Introduction and Erica's Healing Journey

Welcome to this episode of the Mycotoxins and Chronic Illness Summit. I have with me today Erica Schlick. She's a nationally recognized cookbook author and blogger, as well as an AI and certified health coach.

She began her train trail to health in 2012 after becoming chronically ill with Lyme disease, mold, heavy metals, and multiple autoimmune conditions. She was my patient and I'm interviewing her here today to show those of you who might be suffering, who might have family members who are suffering with complex chronic illness, that there is hope.

Welcome, Erica. Thank you. You know, send me back. Yeah. And I'm just I'm so happy for you. So proud of you to see your healing, to see the trajectory from from being quite unwell to to look at you now, living, loving this beautiful, beautiful, productive, healthy life.

So tell us about what. What makes you stay in remission? You know, I do a lot to stay in remission. I probably do a lot more than most is what my doctors told me.

But I would say one of the biggest pieces is definitely maintaining a healthy lifestyle, a clean lifestyle, eating healthy. You know, diet was such a huge part of my healing journey.

Making sure that I'm gluten free and eating really nourishing foods. I can tell when I kind of derail from my diet. And you know, I now that I've healed, I can definitely indulge a little bit more on things.

Never gluten, but you know, like maybe like a gluten free treat or like some sugar and things like that. And I can just feel that I don't feel as good.

And then as soon as I get back onto my strict diet, which is mostly paleo, I would almost say I'm borderline carnivore these days. I really, really thrive on high protein.

I meet high fat. My body is the happiest when I'm in that state, and when I get back on that, I feel so good. So which more? Tell us more about that. About about being more of a carnivore.

What is it? What does your plate look like? Breakfast later. You're more of a grazer. And then tell us the difference between between being more carnivore and.

Absolutely. And it's interesting. I spent this whole year kind of testing it out and doing labs to quantify if it was working for me or not, as well. And so I would do experiments where I would do high meat in the morning.

So bacon or ground pork or some kind of ground meat and do with like some herbs and seasoning, eat that for breakfast. And then I would do my first lunch.

Diet, Carnivore Eating, and Lab Markers

I usually do a steak, I'll do steak or I like red meat at lunch. So I'll do steak. I'll do lamb sometimes. Sometimes in Buffalo, do a big portion of protein with some healthy fats.

And then I'll do some veggies like some salad or tomatoes or cucumbers, maybe some broccoli or spinach things like that. And then dinner. I usually do something a little bit lighter, like I'm more of a, a three meal a day person.

I'm not really a snacker grazer. Fortunately, I think it makes it easier to just have three set meals, for dinner. Like, I'm usually not as hungry, so I'll do something a little lighter.

I'll do either. Like a fish, sometimes like a little bit of chicken with some veggies. And then I might cycle in some cleaner carbs later in the day. So maybe some, like root veggies or, sometimes I do rice.

I tolerate rice now. I don't do it too often. Maybe some potatoes, things like that. Maybe like once a week. And so I notice, like in the mornings. Mornings are where I really started compensating with like higher meat.

And I notice, like, I just felt so much better, had so much energy. I didn't if I was prone to, like, wanting a snack or eating something that wasn't as good, I that craving was completely gone because I was so full from the fat and the protein.

And so I did labs, and every time I would do high meat versus something else for breakfast, say like, you know, I would do maybe try a yogurt out or try doing eggs, which are still kind of high protein, but not as much as meat.

I noticed, like my crp would go back up and my TPO antibodies would go back up. And when I eat bacon for breakfast and eat meat for breakfast, I feel good.

And my crp went down to one and my TPO antibodies went way down. And if I've done it three times as like a test, like over like the course of the year, kind of like alternating back and forth.

I was like, is this really like, can I really eat bacon for breakfast every day? And I seem to thrive on it. So yeah, it's crazy, you know, like considering like, all the science and articles and there's definitely both sides of it.

There's people that are like, yes, you should eat this way every day. And people that say, no, this is not healthy. But for me, you know, I go based on how I feel, go based on how my lab work is looking and seem to be thriving on a more kind of carnivore style diet, which is ironic.

I was actually a vegetarian for ten years before I got Lyme, and I think it really contributed to me being sick. You know, I was eating a lot more gluten and not eating a lot of protein, and I was compensating by drinking a lot of extra coffee.

And, you know, I would drink five shots of coffee in the morning just to get going. And I would drink more in the afternoon. And like, that's not healthy either.

And I think it was just because I was having so much fatigue from not getting the right foods and nourishment, that it just really was like wearing my body down, and I was compensating with these stimulants to just keep myself going and keep myself awake, which was, you know, just running me into the ground as well and wearing my adrenals out.

So, eating this way, you know, I drink one cup of coffee in the morning and I don't have to have any more like, caffeine or anything else to kind of give me energy through the day.

I do take T3 thyroid, which does help with my thyroid. It does give me energy as well, but it's because my body's deficient in it. So I think between managing my thyroid and making sure my levels are optimal, with that T3 and then the caffeine and eating healthy, I feel great, you know, so this is a really important topic you bring up.

First of all, I want to stop and and tell everybody what crp is and where the thyroid antibodies are. So stands for C-reactive protein. And it's a it's an it's an inflammatory marker which will rise when the liver is under stress.

And when other organs like the heart are under stress as well, but particularly the liver and and the thyroid antibodies were or a marker for her for, Hashimoto's, autoimmune thyroiditis.

So now an important topic is, is vegetarianism actually. And I understand why a lot of people are vegetarians. I was one for, about 25 years. Well, well.

And, you know, I, I understand obviously, I understand being a vegetarian because I was one for so and, and we

want to, be kind to the Earth. We want to planets.

I really wish it would have worked out. I wanted to call the ethics about it. I, I really connect with. Yes, it's true. And I have many, many patients who come to me as vegetarians.

And it's difficult to, to get back into a place of health, you know, when, when they, when they continue as being. And so, you know, we talk a lot about, eating sustainably for the planet.

For us, people who want to say prayers of gratitude to them that they're consuming. Absolutely. And. Yeah. And and to add on that not all meat is created equal.

So when I say I'm eating, you know, all this meat, I'm making sure that I'm very conscious of where I'm sourcing my meat from and that it's a farmer that practices regenerative farming that's going to help our soil and help our environment.

That is not cruel to the animals. They're grass fed, they're fed well. And so, you know, being very conscious of that, like factory for me is not the same as a pasture raised meat.

And even the nutrient differences in it, you know, not only just like the land and the animals, but also the nutritional components of farm raised meat versus a grass fed or pasture raised me are completely different.

The way you're nourishing your body. So it's important to, I think not lump it all into one category and know that there are better ways to approach being a meat eater very, very.

Here's. So, Erica, what would you tell patients out there? We have thousands of viewers. And I bet you a lot of them are vegetarians. What what would you tell those who are vegetarians?

But we're we're sick, and they can eat to turn the corner and and in if way, say to them, would you consider having some grass fed sustainable meat? Absolutely not. No way.

You as an ex patient, someone who was quite ill. Turn around. You tell people who's who are now suffering the way you did. Yeah absolutely. I mean it's a tough one because I feel like I was that person to like I didn't want to eat meat.

You know I was mostly vegetarian when I first started. And I think you really have to hit whatever your rock bottom is to realize that, you know, you might have to do this.

You might have to start with that. So I started by doing bone broth. I started doing, maybe not so much red meats. I started doing like, more seafood and like chicken and things like that to kind of try to integrate it.

Vegetarianism, Meat Quality, and Transitioning

And then it was actually kind of funny with the red meat. I actually ended up just kind of jumping into that. I was going on a trip to Argentina and everyone's like, oh, you have to eat the meat there.

And I was like, well, okay, I'm just going to do it for this one week and go on this trip. And I kind of started eating a little bit before I went. And just as an experiment to make sure I wouldn't feel sick on my trip.

And I could not believe, like, how good I felt like, and I had no reaction, no stomach ache. I thought I was going to feel sick as I was like, it's been ten years since I ate red meat.

Like, how is my body going to react? And I think that really taught me how much my body needed it and was missing it. And even though I didn't want to do it and I was resistant, I was like, well, I'm just going to try it for this one week just to see how I do.

And it was like, I, I had something like in me that was I couldn't control. It was like also craved was like meat and meat and meat. It was like my body finally was just like, oh my God, you're giving this to me.

I've been craving this for so long and eating this. And it was like something took over inside of me and was just craving it. So it was really interesting.

And when I felt that and noticed that, I noticed how much my body wanted it, and that it was very healing for me. So from that point on, I started integrating a little bit more, a little bit more, red meat.

And then now I'm on like the other end of the spectrum. Now I joke, I'm like a T-Rex, but it's just like, it's like my body just thrives on it. So, you know, I think hitting rock bottom, I think maybe experimenting, like, even if you don't want to do it, maybe try and like a little bit and just seeing how your body reacts, you may eat it and it may not be good for you.

You know, it might be that you have a little bit and you're just like, I don't feel good. It doesn't work for me. And then you've explored that part of it.

But I think trying it and seeing what your body says and listening to your body to see if you can incorporate a little bit, and then making sure you go after those like farms that are practicing well and, you know, even starting off with like a little bit of bone broth, you know, sometimes can be an easier way because you're eating it, you're not chewing it.

It's more something that you're sipping or using in a soup. Like all the soups that I make, I use a bone broth based for. So that's like another way that you can start to integrate some animal products, and might be an easier way to transition into it.

Thank you for that. Yeah, yeah, it's an important piece. So are you still on a healing journey and you're still doing any treatments? It's interesting.

Like a little bit. I would say I'm always on a healing journey. Are we always healing? Oh, no matter. Even if you think you're healthy. So, I mean, I do things to keep myself in remission.

Like, I don't do treatments because I'm sick. I do them because I want to stay healthy. So, I'll do, like, a ten pass ozone maybe every two, three months.

Just because I feel so good when I do it and it keeps me, like, really optimal. And, in between that, if I'm feeling a little down or, I'm still very, very sensitive to gluten, so that can really deplete my immune system.

So if I'm feeling a little down or I've gotten gluten a couple times in a row, I might do a round of like vitamin C IVs with some ozone or some glutathione and things like that.

You know, just to kind of keep my body happy and healthy. And I do them and I just get such a good do. So I'm like, why not do it? You know, like, I don't want to feel depleted ever.

So I do those things more as kind of like maintenance. Interestingly, earlier this summer, I was feeling a little tired and fatigued. I was like, all right, something's going on.

Like, I'm not quite sure what it is. And I always felt like I never completely finished my mold journey and detox. And I was feeling really called, like, kind of like the Shoemaker protocol and like, checking that and like, wanting to do VIB, spray to see if that could kind of like reset my immune system.

So when I saw a doctor here that, that does that and he's like, well, he's like, I was like constant. I was like, oh, I'm just here to like do that. But I'm on the last stage. I'm like, you know, ready to go.

And he's like, well, let's just go back a little bit. Let's do some labs and make sure you're really there. And I actually

ended up testing positive for more cons, which I was really shocked.

So, for the past six months, I've been treating more cons, and I'm doing that protocol, and I just re swabbed in December. Unfortunately, I was negative, after six months of treating it with, EDTA spray.

So now we're up here for just a second. So for those of those of our watchers who don't know what mark ons is, it's a certain kind of staph infection, which is common in the sinuses of people who are suffering from Miko toxin and bio toxin illness.

So mycotoxins, as we know most of us, because we're here, are the toxins that mold create. And bio toxins are the toxins that other infections create.

Parasites. Bacteria create biofilm as well. So those patients who tend to suffer from illnesses, from these bio toxins, we see that hand in hand. They have a certain kind of staph infection very commonly in their sinuses.

And, it's difficult to treat. It's resistant to multiple antibiotics. So we have very specific ways. I have very specific ways to treat mark ons and it changes people's lives.

So people that that's their sinuses, often they find mark ons this staph infection. And often we find mold in the sinuses as well, and all kinds of other infections as well.

And so infections in the sinuses can really affect the brain mycotoxins. There's research that shows mycotoxins can cross the blood brain barrier. And of course, we know inflammatory cytokines can cross the blood brain barrier.

Mark ons, as well as all the other possible infections in the sinuses is very, very important, not only in treatment when somebody is still sick, but as well when when treatment is finished, if you have lingering symptoms, if you have brain fog or, you know, a mental fatigue in a way, and it's important to test for that.

So I'll go go on it. Yeah. So yeah. So I was surprised. I was like, oh man, I guess I am only on stage three of this whole journey again. So fortunately it's clear now.

So now I'm starting bit. So I would say that that's like the one treatment or kind of like healing thing that I'm still working on. And then you know, like Lyme unfortunately triggered on several autoimmune conditions for me as well.

So I have celiac disease, so gluten, I'm just so sensitive to it. And that hasn't really ever resolved since I've gone gluten free. Like a microscopic crumb of gluten will set me off for a week.

And and I don't get any digestive issues. I get all neuro issues, which I almost think sometimes everywhere. So it's like brain fog for a week. Like a headache back there for a week.

And it's interesting because I get gluten to Monday at lunch. It'll go away the following Monday at lunch. And it's like it just kind of lifts. So that's still a challenge, you know, to make sure that I am very careful.

I'm so careful. But it just happens more often than I would like unfortunately. So that and then I also have Hashimoto's, which fortunately that's being managed really well right now.

And again we talked about like how the high me is like keeping my TPO down and things like that. So I feel like my thyroid is in a good place, but it's just kind of always monitoring it, keeping an eye on it and, you know, challenge the challenges of just living with autoimmune conditions.

Unfortunately, I'm just going to be kind of ongoing, I think. And so, I've been feeling a lot better since I treated the more cons like my energy has really risen, which was really nice.

Like, I already felt decent, especially, like, compared to Lyme, you know, if you feel a little fatigued, it's like nothing

compared to what you've experienced with Lyme.

So I think you just kind of think it's okay.

Ongoing Remission Care and Mold Treatment

I think it's normal, and it's not until you do some things and get more energy that you're like, wow, I can have more energy or I can feel better. So it's always kind of surprising to to feel that as you do things, how your energy can fluctuate.

But as far as Lyme treatments, I don't really do any I don't have any lung symptoms. I haven't had, like, symptoms for about four years now. I almost yeah, about four years.

So I don't do any Lyme treatments or anything like that. It's mostly just kind of managing my autoimmune conditions and then dealing with this little more cons mold thing and, trying to reset my inflammation and, you know, need to live with those autoimmune conditions underneath autoimmune conditions is almost always a combination of some kind of bugs, action and toxin.

And I know you're working on that still. Yeah. You know, and I expect to see your autoimmune conditions resolved. They do. Yeah. Yeah. You know, people go to the rheumatologist and and then and I love rheumatologist.

This is nothing against rheumatology. You know they those are not practicing a functional a functional that's that you know, they're just given, patients are given a steroid and then that's it.

But but there's so much more, you know, under these autoimmune conditions. Yeah. And reversed when we do more detoxification, more killing off of infections.

But it's just we have to hunt for what those are. It is what the cause is because people don't need to live. Yeah. In conditions that we can reverse them.

I'm really hoping that all the more cons and kind of like this mold and spray that I'm just starting is really going to help with those things. So in my gut, I've been feeling really drawn to it for a while now.

And I was just kind of putting it off till we moved into our new house. We've moved into our new house in July. I made sure to test it for mold and make sure it was going to be perfectly clean.

Did like really extensive testing and it was completely clear. So I was like, all right, now is the time to do it. I know my environment's clean and clear, and I can focus on this and not have any any issues like if in case there's any hidden mold or anything.

So I think it was like the right time to, to finally dive into it. Good for you. Yeah, I expected your autoimmune conditions reverse, so I would love that.

Especially the gluten issue. Man, that's a tough one. That's a tough one. But most of my patients even even after remission the sensitive. Yeah part of it just part of the nature.

Of your structure if you think so people, people do get to live a normal life. I think you are a normal life. Tell us more about that. But also yeah, I want patients to know that even when they're living a normal life, they have to be, maybe more careful than other people because their, their constitution is more, is more sensitive.

But but patients know how to handle that really, really well so they can continue living a normal life. Exactly. Yeah. I mean, it's definitely a new normal, you know, I'm not normal.

Like I was before. Alive and everything, where I could just do whatever I wanted with no repercussions. Or actually, there probably were repercussions.

I just didn't pay attention to them or know they're happening is actually what I think was really happening. But now. Yeah. Like, you know, like you said, you I definitely feel like I'm more sensitive to things in the world, but I respond and react so quickly to them.

So, like, if I go somewhere or stay at a hotel, I can definitely tell them it's moldy or not, and I can get out of there as quickly as possible, whereas before I probably would have just stayed there like afterwards, been like, why is my face puffy?

Like, why are my tired and like, right, not really know why, you know, and you know, same with like fluids and things like that. And I think you just you're it's a new normal, but you become like more resilient and you become so aware of like the signals and messages your body is giving you so quickly that you can act on it.

So I don't think that I'm ever going to be as sick as I was, because I wasn't listening for the signals that my body was giving me for years. And, you know, now I'm so much more aware of, like, what things could be triggering it.

And I start to know and feel like when certain things are like, if I have a cup of coffee that has mold in it, I feel like really nauseous and like kind of like almost seasick.

But I know that's what it is. And then I can take some charcoal and detox and do things to like cleared out of my system as quickly as possible. Whereas before I would drink it and like, oh, why do I have a stomachache, I don't know, and just go on with my day.

So I think you're new normal. You have a lot of things in your toolkit, and so you can use those tools that you have so that if you do have an incident or exposure or something, you can bounce back from it so quickly and you know, exactly usually what it is.

Also, I feel like you have such a good team of doctors at that point, too, that, you know, if something more serious is happening, you can always work with your medical team and be like, hey, something's not right.

Can we what do you think it is? Or let's do some testing to see what's going on. And also, I think with your new normal, you know, I generally do labs like every three months, usually just to kind of monitor things and see how things are going.

So if something is off or elevated, I'm like, okay, what's going on? Like why am I'm not feeling as good either? You know, like with the mark on saying I was like, something feels off.

I just feel more tired than usual. Like this isn't normal. Did some labs we did the task. Someone and there was a reason for it. So I think you act on those things a lot quicker.

So that you don't get so taken down into such a sick place like you used to be. I think there can also be, like, a little bit of PTSD with it too, though, like, you know, like you wake up one day and you like, like your knees, like, hurt or something, and you're just like, oh my God, what's wrong?

Like, what is Lyme again? Like what happened to me? Or like, you have a few days where you're like, really tired and you don't know why. And like, you know, there's like, I have good days and bad days still.

And like, sometimes I had bad days where I just feel tired. I'm like, did I get gluten? Like, why do I feel so tired? Like, what's happening? And you can kind of spin out a little bit and freak out.

But for the most part, I think we all have, like, even if you're a healthy 100% healthy, you're going to have a day where you just don't feel 100%, you know, for whatever reason.

So I think not letting your head kind of spin out into that place, is important too, because the mental stress is, like very hard on your body as well.

So stress causes immune dysregulation. And I also notice when my patients become anxious, but when experiencing the symptoms become amplified, you know, you can calm down the nervous system.

There's many techniques about coming in the nervous system and then the nervous system that is and and when we use this next be meditation, breathing exercises and your sacral therapy, acupuncture, grounding your feet in the earth, going to the ocean, going prayer if you need that.

All of these ways can can come down our nervous system and, and once we get the anxious thoughts calmed down, the symptoms are, are much easier. Absolutely.

Yeah. And they may have already passed by then to. So you put yourself into this whirlwind for no reason actually. Exactly.

Managing Autoimmune Conditions and New Normal

I want to talk a little bit about remission, and I want to explain to our audience what it means to be in remission. So, so when from tick borne disease that is so, so when somebody is, is, suffering has suffered from Lyme Bartonella, but these are Alicea Rickettsia tick borne relapsing fever.

That is Lyme in co-infections. And then they get treatment. If you're told that that now your your Lyme free or your tick borne disease free, it's not quite true.

What we can do is bring the microbial count down so that that your system doesn't notice it. What we could do is modulate your immune system so much that your immune system can handle it.

And and that's living a normal life that's in remission. And so somebody who's had chronic Lyme, meaning they've had Lyme for, six months or longer and, and they've had treatment, there's always going to be a little bit left.

Right. And so when there's stress, whether it's a physical stress or emotional stress or another exposure of some kind, then there becomes immune dysregulation.

And and the tick borne diseases can flourish once again. So it's really important to to notice when you're under stress and then to begin treatment. I don't mean treatment for tick borne disease all over again because that's rather intense.

I'm talking about treatment to meaning treatment to manage the stress or manage whatever is going on modeling system. And then you can stay in remission.

So when you do that, then, then you're not giving a chance for the tick borne diseases to grow and proliferate again. So tell us about about recommendations you have for people as far as like kind of like how to manage your, your neurological system and things like that.

I really like one thing, a tool that I learned when I was shortly after I started getting my stem cells, because I knew part of the way for me to heal was going to be to, like, manage my stress and manage my anxiety.

And especially with stem cells. It's such a long healing journey. You can you can spin out and be like, this isn't working. I don't feel good yet. Like, why haven't I healed?

Yeah, and kind of like really trying to manage that. So at that time I started doing, biofeedback, and doing heavy training, which was a game changer for me.

And I worked with a practitioner. We would meet once a week. And it was kind of interesting because at first they kind of do a test on the first day to see like what your stress response is.

And for me, like, it can be like sweaty palms or you can like sweat or you can hold your breath or your heart can

race and things like that. And for me, it was I held my breath when I got stressed.

And so we did a whole exercise on learning what my ideal like breath rate is to kind of reset my nervous system, and doing the heart rate variability so that my heart and my breathing could kind of sink in.

And it changed my life. And I still use it to this day, like all the time. I don't necessarily do like a practice of it all the time, like I used to like when I was learning it.

I had to practice it every day and kind of get used to it. But now I find that if I'm in like a stressful situation, I can. No one even knows I'm doing it.

I can just drop in to my breath rate, kind of reset myself and calm my nervous system down. And that has been a really, really big piece for me. You mentioned acupuncture, acupuncture is fantastic too.

My body really, really responds well to it. And, I went through like a really stressful period earlier this year when we were selling our previous house.

Life in where we were at in Venice was really, really stressful and really awful. And my cortisol was like through the roof. And I knew I had to, like, do something to reset it because I was like, this stress is going to be really, really bad for my body and for.

So we moved to a place, temporarily while we were waiting to move into our new house. And I literally slept for like a month and go to bed at like 830 and wake up at like eight the next day.

I slept so much and I did the HIV. I practiced it every day just to kind of reset my immune system, reset my nervous system, and just kind of like, let myself decompress from that stressful time.

And then by the time we're moving into our house, I felt so much more, more resilient, so much stronger. I like, redid my labs. My cortisol went back down.

So it was just amazing how even just like external things like your environment or where you live or a stressful situation unrelated to your illness can just really rev up your body so quickly.

But you know, having these tools, you can also quickly bring it back down and, you know, letting your body kind of reset from that. So, I mean, HIV for me has just been a game changer and the biofeedback.

So I highly recommend that. I know a lot of people really like downers. I've considered looking into that to see if it can help with my gluten reactions and kind of reset myself a little bit from that.

It's kind of a big time commitment. And like for me, it's difficult to find the time to do that. I think if someone is in a more kind of chronic illness state and, you know, not working and really, really sick, that might be a good tool because you have the time to do it, and it can be something that can be really helpful and healing.

And then by the time you start to recover and reach remission, you have that kind of tool in your toolkit, and maybe you don't need to do the full our commitment to it a day, you can just kind of draw from it, just like me with the HIV, like I used to meet with a practitioner an hour a week and then practice for like 20 minutes a day.

And now I can just use it when I need it. Like I don't have to do it like the muscle memory is there to use it. So things like that. Yeah. And actually become part of your being.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm trying to get my mom to do it. She needs it. Which is really good to listen to this. And tell us about emotional and mental health.

How it affects remission. Yeah. You know, it's that's like, a tricky one. Some days I'm, like, really happy and thriving and excited to be where I am.

And I'm. I accept my new normal and that I can't do things like certain things and things like that. The things that you can't do in your new normal, like, traveling is a little harder just because my celiac disease is like being able to just, like, go out to dinner anywhere or, you know, grab a slice of pizza, like on the go or eat whatever I want without like 100 questions of what's in it and how it's prepared and being able to eat at any restaurant.

I want things like that. Or really challenging still. And I think that it takes away a little bit of your freedom to have to be like on a restricted diet and things like that.

And, you know, like with me, with gluten, it's like really challenging because every single thing that I touch or put in my mouth, even like lipstick or makeup, anything that can touch my mouth could potentially make me sick for a week.

So it's like your life is kind of feels like a minefield with food because you're just like, I don't know if I'm going to be okay or not. You can't really, like, go to people's houses for dinner.

Very easily and like, eat at out at certain restaurants. So and that makes it challenging, especially if traveling to I think is challenging. For me that's the biggest stressor.

And like hurdle, like the new normal, I think, also this year has been, I mean, the past two years really with like Covid and things have been really challenging.

Last year I feel like was easier because I had already experienced, like, illness and like, I didn't want to be sick and everyone was kind of hunkered down.

And like, this year, things are getting back to normal. But I'm still being pretty cautious.

Nervous System Tools and Stress Recovery

And it's like, you know, do I just trust that my vaccine works and go out and start living again and potentially get sick and get really sick? Or do I wait things out a little bit longer and see how things go?

So like, I feel like that's like a mostly wearing on me because you can't just be like a normal person. Like I have friends that are just like, back to normal, but they're young and healthy and I'm like, well, I have a lot to lose if I get sick potentially.

And I could be fine, or I could be, you know, maybe like, I come out of remission or, you know, activate like the cytokine storm again and things like that.

And it's challenging to like kind of deal with that extra layer of like every decision you make, you have to put your health first instead of just being a little freer to make a decision to kind of do whatever you want.

So that's challenging. I feel like this year has this past year has been a little more challenging because in August, it will have been exactly ten years since I got Lyme and got sick and like really started this whole journey.

And I already feel like I lost so much of my life. Like I basically lost my entire 30s to like illness really, between Lyme had like one good year and then Covid kind of like, you know, trapped me at home again.

So it's like, I feel like I've been trapped for like ten years. So I'm really hoping that, you know, I can kind of like restart this new decade and year and hopefully things get back to normal.

Or I can just feel be more comfortable, like getting back out in the world. Absolutely. Thank you for being so candid. With us. Yeah. There's so many gems here.

So how does emotional and mental health affect remission? You know, I think I was really happy, like, right away, like when I started getting into remission, like, everything felt like new again.

Or like you had, like, a new lease on life for, like, a new start. So I think in the beginning, it was like, everything was, like, really exciting again, because, like, even, like, exercising again or going out again and things like that.

Like it was just like you had this, like, just feeling of, like joy and excitement, like everything was new. And I feel like now I've been in remission, like, I guess like five years or so.

And then Covid has really put a damper on it. So it's like hard to tell. But, I mean, for the most part, I feel like really happy and thankful. Like most days, like most days, I'm like happy that my brain works and that my body works and that I can exercise every day.

And, you know, even I went through like a little lull, like over the holidays. It was like really rainy and cloudy. And that really affects my mood and like emotional state.

And I didn't exercise for like ten days. And I finally one day just forced myself back onto my SoulCycle bike and moved. And I was like, afterwards, I was like, wow, I needed that because I felt so thankful that I could get on my bike and move my body and feel good after doing it, instead of like when I had Lyme.

If I tried to exercise, I would feel so tired. So it kind of like put things back in perspective for me that, you know, even if I had this little depressed phase with the rain and everything, that it's like, I have a lot to be thankful for.

My body works, my body is healthy and I just needed to kind of like reset myself a little bit. I love that. So tell us more about the differences between when you were sick with Lyme, metals, mold, everything all at once.

Like all my patients have a home at once. Tell us. Tell us what you experienced at that time in your body and in your mind. Oh, man. I was a vegetable.

I was so sick. I mean, I pretty much spent my entire days in bed. I had to stop working. I had to stop driving. I definitely couldn't exercise for years.

You know, taking a shower would exhaust me for days. And I just remember we had. We lived in a loft. We had blackout curtains that I had to keep clothes because the light would just be too much on my neurological system.

And I would literally just lay in bed half the day and like that. And I would have like some good days. So it was really confusing because you'd have these days where you felt like almost normal for like a day and you're just like, oh my, okay, my out of this.

And then all of a sudden 99% of your days would be spent just feeling so sick. And, you know, it took two years for me to get diagnosed. So for those first two years, I was just decaying so rapidly and going, doctor, a doctor trying to figure out what it was.

And then once I was lucky to find out that I had Lyme within those first two years, and then we started working together. And then just slowly, you know, the thing started kind of peeling back, and I started having a little bit more life.

And, you know, little by little, I started to feel like myself again, like, so proud of you. Three years. Right. And we treated for about three years.

Yeah. It's so hard. This is a healing journey. Definitely. I wish I could wave a magic wand. You are better now. I know, like, but it takes time. Takes time.

You work so hard. Really. I'm proud of you. I'm just so hard. Things. When I'm like this, I see the difference between when I first met you as a patient and, the life you're living now.

I mean, it's just so beautiful to see you driving this way. And and, you know, so it looks like right now the main issues are, are food, right. And punishing the weather. Yeah.

I mean, compare that to what? Oh, totally experience I mean yeah I mean the gluten thing is like rough like I think I spend about 30% of my life accidentally gluten, which is really high.

That's no matter how careful I am. So like, you know, when that happens, I get really depressed, I get really anxious, I get really tired, I get achy, I have brain fog, and I feel like I just like, can't do anything.

And it's like it's kind of traumatizing because it puts you back in that place. Like, not as bad. It's night and day compared to like when I headlined, but then it's like kind of triggering almost, because you're just like, oh, like, I don't feel like doing anything and I don't feel good.

Fortunately, the way I kind of get myself through it is like, I know it has an end. I know it's going to end Wednesday at noon, and then I'm going to be back to normal.

So I kind of focus on that and then just do supportive things like sit in my sauna, do some detox baths, like all those kinds of things help, kind of just help your body along to get out of it.

But that's, that's I guess. Yeah, yeah. Do you feel like you can enjoy more of your diet now in general? Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, I at the peak of where I am, I think I had eight foods that I wasn't allergic to that I could eat, I was allergic to so much, doing the I diet helped to kind of reset my, my gut and things.

I think it helped a lot. And then after stem cells, all my allergies went away. I can even eat chilies now, which is like, yeah. So I had an EpiPen for chilies.

I still stay away from hollow opinions because those were like my really big offenders. But, yeah, I can eat things with like, red chili in it, and I'm fine.

Emotional Health, Symptoms, and Cookbook Offer

And I, you know, I, like I said, I eat mostly paleo, but, you know, over the holidays or if I'm traveling, all I can do, like a gluten free bakery or like, you know, eat things like that.

And it doesn't take me down too much anymore. Like, I bounce back fairly quickly. Which is nice compared to before. By something like that. I'd be down for a week or more on top of everything else.

So you definitely your body gets stronger, more resilient. You can start to live and indulge on those things again. I wouldn't like eat gluten free baked goods every day of my life, but like, you know, on vacation or like once in a while, it's a nice trait to have and feel normal compared to all the other things. You can't feel normal with here.

And so happy for you. Mainstream. It's such a thing to celebrate every day really. And like your s in life that you now have back. Absolutely. Really.

So speaking of autoimmune paleo and and paleo, tell us about your cookbook and tell us about the gift that you're going to offer. Absolutely. So I have my cookbook, Wandering Palate.

It's a 28 day meal plan of travel inspired paleo foods. And it was kind of interesting the way it started. So first of all, I mentioned traveling is challenging and, you know, going to different countries and being able to eat whatever you wanted.

So the book kind of takes a lot of foods that I had on my travels and journeys even before Lyme, and kind of creates a paleo version of, so you can still enjoy foods that you may not be able to eat if you go to those countries.

Everything is clean, super simple. 90% of the recipes can be modified for AP as well. Which makes it nice if you're on a more restrictive diet. And yeah, so you can get that on my website.

I have a discount code for everyone. It's summit and you'll get 10% off, for the book as well. And anything on my

site, all my other merch. And yeah, I'm going to start working on a second book as well, so I'm really excited for that.

I'm working on I can book my proposal now. It's going to be, also a kind of a travel inspired thing, but it's going to be, circled around hosting dinner parties.

So gathering with friends, especially as we're kind of coming out of Covid and also since I mentioned, like, it's hard for me to go to a friend's house for dinner and things like that.

So I we tend to be the hosts a lot. So kind of creating a healthy travel inspired meal based on different countries. And it's going to be kind of everything figured out for your, like, the decor playlist.

You know, how to time your food, what you can prep ahead of time and things like that. So it's going to be based around gathering with loved ones and creating really healthy and amazing, delicious food.

That's so exciting. I can work on it. I'll give it a let you know once there's more details on on it. And for everybody listening, I know some of my patients, a lot of my patients might feel too sick to cook or want to cook.

Erika's book is actually really accessible. The recipes are accessible, they're delicious. And she makes it really easy, super easy. So that's that's right there. Yes.

And it has a shopping list and everything figured out for you too. So you can buy your week's groceries and have everything you need for all the recipes. If you want to use it as a meal plan.

Or you can just do it individually. And one thing I should add, I know it's challenging to cook when you're sick, and it's can be time consuming and you may not have the energy for it, but I highly recommend using, like an instapot or even like the Ninja Foodi.

You can cook entire meals in there and just literally put everything in, press a button and it can help you like really eat nourishing foods. Keeping it simple.

Also doing like one pan meals where you can just cook everything in the oven and that way you know you're eating healthier, you're eating clean. Can you even have leftovers?

You don't have to cook the next day. And then that way, you know, you don't have to go for the takeout or something. That's not going to be as optimal.

And you can really control your ingredients to help you heal. Fantastic. That's great. Those are great tips. Yes. Yeah. Well thank you, Erica. It was so great to hear.

And then I have to say it again, I'm so proud of you. So thank you. Thank you.