The Power Of Hope: How Mindset & Lifestyle Impact Cancer Recovery Transcript

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Introduction and Speaker Background

Well welcome back everybody. The Plant Based Cancer Summit. This is so dear to my heart. As you know, there's so much information I want to impart to you.

And that is important to see the. We're talking about that today. The power of lifestyle medicine and all these components working synergistically to give you hope and to give you the actually ability to change the course of your future.

So today we are lucky to have with us a dear friend of mine and just a really impressive and wonderful physician, Doctor Scott Stoll. And let me tell you a little bit about him before I get into the what we're going to talk about today.

He's inspiring leader in lifestyle medicine, a board certified physicians specializing in sports and regenerative musculoskeletal medicine. He was not actually on the Olympic team on the 1994 Olympic bobsled team.

And he's doctor still has been a visionary. He co-founded the Plantation Project and the international plant based Nutrition Health Care Conference and the International Journal of Disease Reversal and Prevention.

So really some important work he's done. He's also served as a founding strategic advisor to the Institute of Health, Healthier Living in Abu Dhabi, AEI, UAE, and the creator of the Help conference, which develops regenerative lifestyle solutions for underserved communities across the globe.

So he's been dedicated to helping people his whole life and his health. And this extends to one of my loves to is regenerative agriculture, where he serves on the board of directors for the Rodale Institute, bridging the vital connection between human health and the health of our soil, plants and our planet.

He's also served on the Whole Food, Scientific and Medical Advisory Board. He continues his popular one week Total Health immersion retreats in Florida, where these life changing events people recover from their health and reverse disease and restore emotional balance.

And he's written numerous books and scientific articles. He speaks at conferences across the world. He's been featured on major platforms like the Doctor Oz Show.

He's had a PBS special in 2018. He's been involved. He's been interviewed and doc in part of documentaries like The Game Changers, Eating You Alive, Disease Reversal, Hope, Plant Wise and the upcoming revive TV series.

So his work continues to inspire and empower individuals to reclaim their health and build vibrant, sustainable future for generations to come. And he's writing for him to be involved here.

But to see Doctor Stolz work in improving people's health over the whole world, not even just in our own country, but throughout the whole planet, it's just really been pleasure to watch.

All right, Scott, glad you're here with us today and how you can add thank you. Thank you. And I just want to thank you at the outset to many of you might not know that are watching this, that Doctor Fuhrman was one of my first mentors.

As I started my journey more than 20 years ago, I discovered that Joel Furman lived just across the the Delaware River in new Jersey, and I went and spent time with you, and you really helped solidify so many things in my mind and showed me what was possible and gave me hope as a physician.

So I just want to appreciate you, Joel, for your friendship and your mentorship in my life and many of the things I'm doing or seeds that you planted in my life.

So thank you. That's so beautiful. Thanks for saying that. And I also tremendously value what friendship and and the good you've brought to this world.

So it's been wonderful to see that. Thank you. Joel. All right. So I know we've been talking here about this how powerful lifestyle medicine can be. And I know you had a great value offer here.

How Hope Shapes Lifestyle Medicine

How these things work synergistically when you simultaneously improve your nutrition and improve your emotional outlook simultaneously you get more bang for the buck, right?

So go start with going into that. On what how we use hope or how we can help people use hope as part of the medical solution and why that's not part of modern medicine today.

Wyatt. Like they they're leaving that out. Yeah, yeah. This is a really interesting part of medicine as you and I were both trained, you know, I think through the reductionism that came in the history of medicine out of the enlightenment period, where we were studying, you know, cells and excited about the inner workings of the cell.

We forgot to always step back and say, well, the cells connected to systems and the systems are connected to a human, and the human is not just a body, it is a soul, and emotions and connections and community and relationship to the entire world.

And so in that compartmentalization, we've lost that sense. And some of this also is the, you know, the Greek mindset of dualism and linear thinking that we have we have kind of disembodied medicine from the holistic aspect of the person.

But the good news is, you know, that out of these fields, like psycho neuro immunology, we've begun to understand that, you know, our emotional states, what we think and believe about ourselves in the world around us, and the emotions that are associated with those belief systems, have a profound impact on our immune system, on our inflammatory system, on our even our ability to begin planning and enacting a strategic lifestyle to intervene for cancer is affected by those thoughts and emotions.

And as we know in medicine, we're not taught these things. We're taught the strict discipline of, you know, differential diagnosis. Create a plan around that, write a prescription, do an intervention, order a study.

And oftentimes it's conveyed to patients, not in a hope filled way where we're going to solve a problem. We're just managing something. And I don't know if you ever experienced this to Joel, but many patients come to see me and they will say, you know, the doctor told me this is the worst condition.

It's only going to get worse over time. They've never seen anything this bad before. And no wonder they're not willing to try anything different. If they're thinking that there's there is no hope.

It's a shame. Yeah. So and we're talking here about the importance of action, people taking action and taking a different action to control their health destiny.

So we're saying here that making change can be difficult for people. It can be overwhelming. It could be like they can give up. And but this is something here that you're saying that utilizing hope impacts their ability to sustain this behavior, change and feel good about it and feel that they can they're doing something that that it actually helps them emotionally and helps their immune system when they've put this together in a way that they're that they're doing something is going to give them hope.

And the more hopes can enable them to do something and sustain, it works both directions, right? Yeah. It's

bidirectional. Absolutely. And hope is really not just a wish, but it's an actual belief that a future state can be obtained.

I'm going to show you just a couple of quick slides, if that's okay. That because I think it's very thing to to see where this what is actually found in the brain so that we can know that this is not just we're not just dealing with something that is hypothetical.

We're actually there's measurable impact here. And so they they identified the location of hope in the brain, which I think is so interesting that hope is located here in this orbital frontal cortex of the brain.

And what does that part of the brain do? Well it's involved. It's involved in reward related processing. So, you know, seeking a reward and processing and feeling good about that reward.

Again, it's that dopamine that makes us feel good about what we're doing. It's involved in the initiation of motivation. So just what you were saying, Joel, it's like Coke gives us the ability to be, to take action, to move towards a goal that we believe is possible.

It's involved in problem solving. And this is really important in, you know, lifestyle change today because we're asking people to make a lifestyle change in a culture that does not support that lifestyle.

The food system does everything to undermine that recommendation of a whole food plant based diet, that when you have hope, you can begin problem solving and you can, you know, be linked to goal related behavior.

And I'll just I'm just remembering a patient of mine that was the prime example of hope and problem solving. And you've had patients like this to this is a woman that came to my office and she had terrible rheumatoid arthritis, and her son was on opioids at 19 for pain.

And she was in a bitter divorce, living in a borrowed camper and didn't have much money.

Hope, Fear, and Cancer Outcomes

And so she said, you know, I don't want to take medications. My son needs help. What can we do? So I couldn't solve those problems for her in my office.

But I told her a story about somebody else that reversed their rheumatoid arthritis with a whole food plant based diet. I instructor on what's it neat how a plate looks, how to begin getting a good night's sleep, and working on those things that reduce inflammation and allow the immune system to heal.

And she grabbed Ahold of that, and she had hope for the first time that she could change her circumstances. So she and her son, without much money, said, we've got to find plants.

Where can we find those? And so they I don't know how they discovered this. I forgot to ask them, Joel, but they said they discovered that at 2:00 in the morning, this grocery store threw away all their produce in the in the dumpster behind the supermarket.

So they would drive up and they would gather all this beautiful produce out of the dumpster. And she took pictures and showed me the beautiful produce that she was getting out of the dumpster.

And they started eating this food. And she sent her rheumatoid arthritis in the remission or a son's pain got better. We got him off opioids. And now not only was she feeling better, but she had enough strength.

And we had activated this part of her brain that she could find her way through some of the other life challenges. And so, you know, this aspect of hope is really exciting, that, you know, when we're sharing stories and you've always done such a good job with this of people that have reverse disease, we're inspiring this part of the brain that actually helps people to make those life changes.

And I think that you're right that the medical profession can actually do the opposite at times. And people generally, you know, the woe is me can can feel like their life is over when they get a negative diagnosis and they're just kind of living without hope, which then makes their disease worse.

Right? That's right. And when we're talking about cancer, you know, cancer is one of the most fear based diagnoses. You know, it's that more than almost any other diagnosis, somebody receives the diagnosis.

It creates fear. And the entire industry of cancer treatment is based on fear, hopelessness. And there's very little hope in that treatment. And have just a couple of slides on that.

So, you know, when we're thinking about cancer and the body's the importance of the body's immune system, as we can see here, the second one, the biological signature of hope.

When somebody has hope, they can actually measure that they have lower inflammatory levels, IL six and lower cortisol levels, which your audience now knows.

The lower cortisol improves the health of the microbiome, restores balance and homeostasis to the immune system, allows, you know, the downregulation of some of the blood vessels that grow in angiogenesis to the cancer cells.

And it also elevates endorphins and dopamine and immune function. So these high hope individuals had diminished stress reactivity more effective emotional recovery.

But the last one here is hopelessness, which we often see in cancer today. And this is a study looking at acute hospitalization was a strong predictor of mortality in those that were hospitalized.

So, you know, inspiring hope is more than just giving people a better vision for what's possible. We're actually changing their immune system. We're empowering their immune cells to begin recovering, fighting the cancer cells and healing the body.

Yeah. You know, it makes me think, too, about how the medical profession promotes fear. Even with screening tests we're seeing finding now about a third of the people with getting even mammograms who get to those with breast cancer or over diagnosed.

Those cancers are kind of like an in between the cancers that would have never killed them. And now they're biologically treated. And then not only are they treated, but now they're living with a diagnosis of cancer, something that they would have never, never had a negative effect in their life.

But they're living with that fear in their hopelessness now. So it's like the we continually, instead of giving people things they can do to control their health, destiny, we kind of put labels on them with input disease labels on them that create fear in their life. That's right.

And if you're living with just that thought of, you know, I have cancer and there's nothing I can do about it, that's a really difficult place. That's a difficult place.

And, you know, just a couple last slides as we continue our conversation that, you know, when they study fear versus hope, they found that, you know, fear as we know it kind of narrows down the action repertoire.

So what kind of actions we might take to change our lifestyle become more narrow when we live in fear. But when somebody actually lives in hope, it broadens that entire spectrum and we begin to see options, pathways, solutions to obstacles that we wouldn't see otherwise when we're living in hope.

And then the last piece right there, which is interesting, three undoing strategies. So these this came from research looking at how do we undo fear and inspire hope.

And it begins with a personal action plan which you do so well helping people develop that plan for some fitness, some, you know, stress reduction and how to implement nutrition, you know, a nutrient dense diet in their lives.

Social action plan, which you've done so well, creating this community and helping each other and then reframing your diagnosis in a positive light. And I think that's really important around this idea of cancer, because it's very easy to see a diagnosis of cancer only in a negative light.

But if you can begin reframing that in some way, in some aspect of it, in a positive light, that undoes helps to undo the roots of fear in your life and begins to infuse hope, right?

There's you know, we know that the majority I could, I could say maybe more than my guess would be 90% of adults have cancer cells in their body. Everybody has cancer.

It's part of life. And the body is always in flux.

Community, Purpose, and Storytelling

Breaking down cells, killing cells. New cells are changing, getting damaged, getting broken down again. And all of us live with a continual exposure to being exposed to toxins in our environment.

But when we take good care of ourselves and we put the right ingredients in and have the right emotional outlook, our body is working in our own behalf.

Our body is our friend, not our enemy. Our body is out to protect us. And whether you have a diagnosis of cancer or you don't have a diagnosis of cancer, you still have a body that's working to protect you and to and your own behalf.

And all you've got to do is turn it on, right. Turn on that light reframing in a positive light, and let that light bathe your cells and do its work. That's beautiful.

That's right. Hippocrates said, feeling is not just a matter of time, but also opportunity. And that's where lifestyle and mindset and belief systems enact such a positive, robust response of the body.

By creating an environment that gives the system that was created to heal every opportunity to do so. And, you know, I know that we that's why we're always giving people's examples of these positive stories of people who've healed that then give more hope.

But there's actually science behind that. And I think there's science behind the synergy, right, between making changes in your life and seeing those changes as being worthwhile and important and effective.

Right? Yeah. Yeah, that's exactly right. That, you know, this is interesting when they study the brain of high hope individuals. So people that, you know, have grabbed onto the idea that I can actually do something to change my future by taking important action.

Today. They found in these areas of the brain, which we won't necessarily go into. But, you know, they found that they had better decision making, goal setting, overcoming challenges, that they were less reactive to negative stimuli and focused more positively on outcomes that they believed in, their innate ability to be able to take action and solve problems, and then strategize multiple ways to achieve those goals.

Just like my patient that had found a strategy that, you know, we can't afford the food, but we're going to find it somewhere, you know, there's this problem solving that gets woven in for lives.

When we have high hope, we develop more resiliency, more optimism. And they found that when you have high hope, it protects against anxiety and is a counterbalance to any fear.

So your brain actually gets turned on to assist you in implementing those core lifestyle changes that people are learning about in this summit. Yeah, it's part of the whole lifestyle, the, you know, the lifestyle medicine.

We're talking about this holistic view that enables the body to function and to heal. When we don't, we leave every stone unturned. We do the whole picture of everything together, right?

The exercise, the sleep, the diet. And the more you do, the more benefit you get. That's right. It's dose dose dependent. That's right. Every dose of lifestyle has an added benefit.

And you know, some of this hope also comes in from community being in communities where people are speaking positively, encouraging one another, telling positive stories, sharing information, solving problems together.

That is another infusion of hope that comes from, you know, outside of ourselves as well. Yeah, I think that's part of what we're also showing that these studies that show that when people have a compassion for others, it gives them a passion for living and this passion for living and being useful to humanity in some way is more fully expressed and continues.

When a person has a medical diagnosis, and in many times the medical diagnosis can make the person even more feel like they've got to continue to be in great health and take good care of their health because of the work they do.

And the important connection they have with others is important to them, to their life, and their life has value and meaning. And when the life has value in meeting due to their compassion and their passion, then they can take better.

Then they're also the people who we've shown long term, have lost 100 pounds and kept it off, who've transformed the cancer diagnosis and stay. And, you know, they stayed religiously or rigorously with the diet that we've been all the regiment they're supposed to follow. They don't.

They want to do everything they can to work in their own behalf, because they're so passionate about their life's purpose and staying alive and doing it, continuing their work.

So I think there's a it's like a they don't give up. It inspires them to do good instead of giving up. Right. Yeah, that's exactly right. Joel, I've just you know, this is exactly what you're saying in this slide that, you know, part of this is, is developing an action plan to help other people.

You know, it's it's we're working beyond ourselves to assist other people and have purpose. And, you know, that is a part of this cultivation of hope.

It's gratitude. It's mindfulness. But it's really, you know, like you said, we have to have purpose and meaning beyond just ourselves. And the unfortunate part of healthcare today.

Again, it's so reductionist that we drive people to only be fearful about their current condition, and we don't help them to see purpose and meaning, even in a diagnosis that they have in a way, to reach out and be of service to their fellow person around them, their community.

And we know that changes the, the, the milieu of our immune system. It reduces inflammation, it optimizes, you know, our cellular function at every single way.

When we become purpose driven people that are working to add value to the lives of others. That's really it's really interesting how because people think, oh, this stuff is so like, you know, my, you know, alternative medicine and it's so weird and, you know, it's they're so geared towards just fine taking a drug.

And they don't realize that, that how powerful all this information can be, especially when you combine them all these things synergistically together.

They don't know the power. And so people are just they think the only thing they have to deal with is going to the doctor and taking a drug. It's taking all the power away from them.

And they don't realize that how you've seen and I've seen so many people, he'll turn these diagnoses around and go on and live for decades, you know, or multiple decades doing good work in their life after their diagnosis.

That's right. That's exactly right. Yeah. I remember Joel, a patient that I took care of, and he had a diagnosis of cancer. And the gist said, you're going to die in like three weeks.

And he said, no, I'm not. He said, I, I'm going to live until May, which is six months from now. Because of my grandson's graduating. He got to six months.

And uncle just said, I don't know how you did it, but I think you're going to die in another four weeks.

Lifestyle Medicine as a Path to a Better Life

He says, no, I'm not. My granddaughter's getting married at Christmas time and I'm going to make it till Christmas. And he just he kept doing this for years because he had a vision.

He had hope he was going to accomplish something. And he he overcame all of the medical predictions of what would happen. And his body just functioned.

And the cancer did not grow inside of him in a way that was fully expected by the the science. But he had he had hope and vision to overcome that. Right.

So, you know, the last thing I want to just share that that you all do so well, it's so important, is the power of stories, right? Throughout history, we've told stories and stories instructive.

They shared history, they helped to convey values, but they also inspired hope and people and your community. And you all have been such an incredible job of sharing those positive stories.

And I just want to encourage people that, you know, stories give us hope. And so when you're struggling reading the story or watching, you know, somebody inspiring story of overcoming a disease in their life or overcoming anything can help us to to not only gather strength and inspiration, but as we've just learned with the science, it changes our brain in such a way that we begin seeing a different future and strategizing the steps to accomplish that future.

All right. Is it does you have any other such great slides there? Thank you. I'm going to share this one because this is I just I love this one too. This is a it just really typifies, I think, what we ultimately want people to accomplish, you know, through a, through our recommendations, you know, it's we talked so much about lifestyle.

I you and I love the science going as deep as possible in the epigenetics and endothelial cells and mitochondria and all of the pathways. But it's important again for everyone to step back and say, why am I doing this?

Why am I changing my diet? Why am I trying to add sprouts and herbs and spices and g bombs? You know, it's it's very important to do that. It optimizes our system.

We understand the cellular physiology, but we really are trying to create more wonderful life for ourselves and for others. And that is the essence of lifestyle medicine and the holistic view that that we all believe in and advocate so fiercely for, because we've seen it give people more wonderful life.

And a part of that element hopefully people take away from today is that, you know who is not woo woo. Hope is a part of this prescription of lifestyle medicine, nutrition and diet.

It's, you know, infusing hope through stories does help us to accomplish a more wonderful life for ourselves, our

families, and for other people in our community.

Thanks for saying that, Scott. Because you know how some people are thinking, you know what they think? They think I couldn't eat that way because I'm too.

That is giving up my pleasure of life. Who wants to live and eat so healthfully? I want to be able to recreate with my unhealthy foods, and they don't realize that all were gaining.

And what people are gaining so have so much more happiness, enjoyment of life, pleasure in life and all these things that people are gaining. They just focus on what they're losing.

And I don't see how actually taking good care of your health, like we're advocating, brings them a much more peaceful and and happier life in every aspect of the system, right?

Our choices impact everything connected to the food chain, ecology, soil, biologic systems and Fabians in the water. Everything is affected by our 100 bites of food that we put on our plate every day.

It's one of the most powerful ways to positively impact our planet and our communities by making those healthy choices that, you know, infuse health, health into our ourselves, but also from the soil to the planet, providing that opportunity for healing as well.

So it's it is creates this robust opportunity for a more wonderful life for everyone. Yeah. If we feel better about we feel better and we feel better about ourselves because we're doing better for the world at the same time.

Well thank you. It's thanks for the major contribution you made to this summit with just this, you know, short piece of learning that we've all gotten.

And of course, good luck to everybody in pushing you all. Best of health and stay tuned. We have a lot more to come. All right. Thanks so much, Scott. Yeah. Thanks, Joel.