How a Whole-Food Plant Based Lifestyle Helped Her to Achieve Multiple Sclerosis Remission. Transcript

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Introduction to the Regenerative Life Podcast

Hi, I'm Dr. Scott Stoll and welcome to a regenerative life podcast where science becomes hope, food becomes a catalyst for healing and every conversation explores the profound connections between personal health, human flourishing and the earth and future that we will share together.

But more importantly, we'll explore one of the most important questions of our time. What happens when we actually begin living in alignment with the way we were designed?

Hi and welcome back. Dr. Scott Stoll here, Regenerative Life, the Science of Healing and the Power of the Plate. I'm delighted to have you back today.

And today I am really honored to welcome Haley Giuseppe. Haleigh and I have known each other, we just figured out for almost nine years. Her story is one of courage, hope, and remarkable healing potential that can emerge when someone chooses to participate deeply in their own healing recovery.

Haley's journey started with multiple sclerosis and it brought fear, uncertainty, and real questions about her future. But through a comprehensive shift in her lifestyle and mindset, really changing those daily choices that we all make—three times a day, what to put on our plate, when to go to bed, She began to experience profound transformation as you'll hear today—improved symptoms, renewed energy, emotional healing.

You'll here the whole story shortly. Her story reminds us that healing is not just measured in scans and lab tests, symptoms medications.

Haley's Early Symptoms and MS Diagnosis

It's really measured the return of joy, confidence, connection to self and others, renewed purpose, vision, and meaning in life, the freedom to imagine a future again, unhindered by disease.

Today we're really going to explore how her life changed, how she sustained it, what message she would offer to those of you that are living with a chronic disease, So, Haley, it is wonderful to have you.

Thank you for being here. And gosh, you know, just as the audience knows, we reconnected last week after about nine years, and it was such a joy to see you again at the Rodale Donor Dinner.

So welcome, Hailey. Yeah, thank you so much for being here. And I'd like to just go back a little bit in your journey. Maybe take us back before the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.

I think that contrast is really important. What was your life like before? When did you start to notice symptoms? And then tell us about the diagnoses.

You know, what were some of the emotions you experienced, the fears that came with that diagnosis, and what felt most overwhelming at that time? Sure.

I would say that, of course I didn't know that these were symptoms at the time, but as a young woman in my late teens, early twenties, I was having kind of a chronic problem with UTIs, right?

And I went to doctors and they would give me medicine and it would clear up and then it At the time, nobody really had any answers for me. So I went to specialists, urologists, and things like that.

And they wanted to do procedures that, thankfully, had a good head on my shoulders that just didn't make sense to me, right? They wanted it to dilate my urethra.

I was like, well, but that doesn't makes sense. If I'm not draining my bladder, that does not make to sense me that I am fine. Then with no reason at all, all of a sudden, it's not working properly.

So thankfully, I declined that and things seemed to even out at some point, but I didn't really think much of it. That just seemed kind of a mystery, right?

I was married young. I married at 23 and had children. And when I pregnant with my second child, my daughter, Sarah, in the hospital and actually I was in isolation for about two weeks because again, they couldn't figure out what was wrong with me.

I just was having these really bad headaches, so sensitive to the light. And during that time, there had been like an outbreak of meningitis at the Philadelphia Zoo, which I had happened to be at with my first born, my son.

So they just assumed it was meningitus, but they evidence of it. So they spent a really long time testing me for a lot of different things. I remember at one point, I was so out of, it I didn't really even think to be scared.

But I remembered at point I kind of came to and our priest from the church was sitting there giving me last year heights. It was pretty serious, right?

And the only thing I can remember was just saying, is my baby OK? That's kind of where my brain was. Eventually, again, they gave me all sorts of antibiotics.

They were pumping me full of all kinds of things. And eventually, I recovered. But again nobody knew. There was no diagnosis. I couldn't figure out what had been wrong with me.

they just assumed the meningitis because of the coincidence of that time. and we went on with our lives. I had a healthy baby girl, she's perfectly wonderful, and went with her life.

Over time, I think the major symptoms that I now know were symptoms, just I was fatigued, a lot of fatigue. And again, as a young mother, so who isn't fatigue when you're a mother?

I would nap when my kids napped. So just to be able to get through a day. And then weight gain was, I started gaining weight. But that's not a surprise.

I was always very mindful of eating healthy because just you have kids and you start thinking about things like that. But I was not foreign to the dino nuggets that my kids love so much.

And when they didn't finish their plate, I'd finish it for them, right? So, you know, typical mom stuff. So you kind of go on with your life. Then one day I was working for a nonprofit.

My kids are a little older, middle school. I think my daughter was in. Was working a non-profit. And I woke up that morning. It was checking my email, doing that kind of thing.

You know, funny, when I brushed my teeth this morning, it must be because I used a new toothpaste or something. My tongue feels a little funny. And then a later, I'm checking my emails and I am trying to type and noticed that what I was typing isn't coming out on the screen.

It was just kind of coming jumbled, which was really interesting. As I tried to get ready for work, noticed I kind stumbling to go up the steps. And I couldn't, I was like, that's, really weird.

I'm feeling a little odd. So I tried, you know, like. typing out an email to my boss, but very frustratingly I wasn't able to type with both hands like I would normally do, I then fingered it on my keyboard.

Hey boss. Not feeling so hot. I think I'm going to stay home today. Right? I sent that email off and I called my husband who had already left for work for the day.

And I explained to them kind of what was happening. But by that point, I was having trouble walking because now it wasn't just going up the steps that was an issue, now my left leg was dragging.

So my husband thought maybe I had some kind of cardiac issue. For the record, I probably at my heaviest was around 160, probably around that time, and I have excessively high cholesterol.

I think one doctor told me that I had the cholesterol of a 300-pound man. So I very high-cholesterol. That's something that would have been a concern at the time.

Living with MS and Medication Challenges

And so my husband thinking that I may be having some kind of cardiac issue, like a stroke or something, immediately calls my in-laws who immediately come over and my has been comes home and takes me to the emergency room.

And they took one look at me because by the time we got in walking into the Emergency Room, I was having to hold on to him to walk like I the it wasn't that it couldn't bear weight.

It was more that just my It wasn't working. If I went to grab a cup of coffee, I would be thinking I'm going out this way, and my arm would float up like this.

It was really bizarre. But it wasn' t as though my body wasn t working, it was just like, different. I wasn''t responding the way I was telling it to in my brain.

The right side, completely fine. Almost like if you drew a line down the middle of your body, my left eye was not focusing anymore. The tongue, if you drew a line down my tongue I couldn't feel, it was almost like your tongue was going numb, like I've been to the dentist.

My scalp, interestingly enough, my scalp on the left side, you couldn' t feel it the same way as you could on right side. It was such an interesting sensation and so the kind of person I am, I was really focused on what was kind going on there.

I'm trying to analyze what's going. But as soon as I walk into the emergency room, they think I'm having a stroke and they take me back and hook me up to all kinds of machines.

I can't remember what the little screeny thing is, maybe an ultrasound of your heart or something. They can find anything wrong with my heart. So now the ER is stumped, right?

They're like, okay, there is nothing wrong. Your EKG is perfect. There is no buildup in your hear. Everything looks good in you arteries. But they can figure out what's going on.

I'm there for a really long time and things are just getting worse. It just keeps degrading. They admitted me, and then I think it was probably about 18 hours later, they sent in a neurologist.

And interestingly, I guess maybe some students with them. right? They were there and they started doing like this. Can you feel this hot or cold? Can feel the scratcher or soft?

And so it turns out I couldn't tell the difference. I can tell difference between hot and cold on the left, I could on right. Couldn't the tell between what was scratching or what is soft on left but I So the regular neurologist was out on maternity leave, but the neurologists that I was seeing didn't have any experience with MS but had some clues that that might be what was going on.

And if I'm honest, Dr. Stoll, I didn' really know what multiple sclerosis was at the time. I maybe had heard it in the tense of, oh, there's a walk going on in my area, like a fundraiser type of thing, but I had no idea what it was.

But apparently my husband did, because as soon as those words came out of their mouth and they said, well, this is what we're going to try, my husband just like the blood just drained out of his face.

And so I knew it was something serious. But at that moment, when they said we're thinking you may have multiple sclerosis, I didn't really comprehend what it meant.

So they started me on around steroids. And I responded pretty quickly to that within 24 hours it was like I could feel like lightning going through like sparks going to my left side of my body and so I definitely responded very well and then you know over the course of the treatment.

My husband explained to me what was going on and yet that's when the fear really set in, right? Like this idea that, oh, this is something I'm going to have to deal with for the rest of my life.

This is a debilitating disease and many cases people degenerate and they degenerated pretty quickly. And the things that were going through my head was like, oh, I'm not going to get to hike with my kids up Huck Mountain again.

How am I going hold my grandchildren if I make it to that age? you know, how am I going to hold a baby in my arms if I can't trust that my hands are going hold the baby?

Like all of this, like my whole life just came down to this like how I am going live with this? How is this going be possible? So the fear was real. And you now, even though I did respond, fortunately I responded very well to the short-term treatment of the steroids.

And it took some physical therapy to get me back to pretty, like I had to use a cane for a little while, maybe like a few weeks. And I did some OT where they would help me like retrain my foot to lift as far as it's supposed to when I'm walking up the steps and so things like that.

And I would say after a year, I got to 95%. And they told me, they said, well, your brain is an amazing organism. And if it can't go down one route, it will build neurons around just like a detour on a highway.

That's how they explained it to me. You're going to have to get off the off-ramp and you're gonna have sit at a light maybe for a minute and then you can get back on right to the road, to main road.

And they said my brain will build pathways around it. It will built new ways to make these things help and the therapy and practice will help that process.

So I would say, yeah, I mean, there's still a little delay. It's worse when I'm tired. I'll stumble going up the steps still to this day when i'm really tired because I am not accounting for that delay, right?

Then the journey of the doctors started, so once I had the diagnosis, it turns out, at least in our area, finding a neurologist who has a specialty with multiple sclerosis isn't that easy.

And so I was told that it would be about a six month waiting list before I could find a doctor. Somehow I got a call within a couple of weeks from Lehigh Valley Hospital, which was about an hour trip from where I lived.

That they had an availability and so I went in and I saw a doctor there and he was wonderful like he Very patient. He explained what was going on and kind of what they know about multiple sclerosis Which is actually not terribly much surprisingly at that point in time, especially so They knew that it was the body attacking the myelin on the nervous system, but nobody really knows why.

So we talked about different things, different paths to making sure that you don't have a relapse. And we talk about

the difference between MS. You can have MS that's progressive, which is kind of the worst case scenario.

variety that is sort of a relapse remit, I think is kind of the term that they use where it just kind comes and goes. And as best they could tell, and at that time there wasn't really any way to tell until you just have these episodes, they did an MRI and it turns out I had seven separate lesions on my brain.

So it turned out that it is very likely that those things that I experienced when I was younger that doctors couldn't explain were very lightly related to the multiple sclerosis.

because I had seven lesions, but only one was lit up, is kind of how they describe it. So it's bright on the CAT scans, or no, the MRIs, those are MRI's.

But that's evidence that this had been happening before, just in parts of the brain that wasn't, you know, as obvious as the one, this occurrence in 2013. Then the doctor said, okay, well, we need to reduce your stress.

Okay. I'm a mother of a tween age and a, you know, almost tweened age children. And so now I've got to figure out how to reduce stress. Right? I can't overheat.

Can't overheat, right? Got to stay cool. So I, stopped up on, I don't know. cold packs and things that if I was going to watch my daughter run track or cross country, it can be out there in the sun too long, can't be too overheated.

I needed to sleep well. That was another recommendation by the doctors. And we have some medications for you to have.

Discovering Food as Medicine

At the time, Copaxin was the recommended medication, which was a self-injection that you had to inject yourself once a day. but due to the way the medication works, it has to be injected into fat cells, but it also can kill the fat cell and create some kind of, I don't know, black skin patches or something.

So you have to rotate where you give yourself injections. We literally had a chart of the body and my husband was so fabulous during this because he's a scientist.

He had everything mapped out and he knew exactly what day and what part of the body that we were going to inject. And in the beginning, he would help me with the injections.

Ultimately, I was able to do most of them myself except for the back of arms. I mean, that hurts so bad. But the side effects of that, it's killing off the bad cells in my body that are attacking my, that's the idea with that medication.

But also it was almost like I started, I just had whelps all over my all the time and particularly on the underside of my arms and the backs of arms was particularly sensitive and I didn't want to wear short sleeves.

It was just a little embarrassing. You know, you do what you got to do whenever you have a debilitating disease, right? But I did mention it to my doctor.

And so he decided that maybe we would try some of the newer oral medications that were coming out. So we switched to, I honestly don't remember this one because I was on it for such a short time because it had really serious side effects.

But there was one oral medication they started me on to at the beginning. And like I said, I had a very bad digestive reaction to it. So that one was really short lived mostly because I was having trouble tolerating it Then we went to one that I stayed on for a bit of time called Jelaniya, and I could tolerate it through my stomach, but what ended up happening is after a time of being on that one, I started just getting infections again.

I would get an infection and I will get on antibiotics and get better. Not even 30 days later, I'd have another

infection. That was kind of a known side effect because what this medicine was doing was suppressing my immune system.

But it was really difficult to live like that because my stomach never has tolerated antibiotics very well, so I was constantly feeling nauseated being on the antibiotics and it just was exhausting.

And then throughout this period, because I needed to reduce stress, I had doctors giving me anxiety medication and because i was having trouble sleeping, they were giving medication to help me with sleeping.

And because, you know, so all sorts of vitamin deficiencies have been linked to multiple sclerosis. So I was also taking vitamin B12 and vitamin D, and my iron was low, I'm taking iron medication.

And at one point, Dr. Sola, who was on more medication than my grandmother who is in a nursing home, you know, like I was on more medication than she was, right?

And so it just felt wrong. And I wasn't feeling good. I mean, I, was functioning, you now, being a mom, going to work, functioning. But that's about the extent of how I remember that time, and I did that for like five years, that journey for about five Yeah, and that's what most people do today.

They have a disease, a chronic disease. And they're seeing medical professionals and they are doing the best they can with the understanding that we have.

People make it through, but they aren't fully alive, not vibrantly alive. Which is where you are today! And I just want to help our listeners understand too that multiple sclerosis is the body's immune system.

mistaking its own tissue—and in the case of multiple sclerosis, it's the central nervous system, the brain and spinal cord—as an intruder. And so it comes with the full force of its army to attack the intruders and kills brain cells and cells in their spinal cords.

That's why people have all of the symptoms that you were describing. And at the same time, it creates sometimes long-term damage, which is scarring. And those are the lesions that you were talking about that are visible, are those scars on the brain.

They're actually a scar, and so you're correct. The brain is trying to find workarounds to bypass the scaring. This was threatening your quality of life, but to your strength, you had the courage and the strength to go on.

So we met I think in 2017 ish, right? When you were working at the Rodeo Institute and I started doing some work there. And, you know, I said to you, are you interested in changing your lifestyle?

And so I'm really curious to just go back a little bit and, You know just hear your, how you reflect on that, if you thought I was a health nut that had some crazy ideas and why you embraced this, why You actually saw hope in this.

So maybe walk us through that next part of that journey. Yes, so I think my first introduction to you, you were giving a presentation at the garden store in the theater there about your journey transitioning from a pediatrician to the work you're doing now.

So, you know, that was my introduction to you. And so I certainly had respect for what you were sharing at that workshop that day. I believe it was Annie Brown who suggested that maybe I have a conversation, you know, a deeper conversation with you.

And I was like, oh, I would never impose on somebody like Dr. Stoll, right? That would have never crossed my mind to take advantage of my position at Rodale Institute and the people I'd meet there.

It would've never cross my minds to, take, advantage, of that situation to serve myself. So I think it was Annie,

honestly, who made the call to you and suggested that maybe we should have a conversation.

And I remember our phone call and I don't think I came to it with any kind of suspicion or because I think I fundamentally just working in the organic industry I thinks gives you an appreciation for these aha moments of yeah if you put poison on your food probably you eat that food you're gonna get poison in you, right?

So they seem pretty straightforward. And, you know, my journey with just nutrition generally, I guess it wasn't the first time that I had considered that, some foods are good for you some food are not good you.

But I think it was the 1st time I ever been introduced to this concept as food could be medicine. Right. So I think that was something that completely new to me.

Healing Through Lifestyle Change

And when we started having a conversation and you asked questions about my journey, you know, about medical history and we talked through that and said you thought you had a prescription you could give me that would help.

I think it was just like maybe I felt a little bit of relief because maybe there was a part of me that had just kind of always hoped that there is a better way that maybe, I wouldn't have to be on these medicines that made me sick all the time or maybe it just was the optimism because Fundamentally, I just didn't want to be on the medicine that was making me feel bad.

But I think I was a little skeptic in that it seemed like too much to hope for, but I wasn't willing to try. And so I'm really grateful. You know, when we had, our second conversation, you came back and that prescription was, and I still have it in my phone today, these are the things you must eat every single day.

These are things that you should limit and these things should avoid. And I think part of how I was, how do I say that? Part of what made it attractive was it wasn't a, don't do this, never do that, it was for the next 18 months, so there was a boundary on it.

You're going to follow this prescription. And it was, you're going to incorporate this into your life. You're not just this whole, we're gonna take everything away, right?

So for me, just psychologically, that worked really well because I'm good at doing things that people suggest are good for you. I am a little rebellious in nature.

So when people tell me I can't do something, it kind of puts my heckles up and it makes me feel a little like, well, why can't I do it? You know, argumentative.

I don't know why that what that is about me, but that's true. So for me just the approach generally was very helpful because, you know I like beans, I can eat a couple beans every day.

That's not a big deal. I don't know anybody who they would say that darker leafy greens are their favorite vegetable, but I can put two cups of those in my meal every day.

I have no problem with that. So there wasn't anything that was significantly just outrageous, right? You are asking me, like some doctors have in the past, to take these pills that I don't know what's in them and that are prebiotics and probiotics and doing all of this stuff.

You were just suggesting that i eat certain foods every single day for 18 months. That seems pretty logical to me, you know, and I think you even recommended some books for me to read that would help me understand kind of more about the body, like the China study, for example.

T. Colin Campbell. Did I get that right? Yeah. That was so informative. But at the end of the day, it wasn't a big lift. I mean, It wasn' easy. There is more to food than just eating and feeling full, right?

Food, especially in Italian family, it's a culture. It is part of our way of communicating. I don't know, It's more than a meal, And so I can still remember, you know, Sunday dinner was quite interesting and it probably took 17 of the 18 months for my mother-in-law to remember that it wasn't eating refined sugar because every meal, actually still to this day, every meals she's offering me ice cream afterwards, right?

Like, because that's just what GGs do. But at the end of the day, there were sacrifices. But it wasn't the food that was the sacrifice. It was kind of peripheral around it.

So Friday nights were family game night at our house. And we always had snacky foods on a Friday night during that time. My kids were teenagers. Sometimes their friends would come over.

But we always had, we played cards, and we do things, there were always snacks. And the snacks could range from potato chips, usually always potato, chicken wings if somebody had gone out to get them.

It was always kind of snacky food. I do remember there was this one night I came home and everybody was enjoying the snack food and I looked at the table and I can't believe I, and it just was a wrong week or whatever.

And I just burst into tears. I cannot eat any of this. But you know what? Because I had such a wonderful support system around me the next Friday night, you what was on that table?

Stuffed mushrooms that my husband came home from work and made, and he made snacky food for me, right? So it just, so it took accommodations and it a community, like people around supporting what I was doing.

It took some adjustments, but really they weren't that difficult. But the payoff? Hmm. Within six weeks, Dr. Stoll, I had started losing weight, which I think was kind of an unexpected side effect.

I grew up, was very skinny growing up. So for me, always been more self-conscious about being on the thinner side because I was teased about it when I young than I ever was whenever I a little heavier.

You know, started loosing weight but that wasn't something that I concerned about. was part of what happened with this diet. But interestingly, I was eating more food than I had eaten beforehand.

Because you don't think about it, but two cups of greens, a serving of berries, serving the mushrooms, the serving raw onions, two cup of dark leafy greens.

A serving like the brassica family. All of these things, they add up and they're heavy. They take up more room in your stomach than the things I typically eating.

And I had to eat three meals a day, which wasn't something I was used to doing because to fit it all in, right? So it was really weird because I felt like I full all the time.

And then I losing weight, one of the first things I noticed. But then the next thing I notice in about six or seven weeks, the was that it was almost like if you're walking around kind of on a foggy day, you may not notice it right there in front of you.

But then when you come over, go up a hill or something and all of a sudden the fog dissipates. That's kind what it felt like as I was coming up. It felt there had been just this fog all around me that I couldn't see and I didn't realize I'm in the middle of.

Then it started lifting. And it is not an exaggeration to say that The world around me was brighter. It was like somebody turned the lights on. In my brain, I could focus better.

I felt like I can see better! I know that sounds incredibly silly, but it felt as if I was seeing the world better, as though I were more present. And then, about week 8 to 10, I'm sleeping, I was like literally going to bed at night and waking up in the morning and having slept all the way through.

And I couldn't tell you, like it had probably been decades since that had happened that I had actually slept. It was incredible that within the first couple of months of switching my diet, to the plant-based whole food diet.

I was having these, literally feeling transformed. There were just these weird things that I didn't even realize was an issue. So I had like this skin problem, like on my foot, on right foot.

Ever since I have children, I've had this like rough skin on the right. I went to a dermatologist and they gave me creams. It never helped. That went away.

Now, to this day, i don't have problems with that. And it's just like weird things like that that you wouldn't even believe were connected. Just things started resolving themselves.

And by the end of the 18 months, I was a different person. I always living life. And it was, you know, honestly, really good timing because then I entered a few years that, when they say to reduce stress in your life, they probably don't, recommend going through a pandemic and having both of your parents die from cancer and your grandmother died from dementia all within the matter of 18 months.

Hope, Community, and a New Purpose

Like that was a really stressful time for me. And I navigated that. while also being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and feeling better than I ever could physically, even though the stress was still there, it didn't impact me.

I don't know. time going through that journey. And I don't know that I would have been able to go through the journey if we hadn't met and you had helped me understand and prescribed to me those 18 months of the plant-based whole food diet.

I didn't where I'd be right now, honestly. You know, two things. One, I imagine that you began to see your plate differently. Rather than a plate of, like you mentioned, restriction, where I'm telling you to take things away, you begin to imagine your place as a place of healing, repair and possibility, which is very profound.

And also it sounds to me like through our conversation, hope was infused and that hope is very powerful. So the prescription wasn't just like do this, but you could see into the future something that was potentially possible that you hadn't seen before.

And that pulled you through some of the challenges of making a lifestyle change. Is that correct? I think that when I want to say it was about six months in, I started weaning myself off of all of the medications.

The sleep medication was the first one to go because it always made me feel like I was a zombie. That anxiety medication I had to wean off slower because apparently there are side effects if you just stop taking it.

So that took a little longer. And then I came off of the multiple sclerosis medication probably about 12 months into it. By the time I was done, I WAS hopeful.

I hopeful that I could live a life and not have to be on medication for the rest of my life. I was hopeful that I would see my kids grow up and that we could go hiking in the mountains in summertime like we like to do and I'd be able to hold my grandchildren when that time came.

What's interesting too is that the people around me started noticing that as well. They would ask me about it, what had changed, and i would tell them.

I'm eating differently and my food, when I feel like I have a cold coming on, I am eating more kale. I eat my blueberries. My kids, if you ask my children, what is mom going to say if I tell her that I don't feel well?

She's going tell you to eat some kale smoothie. That is what I prescribe my kids. You talked to my dad, and he was complaining. He's 72 years old, he's complaining, I don't like to eat my vegetables.

I'm like, well, you don' t have to like it. Do you like eating your medicine? You're eating it because it's good for your body and it will help your bod y make you feel better.

You' re not three years o ld. I don"t care if you li e your broccoli or not. Yo u're going to ea t it becaus it' s good fo you. This whole idea that I don't like to eat something doesn't even exist in my brain.

I'll care if you like it. It's what your body needs, right? Nobody says, goes around saying, oh, I like my medicine. Like I liked my cholesterol pills.

You know, diabetes injections. Nobody walks around and saying that. you don' have to like, it's food, and it is medicine, one and the same. And I'm sure you found ways to make all of those foods delicious.

You know, your point is so well taken. And, I think it's exactly right that we have to look at our plates differently. you know, to provide our bodies the right opportunity and resources to heal, which is exactly what you did.

And not only did the immune system kind of down-regulate, downshift and stop attacking your central nervous system, but you ramped up all the other healing mechanisms in your body to begin resolving some of those other small little chronic issues like the skin changes.

And it was simply because you saw your plate as a plate of possibility every day. And I know you made the food delicious, too. It wasn't just some raw kale on your kids' plates, but it's very, very powerful.

For somebody that's watching today and maybe struggling with chronic disease, What would you say to them? You know, how would inspire hope? How would encourage them today to start thinking about their lifestyle and their food differently?

And you know what would like to leave them with as we kind of bring our conversation to a close? I would leave them with, nobody can do this by themselves.

You need a community. And so I think that I was successful because I had the people around me to help support me. It started with you and Annie, and it started, you know, my husband supporting me and my family and, kids and you, know and friends being inquisitive about it.

I think it's important to find that support because this is possible. It is. Possible to change your lifestyle. Is possible to learn how to cook and make parsnips taste really good.

Even though they're not your favorite, right? But yeah, you need community to do that. You need support and you. Need people who are going to make you stuffed mushrooms on snacky family Friday fun night.

So surround yourself with people who will help you and support you in this journey. Yeah, thank you. That is so important. Over the last 20 plus years that I've been doing this, I have come to realize community is the secret sauce.

It is exactly what it takes to move from conversations about healing to practical application. Healing begins when hope becomes practical. The practical part of hope is education and awareness.

Part of it is engineering your environment, but a big part of, like you said, is having people around you that will support you, that would encourage you.

And like your husband, begin working with you to support your change. Then it becomes sustainable and it actually becomes enjoyable. So I'm delighted that you highlighted community because that's one of the aspects of a lifestyle change that is often missed.

And so, Haley, as we kind of wrap up, I always like to ask people, like, what is your inspiration now? So, you know, your had this tremendous lifestyle change, and your multiple sclerosis is for all intents and purposes in remission.

Your symptoms resolved. You are full of energy and vibrancy. You achieved that kind of idea of living more fully alive, you know, rather than just surviving.

And I know you've started a new company, but what helps you to kind sustain this lifestyle and what inspires you keep pushing forward into life? Oh, gosh.

So, my children have graduated college now and, watching their journey as they move into the real world motivates me to want to continue to be healthy and be here.

I am still looking forward to holding the grandchild at some point, but don't tell them that. Not too soon. I'm inspired by my husband. He made a career change late in life that has made him happier than he's ever been.

And so, I don't know. Whenever you have almost the second chance to live life, it just becomes like I relish every moment. I earned my degree at Albany University.

I officially joined the Catholic Church since this all resolved. I have this passion, and I don't know what it is, but this passionate to learn and absorb and be a part of this world.

Like, I want to make a difference now. It's almost like I've been given this chance to The Lord has given me a gift and I want to share that with the world.

And I feel like the illness was sort of this path for me to walk that helped me understand what life could be. And now that I have this clarity and the energy and inspiration, I want to move in the places that i'm feeling called to.

And that is, i guess, what really motivates me. trying to come down to one idea, right? I feel this calling back to the agriculture industry, and that very likely could be related to my journey with food.

It could related my family history in the cattle ranching and farming industry. It could be related to my time at Roe Dale, which was just an incredible experience working for Roedale Institute.

But whatever it is, I feel called back to that industry and I'm trying to find ways. The company you mentioned, Pocket Gopher, is my attempt to merge my passion for agriculture and my gift for problem solving and trying to merge those two together to be helpful in a space where there are people who need help and assistance.

So I don't know. I just, I feel called in that direction and I think my faith is much stronger now than it has ever been. And, you know, think that that is what drives me forward right now.

I love it. That's so inspirational. And that's what I've seen so many times too, Haley, is that when somebody experiences this transformation that can come when we transform our lifestyle and our plate, It opens up new possibilities, new hope, and maybe an exploration of gifts that we didn't realize we had.

And I've seen many times that it impels people forward to pursue their dreams and to help other people in a new, inspired way, that's what I'm hearing from you.

I love that its founded on faith. That is the substance of everything. And your story is so powerful for everybody that's listening, because it really is a journey of hope and healing, and hopefully will inspire people to begin seeing their daily plate as not just a place of habit, tradition, or just enjoyment.

It can be all of those things. But it's also a space of, hope, of future, inspiration, transformation, healing. That's what you've shared so elegantly and beautifully today.

And I'm really grateful for your time today. I am inspired by your journey. And this, you know, I've never had a chance actually to hear your whole story like I have today, and so this has been a real joy for me.

So thank you, Haley, for being here. Well, thank so much for inviting me, Dr. Stoll. It was great to catch up. Thank

you. Where can people learn more about you and Pocket Gopher?

So PocketGopher is pocketgopher.com, and that's P-O-C-K-E-T-G- O-F- E-R. And I am on LinkedIn, Haley Giuseppe, G-U-I-S-e-P-B-A-Y. So yeah, feel free to connect with me on Linkedin.

That's probably the best and easiest way to get me. Fantastic. Thank you, Haley, and thanks to all of you for being here. Remember, healing begins where hope becomes practical.

And the practical aspects we learned about today were community, We're re-envisioning your plate as a place of hope and healing, connecting to those things that are most inspiring to us, and learning to make a difference with the gifts and talents that you have, just as Haley does.

So thank you again for being here, Haleigh, And thanks to all of you for joining us today. And please come back to a regenerative life. in every part of your lives.

Thanks everyone. Make it a great day.