Master Stress, Master Menopause Transcript

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Welcome to Day Six

Hi, everyone. Doctor Sharon Stills here. Your host. Welcome to day six. Oh my God. It is been a whirlwind and we still have two more days left of information.

So I just wanted to come in here and have a chat with you. And I wanted to talk about stress today. I think a lot of times we, we know we go, oh yeah, stress is really bad and it's hurting my health, but we just kind of like give it lip service and we don't really do anything about it.

And so I really want to emphasize today because what I say is stress is 99.99999999999999% of all disease processes. Now, menopause is not a disease, right?

Stress and Menopause

Menopause, like death and taxes, is inevitable if you're a female and it's going to happen and it's actually a natural transition. And now if it becomes a very symptomatic time, which I'm sure a lot of you are experiencing, that just means we need to kind of us.

Exhale and kind of regroup and see what's out of balance. Is it our hormones crashing our. So we say that our adrenals pick up the slack for the ovaries.

And so we still produce hormones. But I can tell you, after 23 years in practice, specialized in helping women through menopause and going through my own menopause transition eight years ago that most of us, by the time we get to the menopausal age we have trashed our adrenal glands to some point and we are stressed out in our adrenal glands are like, sorry, we've left the house like your ovaries, or we're going away.

We're going to the hammock in the Bahamas, and there is no production of hormones, even though that's what we read in the textbooks. Because let's face it, we all have stress in our life.

I don't want to teach you how to get rid of stress because that's not realistic. I want to teach you how to dance with stress, how to interact with stress, how to respond rather than groom react to stress.

Because there are so many different levels of stress, there's emotional stress. We're having difficulties in our relationship. There's situational stress. We're moving.

We're having our house redone. I know that sounds silly, but like having construction done or remodeling is like way up there with divorce and death. Of course, the loss of a loved one causes stress.

We create stress in ourself when we forget about the sacred know and we say yes to too many things and we're overcome, committed. We have metabolic stress, we have chemical stress, we have anatomical stress.

How Stress Affects Hormones

When our vertebrae are out of alignment or a fascia is restricted, or our lymph isn't flowing or our muscles are too tight, we have stress from artificial lighting, from chemicals, from food and glyphosate.

I mean, it's it's part of the human condition. And so I like to do the things we can do to reduce our stress, to reduce our exposures as much as possible and to become resilient.

So again, we can boogie with the stress, right? We can learn to dance with it and know how to kind of like be a ninja, a stress ninja. And we have to think about one of the biggest hormonal, problems or deficiencies we see is

progesterone and progesterone alone.

When we're looking at the biochemical pathways, it comes right before our glucocorticoids or our cortisol. So if we have a lot of stress and that can be too many emails, that can be the neighbor's dog barking.

That can be we didn't prioritize ourself. And we're not getting the exercise we need or the meditation we need or we're not sleeping enough. Then our body says, well, survival is more important than procreation because progesterone is pro gestation.

It's the let's get pregnant and stay pregnant hormone. So the body says, nope, we need to build glucocorticoids. We need to secrete cortisol and it depletes our progesterone.

So stress is always it's just always lurking and always there. Too high of cortisol levels will interfere with our T4 to T3 conversion and T3. I'm talking about thyroid hormone now is the active hormone.

Too much stress will deplete our DHEA and DHEA. If you've done a consult with me, you know it was called the Ponce de Leon hormone. He was like my favorite, explorer in school.

He's like the only one I remember. But he discovered the fountain of youth. I'm like, oh, I was like, foreshadowing what I was going to do with my career.

But DHEA is like that fountain of youth vitamin. It's good for your muscles. It's good for your brain, it's good for your skin, it's good for your immune system, it's anti-cancer.

Practical Ways to Reduce Stress

It's anti-diabetic. It supports I said your immune system, it's anti like auto immune. So I use it a lot with autoimmune disease. So it's just such a great hormone and stress will tank it.

If we have too much stress we deplete our lovely oxytocin. The bonding, the hugging, the love yourself hormone the orgasm hormone. So it's all this lovely little symphony, this lovely little spider web of hormones and stress can always be at the bottom of it.

So what can you do for stress? Well, a lot of it has to do with taking inventory of how you are. Maybe you're stressed right now because you're like, I want to see all seven, seven interviews today, or eight interviews or however many interviews there are that you want to see, and you don't have time because time causes a lot of stress.

And so I really encourage you to to take time, maybe a little bit of time daily, more on a weekly, more on a monthly, more on a quarterly, more on a yearly.

When I say retreats are medicinal and mandatory, I didn't mean it. It's why I host menopausal retreats, because we need that time to pause and really step away and be the creator.

Be the artist of our life, paint our canvas, and we have to look at what is stressing us. Is it too much of something or not enough of something? It's the same in health.

When I'm working with a patient, I'm looking at, let's just say your diet. So are you getting too much sugar? Are you getting too much processed foods, or are you getting too many greens?

So we can look at it from that perspective, like we have to cut down or we can look at it from what are you not getting enough of? Are you not getting enough of pure oils, olive oils and avocado oil?

Are you not getting enough protein or are you not getting enough essential fatty acids? And so it's the same with stress. Are we getting too much conflict from a relationship, or are we not getting enough love and attention from a

relationship so we can look at it from each side of the table and then we have to decide, is this something that is worth putting energy into changing to shifting?

So it's nurturing me? Or is this something that I do? The love you, but I'm going to love you from the other side of the street or, and, you know, and this just goes on for everything from are we making time to sleep?

Deep sleep is foundational. You must, must, must be sleeping. And a lot of us don't sleep because we've said yes to too many things. We've overstayed.

We're cutting into our sleep time because we're staying up too late, answering emails, working on projects, whatever it is that we're doing, instead of honoring this body needs to rest.

I like to sleep at least eight hours a night, and I like to be in bed for longer than that. I like to I don't want to go to sleep stressed. I want to go to sleep because I've taken the time, because it's meaningful to have my whine down routine.

And then in the morning and I want to jump out of bed with an alarm and have to go, go, go. I want to greet the morning. I want to feel my body. I want to give thanks.

I love my bed. I love my blankie. I love my pillow, I love my PJs, I love how comfy it is and I want to just enjoy that and give thanks that I have the the blessing of having that, of being grateful.

And then I want to give thanks for the day and start my day off from a positive space. And so we have to make so we have to make time and space for these things.

And sometimes it's just as simple as getting I'm looking over here my calendar so I don't keep a calendar in my iPhone. I keep calendar my, my my hair.

I'll show you my calendar so I keep an actual book calendar. This is my book calendar. Take not on with lots here. Look deeply. All right. I just open to that.

I love when that happens. And so I write in my calendar and I think about it the other day.

Mindfulness and Breathing Practice

I said to my son Dylan, who runs my practice, many of you may have interacted with him or will be in the upcoming future. And I said, you know, I need a day.

I need a day with no meetings, no patient appointments unless there's an emergency. But I just need a free day every week so I can catch up, make the phone calls I need to make, and be in my own flow, catch up on my patient charts, do my self-care. I mean, I do my self-care every day.

I'm the self-care queen. You want to learn self-care? Stick around. Stay with me. You will be loving on yourself. So I I'm going to create that. And so we have to think about, you know, are we not getting to bed on time?

Are we so tired that we're sleeping in and we're missing that beautiful magic of the morning where we can get up and reset our circadian rhythm and we can put our feet on the ground, and we can hug a tree, and we can watch the sunrise and give ourself this time where we're enjoying it, not where it's like, okay, check, meditated.

Check. Put my feet on the ground, check. Watch the sunrise. If you're doing it in that energy, then you're not feeding yourself. You're not de-stressing.

It's almost like you're adding to the stress because now it's become this to do list rather than I get to do this. So instead of saying I have to meditate every morning, I get to meditate.

Every morning, I get to wake up. I get to have another beautiful day. I get to be here aging. It's a privilege. It is not something everyone gets to do.

And this life is fleeting and it's precious and it's beautiful and I, I want to it's it's easy for me as a physician to help you balance your hormones, to get you detoxing, to optimize your thyroid, to teach you how to eat, to teach you how to move all the things I love doing that.

And when we feel good in our physical body, we get to this. The deep work of how we're relating to our lives and to our selves. And where can we learn to dance with stress rather than being controlled by it?

Worry is a waste of the imagination. I love that saying I didn't make it up. Being mindful, being present, being in the moment is some of the best medicine you can give yourself.

So I learned about mbsr, which is mindfulness based stress reduction. It's based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn. I learned about it when I was a first year naturopathy medical student back in 1997, and I got involved in it.

I was part of a research project and it changed my life learning to breathe, learning to meditate, learning to be present in every moment is one of the best things you can do to learn to dance with stress.

So let's take a few deep breaths together. Let's be present. Sit up straight and we want to inhale through our nose. And when we inhale through our nose, we let our belly expand big Buddha belly.

And then as we exhale through our nose, we pull our belly in. So it's the opposite of what we've been taught. We're always sucking in our belly. But no, you want to breathe in through your nose.

Let your belly expand. And if you're not used to doing this, your mind is probably racing in a million ways. Am I doing it right? And in here? What? She said. Wait a second. Wait.

Am I going to miss the next talk? And so that's all normal. That doesn't mean that you don't know how to meditate. Mindfulness is a muscle. We got to build biceps by going to the gym and lifting and lifting.

Closing Thoughts and Day Seven Preview

We got to build mindfulness, by practicing, by returning to the breath, by returning to the practice. Mindfulness. The definition is paying attention moment by moment, on purpose.

And I like to add in by being kind and gentle to ourselves. None of this. You're doing it wrong. You suck. You can't do this. But lifting ourselves up.

Positive self-talk. So let's do a for breaths. Let's remember that. Silence. Let's speak loudly. If you slow down to listen. And then a lot of the answers you need are not out here.

They're in here. So let's have a great six day. I'm so happy that you are here taking this time for yourself. Do it. A stress free and mindfully as possible.

And this is just the beginning of our journey. I'm thrilled that you're here. I look forward to being a part of your journey in the post summit parties and all the things, all the offering and we still have today and tomorrow.

So let's make the best of it and I'll be back tomorrow for day seven.