How Stress Fuels Disease — And How She Healed Naturally | Jane Hogan Transcript

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Introduction to the power of calm

In that desire step, I have two habits. The first habit is create calm and I just get people to start practicing the breath. And then the second habit in that is I call it amplify your vision.

So it's about creating a vision of your healed and healthy self. What would you like to be doing? What's the emotion? what does it feel like in your body?

Find a song that goes with it because songs are very powerful evokers of emotion. And so practice that. Practice that vision because we create everything twice, right?

It's first created in the mind, then it's created physically. So we have to give our brain a target. It is kind of like putting in a destination in GPS unit.

We need to get with the destination. And so the breath work and then shifting to this vision, perhaps playing the song, feeling the feelings, that's that first step of desire.

And it's not hard and it feels good. Welcome to the Belgianski Cancer Talk Show, where integrative science and holistic healing come together. I am Sylvie Belzhansky and in each episode we explore nutrition, lifestyle, mental health and research-backed approaches to support the whole person through cancer and chronic diseases.

Hello and welcome to the Belhanski Cancer Talk Show. It is my pleasure today to receive Jane Hogan and she is going to talk to us about the power of calm.

Jane is a wellness engineer. She blends science and spirituality to help people release chronic pain using the mind, body, and breath so they can become empowered creators of their own health.

Her personal experience of reversing crippling rheumatoid arthritis using natural solutions inspired her to leave a 30 years engineer career and become a functional medicine certified health coach, certified yoga teacher, and wellness educator.

Combining ancient wisdom with leading-edge science, Jane's Wellness by Design blueprint has helped hundreds of people release chronic pain naturally. She is the host of the Wellness By Design podcast, and her empowering message has been featured on numerous podcasts and seminars.

Welcome Jane, welcome to the Belgiansky Cancer Talk Show. Thank you so much, Sylvie. I'm so happy to be here. Delighted to have you, but sorry to learn that you have been suffering with crippling rheumatoid arthritis.

Jane Hoganu2019s rheumatoid arthritis journey

Can you tell us a little bit more about your personal journey? What happened to you? What did you learn while having to deal with it? Yeah, it came on really suddenly for me, Sylvie.

I was going along in my normal life. I was working as an engineer at the time, but I had gone through this very stressful year. My mother had died suddenly in 2015 and I, well, she was my best friend, so I in deep grief and shocked because she in good health.

And she was also the executor of her estate. So I had all of those responsibilities. She lived a seven hour drive away from me. I have two older siblings, one younger sibling.

Everyone knows that this can be a really stressful time for everyone. It was a very stressful year. And coming up to

about the end of the year when I was finally dealing with the house and the contents, because my parents My mother had been in the house for 50 years and my father had already passed.

They were travelers and collectors. It was full of stuff. So I had a lot to deal with. I was just coming up to the end of that as I doing the final divulging of the contents, getting the House on the market, that the pain started and it was severe.

You know, I think it started, and I can't remember if it's my right or left shoulder. One shoulder one day, so bad my arm had to go on a sling. The next day it is the other shoulder, and it started kind of rotating through joints in my body and I had no idea what was going on.

I thought probably it had something to do with the stress because, you know, their stressful year and then this happened. But very quickly, Sylvie, within three months, I went from being strong and healthy to barely able to walk, not able A fist, no grip strength in my hands, jaw pain, knee pain hands elbows, feet everywhere.

My knees were swollen up. And so I thought that I just needed to have a vacation because I finally sold the house and everything would be fine, but I didn't get better.

It just took me down a path. We didn't know what it was. My doctor, actually, I was very lucky to have a family doctor who told me that sometimes foods can cause joint pain.

And so I thought that was really crazy at the time. I had never heard this. That was back in 2016. But I cut out gluten and dairy because she said they were the biggest triggers.

And I immediately, within like five days, noticed a reduction in pain and I think that changed everything. It empowered me and then it took me down a whole pathway of healing holistically.

Let me to functional medicine there i really was interested in the power of the mind more than any other topic and i realize that for me like food was food with helpful but not the only thing and so i just.

Learn about the nervous system the powder the mine and how we can change our physical body with. So many things we have available to us with the power of our mind and the nervous system.

So that's like the 30,000 foot view. How long was that ago? The pain started in 2016. I spent a couple of years on this path, trying to figure it all out and getting better along the way.

And I ended up being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. The rheumatologist told me about the medications, but I was having some results with what I doing and so he was also supportive of me carrying on if that was my choice without medications.

And it was by choice because the side effects to me were very frightening and it didn't make sense to take a medication for something I knew that stress had turned on.

And so I just kept on doing what I was doing. So really, it probably took me about two years to really get it under control. Again, I didn't know what was I doing because I starting with food.

I creating a lot of stress around food in my life. And then, you know, then I'm a work in progress too. Like I know that stress can still impact my body.

so, I have to keep working at it. But basically I live pain free now. I'm running. I just ran a 25 kilometer trail run a couple of weeks ago and just living my life again.

And I ended up leaving my engineering career because all I wanted to do was talk about and share what I had learned because most people aren't really hearing that.

We're taught that pain is something to cover up or cut out or hide and that it's a problem instead of the message really that I think it is our body giving a message and it really information and so it information to help us create that environment so the body can do what it does and thats like return to homeostasis.

So how would you describe the connection between stress, emotions, and physical pain? In your view, how does this work all together? Yeah, it's so interesting.

I think because I'm an engineer and I am more of a system thinker. And I was just like looking at the big 30,000 foot view, like what's going on here?

Okay, I had stress, turned on pain. What was going with that? So it led me to look at, okay, what happens when we're stressed? It shifts the nervous system into the stress response.

In that stress responses, all of the systems stop working.

Stress, the nervous system, and pain

Because of course our brain and nervous system think that we're in mortal danger and so it directs all resources towards protecting us you know heart rate goes up we don't sleep because we gotta be on alert.

you know, using all the energy for that and then all of the other systems start to not work so well. So there can be digestive problems and that actually happened to me.

I learned pretty early on that I had solid test and bacterial overgrowth, which of course can happen if your digestion isn't working well and the digestion is not working.

Well, because of stress, it's not a life you know, preserving thing, right, in terms of an immediate danger. And so that then has all kinds of downstream effects because 80% of our immune system is sitting on the other side of the digestive tract and so it's getting triggered and just has these other downstream affects, one of which is autoimmune disease.

Another could be cancer. Another, could it be, you know, all kinds of things, right? Diabetes. So, so many of these, what we think of as, an inevitable part of aging or just bad luck or got bad genes, that kind of thing is actually our nervous system is at the root of it.

The nervous is what got stuck in this fight or flight response and then has had these downstream effects. So the root cause is the nervous system. And I've also studied pain a lot too, and specifically, there's a whole lot of things around pain, the way the brain works with pain.

Emotional pain and physical pain kind of very similar pathways in the brains in terms of triggers. So emotional pain can trigger physical, what feels like physical response.

It doesn't mean that the physical pain or the pain that someone's experiencing isn't real. It's all real pain if anyone's experience in pain. But there's a lot going on in the brain in terms of learned pathways that just keep being repeated, repeated repeated.

And then we have fear about the paying naturally because that's what we've learned. Of course, you started for me, I was barely able to walk. I started thinking what's going to happen in my future.

Am I going to be able to stay in this house? I'm not going be to able do anything. And of course that keeps the nervous system stuck in a stress state.

So you can perpetuate that pain fear cycle. It just keeps going on because then the pain gets worse. There's a lot of other interesting neurological things going specifically with pain as well.

Yeah, for sure. I mean, there is emotional pain, physical pain and all that gets compounded into something, a kind of big ball that creates even more anxiety.

So, beyond the foods, the gluten, and the dairy, what can we do to calm the nervous system? Yeah I mean the first place to start even though I started with food and I know a lot of people still do think okay I just got to figure out what foods I should avoid and then I'll be fine or or you know so many things people can get.

really granular with and I think it's kind of missing the point. The first thing we need to do is get the nervous system, be able to regulate our nervous systems.

And so the easiest way is what I found is the breath. You know, that's a great way. I mean, there's sometimes I think about it as like top-down approaches and bottom-up approaches.

So a top down approach, like in terms of thinking, might be shifting to what am I grateful for right now? Like that's a simple way to get out of fear.

If you're thinking about what you are grateful for and then what's going well in your life, it's hard to also be in a fear state, you know? And then in terms of the breath, that is a very body centered way.

Start with the breathe, breathing into the belly. When we breathe into belly, we are activating. the lower lobes of the lungs, and that activates the parasympathetic or the relaxation response of nervous system.

So we can actually do that. We can change our breath and then create that response. And there's so many other things, but those are really good starting points.

Sometimes we try to create those kinds of We decide we are going to create this kind of routine and take some time for meditation and journaling and all those things.

But sometimes we never feel after a few weeks that we get stuck, that it's not working. And we try to heal, but sometimes, I mean, we feel it doesn't work.

With this, I mean, voluntary approach, sometimes we cannot just decide we are going to heal and make it happen. Yeah, I mean, i'm never surprised at the power of the mind.

So it's interesting because I do see this a lot where people are really working hard at trying to heal. And so they're really focusing on, okay, must journal.

I must do my breath work. i've got to do this. Oh darn, I still got pain or whatever symptom. It's not working. I don't think this is working and of course all of those thoughts don' t shift us over into the the rest and digest response, right?

They're going to keep us in that fear response.

Calming the nervous system with breath and mindset

The stress response of the nervous system. And so it's really, I won't say it is easy. It's simple, but not necessarily easy, so we have to start with awareness.

What are you thinking about most of time? And can you start to make little shifts? It might be like, okay, still have pain, It might be I've noticed some small changes in the right direction.

Or even, even if someone hasn't, Even if they say I'm open, I just find start using like the power of affirmations, but in The right way can be so supportive.

So I am open to, whatever. I can do something. about what's going on physically in my body. That could be like a

starting point for someone who's like, will this even work?

Just being open to the idea or like I am making gentle shifts each day. So simple little things like this where just you're changing your thoughts because if your if you thoughts are focused on, I haven't figured it out yet.

I've got to work harder. What am I missing? This isn't working. All of those thoughts keep us in that stress response. And, you know, it's okay. I'm not saying that we never want to experience negative feelings or we do, we want allow our feelings to be expressed.

We just don't want sit in those feelings that aren't supportive all day long because if we, do we're not going to shift. So we have to, shift our nervous system.

over to the relaxation response. We can do it a little bit at a time, but any little changes will help. Just keep taking the baby steps and you just keep them day after day.

And sometimes Sylvie, the answer is like, just stop focusing so much on your health. Maybe do something that you really love to do. So I'm thinking about a lady that's in my program and she also had rheumatoid arthritis.

I have people with a lot of different types of pain. But she had been really trying to focus on what can I do to fix myself? And I understand, because I was doing that too, was trying to figure it out.

And so after a while, I found out that she did watercolor painting. So I said, just do some watercolor paintings. Don't let it, it doesn't have to be perfect.

You're just doing it to enjoy the process. And she started doing that. It's in these little steps of just forgetting about working so hard at trying to figure out and just getting back to doing life and what brings you joy and fun for you again.

That's an example of a baby step. Just giving yourself permission to i don't have to be perfect i dont have the perfect health health in order to live my life again i can start living my like enjoying the moments now and it just keeps changing.

And shifting things because coming back to the brain. Sometimes I think about the neural pathways like pathways in a field of tall grass. And so if we've got a feel of toll grass and we always take in this pathway of pain, fear, pain and fear.

Oh no, what's wrong? I've gotta figure this out. Then that pathway is really well beaten down. So that's gonna be the easiest pathway to take. If we wanna take a different pathway, of things are shifting, pain isn't something to fear.

I'm okay right now, I have a roof over my head, i'm safe right. Now then we could start to build new pathways in the brain and then eventually the old pathway starts to, you know, the grass starts, to grow up again.

So it gets easier and easier to take this new pathway. But it takes a little bit of effort building a new path way, right? It's not going to come easily.

We have to like really be aware and start making the shifts to take that new pathway. Molecular biologist Dr. Mirko Beljanski studied how specific plant extracts interact with cancer cells, work that continues today through independent research and real-world use.

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And would you say that unconsciously not to, I mean, focusing on external things, like the food or some relationship that can be painful or things like that, it's a way to not letting go, actually, of the pain and the stress to some, in a ways, hanging to what is internal and focusing and things which are more external?

Well, I think when we focus totally on the external, and especially if that's not within our control, that doesn't feel very safe. So even like shifting over, like, this is my responsibility.

I am the one who's in control and I'm the can decide what to put my attention on. And it's not that food, for example, isn't important, it is important.

The DESIGN blueprint and the desire step

It's just, what are your thoughts about it? For me, I got to the point where I had orthorexia, where was afraid of eating anything but healthy food. and it was stressful for me.

So it actually wasn't that helpful. I now teach people with food to begin with, with just enjoying the food, being mindful about what you're eating, grateful for the foods that you are having, slowing down so you assist your body in digesting, feeling grateful, noticing the taste and the flavors and smells and appreciating the textures and so on.

So that's what I get people to focus on with food as a first step rather than, oh, I've got to cut out gluten. Because that is hard for a lot of people.

I remember having one person who I was telling him about this early on how I cutting out the gluten and he had some pain in his fingers. And he said, "I'm not cutting now gluten." He said I may as well like drag me off to die.

" I'm never going to do it." So that's, it's just not going work for everybody. And the power of the mind is amazing, too. If we believe that foods are going to be harmful for us, often they probably will be.

So there's so much going on, really. And we're not even touching on the whole quantum perspective that we are energy. And so energy is a frequency. Thoughts and emotions are frequencies.

And all of those thoughts that we have are frequency that's affecting this frequency, so we're just such wonderful beings, I think. So you were speaking of breath.

Can you tell us a little bit more about what you are practicing? I, for a long time, know that I was breathing in my chest mostly, quick, shallow breathing.

A lot of people in pain also hold their breath. It's common to be a breath holder if you're in a pain. That is what happens when we shift into that stress response of the nervous system.

The breathing does tend to be up here, it tends to quicker because we're ready to run and so that's what we want. So what know is that breathing, if we can lengthen out the breath, breathe lower into the belly, um you know not not hold our breath breathing in and out through the nose also all of these things can help shift the nervous system over into that relaxation response and that's where all healing happens so healing cannot happen in a stress response state.

healing happens in a relaxation response state. So the breath is a great way to do that. We're lucky we can control our breath consciously. It's kind of like a habit as well.

If we want to shift into a habits of deeper breaths, longer breaths. Longer exhales are also really good because it's in the exhale that shifts to the relaxation response.

So we can just practice that teaching our body a new way to breathe. And there are times when I still have to come back to it. Like even right now I'm breathing.

I can tell I breathing very much in my chest because I tend to talk quickly. But if we make time, to practice slower breathing, conscious breathing. Then we can start to shift more often into that state.

Yeah. How long does it take? I mean, did it takes you to really master that from the time you decided to get? That was the way you would go. I mean, it wasn't the only thing, but it certainly was a starting point for me.

I wouldn't say I'm a work in progress, Sylvie. A morning routine where I begin practicing, I have a mindfulness breathwork practice as part of that. I try to shift out, and I rest in the middle of the day.

Not a sleep, but a rest. Where I shift back again. And I practice before I go to sleep which is part my wind-down bedtime routine. I even practice while I'm running, believe it or not, because I am a trail runner and it's kind of a slower pace.

While I run, I start with the exhale actually, and so exhaling, pulling my belly back into my spine so that when I inhale I can fill up my stomach again.

I practice that while running because when running I don't fill my body up when inhaling. So it's anytime, anytime I can think about it, I try to practice it.

And there is a point where, you have made some improvement, then you are to go beyond focusing on those improvements and start getting your life back and stop thinking of the pain or what you will have to do on a daily basis to avoid being in pain, right?

When cancer enters your life, the questions don't stop at treatment. You start asking, why? What else? And what more can I do to support my body? At the Beljansky Foundation, we believe cancer care deserves deeper answers.

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That work continues today through independent research, education, and global collaboration. At belgianski.org, you will find evidence-based resources, expert-led conferences, books, and conversations that explore integrative approaches to cancer and chronic disease alongside conventional care.

Whether you are a patient, a caregiver, or practitioner, this is the place to learn, to question, Visit belgianski.org to explore the research, attend upcoming events and connect with the Belgiansky community.

Because informed choices begin with credible science. Yeah, I put everything that I teach into trying to come up with a model for how to teach this and a path for people to follow.

And so I've put it all together in what I call the design blueprint because I'm an engineer. I love the engineering terms and the word design is an acronym for desire, explore, surrender, integrate, generate, navigate.

So each of those Steps has a couple of habits for each step that kind of move people along a path. Not that it has to be, it's not like an exact science, but it is a, path for people to follow so it doesn't feel so overwhelming.

Okay, so the first step is desire. In that desire step, I have two habits. The first habit is create calm and I just get people start practicing the breath.

And then the second habit in that is, is called, I call it amplify your vision. So it's about creating a vision of your healed and healthy self. What would you like to be doing?

What is what's the emotion? what does it feel like in your body? Find a song that that goes with it because songs

are very powerful evokers of emotion.

And so practice that practice, that vision, because we create everything twice, right? It's first created in the mind, then it then is created physically.

So we have to give our brain a target. It's kind of like putting in a destination in the GPS unit. We need to get with the destination. And so the breath work and then shifting to this vision, perhaps playing the song, feeling the feelings, that's that first step of desire.

and it's not hard and feels good. it feels to slow down the breathe. Feel the feelings of doing something you love doing. Even if you're just imagining it in your mind, your brain, they say the brain can't tell the difference between something we imagine in our mind and actually doing the thing.

So this is a wonderful starting point and it's like, It's like plugging in the coordinates in a GPS and then we move on from there to the other steps.

And they go right along to, the last ones are about doing joyful things. What do you do for play and creativity? And what do want to learn more about?

Because this is really all about really expressing your soul because we came here to be an expression.

Practical tools, resources, and closing remarks

And so, what is it we want to learn about? What do we to participate in? And, so it takes us right back to participating in life again. And it's kind of circular because once you've gone through the blueprint, then perhaps you got a new desire.

All right, I've got new goal now. You go through again and the model again so that you're bringing that new desired to life. So I just love this little model and it works really well for people.

They really enjoy it. So what would you recommend to people who are interested and would like to learn more about this blueprint and really implement that in their life?

But if you feel you need some support, it's going to be difficult to do that. Yeah. Well, my program, My membership is called Living Pain Free. This is the model in that, but if someone wants to learn about it first, I lay it out in my book.

My book is call Pain free on purpose. Use your mind to heal your body and get your life back. And I layout the blueprint and the habits in the book so people could follow it on their own.

And I have a free chapter if anyone wants to get the first chapter. Absolutely. We will have the link in the podcast. People will find the free chapters and then get to your newsletter and can absolutely subscribe and continue this very important work.

I send out an email every Friday called the Friday Thrive where I really give people little shifts that they can do to bring their nervous system back to regulation.

A lot of people tell me that my email is the only one they open. They look forward to it every week because it's just little things that can they do. And if people want to work with me a little bit more, they come into the membership, which is a lovely community of to support people in that curriculum, but they don't have to do that.

I also have it all in my book, I share things on my YouTube channel and in My Friday Thrive every week. So there's lots of ways that people can learn how to this.

And the beautiful thing about it is everyone can do this and it's within your power. You don' have t o go outside for

someone else to d it. This is your work to.

But it s very empowering. It takes, I believe that really when our body starts to, you know, show signs of disharmony, it is because that full version of who we are, our soul, can't, It wants to come through and it's getting blocked because we got this nervous system that's stopping it.

And so we can train our nervous, retrain our brain and nervous systems to allow all of that loving essence of Who we Are to fully come fully through. I see that as a very unique opportunity to get into a safe space and work that can make a difference in everybody's life, even if we already mastered some focus and are able to function well.

It's always areas in our lives where we tend to trigger us. And you had it, I mean, your life well together while before your young mom passed, you were an engineer, You had a thriving career and then life happens and you realize that you have a lot still to learn and to achieve and discover within yourself.

Well, you know, what I really realized to that was that my mother dying, the stress of that year was actually more like the straw that broke the camel's back.

And then I've been carrying stress my whole life, like a lot of people, um, a lotta women, I would say as well. We, we learned to be people pleasers, perfectionists, it be independent, really not, not say We have trouble saying no to things or always helping other people first and putting other People first.

All of those are actually not so much a personality, but it's a it say behavior of protection because when we were really little. and different things happen or we interpreted them a certain way or learned things from our parents and other people in our lives.

We couldn't fight or flee and so we learned to fawn, is the other word that's being used. So we learn to how to adapt our behavior to keep us safe. And so really humming, my whole life humming along with me was this underlying stress in my nervous system where I didn't feel safe unless I was trying, unless was perfect.

Of course, no one can be perfect, so how could I ever really feel fully safe? So, you know, I see this so often, and when I ask people about those, what we think of as personality traits, how many of these do you have?

And I do talk about it in book as well. How many of these do you have?" They'll be like, all of them, most of the them. Because it's just a sign that our nervous system was already in protection mode from a very young age, and it has been a humming background stress our entire lives.

And then, of course, as life goes on and stressful things happen, just our body goes, no more, So, last question, how do you recognize when you are responding from protection rather than from our authentic self where we are not fawning, as you say?

You know, it's hard when we're not used to paying attention to it. I would say tune into your body. What do feel in your bodies? Are you clenching anywhere?

are you tightening up? Do you feel a sense of a drop, you know in terms of you know, not feeling good or any of these kinds of feelings that are not, I would call on the loving side of the spectrum.

They're really coming from limiting beliefs that will always lead to that stress response of your nervous system. So tune into your body. And it may take a little while if you're not used to tuning into your body.

I didn't know I was tightening and clenching a lot in my belly. So just start to tune in and notice, you know, and I did, I just made me think as I shrug my shoulders there.

And I remember my Tai Chi instructor would say, Jane, relax your shoulders. Cause my shoulder are like this all the time. Like they are relaxed. That was normal for me.

If people are saying things like that to you, then, or maybe you notice you've got tightness. And I did as well. Long before these pain symptoms showed up, I had tendonitis.

I would have to go for massages and go see the chiropractor. All of these are just signs that our body is tensing. If our bodies are tensed and clenching, why is it doing that?

It's because it's getting ready for protection. And why is it getting ready for protection? Because the nervous system has shifted into that stress response.

That's fascinating. Thank you so much, Jane. I think that was really empowering for a lot of people and we need to realize exactly where we are into this journey, all of us, from stress to to a happy place where we are not under stress, where are we not in a flight or fight response and where, we can focus on unhappy feelings that are going to make our bodies happy.

Yeah, if we could shift there more often, then we're putting ourselves in the place that the body can just return to homeostasis, start to do the repair that it needs to.

Sylvie, thank you so much for having me as a guest. It's been really an honor. Thank you for joining us on the Belgianski Cancer Talk Show. Everybody, please look at the notes to learn more about Jane's book and the free chapter and subscribe to the newsletter.

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