lot of influencers, a lots of these experts, we know about the gut brain access. So it's not even just about your immune system or your microbiome.

I mean, this even affects your brain health, right? I wanna go, because there's a lotta other people that probably deal with similar issues to what you had.

And the reason why I say that is because in my early 20s, when I started already working at the fire department, I had a similar issue, right? And at age 20, I'm getting colonoscopies, which in all reality, most men are not getting colonies until they're over 40 over the hill, Right?

So for me to start getting Colonoscopy is one of the main reasons is because I have colon cancer history in my family. But I was having some issues where I Had a GI bleed and I Was a healthy young, you know, 20 year old kid working in the fire department already.

And I didn't know what the heck was And I got a similar diagnosis when I went to go get that colonoscopy. Mine was distal colitis, right? But one of the things they put emphasis on is that it can progress and become the full-blown thing, also reticulitis as well.

And, you know, they'd put me on a suppository, an anti-inflammatory suppository. I said, okay, we'll do this temporarily, but… How long do I got to keep on shoving this thing up my ass?

You know? Yeah. This is I'm not trying to put suppositories in and the doctor says, oh, no, you got be on it for life. Yes. That ain't going to happen.

I ain' gonna be doing this for like, so that's where I had to venture into. Well, something else has to correct this. Right. So. Talking about that, I come from Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's a very, they don't dabble too much into the alternative medicine world. It's very allopathic, traditional medicine. They do have great medical systems there in the traditional medical world that has fixed a lot of diseases

and everything.

But I want to go into the moment that you you know, you're 20 years old and you start telling yourself like, this is not it. Like, like I have to venture into something else.

Was it someone that put that into your head? Is it something that saw? Like what made you at the age of 20 say there's got to be something. Yeah, so kind of a cool story which relates to where I'm now working is I remember my wife and I had fiance at the time where we would sit and watch in the in hospital room Bobby Kennedy's independent campaign speeches and he would touch on a bunch of these things like there are other options out there.

There are alternative medical care out there. And it kind of started me on like this questioning of, is this really the only option for me? You know, I've been constantly being told, well, you're going to be on these medications the rest of your life.

You might need surgery down the line to remove the part of the colon that's inflamed if the inflammation doesn't subside. And those types of things to me were just, they were kind of wild because to be I'm thinking, well, three months ago I had a perfectly normal working colon.

And to that point, I've kept thinking like, how do I get back to? There has to some pathway back making it work like normal before. Why did it so well back then?

What caused it? And that's kind where I think our medical system does great in like short term prevention of things, but long term, no doctors really getting training on like, well, here's the steps you can take to prevent yourself from getting this 30 years down the road.

And that's where like preventative care now has become such a big thing. That was really the catalyst of me starting to question everything was watching those campaign speeches hitting the medical industrial complex really hard and making me just question, well, yeah, that's right.

I did have a perfectly working colon a couple of months ago. Why is it not working now? How do I get back to that? Because, I mean, i did not want to live the rest of my life on the medications.

i didn't want the high heart rate. I didn t want feel drowsy and stuff in the mornings when from taking the medication. So it was just kind of me got to a point where it was, all right, this is enough, let's go see what the rest of the industry is talking about.

And that's what led into the naturopathic world of medicine and has opened my eyes to whole new way to look at medicine. Completely different. So how did you feel at the point in time that that doctor, that GI doctor after you got your colonoscopy done, he says, hey, you gotta be on this prednisone for the last year?

Yeah. I mean, I didn't really know much about it because I don't grow up in like a natural household like with health and stuff. It was I was one of the people that many that the system gets a hold of with many people as, oh, this is the option.

My doctor is telling me it must be the only option stuck in the trap. Yes, exactly. And in the beginning, I spent more time just looking into and researching what exactly is ulcerative colitis because only one and I think 200,000 people get it.

It was more of like, here's a disease that I have been told I'm going to have the rest of my life that i've never heard of. So there was that there is that fear factor to it, but then there were also the doctors telling me Well, here's the answer and at that time, you know being sick for going on almost two months at time I was just thankful like okay.

Here's an answer This better fix me and when it didn't that really just kind of should open the eyes my eyes even more to This system isn't perfect and we've got to reform it.

Yeah, that's what that answer is what I call the band-aid answer where it's just, they're basically helping you subsidize the symptoms of the inflammation, which is temporary, and then eventually you gotta put on more medication and more of an aggressive dosage, that's the problem with the allopathic world.

Choosing a natural approach and recovery

We live in this algorithmic, pharmaceutical-driven, Medical system that truly needs to change, you know, it has to be more root cause medicine and um, You know i'm happy to hear that you were able to take this other approach and one thing I I heard you say about the chiropractor Chiropractors were always trained with nutrition taking more of that holistic approach putting their hands on the patient Looking at the tongue looking at their nail bits all of this stuff you Know in A lot of things have changed, like I've been, I got into the functional medicine space on my days off from the fire department at a young age at the age of 19. I'm 39 now, so almost as long as you've alive I been in the function of medicine.

So I have been actually, that's crazy, okay I feel all this shit now. You know like, you know I seen a tremendous shift. when it comes to medicine and a lot of new doctors starting to adapt into the functional medicine space.

Like when I went back 20 years ago and people were talking this stuff, it was just like, you know, fortunately my mentor in the function of medicine, Dr.

Robert Willicks, he was a former heart surgeon. So he was very well respected, even though him being a heart surgeon and an M. D., people would still call him a quack, you know?

So I do think that you are in a whole different era that is going to benefit more for what you have going on. Now, Garrett, I want to ask you, why is this system so misunderstood right now?

Yeah, I think that the reason the medical world is in this pickle that we're in is it comes back to where it starts. And that's in the undergraduate schools where people start off on their healthcare career journey.

They have to go get a degree, they have go to get trained in it. When you look at those curriculums and what those students are learning, their not learning the alternative side.

Their having pharmacology mandated on there curriculum. Some schools might not even offer nutrition as an elective on top of that. And these students get fed this.

This is the system, this is how you practice. If you want to make it in the systems, these are the levers you're going to have to pull and the things you are going have do in your practice to be a doctor.

And it really comes down to those students enter the field wanting to heal people and wanting do good for society. And whether it's becoming a brain surgeon all the way to a physical therapist or athletic trainer, they're all still part of the health care world, but they are not touching on nutrition, not touch on preventative nature, the human biology as each person is different.

And after sometimes in the case of going for a high level doctor degree, like a neurosurgeon, you're in 20 years of training where there's one system that's been taught to you.

It's very difficult then to pull those professionals into a new world of it. And that why I think it has to start at the base route as just the same as health with preventing chronic disease.

We have to go back to the route to fix the healthcare system. Yeah, yeah, I agree with that. Now, with you personally, shifting your beliefs when it comes to modern medicine, how difficult was that?

Because I'm more than sure you had people look at you like, Garrett, what are you doing? You're not listening to your doctor. Yeah. Especially our Wisconsin people, you know, sometimes they might think we're a little bit crazy for shifting over to like alternative medicine.

Yeah. Um, for me personally, it was kind of a weird, they put me in a position. I was born eight weeks early, so I had the allopathic system helped me a ton with that.

And then also I didn't lose my face because of vast acting ER surgeries and things like that So to me it was like, oh the allopathic world is very successful, but then once I got ulcerative colitis and had my eyes opened, the system really only reacts.

It doesn't actually really dive into the prevention of it. So I had you know, it would took me some time to to overcome like oh This is you're watching YouTube videos of people fixing their inflammatory levels in a blood test through foods.

They're eating or Juices that they're doing juice fasts on things like like to me. It was like, okay It worked for that person But I don't know what's gonna work for like I went through that battle kind of mentally with myself for a while before I ultimately decided all right Let's let's do it because the aliphatic system is not working.

I So let's see if I can get some results with this other side and then you know going through it do it starting out with a with the detox and complete reset of going back to starting with just rice and cooked chicken with no seasonings and Cabbage juice, you notice.

Yeah cabbage juice. No, that's not something I've seen on the menu when I go to the juice store It's what does that taste like it's actually pretty sweet and But to me, now that I've used it so much, it's more of I look at it more as like it to medicine.

OK, I don't think people are going to, you know, go to the store and be like, oh, there's cabbage juice on the shelf. Let's let's buy this. This this sounds like what I want to take to a baseball game with me.

Absolutely. It's not an exciting or Whatever you want to say like it's nada. It"s not something that I was still drinking Occasionally. Yeah, whenever I'm when do you have it like first thing in the morning?

Oh, yeah I would have in in them before bed and that kind of like during my during that. I went 28 days of doing it in The morning before bad as a wife tried the cabbage juice.

Yes. She has what does she say about it? I don't think she likes it very much. No, but it's also because she doesn't like juice that much Okay, so she's a you know, she is a little we got to open her eyes to juice So you started doing like an elimination diet What else was were you doing that really got you where you start to see in that success of fixing your gut health and Weaning down the prednisone that I was prescribed in the beginning, after I found my official GI doctor, he was very open to like, let's get you off medications.

I ended up in a very cool situation where this doctor was recommended to me by a family friend of ours who's also a doctor. And they kind of were like, well, he's gonna, He's not going to be a traditional like doctor like they'll, it might still be an official GI, but he is going let you explore options and give you advice and all that kind stuff.

And so when first time meeting I'm doing my initial like diagnosis and overview of like my case, I had told them that I was very interested in getting off of prednisone as fast as possible, because I'd read that people do get off it after, you know, some people on it for months.

And it was really cool to see him just kind of, like, embrace that and be like well, yeah, we can start weaning down by I don't remember the exact milligram that we were weening down buy per week.

But this is end of beginning of February, um end of may okay so as i weaned down that dosage i started to notice my energy levels come back and that's when i once i starting to have uh more energy and my heart rates start to go down and overall like uh my my overall self started To get more healthy i was able to increase some of like the other alternatives that um i wanted to associate with my like gut microbiome reset and building my my microbiome them back up with probiotics and prebiotics and things like that.

And one of those was walking after each meal. Very true, I'm sure, because it helped me a ton. It also helped be lose a bunch of weight. When I was first diagnosed, i was 240 pounds and I am about 180 pounds now.

This also opened my eyes to, oh you can lose weight without medications and all these other things. For the full circle thing on it, It really opened my eyes to food really is a medication that you can treat as nutrition can be treated as as an actual form of medicine to better your life and It's been it's very cool to just see it continue that way.

Right, right Did you do most of the cooking yourself or you had people to help you with it? I Yeah, so I would say I learned quite a bit of cooking during this time.

My wife is a huge baker, loves to cook. That's kind of like she used to bake at a bakery and she loves do it all healthy and natural and all this kind stuff.

So it was very cool to have her by my side during that time um she did a great job just kind of like coming up with different recipes understanding you know she's going in she is going for psychology um is what her degree is in so not direct medical field but she took courses on nutrition and dietetics and things like that just as electives because it's interesting to her And so she knew these are different spices that are going to increase inflammation.

These are things that might decrease it. And we just played around with it until we got to the point where, come July, when I had my follow-up colonoscopy to see if they had made progress, the GI doctor came out of the procedure and told my mom that if he were to give me a diagnosis on ulcerative colitis that day, he would not have enough to go off of because the inflammation was gone.

So we know that food can can do these things. It's just I think it comes down to also to our society where we've become so prone to like living laszadasical lifestyles.

Right. And people don't want long term commitments to something that they feel they might not get the effect they want or the results they.

Why medical education overlooks nutrition

So I. Think, you know, it. Comes down. To societal stances changing where. Weakened food, food medicine might take longer, but in the long run, it's going to benefit you much better than here's the quick, easy fix in a week's time from now, you should be able to not experience any symptoms, even though the problem still exists in your body through medications.

Well, you know, one of the things that we have to highlight and talk about with what you just said is, and that's one the big issues that We have in our medical system.

It's not just a medical System, but it's the individual as well that they don't want to put in the work, right? People rather still eat the Twinkies and the ultra-processed food and take a pill thinking that it's well I'll just stabilize it and correct it with this little pill if I got high blood pressure I still be able to you know drink every day of the week I'd be to eat all the ultraprocessed foods eat foods with high sodium all of that I just take the little pillow that my blood pressures, okay?

But what they don't understand is all of the other things that are going to go off balance that that little pill is creating internally with your biology.

So that's the important thing for people to understand. Yes, you could take that pill or the injection that will help stabilize whatever initial symptom that you're having, but what about everything else that is going be affected chemically with that drug?

And this is the importance of actually correcting it through proper lifestyle, eating right, exercising, et cetera. So, um, when you got that news that the inflammation is basically not even there, how you feel about that?

It was kind of like, uh, I remember sitting there on the, like the in the post procedure room, whatever they call it. Um, and the doctors telling the news and that kind thing.

And I don't really remember my emotions at that exact point in time, cause there's medications associated with it, procedure, but I remember like kind of going home and realizing like, oh, it worked.

It's almost like you're your own doctor. So yeah, I fixed myself. Yeah. And then, um, It was really cool. Like then being able to tell everyone like yeah.

All these crazy things I've been doing, like my friends in the beginning, don't think understood it completely. We'd go out to eat and I'd be like okay, i'm not going to have any of this.

I don' drink anymore. You know, all those types of things. it was cool to be able to say like, well, it worked. You know, these, I don't have to deal with these symptoms anymore.

I feel great. As long as I continue to take care of my body, i'm never gonna have end up in that ER room again, questioning what's going on with me. So, that was kind of like the full circle moment of Oh, yeah, Bobby Kennedy is not crazy.

The things he was saying on his campaign do work, you know, like the things that some of these authors like a person I consider my mentors, Kelly Means, who's at the White House now working on nutrition and the nutritional guidelines, things like that.

And it was just really cool. I remember reading his book, him and his sister's book. Good energy throughout this time. It was very cool to just be like, it worked.

These things do work. these people aren't crazy like the media says they are. And they know what they're talking about. Now it's time to make sure more people have access to this.

So throughout your journey, all the different things that you learned. What is one thing now that is a non-negotiable where you're just like, there's no way I'm ever eating that.

I've got to make sure I always do this first thing in the morning. Like, what's that non negotiable for your route? Yeah, I would say my non-negotiable would be I don't drink anymore.

No alcohol? No, alcohol. I think I've had like maybe one or two drinks like once I thing on New Year's and one on like, maybe my birthday, like that kind of thing.

But it's like no more, none. And being in Wisconsin, obviously, that's a very big culturalistic thing Beer state. Everywhere you go, there's beer. Yeah.

So it was one of the main things that I'm like I am done with it. Don't need it at the risk. Not worth it And then the other thing too, I'd say would be added sugars.

I try to stay away from added sugar as much as possible. And like when I'm out grocery shopping and that sort of thing, guy go right to the ingredient list and check and see what's the added Sugar.

Then if it's a super high amount or even if I mean I tried to Stay under as low as possibly on it. But most of the time I'm buying things that have no added sugars and I think to the other one that I've increased a lot is honey as a sweetener and Organic cane sugar is a sweetness because those are the two original main four and maple syrup as well as the big one and especially in the Midwest But those sweeteners are they don't have the same?

Bad side effects as super ultra processed artificial sweetner, but the others stuff causes severe inflammation Yes, exactly the alcohol too is I always tell people it's alcohol is a poison.

There is no safe amount of alcohol for you to intake. And I can't say that I don't drink alcohol, but I'm not a person who actively goes out and drinks alcohol.

I had some other guy on my podcast, David Gutman, actually, not too long ago, and he brought it up. But I actually stick into what he said. He says, I have alcohol five times a year.

And for him, every single time he has alcohol out of those five days out the entire year, it's an experience. You know, like he goes on a vacation, he's with his family, and he straight up said, if you're with him during one of these five day where he is actually drinking, this says you are a special person in his life.

Yeah, I told myself said man, that's like drinking once every other month, you know, and it's not just having one drink He says like that says data go drink I was like, You know what?

That's kind of like maybe what I'll do. I don't drink that much whatsoever at all You you I actually think alcohol doesn't taste good, like if I go on a cruise and order a pina colada I'd rather have a Pina Colada without alcohol because it tastes better Yeah, so, but that's good that you brought that up.

Now, let's shift gears a little bit here. You know, this whole experience that went through personally, a lot of people, they'll go through these type of experiences with their health, and they become successful.

They'll change things with your diet, with the lifestyle, And they just keep it to themselves. You decided not to do that. I mean, you're getting involved at a greater level than what most people that even want to help people do, and I want talk about some of the things you are doing, not just with Maha, but also the other nonprofit that was created.

So I want to talk about how medical funding is shaping physicians' mindsets for the future. So, I wanted to tap into some of these things that you've decided to actually do with your experience that went through.

Yeah, so after I was diagnosed, um, started working in the nonprofit world. Um, and I got this idea like seeing all these different nonprofits and charities working on these.

I. Wanted to start something that would help fix the problem that I went And during the time, lots of different ideas were what I wanted to do with it.

But ultimately, my co-founder and I, Ashton, we decided on starting the Vital Choice Project, which its main goal is to empower the next generation of health care students to equip them and empower them with the mindsets and understanding of what food is medicine means, what is food curative means so that we can put people into the that understand the healthy handshake between allopathic and naturopathic medicine, bringing back to like what I said earlier on, we have to go to the root of the source.

And to that point, about 80% of medical schools in the nation have funding coming from pharmaceuticals.

Founding the Vital Choice Project

Almost every campus, whether they're starting out at pre-med or really almost anything in health care space, they are mandated to take pharmacology, but nutrition is not mandated.

And while some of those things are changing at the med school level, and it's an amazing win, we have to recognize that some these students are going through four year, five year degrees of pre-med, going off then to their med School, where they might start to learn nutrition, but they have zero background on it.

And I mean, now we've started chapters in six states. We're up to seven chapters nationally. The really cool thing that we started to learning is like students want to students want to understand the both sides of the health care system.

They hear that there's alternatives out there, but there are not really resources for them to learn it. And so that's why we're very proud of what we do with, you know, just giving them that channel, that alternative to learning these things.

Right. That's where we started the breakaway grant is to break students away from the pharmaceutical buyout. Our goal with Vital Choice Project is someday to be the largest funder of alternative medical courses to premed students.

And that's why it's called the breakaway grant. We want to break as many students away from that and bring them into this new generation of healers where where, frankly, we create healer's, not just dealers for the pharmaceutical industry.

That's amazing. Are you ever get scared that some of these bigger pharmaceutical companies are not going to like what you're doing? Well, that's funny, you bring that up.

One of the first things when we went to an attorney to start the foundation process of what we need to do, he brought that out to me. It was like, if this gets to the point where what your vision board here says, the pharmaceutical industry is going to come after you, they're going try to shut down the nonprofit.

They're gonna try and remove your C3 exemption, things like that. In all honesty, like, I mean, people that go into these, sure, you hear crazy stories of like people doing insane things with charities, but I'm not scared of them because I know that what we're doing is going to be good for society, good, for people.

And there's everything that we are doing. There's nothing wrong with it. It might just hurt their profits a little bit. Right. You ready to walk around with a security guard?

Maybe someday if it gets there. At the end of the day, this is the time, right? People are very well aware of what's happening in the medical system and our food system.

So I think this a beautiful time or something like this, like the Vital Choice Project can really blow up. I wanna understand a little bit more on how the Vital Choice Project works.

So you got some kids that are going to college, they're in pre-med, where do they take these courses, the nutrition courses? Yeah, so the Nutrition courses are offered at their university, but as electives and sometimes as alternative elective to the required curriculum in their coursework.

So our goal is to fund students, give them grants that they can then use to go and take those courses as electives, because the courses exist out there.

And our goals with that is we would like to try to push as many students to start taking these nutrition courses, so it signals to these universities that, oh, kids are interested in this, we should start expanding on these.

We should go from not just nutrition one or two, like let's do a nutrition course that can take all the way up to the 400 levels. And that will signal then the universities that this is a thing that students want.

They're going to see that. Students are breaking away from the pharmaceutical agenda. And we want it to kind of be this like driving force to the schools, to their boards, and to thier funders that we can influence students to take alternatives.

and students WANT to TAKE those alternatives So, when a student, you know, they decide to get involved or they hear about us, however, it is that they here about this.

They will go and sign up. Would they have the opportunity to start a chapter? They can just stay as a TV CP student. Which is just a students in our program that can apply for the chapters.

they can attend other campus activities if their school doesn't have a direct vital choice chapter. We've also sent students to we've sent since the eudaemonia, which is where you and I ran into each other and They had a blast at that because that whole conference is a medical conference, but about alternative medicine right so if we can put those students, you know into these places and kind of overload the system of like oh wow students really want this stuff and I really think that'll send a message to the top that times are changing.

We need to adapt and there needs to become a healthy handshake between naturopathic and allopathic medicine. And it's just going to better us. It's really going change society.

No, I agree with that. Getting them young in their education and before they even get into their career and getting them exposed to a lot of this type of functional medicine or natiropathy medicine, At least it gives them that basis of these, you know, when someone goes so deep into their medical education and they haven't been exposed to any of this and it's been this this pharmaceutical driven education.

And I've met some of the these these doctors and there's so brainwashed where you even say anything about nutrition that they just totally cancel it. So so doing it that early, I think has a huge effect.

Now, my question with that is We put these people through these nutrition courses at the university, but what about what's actually being taught to them?

Because some of these universities, what they're teaching for nutrition, it ain't the right stuff, right? So at same time, we don't wanna go ahead and give them this breakaway grant, and then all of a sudden, you know, were feeding them the completely wrong information when it comes to nutrition.

Yep. Yeah, so that's where we kind of have explored these alternative agendas that we can push towards them. So a lot of the time we'll buy them like some of these books, like The Earth Diet is a really good book.

Good Energy is another really great one. Leanna Warner Gray's book, right? Yeah. And Good energy, which is Casey and Callie's And getting that into these students hands, you know, they want to the amount of students that they start chapters, that apply and they're like, what are some books or podcasts or films?

I can be looking into a documentaries event that that will help me understand this healthy point of view. Yeah. Healthy point-of-view podcast. And that's kind of where it was really cool to just see students flocking to that.

That's where we kind expanded the breakaway grant then to cover. They could go and buy these educational books and things like that to attach. And what's something that's really cool that happened at our Davidson chapter, we've gotten blessed with the student we have as their president at that chapter.

And he is kind of like his own, he's the movement if it were pushed into one student, like he he has a perfect representation of what the Vital Choice Project students should be.

And, I mean, he took the chapter right to their dean of premed and got one of the one, of, the faculty advisors to be one. Of the official professors on campus.

Oh, wow. They're now diving into these things on a monthly basis with chapter meetings and he brought in a. A speaker that gave a speech on the science behind seeds and amygdala and cancer prevention through foods.

And we had almost 30 students show up to that and just sit through a full lecture on alternative medicine. So now we've started to turn this into where, okay, they have the nutrition program.

They're asking their professors to dive deeper into nutrition, but now we're also bringing specialists to campus. Now we are putting alternative books that the university library doesn't have in their hands.

And we send them to conferences where they can expand this understanding. That's the goal is to get these students so hooked on Wanting to bring change and wanting to understand it that they become specialists on the

topic themselves and they became force multipliers across campuses, which is powerful.

What is what is the typical price point for the breakaway grant to actually provide this to just one student? Yeah, so right now we're doing between 500 and 1000 per student per semester.

We've done 25,000 in breakaway grants over the last 11 months since we started our first semester, being around was the September of 2025. That semester we had three chapters found.

We managed, we almost got to 100 students by Christmas. That's joined chapters. I believe it fell short by like, I think we were 92. But then Ashley and I got invited to Turning Points America Fest.

to speak on a panel about health stuff and maha and things like that and we got to share about the vital choice project and that's when it kind of hit a critical max where we now have more students than he and I know what to do with in some situations where you know we've got chapters that we that want to start and it's like all right we're gonna start here first and these students are really starting to put things together here so we need to focus time on like the ones that have already gotten recognized by their university.

But what was really cool is after that panel, we had almost 40 students come up to us and just talk to about these different things and how they could get involved.

We had high schoolers that hadn't even committed to what school they're gonna go to yet, but they know they wanna go pre-med, come and talk with us. So it's very exciting just kind of like proving to ourselves over again that this is something students want Yeah, and it we're the only channel really doing it right now for them so we need to try to grow this and expand this as fast as we can because Now is the time to your point.

Student grants, chapters, and med-ed reform

This is time that the natural health revolution is really hitting People want it. I was reading an article the other day that alcohol consumption with the younger generation is down tremendously.

And the only thing I can think of is that people are becoming more aware. Yeah, most definitely. We've seen studies where snacking is done. It's because people realize that most snacks we consume are dead foods of ultra-processed ingredients.

And I mean, there's no nutritional value to that. Right. So people are started we're seeing people eating more like more meals instead of snacking. We're seen snacks on shelves being purchased as less rates where we are seeing more people buying to cook meals at home.

And to touch on that too, people were going to probably say, well, home cooked meals and things that are way more expensive. when you show it by based on the nutrition that you're actually feeding your body and price it out, cooking for yourself at home is healthier and it's more affordable because it can be drawn out longer.

Yeah, I've created videos of that. I actually showed that, you know, we have a kind of like a fast food restaurant. You know almost like Chipotle type of deal, but it is called it.

It's called Belay. And I don't know if you've heard of it and they make all fresh food and I showed people like I can actually create my meals cheaper than what a value meal at McDonald's is.

And it's healthy. Yeah. You know, clean food. So so that's just something that people have to have their their mind open, open to and actually see it.

Um, so what are some of the next steps of what you want to see with the whole vital choice project? Yeah, so right now we just want to keep plugging away at getting onto as many colleges and universities as possible.

And then growing that student database that we have of how many students are interacting and all that kind of stuff

because eventually we would like to get to the point where we're leveraging the med schools.

Where we are directing students to the med schools that have the most the, most medical freedom aspects or nutritional education aspects. They're not completely controlled by the pharmaceutical companies of what curriculums they teach to their students.

So we've started to roll out something called the Med-Ed Freedom Index, which stands for Med Ed being medical education. And it's a map of all 50 states where we're starting to enter in like state scores of what do the med schools, what did the state laws say?

What are the curriculums look like? Because let's say, you know, university X has, You know you need to have be fully vaccinated. You need, to take 80% of your course's work is pharmacology.

Nutrition isn't mandated versus Campus Y, as there's less medical restrictions on vaccination status, nutrition is a mandated coursework they're going to take, then we can start to show those students, shed light on these universities, direct students into these campuses, and hopefully force the other universities that haven't caught up with the times to change.

Right, right, I love that. This is definitely gonna be part of the big change of what we need in our nation, just in general. So, Garrett, this next question, and I want you to take some time and think about it, then I'll want your answer to come from the heart, all right?

I'd want to let the world know what the true problem today is. and what the Vital Choice Project is offering as a solution. Yeah. I think that the number one problem that we're facing right now is a lack of understanding and awareness to what is truly in our food society and food supply.

As a society, as we grow and learn on this new revolution that's sweeping the nation, it's important to understand that we have to pursue truth in what is truly an ingredient label, what's truly being done to our food.

And I think that something that I try to live by and instill in the students and it is on our website everywhere is God already created everything we need to be a healthy society.

We just need a return to it. Right. And I think that it's extremely important to instill the next generation because if we can culturally change there, we could force the generation after that and the after-that to continue in that pathway of bringing change, of bridging the gap between naturopathic and allopathic.

And eventually that's going to result in a full change in our food supply because enough people are going understand the term food as medicine, food is curative, and they're not just going fall trap to, you know, the pharmacology agenda that is being done in the hospitals, education system, etc.

I think that the end goal here is to allow a family that needs treatment to end up in the ER that's their yearly checkup or whatever it ends up being.

But the goal is here to have a doctor explain and ask What is your diet? What are you eating? Here's some things we can try to quirk before we offer surgery, before offer pharmaceutical.

And if that solves the problem there, then that's the win. We've changed the system to where doctors are now treating you as an individual person, not just another number to enter into the pharmaceutical codes and medical codes.

but as an individual human that we have healed naturally so they can continue to carry on and live their most natural and best life. Amazing, amazing.

Love it, love it. Garrett, I'm gonna do something really quick, right? And when I pop up a health and wellness expert's name, they're gonna be the biohacker or health wellness experts, You're gonna answer with one word

answer, whatever comes to mind.

All right, you ready? Yeah. Hope I get them all. We'll start off with people that you know, that I know that. Yeah, Kelly Means. Inspirational. Vani. A true champ, a true warrior.

Dave Asprey. Truth Seeker. Ben Greenfield. Another truth seeker. I don't know that one. No? Okay. Who else can I throw out there? That's good, that's So one of my favorite podcasters is Steven Burlett with a diary of a CEO.

You've probably seen his podcast, you know, he came out with these conversation cards. So I'm going to have you grab that. We're going go ahead and open it up.

And you're gonna pick two cards out of there just randomly. Pick them from the middle or something. Yeah, and you got to read the card and they're to answer.

I have no clue what the cards says, by the way. You want me to read them to you? Yeah, you'll read him out loud. OK. When do you feel the most emotionally connected to yourself?

And by Tony Hawk, Tony, I got answered. I think it's when I'm spending time with friends and family, because for a point in time there, when it was like when was going through my diagnosis, i did not see a lot of friends.

My family was I felt disconnected from a of things because I truly didn't know what answers were. I didn't know what the future held for me. And before understanding the natural route of things, I was very stuck in like, in my head of like this is really what The Rest of My Life is going to look like.

This is, you know, it's a scary time. So now like when I go out to eat with friends again and um or we're doing cooking with family or things like that or christmas time and actually getting to not just be around when we are making like maybe some of those not as healthy options um and sweets but i'm still able to be a part of that again like i am not stuck in my head worrying about If I eat this, am I going to end up in the ER tomorrow morning?

Right. And I think that's why, like when I'm most to bring it back, most emotionally connected is just getting to be around family and friends again and just appreciate that.

I can I still do these things thanks to the natural world of medicine. Amazing. What else you got there? Next one is what is an inadequacy you admit to that you could work on starting tomorrow?

And it's by James Smith. I'm chronically online because of my job and the things I've involved in.

Closing thoughts on hope and finding the project

I spend way too much time on my phone. That's something that I definitely need to work on and just get back into the real world a little bit. It's difficult working a political job, and also working on nonprofit things.

Everyone's online as well in those industries. But I think it's something that I know I need to work on and have been working on a little bit. It's just getting off my phone and not spending so much time staring at a screen.

There's an app for that. Joel, what's the app called? Opal. Actually, one of the girls from Maha. I've seen ads for it. She's actually the one that brought it up.

And then Joel. We were at the Maha Summit and then Joel downloaded it and he uses it now. That's cool, that's also cool. Yeah, the Opal. I haven't downloaded, I don't think I'm downloading that.

My whole business is, you know. One day, we'll see, but it's good that they have an app like that for… people that have the issue, how you just said, well, you're online too much.

And I catch myself on that trap. You know, and sometimes I get hit with this crazy algorithm. Like just the other day,

for some odd reason, I got hit into an algorithm about UFOs.

Oh, and it was like all about it. It was it wasn't like, um, like fiction stuff. And it's like people actually testify and like very well decorated military guys.

Yeah. I love that stuff, you know, there's something else out there and then I'm seeing Donald Trump talk about on the Joe Rogan. So I had to actually go on my Instagram app and reset the algorithm.

You know, so I go in there and I clean it up because I'm like if I just go down that rabbit hole I'll be stuck for for days going through it. So I get it So garret man as we wrap up here If someone listening or watching this podcast really resonates with today's message with everything that you shared What is that last thing you can leave them off with?

Yeah, to anyone that's watching that may have a chronic illness, I would leave with you that there is hope and there are answers and results. That's what's important and that is what my main mission in all this stuff is, is to bring into light that you don't have to be stuck in the system, you do not have be questioning what your new life is going to look like.

You can get back to your quote unquote old life and continue where you left off. And I think that's just important to know that it is possible and it's achievable.

And that if you start on that path and people think of you as spooky or weird, it just not the case. It's not truth. You're a champion in this health movement and taking a step that is a lot harder than most people have the courage to do.

Absolutely. And Garrett, if people want to find more about what you're talking about, about the vital choice project or want learn more, what can they find you?

Yeah, my Instagram is it's Garrett Pagle. I don't think there's any spaces. Then there is also the Vital Choice Project website, which is the VCP dot org.

Or if you are a student that's looking to get involved, it is TheVCP.org slash join us and we'll be happy to plug in and keep carrying on the medical revolution.

Amazing, brother. It was a pleasure having you on A Healthy Point of View. Thank you, Sam. Amazing. Guys, as you heard Gary talk about his situation, there is hope, right?

There's other things out there besides what your allopathic traditional medicine doctor is telling you. These are a lot of the things that we're talking about when it comes to root cause medicine.

When it come to more of that precision medicine where they're taking a deeper dive to figure out what's really happening with your health. And when you look at the basis of where it starts, it's just with the lifestyle.

It starts with your nutrition, how you're moving your body, your sleep is a big component of it. So these are things that we're trying to really get the word out there.

We're tryin' to get medical providers to understand these other parts of life that are actually some of the most important parts, of taking care of your health.

So make sure you guys take this podcast, share it with all your friends and family. Make sure people start learning about health and wellness and don't forget to subscribe, like share, do all that fun stuff and we'll see you for the next one.

Amazing.