Introduction and Megan Ramos Background

– Welcome to another session of Reversing Inflammaging Summit Mari Body and Mind Longevity Medicine. I'm your host, Dr. Stephen Sideroff And I'm very pleased during this session to have Megan Ramos, who is the co author of the Bestselling book Life In the Fasting Lane.

And Megan is such a pleasure to have you here for this meeting. – Oh, thank you so much for having me, Stephen. Good. – You know, I know we're talking in general about uh Fasting, intermittent fasting for diabetes type two. But let's begin by telling us how you got into this area in the first place. – Yeah. So from a young age, I was very keen and preventative medicine. My mom had a whole bunch of health conditions and they just always treated her symptoms which gave her more health conditions and nobody took the time to figure out what was causing the initial problem in the first place.

So at nine years old, I decided I was going to become a preventative. I did get into nephrology though, as a young student at 15, at a summer job doing data entry and some small projects, what I didn't realize at the time was the largest medical research program or in the United States and Canada were based in Canada.

So all in North America. Um so it's a nephrology program and I was partnered up with a young physician right out of his residency, a young man named Dr. Jason Fung.

And we, he's an ethnologist and we worked together in the summertime and I continue to work there throughout the school year. There is a lot of drug studies going on at that program. But there's a lot of lifestyle interventions.

They use a lot of the profits to find lifestyle interventions and prospective studies. Looking at, you know, changing diets and Including exercise, sleep and stress management. There's this whole clinic actually dedicated to it outside of the research as well. So I thought this is just a gold mine.

It was everything that I wanted to do with my life and work with like minded people anyways flash forward 11 years and we have people dropping like flies from type two diabetes when I was 15. And I walked into the only dialysis unit, there was barely any patients. By the time I was 26 there were thousands of people being die allies 24 7. So many in fact that we were airlifting them to places like Ottawa and Sudbury, which are about a five minute drive from Toronto and that was largely due to type two diabetes. And all I did was watch people die and I thought, oh, you better get your act together. Megan.

You know, you're skinny now, but you had fatty liver. You're told you have fatty liver when you're 12 and peace to us when you're 14. And it seems that everybody's 40th birthday present in my family's type two diabetes as well as the first heart attack. If they even make it to 40 without a heart attack. My uncle passed at 36 from his third heart attack. So, you know, it takes some time figure out what you wanna do with your life because watching people die isn't what you signed up for and get your own health together. So I did everything.

I hired the best dietician in the country. I worked out with a personal trainer and didn't spare any expense. And at the end of it, I gained quite a bit of weight and develop type two diabetes for my 27th birthday.

Jason was going through a similar transformation as me being so frustrated and conversations that he had with friends led him to start thinking about fasting from a therapeutic lens. And when I had my diagnosis, he was just starting to talk about this within our clinic, to colleagues, to some patients. And I listened to him talk to patients one evening and I went through all of the all the stages of anger denial, grief. I don't know what the order they are.

It all happened really quickly. And the next day, I did my first fast six months later, I lost over £60. I've maintained an £86 weight loss in the last 11 years.

I reversed my A one C from 6.4 to 4.6, no more fatty liver and no more PCOS just six months. So it was the most rewarding thing I ever did.

Fasting, Weight Loss, and Diabetes Reversal

And unfortunately, we're able to team up to start bringing fasting to diabetic patients to help them reverse their condition. – That's an amazing turnaround. And you attributed specifically to the fasting regimen that you used – A combination of fasting and lifestyle.

I was too sick and I was too heavily addicted. I didn't have the good health to even work on healthy habits. I was 1984 baby. So the formula Fed McDonald's is real food to feed your kids.

Don't let your kids go for three minutes without eating generation. I often joke that I had insulin resistance coming out of the womb under £11 baby.

So, you know, there was definitely nutritional stuff that I did that really helped optimize things, but fasting started to give me some energy. Fasting started to show me that light was at the end of the tunnel.

And so my goal went from, you know, I'm gonna do my fasting protocol three times a week and on my eating days, I'm going to try to have one good meal that week and that went from having one good meal to only one bad meal to one bad meal every couple of weeks.

So I just didn't even want it anymore. So I attribute fasting to sort of being the tip of the iceberg. You know, that really caused the whole transformation and made it capable for me to do so.

– That's great. Well, before we go more into the details of the program, let's take a step back and give us your perspective on aging and longevity and how it fits in here in this discussion.

– It's really cool because we started fasting with individuals to help them reverse their type two diabetes and they would come in and say, can fasting help with this or that or all this range of things. And we'd say no.

And now I don't know what fasting can't help with from anti aging and longevity um perspective. I mean, it's just so mind blowing both sort of at the cellular level. And then also just physically, we see these radical transformations, I've got into waiting rooms and called in patients that I hadn't seen in a couple of months or look for the patient and not see them and go back to my exam room and have them chase me down the hall saying Megan, no, I'm here and I just didn't recognize them. C section scars disappearing all after like 30 37 10 years, all this crazy stuff. And we attribute that to a topic.

E so Takaji is this cellular recycling phenomenon that even when I was in university, no one was talking about it. But in the last 10 years has become a really hot topic because of all of its great potential in terms of anti aging, longevity and disease prevention.

So when your body, when this physiological state of a top aji is activated in your body, your body will hunt down old and damaged cells proteins and take them apart and put them back together. So they function normally again.

And early research in this shows that there's a lot of potential benefits for disease prevention, especially when it comes to things like neurological conditions, but just anti aging in general. And I'm, we're seeing it observation aly uh in their clinic in our coaching program with just the radical changes um that our patients are experiencing. I mean, there getting better lab markers in their seventies and they had in their twenties. It's just been really wild to see people actually aging backwards and we'll often joke with some of our clients and patients.

You know, it's your birthday and your, your younger with all the work you've done. Like, let's look at a photo of you last year versus this year. Let's look at your labs last year versus this year, what we're doing in terms of activity.

So a lot of that fasting, there's different ways to activate this physiological Takaji phenomenal in the body, a

ketogenic diet. So extremely low carbohydrate diet is a one way, very intensive exercise is another way. But fasting is a really great lazy way. It's a really turbocharge it.

Um, you know, you just enjoy some green tea, some mater, a few pinches of salt throughout the day. You don't have to go pump a ton of iron at the gym and you don't have to be so micromanaging with your meals and you can experience this extreme amount of atop a g in a relatively short period of time.

– Now that, that's great. Um tell us what's the problem with type two diabetes and insulin and, and why is it such a growing problem? – Yeah. So we look back to like my grandparents, um they would be in their 90s if they're still both alive today.

Uh And they grew up eating food. My grandfather grew up on a farm, you know, eating food from his own land, not processing refined foods. They ate three square meals a day. No snacking.

My grandmother was my biggest advocate when I started fasting because everyone else in my family thought I had an eating disorder at the time and she said, no, it wasn't until we started eating all of the time that we became obese and we started to develop disease in this family.

Going back generations, people didn't have diabetes, they didn't have heart disease. You know. So why suddenly are we played in more recent generations with it. And a lot of it goes back to these changes, you know, from how my grandmother grew up versus how I grew up.

I grew up on processed and refined foods. I grew up being told you need to eat all of the time. And people ask about the genetics. Everybody loves to blame everything on genetics. Okay.

Clearly, there's a genetic predisposition in my family, like many others to develop type two diabetes. But my grandmother, you know, she was in her seventies, my father, you know, was in his forties.

Why was I in my twenties developing it? So our diets radically radically changed. So what are these processed and refined foods that we eat? Sugars and fats? They cause the body to produce a lot of this hormone insulin. Many people know about insulin and that it has some form of relationship with diabetes that usually involves people injecting it.

And I think a lot of people out there think you inject it because you have a deficiency of it. And that's true. And type one diabetes, which is an autoimmune condition where the pancreas doesn't have the ability to produce enough insulin.

Aging, Longevity, and Autophagy

But what we're having issue with is that our diet and the processed and refined foods that we're eating and the frequency of our eating causing our pancreas to produce an abundance of insulin, which ends up building up in our systems and becoming toxic and it creates the state of hyper insulin amia. And that leads to the development of something called insulin resistance, which is synonymous with metabolic syndrome.

So, metabolic syndrome, the root cause of conditions like type two diabetes, cardiovascular disease. So type two diabetes is actually a disease of too much insulin in the body, the body, the cells start to develop resistance towards your own insulin levels. I always like to use this example of one of my favorite singers, Adele, I think you have to be living under a rock to not know who Adele is.

She's one of a Zillion Grammys. Um So she had this great album and then she disappeared for a few years. She got married, had a baby and then she came back with this new album and her hit song was called Hello.

And again, you'd have to be living under a rock not to hear this song. And so I was so excited when it came out. But then that song, everybody was and it was playing everywhere, every elevator, every shopping mall, every store. And one day I got in my car to drive home and this was back before the days of Spotify and everyone

listening to Apple carplay.

But when I was listening to the old school radio, it was on eight My 12 preset stations and all I wanted to do was scream to goodbye adult. My brain had developed Adele resistance. I couldn't stand her voice.

The sound of the song due to that over exposure. And that's what our diets are. Modern standard North American diets and meal eating habits have done to ourselves, ourselves have been so bombarded with our body's own brand of insulin that it's developed this resistance to it.

So we inject this foreign insulin that's somewhat different in the hopes that our body will utilize it. But then what happens is we still eat the same foods and we still eat them the same frequency. And when you're diabetic, they tell you that even eat more of these foods, um then your body starts to develop resistance to your insulin injections. So you go from 10 units.

Next thing you know, you're on 100 units. Next thing you know, you're on two or three different types of insulin. At the end of the day, they put you back on oral medications and we had one patient who was on 440 units of insulin, four oral diabetic drugs and still have that hemoglobin A one C of 13.

And it's just wild. So, you know, we develop resistance, insulin resistance to all of the injections over time. So we really got to work at treating the root cause if you develop this insulin resistance, at least the type two diabetes by eating too often and eating the wrong foods, then we need to try doing the opposite, which is not the standard of care.

But what we've seen clinically is if we do the opposite. We can actually reverse the condition – And what's the relationship between what you're describing and inflammation. – Yes. So, inflammation, insulin is a huge mass producer of inflammation in the body and body fat, fat fat cells are also a huge producer of inflammatory cytokines in the body.

So, and the foods that we eat there also inflammatory in their own unique ways that aren't just an insulin producing as well. So our whole diets are designed to create this huge, huge inflammatory storm within the body hormonal responses that create the inflammatory storm and then helping the body develop body fat that further creates the inflammatory storm. – And what have you found in terms of the effect of stress on this model that we're talking about?

– Stress is huge. It's huge and it's one of the greatest epidemics I think that we have here in North America right now. It doesn't matter all of the, the good that you do with your diet and lifestyle to stress can magically undo that instantly. I was just sharing.

I've gone through some stress in the last year and boy did it do my health in and I finished off 2022 with just like the worst case of COVID. Uh and that I had not been sick with a cold or sniffle um in like a decade uh with my, my good health and my good lifestyle. So stress can definitely do a number on it stress our primary stress hormone cortisol is produced by adrenal glands.

It causes this hormonal cascade that is quite detrimental. It causes their glucose levels to go up very high. It causes our insulin levels to go up very high. Um, when stress becomes more long term, then you end up with chronically high glucose and insulin levels.

And this in itself can lead to the development of insulin resistance and type two diabetes. – A lot of times when we talk about the mind, um people think we're talking about, oh, it's all in your head. But in fact, stress and other cognitive factors, how we appraise situations, how dangerous we think different situations are.

Insulin Resistance and the Roots of Type 2 Diabetes

All those have as you just described the direct relationship in a direct effect on our by on the biochemistry and physiology of the body – Very much. So, you know, it's uh we live in this constant state of dizziness.

It's, you know, like a badge of honor. But it just leads to your sort of demise at the end of the day. So it's important to take care of your stress, helps manage your glucose levels. Your insulin levels reduces your risk of developing metabolic syndrome amongst many other health conditions as well.

– Right. So from the psychological perspective, from the resilience perspective, it's also about helping the body get into the optimal state to allow recovery to re lower the here allow the healing process to take effect when you're on guard and worrying about dangers.

It does, it sends the body into a whole different direction – When we work with a lot of people. And they say, you know, I physically feel awful but I mentally don't feel like I'm satisfied, for example, that's just one of them and we are just so go, go like nonstop.

And so we'll ask these individuals where you, you eating your meal at your desk because they'll say they ate, then they physically feel full, but then they can't start there fast.

So it's prohibited, prohibiting them from completing what they need to do for our program, for them to reverse their type two diabetes, for example. And their feedback is yes, I, I am eating at my desk or I'm sitting at the table scrolling through social media or watching something on youtube or watching the news on TV while I eat.

And we try to spend a lot of time educating people on, you know, how your body responds to the sympathetic nervous system response versus the parasympathetic nervous system response. So we've got the sympathetic, the flight or fight stress response. So if you're trying, if you're distracted watching the news scrolling through social media, trying to rush to finish that report, um your body is going to be in a state where it wants to trap fat where it wants to spike glucose levels.

Where, you know, it's not investing any metabolic resources really into digestion. So we have this huge epidemic, two of irritable bowel syndrome and all different types of G I conditions that are new. I'm rising really rapidly.

But thinking about how we eat differently versus if we're in that parasympathetic state that rest and digest state, our bodies are relaxed, then we're able to digest food, efficiently, assimilate the nutrients much better.

See a decrease in their glucose levels and boost in satiation levels. So even on a microscopic level, when it comes to stress, we spend so much time with our clients trying to help them, you know, experience this and once they see the big difference, you know, once they eat something that normally makes their stomach upset, Stay in avocado sometimes um when someone is newer to eating more fattier foods, but if they're sitting there and they're present and they're just eating their meal and they feel really good and they brought this, you know, they're greatly satiated, they can go on with their fast, they feel good on a minor scale, we can show them the impact of stress versus no stress on their physiology. And this we often find, helps them, helps inspire them to try to take control of stress in the larger picture in their life because it's just, it's just truly detrimental to metabolic health, which is just detrimental to aging and longevity as well.

– Yes. Right. And, you know, it's interesting, I find that a lot of people are not really clear on, um, when they are relaxing, they'll come home and they'll watch on TV, either the news or an action movie and they're sitting in their chair and thinking, well, I'm relaxing but in fact, an action movie or the news can be stressful as well.

And so I find people wind up just jumping from one source of stress to another, even when they think that they're not being stressed – Very much. So, you know, this is something that I really had to take a hard look at in my own journey.

And we are very multitasking time and society and you know, how many times that I do my hair, you know, without trying to watch some form of educational materials, podcast, recording something like that.

How many times do you go on a walk? You know, and just think about that air there and the trees and how your pups are enjoying it. You're on your phones. So just being present, just focusing on one task at one time and giving it your full attention.

That's not something that we do in our fasting patients. We definitely see it being a big roadblock or being very counterproductive towards the types of diabetes reversal quests. – Yeah. Well, let's get into your program and maybe some of the most specific aspects of it uh in terms of the intermittent fasting, what do you find is the most important aspect of that?

– So the biggest thing is to cut out snacking in order to reverse type two diabetes. At least not to make it worse. We need to minimize the number of times that we are eating in a particular day. There's a reason why my Grandparents generation until the late 70s wasn't developing type two diabetes.

They had breakfast, lunch and dinner. They weren't allowed to have a snack before dinner because I had ruined their appetite. Nor were they allowed to eat after dinner?

It meant they didn't eat enough broccoli and their meal. So they had to go to bed hungry. You know, we clearly wouldn't be here today. If our grandparents didn't survive that our great grandparents didn't survive that. So we have this incredible retreat storage and retrieval mechanism. You know, several years ago, I was in Toronto. I lived in San Francisco area now.

But when I was in Toronto, I was doing an interview with a woman who born and raised, always lived in Dallas her whole life, very different climate than Toronto for a part of the year. So it's -40 back home Celsius or Fahrenheit.

Same thing at that point is cool and, and it's going to be that way for weeks like it was February, we were not going to see the light to sometime in March.

Inflammation, Stress, and Metabolic Health

So this woman, you know, she asked, do you think that it was possible for people to survive in the past? Like, did humans really like, survive fasting.

And I'm thinking okay, you know, she's in Dallas and probably has got a garden going all year around. But outside my options today are bark and snow. Right? Like there's, there's not many options and it's gonna be like that for several, several weeks. And people had to survive, right. People inhabited Canada.

People made it and live through the winter times. We have this really great storage and retrieval mechanism. So it's really encouraging people to have faith in our evolutionary design.

You know, we didn't wake up and have cave men or cave person, cupboards and refrigerators to go to at some point, we did start preserving food. But that didn't mean that we didn't go through periods of time every year, lengthy ones where we didn't have access to food to preserve in the first place.

So, you know, we've had, we've got to rely on these ancient mechanisms. So the best things people can do is to stop snacking. That really helps stop adding fuel to the fire.

So every time we eat our bodies add more insulin to our system in response to that food. So we're walking around like we've got this insulin storm on us like this California fire going. You know, forest fire, we don't want to be dumping oil or gas, you know, on that fire. We want to be putting it out.

So every time you eat, you're adding more and sometimes people say, okay, you know, I'm gonna eat really low carb foods because low carb foods don't generate a lot of insulin production in the body. So they'll eat on things like cheese and olives and nuts, you know, throughout the entire day, but for several hours throughout the entire day, they're constantly adding drips of insulin to their system. If their systems are already full of insulin, they're just going to cause it to overflow. Even though the foods that they're eating are not processing, refined. So it's just minimizing the number of times that we're producing insulin a day, allow ourselves our bodies to have a break from insulin production.

And then when we come into fasting and really for the metabolic patients, someone with insulin resistance already,

um when we come into fasting, their goal is to suppress the insulin levels down long enough to help facilitate the breaking of the cycle of insulin resistance. And the data shows that insulin resistance, individuals don't even see their insulin levels fall substantially until about 24 hours into a fasted state.

So most individuals up to this point, they're not seeing improvements in their blood sugar levels. They're not seeing any fat loss. And that's because their insulin so high, you know, I talk about insulin being like the soldiers that's guarding the fat cells um from being emptied the and release of the body fat.

So we've got a fast long enough to lower it To enable some of the insulin suppression to get the blood sugar levels, to come down, to get the fat cells to start causing us are enabling us to lose, lose weight in the first place.

So most, most of our patients um they do three fast a week that ranged from 24 to 42 Hours. So at the minimum, we want to drop their insulin very low at the 24 hour mark.

And then ideally want to sustain it for a period of 30, or 42 hours, depending on their comfort level. And that was the standard protocol. Jason and I started with, and you don't have to do this forever.

It's a therapeutic treatment for a reason. It's not a diet. It's a therapeutic treatment. So, I mean, you would go to say chemotherapy for decades upon decades, you go for a series of treatments and then hopefully you'll get some results that are favorable for you at the end. And that's what we try to do.

And in our first cohort of patients, all of them are off insulin in three weeks, every single patient, Some of these patients at the time had been on insulin longer than I've been. I had been alive.

They were talking 34 years. I was 27, at the time that we launched this program. And I'm nearly 40 now and these patients are still off insulin. I still have relationships with each and every one of them. So it's, you know, it's true reversal of the condition. And it's just really incredible and they're not doing, you know, 3 36 hour fast a week anymore.

But they did that for a period of 6 to 12 months and in that 6 to 12 months, what happens is, you know, they might not eat cake every day anymore, for example. But you know, on that holiday, when they have a piece of cake for someone's birthday and a small piece, the cake will have a normal glucose response afterwards rather than a diabetic glucose response afterwards. So if we were to give them an oral glucose tolerance test, they would, it would come out as non diet.

But at the end of it, so, you know, people don't have to fast therapeutically forever, but we encourage them not to snack. So not to constantly add insulin to their system. And when they do eat meals, try to be conscientious about those meals. It's not that you can't ever have certain things. Sometimes we're all human, but you just don't want to be eating them every day. You know, the ice cream.

My husband likes ice cream. It's never something you're gonna find in our freezer on an ongoing basis. But every now and then he'll go out and he'll have a little bit of ice cream. So Jason is a big ice cream fan as well, but it's no longer in his freezer. So it's about really prioritizing real whole foods in the long run, being mindful of glycemic load and insulin load.

Um, in the long term. But for about six months, you know, 6 to 12 months, people can reverse decades worth of disease. You know, it takes 10 to 15 years before your markers on your blood tests even begin to indicate type two diabetes, like it develops for 10 to 15 years before you even get a glimpse that you might have the condition.

So in six months, if you passed three times a week, you can reverse, you know, many years worth of damage. – So if we shift our discussion from reversing uh diabetes too and what you're doing right now or what you would suggest is a good plan or program. I know that I believe that you said that you do 18 hours of fasting. I've gotten into the habit of five days a week doing 16 hours. Can you say why you pick 18 hours and what the variable is there – Right now I'm doing 14 hours because I'm doing working on this baby family thing. So there is, we don't want a lot of growth.

But you do want to permit enough growth and fasting kind of anti growth. So I'm doing 14 hours. But 16, 18 is kind of arbitrary depending on an individual schedule. So up into this point where we're hoping to have a baby ramos on boarded soon.

I was doing 16 to 18 hours, just depending on how my day's up then flowed. And if there was a day where I just wasn't going to be able to have that say lunchtime meal. I live on the west coast.

My company operations are largely based on the east coast. Sometimes my lunchtime can get a little bit. Men, see, with meanings and trying to coordinate schedules.

Intermittent Fasting Protocols and Maintenance

So instead of eating in that crazy sympathetic state where I'm just driving my fat, storing up and my insulin up and my having the stress response, I just elect to have a nice cup of tea, a nice glass of sparkling water and I'll end up Doing a 24 hour fast on those days. And that's typically how I let my schedule sort of role when it comes to my eating for maintenance is what I've done.

You know, in the last 11 years and I've maintained some really great weight loss and my metabolic all for the most part, uh, might have some stress in the last year.

So, you know, if it's a regular day, it's more two meals and if it is a busy day, then I'm not going to not going to eat under circumstances where it's not ideal for me to eat, it's certainly not going to harm me to do a 24 hour fast.

– And I'm curious in the recovered patients that you've worked with, did you notice any cognitive or emotional benefits from the process? – Yeah. A lot of individuals, um, noticed huge improvements in conditions like generalized anxiety disorder, depression. We have had some individuals noticed huge improvements with bipolar disease as well. Just better mental clarity, mental focus, reduce stress because their energy is better.

They've got more energy, they're able to keep up with their tasks and be more present. And that just being present for people, you get your job done, you're less stressed out, but you also have better relationships and your community thrives when you're able to be more present. So just pretty overwhelming, you know, improvements for individuals outside of even their own personal diabetes journey. But improving those markers, attention deficit disorder is another one where a lot of individuals that I was like that, you know, a certain age, I think they just put many people on our role or via the.

So I fell on the via vans category and I felt like I needed it to survive in my early twenties. And then I got to the point where I was just so busy with work and things were going so well and I had so much energy and I was catching up on, you know, it felt like years worth of miss living.

And I was like, I'm in my twenties, I need to embrace this now, you know, just really kind of thriving in life. And then I realized I had gone three months without getting my Bio Vance prescription refilled.

So it's just been really neat to see all of those improvements across the board. I do think a lot of it though does result in not just fasting but also positive dietary changes and reducing inflammation on the body and improving gut health.

I think all of passing is one of the many tools in the tool chest that helps improve gut health. And I think that gut health is really at the end of the day, that leads to improvements in these particular areas.

– Yeah. And I think there's a lot of good evidence that shows that what Children are fed uh plays certainly plays a role in attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity and things, things of that nature.

When you do your longer fast, are they, what do you allow just water or other liquids or how do you do those longer fasts? – Yeah. So water is alternate passing fluid.

You can have it flat mineral sparkling, you can have it at room temperature, you get cold, you can make it hot, you can get really wild with water on your fasting day. But we also we encourage people to have some other things that are going to impact their insulin levels.

Very much so, tease, especially herbal teas can be really great minty. Peppermint or spearmint doesn't matter really great appetite suppressant. No caffeine in it either. If you've got a sensitivity, you can bring it all day long.

Rivals T camel. T there's so many wonderful, great ones out there. Jason is a huge fan of green tea because it's very strong, anti our appetite suppressive properties.

People can have coffee if they can tolerate the caffeine as well and some people report that it is a great appetite suppressive for them. So we've got water, we've got TV, you've got coffee.

I will encourage patients to have a cup of broth if they do need it to help them get through a fast. We look at things like broth or any fats that they might add to their tea or coffee, we look at them like training wheels.

If you need it, use it, if you don't need it, don't use it. But if having a tablespoon of fat like butter or ghee in your coffee helps you fast for another 12 hours. And by all means do that or if having a cup of broth gets you to fast overnight until the next day at lunch, then absolutely have that cup of broth to use it.

So we encourage people not to seek comfort in the fats and in the broth on their fasting days. But to use it as tools to help them lengthen the fast when they feel they need assistance – So the longer, the longer fast three day, um, and, and longer I'm hearing that that's like an early step in the treatment of the diabetic. Are there benefits or reasons to do those longer fasts for healthy people? – Well, anyone of metabolic syndrome, can benefit from it. So, you know, people will say to me, but I might be overweight, you know, my, my have a belly.

And, but I don't have type two diabetes, but you still have insulin sense or we work with a lot of women who are quite slender but have severe PCOS. They have a lot of insulin resistance or there's quite slender type two diabetics as well. And that worry about fasting and weight loss, but their body composition is not so good. So even though they visually look slender, we call them trophy sitting on the outside, but on the inside, they have a lot of this visceral abdominal fat.

So pretty much anyone that falls under the metabolic health spectrum, can benefit from doing some of these longer fast but individuals who are just healthy.

Like someone like myself nowadays days. I well, under different circumstances when not trying to conceive, I would periodically do some longer fast just to help induce some of the uh Takaji.

So I thought of it more as a cleanse, essentially a reset prior to COVID. I was on the road all of the time I come home, I do three days of clinic. I go on the road and I'd be in Amsterdam. I'd be in Zurich.

I beat Texas all over the place all of the time. So you're eating out, you think you're ordering good foods, but there's rancid oils that they throw on the grill.

Not necessarily the most organic or highest quality foods as well. So your body does accumulate inflammation from this. And I would do these fast periodically throughout the year just to help reset. So some people will like to do like a Fast say every Friday or fast every Monday as part of ongoing maintenance. I was someone who had more elect to choose like a few days, you know, like five or seven days and take a therapeutic approach for a week.

And I would do that seasonally like we clean out our homes seasonally and my business partner, Jason Dr. Fong, he does it once a year. He'll do a 5-7 day fast.

– So I know you, you coach patients and um you're both trying to create the program by having them do the fasting, but you're also addressing bad eating habits as as well. What's the biggest resistance you find in people? What's the greatest difficulty you encounter in this process? And then how do you, what do you have you found effective in

overcoming them?

– Yeah, I think a lot of it comes back to stress in our book Life In The Fasting Lane. We had a third author names, even mayor.

Cognitive Benefits, Fasting Liquids, and Longer Fasts

And she wrote in one section about how the moment it dawned on her, that food was her best friend. She celebrated every success of food. She consoled every failure, every bump in the road with food. When she was bored, she hung out with food. You know, food was her, her best friend and she had to mourn that and she had to figure out what it was that she could do to bring herself comfort or fulfillment.

That wasn't food related. How do you feel that void? Especially when you have such a lifelong connection to food. Even I learned it from a young age to, you know, my dad was a trial lawyer.

So grumpy to the stereotype. So dad would come home from court and he'd be really grumpy and mom would give him possibly red chocolate milk and dad would be really happy for an hour and then he'd go to sleep. And so I learned that that's how one cooks with stress from a young age. So what we hear from a lot of our clients and patients, you know, is this deeply emotional relationship with food.

And food is their best friend and with making changes, there's a lot of voids and it's not even like we are best friends or eggs or their sardines or avocados, you know, there are a lot of this processing, refined junk that's available, that doesn't serve our metabolic health goals or launch equals very well.

A lot of inflammation producing foods. So it's counterproductive. So then we have them and we only feel good for a few minutes. But then physiologically, we feel very worse, you know, sometimes for even days after consuming these foods.

So our biggest struggle is trying to help people turn away from that. And when you get um, individuals now that are coming through the program in my age group, like we never grew up eating, well, we didn't grow up eating home cooked meals.

We don't even know what these foods tasted like. I didn't eat my first Brussels sprouts till I was 31. You know, these were just not foods that we had. I had so many mcnugget happy meals that the lady Cho call me baby doll and didn't have to take my order at mcdonald's.

So we have this whole generation that doesn't even know what real food is. So, you know, someone like myself, I had to go through this period of time where I just wasn't liking food. And now, you know, I could beat in Brussels sprouts the last four days in a row.

To be quite honest, I just love them. I'd have them over French fries any day of the week and that's just totally wild. So, it's, how do you feel that void? And that's a lot of hard work and it's so habitual to that, you know, I was talking to a client the other day and there was a very stressful situation. She's a single mom and a caregiver for her declining mother and her mother wasn't doing well.

And without thinking, she leaned into the cookies. So how do we break that? You know, how do we get in front of that? Because it just keeps the ball rolling backwards.

So our relationship and trying to help people, you know, stop the habitual, mindless going for it and that emotionally heightened state and helping them seek comfort now. And I'm really stressed out.

All I want is a cup of like a warm cup of tea and a bath. But it took a lot of work to make sure that it wasn't a mcnugget Happy Meal or a Domino's Pizza. So it's doing that type of work that we find to be the most challenging in our community.

– Yeah. And of course, these early childhood associations, conditioned associations, relationships are, are so strong and very difficult to, to break. So there needs to be the process to develop new associations. And what I find is people really, um maybe make an effort and then it doesn't happen as quickly as they expect or want and then they give up and they don't realize that, you know, you spend your whole life making those childhood, strengthening those childhood associations. So it's gonna take a while to develop new habits and you just have to have patience and engage in that process and have good support in, in making that happen.

– We were of a society full of perfectionists for various reasons. I know. And when I was like that when I was younger and I remember really tripping hard falling pretty flat, you know, with, because if you were in perfection, then you ended up failing massively. And when you're a kid, it's not so consequential. But in my early twenties, I experienced my first consequences of this perfectionist mentality.

Behavior Change, Food Habits, and Community Support

And my father said to me, you know, it's not how you fall, that's not how you fall down, that defines you. It's how you pick yourself back up. And so when I got diagnosed with type two diabetes, I was someone I'm like, I'm gonna fast 1000 days. I'm gonna, that's now I am never ever, ever gonna have another piece of pizza in my life.

Like I'm just done. All very unrealistic um self talk. And I said to myself, okay. You know, this is really, you know what James Clear says showing up and being 1% better. I'm making sure that you celebrate that or I'm never a failure. Always a lesson.

You know. So when I did, you know, sort of mindlessly end up eating something that wasn't a food I wanted to have in my routine. Anymore. Okay. What made me reactive, you know, what made me go to that food? What can I set up in my environment next time to help me be cognizant of that and redirect me. And so not dwelling on the negative. And so we see a lot of people want to go 100 MPH right off the bat to um not be able to be perfect and then sort of going extreme opposite because they feel so down on themselves. So reminding people that this is not a linear journey. And there's going to be plateaus and sticky spots around the way. And that's why I think community is so important. That's largely what we built with our business, fastening method, we do our coaching. But really the community, you know, I didn't have anyone when I was going through this, I had Jason, but he had never struggled the way an illness like I did.

And I couldn't talk to him 24/7 about it, him or anybody nuts. He couldn't have been my only community. And I was just really fortunate that once I started to get to a place of good health, we started doing this with patients, my patients became my community and I saw them all day long every day. So I was totally immersed in this community, but where they struggled was leaving the clinic and I was always there and when they left the clinic, they didn't have that community. So that's what we've tried so hard with the fasting method to do.

– Well, this has been such a fascinating and informative conversation. Megan. I really appreciate all the information and that you're bringing to the table here. And I think most importantly, it's just to demonstrate the power that we have in our behavior and our choices and that you're able to through this process, reverse some serious illness.

And I think that in and of itself is encouraging to everybody watching and listening and also our recognition that there is a strong mind, body connection here in terms of what works and how we overcome community is important. Support is important.

And so, you want to have some like a comprehensive approach to whether it's diabetes or any other chronic uh physical condition that it's a comprehensive program that you want to find a way to put together in order to have success.

So I really appreciate all the, all the anecdotes and, and suggestions that you've made. – Thank you, Stephen. I appreciate our discussion today as well.

Are out there are psychologists and our team is definitely the busiest one days, but there's a huge mind, body connection there. And it's just so great to be a student of it every day at work. I love showing up helping people get

better and, and learning. So I appreciate having the opportunity to share my learning with you all today. – Yeah. Well, thank you so much.

And how can people reach you or find out what you're doing? What's your website? – Yeah. Our website is thefastingmethod.com. All of our information books, blog posts, community coaching, all of our social stuff. You can find everything over there.

– Thanks again, Megan.