Introduction and Guest Background

I welcome I'm doctor Roger Murphy. I'm your host for the freedom from Fibromyalgia summit. And delighted you're joining us today. I have, Tammy Stackhouse here, who is a health coach and the founder of the Fibromyalgia International Women, founder of the International Fibromyalgia Coaching Institute.

I knew I was gonna mess that up. Tammy had a back injury. She's the author of two books, The Fibromyalgia Coach and Take Back Your Life and her podcast, the Fibromyalgia Podcast.

Wonderful. I'm would encourage everybody to check that out. Tammy, thank you so much for being here. I really look forward to having a conversation about your experience and what you see with your with your clients and fibromyalgia.

Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here and I love sharing our stories so well. Tammy. So you've got quite a story. Your your own personal journey to fibromyalgia, which led you then to take all of this, this goal of being able to help others with this condition.

Can you share a little bit about your story, your personal story, and then how you decided to become a fibromyalgia health coach and then to train others to become a farmer?

I think absolutely, absolutely. I think, you know, the first part of my story starts, like a lot of us, you know, I was one of those kids who, you know, was always getting sick, you know, had my tonsils taken out as a young age, developed mono when I was in junior high, like all the things.

Right. And eventually when I was older, I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. My diagnosis came in 2007. And, you know, it was really hard because I was also a newlywed.

I had gotten married about six months before. My husband and I had lived in the same town for a whole month before we got married. We had met online, and I'm sure it was like really hard for him.

It was really hard for me, but like, you know, just getting married and then also getting this, this new diagnosis and, you know, things got so bad that about a year later, I actually filed for Social Security disability.

I had this moment where I was trying to clean the house because I had company coming over the next day, and I just ended up like, you know, sitting on the stairs bawling my eyes out because I was still in my pajamas.

Right? I hadn't had enough energy to get dressed. But yet here I am, trying to clean the house, and I'm thinking, I can't take care of myself. I can't take care of my house.

Maybe that's what disability is for. So. So that was like the lowest of the low right there. Well, I'm curious now, prior to that, were you in good health?

Did you have any other health issues? We obviously had some stuff growing up as a kid, but prior to prior to really starting getting the fatigue and I guess the pain.

Did you have any other health issues or.

Tammy's Fibromyalgia Diagnosis and Early Struggles

Not not really. I mean, I was one of those people who was basically healthy but just had these little nagging, chronic things, right? Like I had chronic headaches and I had IBS and like, nothing major, but just, you know, those

little things that still drive us nuts, of course.

But yeah. Yeah. And I had had I had been working at a very stressful job for about nine years before I got married. I was I was the customer service manager for a software company.

So I manage the call center, the tech support, like all of that stuff. And and I'm sure that chronic stress was my trigger because right after I left, that is kind of when everything fell apart, right?

You know how we kind of hold it all together while we're doing something, and as soon as it's over, like, yeah. So you feel like that, that nine years of a lot of stress eventually caught up with you.

And maybe just when you gave that up, it was like, And then you realized, now I don't really I'm not. You're probably a type I, I would assume from a little bit.

And, you know, this is I share this in, chiropractic school. We would have, we would study for 2 or 3 nights in a row, you know, cramming for the end of the year exams and get little to no sleep, push through.

And then sure enough, two days later, everybody on the whole campus would be sick as a dog because you just do what you had to do, right? And I think in the fibromyalgia community, if you're Type-A or even if you're type B, you just do whatever you have to do.

You feel terrible. But whatever you got to do, you just put up with it, get through it. But I think for most people that there comes a day where you just realize you can't do it anymore. And I guess that's that's where you were.

That's where you got to that place. Yeah. Yeah, exactly, exactly. I mean, I remember many days where I was sitting in my office and I literally remember having the thought if I could just turn off the lights and crawl under my desk like, I would love a nap right now, you know, like, I was just so exhausted and I would go home and of course I would hurt.

But, you know, I'm thinking this is just normal life, right? Because, like, I've had these little things wrong with me, but but nothing big. And, you know, I was really in my 20s, so, like, 20 year olds aren't supposed to go home and hurt after a day of work sitting at a desk.

But that was me. So. Yeah. So from there, where did you go? I mean, you're 28, 20, in your early 20s. You've got you're not really sure what's going on, but obviously you're not doing well at all.

If you have to give up your job and go on Social Security. I mean, you have, you know, this this this is a wake up call. Where did you reach out and what was your experience reaching out to, I guess practitioners for help.

Yeah. So, since I had gotten married, I was on all new insurance, so I actually didn't like I had to start over finding doctors. Right. I had been kind of pursuing this a little bit before I got married.

Like I said, you know, sitting at my desk being so exhausted, and I even talked to a few doctors about fibromyalgia, but it wasn't I mean, this was, you know, early 2000.

So there wasn't a lot out there. I remember when, nurse, I had sent them, a message and she actually emailed me back and said, I'm not sure what that is, but I'm like, oh, I'm going to get a lot of help here.

Okay. So yeah. So I had to start all over, finding a good doctor, fortunately. I mean, I just did all this on a website, but I just like, happened to I always say this is a God thing because I just, like, picked somebody at random that just looked and sounded good on a website.

And it turned out that she had actually, fibromyalgia was actually one of her focus areas in med school. So she actually knew what to do with me. And I cried all the way home because I finally found somebody.

Okay, so that practitioner, they were able to help you to then overcome your fibro. She helped me get started. I've had several great doctors in my life.

I think what often happens for a lot of people, I definitely see this in my clients. You'll have a a doctor who's really great who, like, gets you started, but at some point there's something that you need that they just don't have.

Right. Whether it's, you know, you've got other conditions going on that need to be managed or whatever. So she definitely got me started. She, I remember leaving her office that first time with, like, a handful of prescriptions.

And, you know, it's just my attitude at that point was, I'm. I'm not working. I don't have another job. My only job is to get better. So what do I need to do?

And I started reading all the books. Yours was. One of them was I was doing all my research. I started sort of expert commenting on myself. Right. Like, if I do this, how do I feel if I try this, how do I feel?

And kind of just going through all of that?

Finding the Right Doctor and Starting Treatment

But in spite of that, about two years in, I just like had this moment where I saw the trajectory of my life, right where I saw every medication is making me gain weight.

And I saw that, yeah, I'm kind of treading water, but I'm not really getting better. And it just I could look into the future and see a future I did not want.

Right. Yeah. And so I made an appointment to talk to my doctor. Fortunately, she had a health coach in her office. She connected me with my health coach.

Six months later, my life looked completely different. Wow. Yeah. And it's just that support of having somebody to help you actually do the thing, right?

I think a lot of us know what we should do. You know, eat better, get good sleep, like all of those things. Right. But doing it is so hard and fitting it into your real life is hard.

Yeah, I like that you shared that this became your full time job. You weren't working and you realized, okay, well, this is this isn't my new job. Now it's to get well.

And I think I think there's a lot of folks that are watching. They're thinking, yeah, I've been I had to do that for a number of years, but I just kind of spinning the wheel, you know, I just can't get off the hamster wheel.

And unfortunately, I think there's just not a lot of practitioners or even health coaches out there who really understand fibromyalgia. So it does turn out to be, a journey that oftentimes ends in hopelessness.

And we're changing that with the summit and your podcast and thank your books. But it it it's expected that if you've got an illness that people don't really understand and conventional medicine or even functional medicine practitioners really don't know how to get you to the next level, you get a little discouraged.

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, that was that was my moment, right? I even had a doctor who knew what to do with fibromyalgia, but I still hit this point where I was just sort of treading water and I think too often we think we're we're trying to find the magic bullet, or we're trying to find the provider who will help us.

And it's really it takes a team, you know, it, it it takes a whole team of people and it takes a lot of different things. Trying a lot of different things, doing a lot of different things.

There's no one magic answer. And I really realized during that time that I wasn't going to find one thing that was

going to make me 100% well, but I could find things that would give me 2% and 5%, and, and I could add up all those little bits and eventually get there.

So it it made me more open to trying some of those things. That helped a little bit, because I knew I could add all those little bits together right? Yeah.

So people get the diagnosis, and I really think once they get the diagnosis, that's really the beginning of their journey. Yeah. Prior to that, it was hit and miss a bunch of tests and lots of practitioners.

No one really knows. But eventually someone says, oh, well, we don't know what you got. So what is fibromyalgia? Now? I know that sounds kind of facetious, but I mean, it is kind of like that.

You finally get to the point someone gives you the diagnosis, and a lot of times the thinking process is, oh, finally, somebody knows what I have. They're going to be able to help me. I'm not crazy.

But then you run into, well, you just have to learn to live with it, right? Right. And that is that is not encouraging. And I think that a certain amount of that relief of, oh, thank goodness somebody knows what to do with me now I'm going to find help.

Like I think that is a totally valid, right, because we've been wandering around in the dark and we finally have found somebody with a flashlight. Right? Yeah.

But then to be told, but there's, you know, we don't really have very good treatments or there's not a lot we can do about this. Like, that's just like turning that flashlight right back off.

You know, it's so hard. And that's why I've made it my mission. And I know you have to to, like, make sure people know that, you know, there's there's hope out there.

There are things that can be done. Yeah. I mean, I think and many of the interviews, I mean, that we've made a point of sharing the fact that fibromyalgia is very much treatable.

And I don't have all the answers. Jacob Audubon didn't have all the answers.

From Patient to Health Coach

Neil. Nathan doesn't have all of the answers. Tammy Stackhouse doesn't have all answers. But what we do have is a track record of working with, depending on the practitioner, in my case, thousands of patients over the years.

And we have a track record of showing what are some of the common things that really do move the needle and can make a big difference. But I do agree. I think it has to be.

It has to be a team effort. You know, you have to be proactive because patients that I work with, they know going in that I'm going to ask things of them changing their lifestyle, changing some of their hip, their, unhealthy habits, changing their diet, things that I'm going to expect of them that if they don't do that, if they don't show up and be a team player, we're not going to get to where we need to get.

And I mean, and I've admitted this on some of these interviews. You're so right. I run into patients and my track records pretty, pretty good. But I mean, there's patients that I get them to a certain point and I think I'm just not smart enough.

I don't know, you know, I don't know what else to do with this individual. And then, you know, I feel bad about that, but I think that's just the way it is.

And that's why it's really important to educate yourself, make yourself a to, a priority to, you know, vest in your self knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, like your podcast.

You know, you could you could listen to Tammy's podcast and get one thing out of that podcast. It told you that. And I don't know what it was, but it was some Oh yeah.

That's why I'm not sleeping at night. You know, it's that kind of mentality I think we want to nurture and we foster that idea. Right, right, right. Because when we as patients go into a doctor's appointment, if we're not well educated, then we're kind of making decisions about our health in the dark, right?

Like, okay, whatever you tell me to do, but I don't know if that's really right for me or not. It's I don't really even know how that medication is working.

Like, we need to be educated as patients. I mean, it's our bodies. It's our lives. We we need to know and we need to have a say in that. And I think the most, the most empowered patients are the ones who tend to improve the most because they're taking ownership of that.

And I mean, it's part of why my book is called Take Back Your Life. Right? Hey, we get to be in control of our lives again, but we have to have the education to be able to do that right?

I totally agree, I find my patients, the more they understand what's going on with them and what we're trying to do, the better they do, because they're able to be a participant in this whole process.

That's why I like, health coaching, especially your health coaching, which focuses on fiber managers specifically, the people that you trained that are your students, that are trained to do this.

So I think it's great. Do you do you fun working with? I know you've worked with hundreds of clients and you've got students that you work with that are training.

Do you find that stress, whether it's acute stress or chronic stress, is really the straw that breaks the camel's back. That's the the trigger that kind of brings all this on?

I can yes and no. So it depends on what you mean by stress, right. Like chronic stress. Like me at my job. For some people, that's the thing. And I, and I kind of think that really for anybody, if it goes on long enough, it's the thing.

But sometimes that stressor is a car accident or, you know, having a baby, it should be something good, positive. But because of all the stress and not enough sleep and everything else, boom.

Fibromyalgia. Right. So I, I do think that there is always some kind of trauma slash stress trigger and stress. Yeah. Even overstimulated right? I mean like, yeah, that's true for some people. Yeah, exactly.

And I do think that managing our stress, calming down our overactive fight or flight is one of the keys to, you know, feeling your best. I definitely notice, you know, when my life gets a little bit more crazy, I get a little bit more tired.

And that's like my early warning sign up. You better get that back under control if you want to stay feeling good. You know. So do you find that, there's one key thing, and you just mentioned bouncing that the the the nervous system, the the fight or flight, the parasympathetic and sympathetic.

But do you find there's one key thing that as a health coach, you really have to focus on because it's something that most people don't realize is important in fibromyalgia.

The Importance of Patient Education and Team Care

Yeah. So so there's a there's actually a few things. I mean, I think it's super important that you look at your sleep and your thyroid and your adrenals and you look at those neurotransmitters and in nutrition and all of those things.

But underneath all of that, and the answer that nobody wants to hear, I guarantee as you're listening to this, you're

going to not like what I say. It's our self-care.

It's our self-management. And that's that self-management. That's self-care. Caring for yourself is the motivation behind everything, right? I discovered that I kind of treated my body like it was, you know, that printer that didn't work.

And I kind of would cuss at it and like, smack it around and like, force it to do what I wanted it to. I didn't know who I was, only one that wasn't going to pay for printers.

Not telling me, but I treated my fibro body that way, right? Because it wasn't doing what I wanted it to do, and it wasn't responding the way I wanted it to respond.

And so I would push through things instead of resting when my body was clearly telling me I need rest, right. But also just that motivation of why we do what we do.

Why are you taking your supplements every day like you should? Why are you going to bed earlier than maybe you want to? Why are you choosing that food instead of this food?

Right? And it all has to come from this place of looking towards our healing. I'm not talking about I can't do that because of fiber. What I'm talking about is I am choosing to do this so that I can feel better and focusing ahead on our health and on our healing, and really making those choices that lead us to that future instead of to the other future that we don't want.

I think self-care is crucial. And, and, and I've shared this on an interview, too, that I'm kind of guilty because I'm really focused on the biochemistry and the physiology.

I love all that. So it's about nutraceuticals and and very judicious use of prescription medication if needed. But but also I do realize the importance and more so today than ever before, over the last couple of years, everything we've been through, just the importance of making time to nurture yourself.

And if you if you don't do that, I think that you sabotage you're you're trajectory where you is, where you can get you can only going to get so far because if you're locked in that stinking thinking or that woe is me.

And then again, it's not just step by status because I'm the worst patient in the world. When I have the. I don't get sick very often, but when I do, my life will tell you I'm the biggest baby.

So I totally understand. I could I would not want to be where you are, a point and where the viewers are right now. Some of you, totally understand, but we have to accept where we're at and then decide, okay, what do I need to do?

And then do it. And one of those challenges, I think just changing, changing your diet and people really kind of, you know, and I understand it's hard.

It's not easy. But if you have an illness like fibromyalgia, you've really got to be vigilant about what you do and what you don't do. And it's got to be in the around or, you know, based on the parameter of what's going to get me closer and closer and closer to getting my life back.

And focusing on, like, choosing health. You know, I remember sitting at one point and just like I had a headache, I didn't feel good. And, you know, trying to decide, okay, what am I having for dinner?

And this thought went through my head of, well, what do you want to feed? Do you want to feed the sickness right? Or do you want to feed the health? And do I want to choose things that are going to move me towards health, or am I going to choose the things that maybe are now just just to be clear, there is totally a place for Netflix binging and eating a pint of ice cream, just to say but in you can't do that every day, right?

And we've got to make the choices that move us closer to health. And I think this is one of the things that I love so much about working with clients as a coach is that, you know, you hear things like this, you've probably heard several people talk in this summit about making changes like these, but at the end of the day, you go home and you say, but how?

How do I do this? And that's where we really help people as a coach is we can dig into your life and say, okay, so what if you did this and this and this, you know, give you ideas and actually make it really practical so that you can make those changes?

Yeah. Have you seen that there's, a particular issue or a hormone issue that you think is common across the board? The right. I'm thinking of one, two right now.

Actually three I guess three is here.

Stress, Nervous System Overload, and Key Hormones

So is there some commonalities with fiber manager that you look at hormonal deficiencies and fibromyalgia? 100%. Thyroid is one of the absolute first things I talk to clients about.

In my training programs, I actually spend a whole module going through, you know, your thyroid, what it does, how to read the labs, all of the things.

And I it's so funny because I could really, honestly count on one hand the number of students I've had who did not have a thyroid issue. Now, most of them did not know they had one.

Right. And probably about half of my students have ended up being diagnosed with Hashimoto's, which is autoimmune thyroid. So for me, and that's part of my story too, I have Hashimoto's, but that is like the key thing that I find that people aren't looking at.

They're not running deep enough labs, they're just running a TSH and thinking, that's enough. And it's not. So that's, that's that's the that's the first biggie.

But you know, all of these things do play a factor, right? Like all of our all of our hormones, all of our nutritional deficiencies like all of those things play a factor.

Yeah. So I found about 70% of my patients have a problem with the thyroid either that's not been properly diagnosed. Maybe the beginning of Hashimoto's start on it's this autoimmune disease or they're on the wrong medication.

And in the seminar I did my one of the days I do a specific deep dive 20. I think it's a 20 minute video all about that. And then I interviewed some people about thyroid issues as well.

But I think it's so important that we share that information that most people are not getting the proper testing because, as you know, if that's the case and we can get them on the right protocol for their thyroid issue, it can be a real game changer for for a lot of people.

Absolutely. And, you know, you've got to realize that fibromyalgia, fibro is an amplifier. So it takes anything else that you have and cranks the volume up.

So whether that's, you know, you've got a bad neck right? And you have neck pain, it cranks that up. But also something like thyroid disease like all of those symptoms are very similar to fibromyalgia.

Right. Joint pain muscle pain fatigue all of these brain fog. Right. I'm not talking about fibro symptoms as I list those. I'm talking about thyroid symptoms.

So if you have that thyroid issue and and you have fibromyalgia that's amplifying it. Right. And we treat part of it. It can bring that amplification down. Right.

So if we can take the thyroid piece out of the out of the equation, then there's less there for fibromyalgia to amplify. Brings your pain down, brings your fatigue down.

So yeah. So this over AMP vacation, that's a common theme in a lot of the interviews. What you know is what we see in fibromyalgia. They're revved up.

So part of their their nervous system is on high alert. The sympathetic the calming part of the nervous system is the parasympathetic is pretty much dormant.

And so for me, typically the first thing I kind of look at is balancing their neurotransmitters, their brain chemicals, neurotransmitters are all over your body.

But looking at serotonin in particular. But if they're really have some anxiety issues and a lot of a lot of those with fibromyalgia do because of this, this over inflammation of the nervous system, I find I gotta settle that down first, because if I try to give them some energy, which they all want, it backfires.

Yep. Serotonin was a big thing for me. I was on at 1.3 or 4 different things that affected serotonin. You know a couple of antidepressants, tramadol which does a little you know SSRI.

And then and I still was low. So you know you've got a and since then I've done some genetic testing and I know my body just doesn't make serotonin well.

So that's a huge piece of it. But for me, the other neurotransmitter that was a massive game changer was norepinephrine. Because norepinephrine is the part that actually makes me want to do the things I need to do.

Yeah, right. That's that motivation piece. And so for me, I can always tell when I need to like get better about taking my supplements or maybe make an adjustment when I just kind of don't feel like doing the things that I know I need to do.

Yeah, my norepinephrine is off, you know? And unfortunately, there's not a really go to test for fibromyalgia. The FMA test I think is, you know, some debate about that.

I personally think that it's a, a test that can be beneficial. But, you know, there's still some, some, debate about it. But what we do see is across the board is that those with fibromyalgia tend to be low in serotonin. And and as you mentioned, the other neurotransmitter norepinephrine or adrenaline.

And serotonin is a very calming, relaxing hormone. It is your happy hormone. It helps raise your pain threshold needed the help you get in that deep restorative sleep.

Norepinephrine, on the other hand, is that neurotransmitter that gives you drive ambitions, go to it to has some pain blocking abilities as well. But what I have found is we don't get that serotonin level up first, calm everything down.

If we try to get the norepinephrine level up too quick, it backfires. Yeah, just too much. So I usually start people on five HTP and some other key things synergistically that go with that.

The thing I developed called the fibro formula. But eventually then I look at, okay, can we get them on lysine allowing or acid into something in Sammy which are stimulating, but only after we've come everything down.

And then then and only then will we try that. Yep, yep. And that's exactly the pattern of my journey. You know, first we discovered the the serotonin started on five HTP.

That's one supplement I never let myself run out of, and then moved on to, to the others. Absolutely. Because we

are so revved up, you know, we we are stuck in that fight or flight.

I'm sure every person listening, you know, if I talk about laying in your bed at night with your mind all of a sudden thinking of the million things you need to do right?

Like, we all can relate to that. And so I think part of that too, is, and, you know, you're asking about hormones. Cortisol is another huge one there because we end up with our cortisol at the wrong times and in the wrong amounts.

Self-Care Strategies and Reclaiming Joy

And so getting that straightened out was, big piece for me as well. Yeah. Now, you mentioned self-care. So we talked about nurturing yourself and self-care.

What can you give us some examples of things that people could do on their own that would benefit them day in and day out with this, with this condition?

Absolutely. So there's two, two things I would recommend that are super easy, that you could start right now. So the first one is to start tracking your steps.

You might already be doing this. Maybe you're wearing an Apple Watch, have a Fitbit. You know, keep your phone on you, whatever. But I want you to think about those steps differently.

What I want you to do is think about what number of steps, where do you feel good, right? So if you're feeling exhausted, look at your number of steps.

That's too many, right. But on on in that sweet spot where you feel good, how many steps is that? And start using that as your maximum and start thinking about budgeting your steps. Right.

So early on when I was really sick first diagnosed, my maximum was honestly about 2000 steps. That's the number two and three zeros, not 22. And I figured out that, you know, going to Costco was like 500 to 1000 steps.

So, you know, in the afternoon after work, if my husband says, hey, let's go to Costco, I could look at my pedometer and know whether I should say yes or no, because I could look and see, do I have the budget for this right now?

And of course, you know, your your steps will change over time. As you get better, you'll naturally add more steps, but as a way of budgeting your energy and it's it's not perfect, right?

You can spend lots of energy like us sitting here doing this under the bright lights. That uses a lot of energy. But I have no steps, so it's not perfect, but it's still a better way than just blindly guessing where that line is of when I've done too much.

So that's the that's my first suggestion is to start watching your steps, start thinking about budgeting, using your steps. And then the second thing is, I have an exercise in my book called the Joy list.

There's even a podcast episode where I go through this, but start writing down the things that bring you joy. Write down things that are things you can do, things you can't do.

Like if you love gardening but you can't do it right now. Still, put it on your list because we can start figuring out how to add aspects of that back to your life.

But with fibromyalgia, we get so focused on what we can't do, and we start feeling like our whole lives are like this massive taking away of things, right?

So we've got to be a lot more proactive about adding in the joy of life. And you know that right at the very top of my list is rubbing the belly of happiness and joy, which is petting my cat's big fuzzy belly.

You know, I mean, it doesn't have to be expensive. It doesn't have to take a lot of time. But really recognizing what are those things that bring you joy?

And how can you add more of that in, because life isn't about like waking up, suffering through the day, going to sleep and doing it all over again, right?

Like, we've got to add that joy back in and that helps us then increase our capacity for okay, now that I'm feeling a little bit of joy, it makes me want to go out and maybe do some of those things.

There maybe are a little bit harder. I love that. And, Eleanor Stein, I know if you don't know of Eleanor Stein, Doctor Stein, she mentioned at her interview Doctor Gouge and his research about the the, the neurotransmitters that are wired together, fire together.

And we set up this pattern that is creating this pain that really is, is is hyper. You know, it's produced in an accentuated way. It should not be that way.

And we have the means just by our thinking. Things that we can do, we can change how those nerve signals are being released over a period of time. So fascinating research.

And I'm just about halfway through his book, and it's really a great book. I'm so happy that she recommended it, but it's goes along with what I've said.

And now you say as well is you've got to change this conversation in your mind. That's where you, first of all, just recognize that and then start taking those steps.

And I think that's beautiful that you've you I talk about the hour power or finding that that gratitude, you know, because you know when you're grateful, you know.

Yeah. You it's a bad day. You don't feel good that. You know what? The sun's out. You know, whatever it is, just finding something to be grateful for and going with that.

And over a period of time, just that energy alone can start to make permanent changes in how you experience, you know, pain or any of the symptoms of fibro.

Absolutely, absolutely. And you know, the but the more we focus on something, the more that's what we see, right? Like you start seeing red cars, you start seeing red cars everywhere.

Right? So if we start being grateful for, you know, my cats sitting on my lap and purring, right. Then we start seeing more things that we can be grateful for.

And I think so often, with any type of illness, particularly a chronic illness, we get stuck in this loop where we start seeing what's missing, right?

What's being taken away, what we can't do. And the more you focus on those, the more that that's what you see. So we have to kind of purposely shift that back.

And in the process, we also are often changing our thinking from more of a almost a victim mentality where something is happening to me. Right. Fibromyalgia happened to me.

And, you know, these things with my doctors happened to me, and I had no control to more of an empowered mindset where we're actually making choices for our lives and we have more control over lies.

Diet, Protein, and Common Fibromyalgia Triggers

I might not be able to have control over when I have my next flare, but I do have control over what I how I choose to think about that, what I choose to do around that.

Right. How empowered I am with my with my doctors, with my family. There's a lot of choices we can make. Yeah. So speaking of choices, as we wrap things up, I want to ask you, what have you found to be probably the most important or five, six things, whatever it is, half a dozen things.

In changing the diet, are there particular things that you encourage your clients to steer clear of, or are there some things that are just their absolute no nos?

What what are some of the potential game changers, in, in people changing their diet? Yeah, definitely. So when I approach, diet with my clients, there's really two, only two goals.

Number one, avoid the triggers. Don't eat things that make you feel bad. And that can be different for each of us, right? Like there's some common ones I'll talk about in a second.

But we all have our own things to. Right? Right. And then the second thing is making sure you've got the building blocks right. If you really want your body to heal, you got to make sure it's got the tools to do that right.

Like if you want to build a house, you got to have the lumber, right. So if our body's going to heal, you got to make sure you're eating enough protein.

You got to make sure you've got all the right nutrients. So avoiding triggers and having the building blocks you need. And in terms of like some specifics there, the main specific for building blocks is protein.

We need more protein than the average bear. And most of us don't get it enough at all. So if you can do one thing in your diet, start focusing on how much protein are you eating and how can you add more in.

That might mean having a protein shake. Or, you know, maybe you sprinkle nuts and seeds and cheese and I don't know what on everything that you eat, right?

Like just find little ways to add more. As far as what not to eat, there are a couple biggies that are no nos for everybody. The first one is glutamate.

So like MSG, monosodium glutamate. They did a study, at OHSU in Oregon where they were looking at the effects of glutamate on fibromyalgia patients. And the people who got plain water were fine.

Every single one that got the glutamate had a fibro flare. Some more severe than others. One person even ended up in the ER, I believe. But glutamate 100% for sure is going to make your symptoms worse.

The other biggie is artificial sweeteners. You're better off having actual sugar, although you shouldn't have too much of that either. But it is a better choice than like NutraSweet, Splenda, those kinds of things.

Those will definitely make your symptoms worse. So there's there's one do and two don'ts to start with. But when I'm working with my clients, we really talk about, like, their situation and their diet. Right.

Because if you have somebody who's already, you know, maybe they're eating meat and potatoes, right? I talk to them a whole lot less about how to add protein because they're already doing that.

But if I'm talking to somebody who mostly eats, you know, bread, pasta, you know, then we're going to have a different conversation, right? So those are those are some things there to kind of get you started.

I think it's important to put to, highlight what you said about the protein, because that is so important because that's

where the amino acids, the building blocks of protein.

Yeah, these amino acid sequences, these chains of amino acids are what make the neurotransmitters, what make some of the hormones, including thyroid, by the way, as well as serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, gamma, amino butyric acid, glutathione.

And I mean you have to have these amino acids. And if you're in if you're deficient in them. And one of the things we see in fiber is across the board.

They're deficient in tryptophan, which would turn into serotonin L phenylalanine, which turns into norepinephrine, some of the branch chain amino acids, isoleucine, leucine, a few others that are really important for, for as you, as you said, are kind of like the building blocks to be able to make these hormones and make the body work like it's supposed to sort so it can repair itself.

And that was something that I learned, kind of the kind of the, in the very beginning of, of really working with fibromyalgia, just the importance of amino acids.

And that's why I'm a big believer, not only a mono amino therapy, single immunotherapy, like a, like a, a natural drug, even though it's just a supplement.

And then also combinations of amino acids which are in my Fabra formula. Because without that you don't you just you it's hard to get enough of that of those amino acids.

You just it's it's almost impossible. So I think it's been a really important part of my practice. But thing and no, no one's really brought that up. So thanks for sharing that.

I think that's absolutely it was a huge key for me. I can look at several points in my journey where it was like a bigger step forward than others, and discovering this piece was one of those for me.

Yeah, absolutely. Tammy, this has been great. We'll have to do it again. I'm going to get you to come on my podcast.

Resources, Books, and Closing Remarks

Speaking of podcast, Tammy, where can they go to find out more about you and in particular about your books in the podcast? Absolutely. So, the podcast, it's got a super hard name.

It's the fibromyalgia, your podcast. So if you just go to wherever you like to listen to podcasts and type that in, you'll, you'll find it for sure. But we also can be found at fibromyalgia podcast.com.

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There's some great free bonuses that we're offering. So thank you for that. Hey, thanks so much. This has been great. I really enjoyed, spending some time with you.

Thanks so much for having me. It's been a blast.