Introduction and Podcast Mission

Hi there. I'm doctor Amelia Scott Barrett. I'm a neurologist and specialist in headaches with a background in functional medicine and biohacking. My own personal journey has brought me to truly understand what it means to live with migraines.

So I know that what we all really want is to heal from those underlying conditions that are causing the headaches, so that we can get back to the life and the people that we love.

Because of this, it's been my life's mission to empower others to take charge of their health. Join me today as we interview leading experts to uncover the latest cutting edge medical techniques and the most actionable health insights to power your health journey.

This podcast is reaching you thanks to Doctor Talks. Doctor talks aims to empower 1 billion people to get educated about their serious health conditions.

Visit them today at Doctor Talk's dot com slash calendar to learn about upcoming summits. Hi everybody, I am Doctor Amelia Scott Barrett. I am a neurologist and founder of Migraine Relief Code and I am here today with my special guest, Doctor Calm.

Doctor calm, thank you so much for being here today. My pleasure. Amelia. Nice meeting you. Thanks for inviting me. Absolutely. So, to begin with, why don't you just, give us a couple minutes overview of who you are, what your training is, and what you do, what you bring to the world.

Dr. Calm's Background and Stress Origins

Absolutely. So I was born in India, and for the first 25 years of my life, I was brought up there. I went to med school, and then I came over to the United States for a higher education, I imagine, in public health.

And then I did my internal medicine residency. And whenever it's either practicing internal medicine. But what I noticed is that, there's a lot of stress in people's lives and that is directly affecting their health, not just the mental health, but also the physical health as in so many patients who are stressed out there that diabetes is out of control, high blood pressure, and then they get migraines, headaches, heart attacks, strokes.

And I noticed that stress had its fingerprints on almost every single organ system in our body. And I said, we got to do something about it. And fortunately, when I was doing my master's in public health, I took a course on resiliency and stress management that was offered, in the graduate, you know, catalog of courses.

So and I totally loved it. And not only did it, I loved it from an intellectual point of view. I was going through a lot of stress at that point of time in my life.

And I stumbled upon this course and some of the principles and teachings there, and that has calmed me down instantly, utterly, instantaneously. Well, it so happened that to go, yeah, it's so happened that the situation was dire at that point of time.

Financial problems, kidney problems and many other things going on. And I was like. I can't do it. I can't do it. And then as a mind was running at a million miles per second, restless path, and I stumbled upon some of these principles and teaching for them would share with you what happened was I felt this deep inner peace.

I said, how is it possible nothing around me changed. The circumstances are still the same. How could I feel peaceful? But a few moments later I started feeling joyful.

This image from the prophet me, I guess, of me being joyful in my life, all falling apart. So. And then I called my professor and ask her what's going on?

And she said, that's totally normal. You just accept your innate help, your inner peace and joy that you already have that is not dependent on any external circumstances.

You tap into it and, you know, I think that is really, a profound point that you're making here that you were accessing something that was independent of your external circumstances.

And I love how you said stress has its fingerprints on on every organ in our body. That's so true. Of course, I see that all the time in my my people with migraine.

So tell us a little bit more about that. I'm curious. What are your thoughts about where stress comes from? Sure. This by itself is always a half an hour lecture, but I'm going to cut it short.

So, most people think that stress comes from their external circumstances. Or this happened. That happened. My wife or husband or was, you know, and, but the truth of the matter is, those circumstances are not the true origin of stress.

Stress is originating from within. What is, hey, is stress is a state of mind. It is a state of mind at its core. And once you get into that state of mind, for whatever reason, there are three stages of stress.

One is it's just state of mind. Whatever that you're thinking, making you feel miserable, unhappy. And that leads to stage two, which is stress hormone release.

The neurotransmitter, nerves and other hormones that lead to stress. And the third stage is the symptoms and same, which is like headache, nausea, vomiting, palpitations, sweating, all these things.

So most people equate stress to that symptom. But the truth of the matter is stress is a state of mind you get into, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Meditation, Calmness, and Mental Stillness

So I think this is really profound, that the stress is actually coming from your own state of mind as opposed to external circumstance, because it's empowering, right?

I mean, you're a doctor, I'm a doctor. We have both had conversations with people where we know that what's going on is stress in their lives. They don't see it.

Sometimes it'll happen that way. Right. And so you kind of gently, you know, walk up to this so you know how your stress, you know, try to bring this, this, up to the forefront that, and, and and the, the what I always bump up against in these circumstances is people are telling me I can't change my circumstances.

I cannot change my finances. I cannot change my job. I cannot change my partner. And that always seems to just shut the door on any kind of progress because they feel so stuck in their circumstances.

So that's why I think it's so important what you're saying, that it's not about changing the circumstances you find yourself in. It is about changing you.

That is so much more empowering. It is absolutely. I mean, you know, this is not to discount the kind of situation that we go through in life, the circumstances and all those things.

Yes, of course, can be the triggers for set. I'm not saying those are not important. Yes, those are important. I understand, I empathize, but as long as you're giving, power to them, circumstances you have this time because there will always be something happening in life that you don't expect.

So the only true way of stress management is go with him. Know that stress is a state of mind that is being created from within. I'll give an example.

So imagine someone is driving a car and their friend is sitting next to them, and as they're on a highway, they see an accident and there's a lot of blood body parts.

Looks terrible. And you look at it and you're like, okay, that. And then you look next to you, your friend passes up, you quickly wake up your friend, and then after he or she feels better. Yes.

What happened? I don't know, like every time I see blessed, I just pass out. I feel sweaty, palpitations, nausea and you wonder why. Now the question is.

If stress, that stress reaction the person had is really coming from blood and body part, then every single person on the highway, including the policemen and ambulance people they should pass out.

But they're not. You see, it is very specific. This is a very drastic example, but this is very specifically about how your mind is processing information and taking it in, feeling the emotion.

And that is what is leading to the stress reaction. Yeah, the that's a fantastic example I love it. Yeah. Yeah. And I'm not kidding because we know that there are doctors who pass out.

I mean you see blessed you know I know talk to colleagues but not just general population. So it could be some kind of conditioning that happened when they were very, very little.

You know, it could be some predisposition that they don't even know. You know, almost subconsciously, unconsciously, it's happened to them. But the point is, once you recognize, okay, it is originating from within, whether they're passing or because I'm glad that that or you're reacting in a certain way because of the situation in your life, whatever it is that it's happening now, you have the control back in your hand and you say, you know what?

I'm not going to let that happen. And I will do everything in my capacity for changing. You are more powerful. Not the situation. Yeah. Yeah. You're more powerful.

So you know you're talking about changing your perceptions how you view things. I feel like one of the tools that people use to try to change their inner world is meditation.

What are your thoughts on that. Do you think that's an important tool? Yes. Meditation is absolutely an amazing way to cut down stress free and peaceful.

And there are so many health benefits because of meditation. In a previous, we used to think, oh, okay, maybe may not be, but now it is. Research. Prove it.

You can see on the MRI certain parts of your brain, like the emotional brain being kind of torn down. And so that is where all the anxiety, restlessness, all that comes down, you start feeling becoming more rational, more clear in your thinking, all that is proven.

So there is no doubt about it. And there are so many studies on meditation reducing your migraine headaches. Heart attacks and overall health benefits in general.

So it's clear. So I am a big advocate for meditation. However, the problem is most people don't know what they're doing when they're doing meditation.

That's a problem. Yeah. Tell me more about that. That's an interesting thing that you're saying. It's because you see our world, the internet world, we are inundated with all this information.

You see information overload of like meditation and these meditations that, do, this kind of meditation, that kind of meditation. Oh, not there's not people are already confused to begin with, you know, in this form.

And this is adding more confusion what to do, what not to do. Do I even know I'm doing it right? What should I feel the pain.

The P.E.A.C.E. System and Managing Chronic Stress

And I'm doing meditation. So actually let us start with what is meditation. And in fact, I don't even want to use the term meditation a lot of times because there is a lot of misconceptions about it.

I simply call it a calming technique, a practical tool that you could use to calm your mind. So what is meditation? Meditation is attaining a state of mind.

There is not even a flicker of restless thought there. Your mind is totally below. That is the ultimate goal. That is then actually, yes, I have touched that.

And when you get there you will like. Yeah. So I let's explore this a little bit more because you're busting a lot of myths here today. Doctor Khan, first of all you said stress doesn't come where you think it comes from.

And now you're telling us that that meditation isn't quite what you think it is? That there that it's about, kind of getting away from restlessness, getting to a place of stillness.

Now, I think that a lot of people who are new to meditation feel like the idea is to sit down, calm your mind, and get rid of all thoughts. Right. And so then I, you know, I, I teach people meditation and they're like, but I had a thought and now I feel bad and I did it wrong.

And then they're stressed out again. So tell me more about this. What do you think is the goal. Like what are people searching for. Tell me about what that state of mind feels like, that people are basically mentally rehearsing in their meditation.

Yeah, yeah. So for that, I think we need to differentiate between premeditation and meditation, to be honest, to make it very clear. So pre meditation actually is you sitting there doing some kind of technique, trying to, you know, put yourself in a comfortable position.

And doing all those things and as you continue to do that practice the technique or, and you sit still and all that at some point of time, what happens is you suddenly feel a like, no more thoughts in your head, kind of.

They disappear as if someone has vacuumed them out. And then you feel this intense state of peace. You feel secure, you feel like nothing can really disturb you.

It really doesn't matter what happens in the world. I'm happy. So that is the state. Yeah. I'm hearing a lot of elevated emotions in that peace, contentment, you know, that sort of thing.

Do you do you suppose that it would help people to think, all right, I am going to intentionally feel these emotions. And then the absence of thought is sort of a byproduct of that, because I feel like when people obsess about trying to stop their thoughts, all that happens is they're more aware of their thoughts.

Two, two because our human minds are very much used to being restless all our lives. We are running around thinking about this, trying to do this, that, you know, whatever it is.

So our minds are habituated to restlessness. So that is half point and meditation. As you keep practicing it more and more, what happens is that habitual restlessness turns into habitual calmness.

Your mind is not anymore running here, there, there, there, there. They're then you're like focused, calm. And you

use pot as a tool because part is nothing but a tool.

You use it. I'm using my thoughts right now, talking to you, explaining people, yet I'm calm. You see. So it is okay to have thought. It is not so much about not having thoughts or having thought.

You know when you need not use them and you don't need them, put them to rest. That's what people need to learn. And meditation is, a very powerful way to do that.

You know what you cannot do by yourself, you know, thinking about it. Because the more you think about it, the more of you get as you said, you know, I want to put myself in a happy state.

And the moment you think about it, all the bad experiences start coming into your mind. You know, when you are happy. So meditation, by using certain techniques that are proven, you can bypass all these restless thoughts.

You know, all this conditioning that we are used to. You can bypass all the things cut through them and get to that one point at focus concentration, which is very essential, really deeply penetrate into that state of deep calm.

That is what it is. So these techniques that you're talking about is that part of your pet system or is that something different? Yes, it is part of the paid system.

What the speed is system is. It was almost, a decade ago. I thought about, you know, stress is a major issue for a lot of people, and it is probably one of the biggest epidemics, if not the biggest epidemic of all time.

That is what I think, because everyone is stressed and I go to seminars. How many of you are stressed? 99%. People raise their hands. There's one person who is not raising their hand.

And then I tell you, you're a liar. And the yes, I am, and that is a hand too. So no other, disease. Illness has affected people, you know, so much as stress, and yet it doesn't get as much important.

You know, people say, yeah, do this, do it, but not really see how much we did for Covid. Right. But stress is a far bigger problem than Covid. So now I said, you know, if we are dealing with an epidemic, a global epidemic of this size, then the solution must be very simple, very simple.

Because if you give complex solutions, people are not going to follow them. So and then I designed this system which comprises of three principle two relaxation exercises, one calming technique.

And what is say, even if you practice 15 to 20 minutes a day of this system last year, I dare say 80 to 90% just can be taken care of. Wow, that that's a tell us more about person.

Yeah yeah yeah. So coming back to our discussion about meditation and parts a little bit because it is related to the system again, you know, you don't need to feel guilty that you are having all these thoughts.

It is totally okay. Because in your mind part flow continues. Let me give an example. Per day you have 50 to 70,000 thoughts that run through your mind.

There are so many thoughts, right? Because your thoughts flow continuously like water flow continuously in the river part. Flow continuously in your mind like water flows continuously in a river.

Now this is what you need to remember. As long as the parts are flowing freely in your mind, you will be naturally peaceful and joyful. That is a natural state.

The moment there is stagnation of parts, you feel stressed, miserable, unhappy. Like for example, that moment that is stagnation of water. It is a dam.

It it's something that is blocking the water flow and the previously how the river water all of a sudden become foul

smelling, not drinkable anymore. The same way when you create the dam in your mind that is blocking the flow of pop, you feel unhappy.

You feel miserable because what happened is how the dam formed in your mind is you start thinking about something bad that happened. Your boss said something two weeks ago.

The boss already forgot about it, but you didn't. You keep repeating that in your head. Are you worried about something in the future? And then you keep repeating that in your head.

You start imagining the most, you know, fearful future. And as you do that, all that is going to make your thoughts accumulate. You know you're stuck on that and you create that state in your mind.

And often this happens unconsciously. Most people have no clue. It happens unconsciously. Yeah. You're bringing attention to a very interesting thought here that, it is really the stagnation of thoughts, the repetitive thoughts that are the problem.

It's not getting rid of all thoughts. And, you know, it's a global thing, but working on the places where you're stuck, that's what is more important.

Yeah, I have not heard that perspective on it before. That's interesting. Yeah. Yeah. And that is how we actually differentiate acute stress from chronic stress.

So if you go into the definition of acute stress versus chronic stress, acute stress is a normal physiological response that we all have. And it it's a perfect response supposed to help us some illness, some threat.

Tiger a bear if it is, you know, all times, hundreds and thousands of years ago. So it gives you the fight or flight response so that you know your body, adapt to that situation and can fight it or run away.

Now, in this modern world, we don't have anymore tigers or lions in our life, our constant companions. Now, psychological stressors constantly. And we those are the tigers in life.

What they call it is the psychological stress. Tigers. You know, life anxiety, worry, fear days that whatever it is and what happens is we are turning that acute stress into chronic stress.

Chronic stress is pathological and it results from a repetitive thinking program in your mind that is dysfunctional. Let me give you an example. Imagine a zebra being hunted down by a lion in an African savanna, and the repressed gets, let's say after that, maybe in 45 minutes or so, it comes back to its natural state, moves on grazers, mixes with the herd, and then but at the same thing happens to you as a human being.

Let's say you went on an African safari tour, and then you got on the bus and straight away from the rest of the it, and then all of a sudden you see a lion there.

You freeze. That's it.

Reframing Stress and Finding Inner Peace

Sweating, palpitation, it can move and the lion is ready to attack and that's it. Then you close your eyes and all of a sudden you get a gunshot from your tour guide, and the lion runs away from there listening to the drum, and you are brought back to the bus, totally exhausted.

And in the next 3 to 45 minutes, probably your body is going to slow down and you feel better, but you no mind going to slow down. Now you keep thinking about what happened, and not only that, everyone gathered fed on you after what happened and you tell them the story and you do that the whole day.

But the end of the day, you feel so tired. You go to sleep in the middle of the night, you wake up nightmares and

the lion is attacking you like, this is terrible, terrible.

I never want to go to Africa again. So you go back to your country and then you continue the story by telling it. Everyone at gym, at office, and three months later used to feel like you're being attacked by the lion.

You wake up every night with nightmares. Now you've got PTSD, you see. So what's happening with human beings compared to animals is we, human beings have a tendency to turn acute stress into chronic stress by not letting go of that event from our mind, we either get attached to the past memory or imagine a fearful future and repeat these negative thoughts in our mind like a stuck city.

It is just, you know, revolving constantly. So it is even for chronic stress. Yeah. It almost sounds like we have a choice with our minds. We can either repeat the negative events of our past or we can focus on positive emotions joy, clarity, peace and whatever it is that we're repeating that is how we are going to sculpt the brain.

We are creating the the forces that sculpt our own brains by what we choose to think about either rehearsing those negative events of the past or, you know, rehearsing potential, you know, the positive aspects of the moment, and then you sort of end up with the brain that is the result of that choice that you've made.

Sounds like that's what you're saying, right? That's rough on what you said. Yes. That your brain is the result of what you are thinking constantly. It is not the other way around.

Of course, they both interact what you are thinking and how it affects your brain. And what is your brain structurally and how it affects your thinking, you know, is that simultaneous processes going on?

But you do have a choice. That's the whole point about this. And you need to break that chronic stress cycle. You know, you need to break the link between that acute stress and chronic stress and take out of that chronic threat.

And that is what it is like, how you break it, break it, break a cycle, come out of it. You retain the acute stress, the physiological normal response that is good for you.

When it is meet it, but break away completely from that psychological stress that you're experiencing all your life for one reason or another. And when you do it, I am free now.

It really doesn't matter what you think of me, it really doesn't matter what someone is posting on social media. So happy. Oh my God, my life is so bad.

Competition. A lot of people live in that social media world right now. And even the real life circumstances, you know, financially, I'm not doing this.

I'm not being good. But you don't have to give power to all the things. That's the point. You know, if you can access your email, help what I call your inner state of peace and joy that is waiting for you within is like an ocean.

Within. And if you can access it, then the surface waves, all the things, the circumstances of life stop affecting your lunch. Yeah, once in a while. Once in a while, there may be a big tsunami.

It will affect you. But from a day to day perspective, you know you're not anyone bothered by them. Okay, I am happy as I am. So how does it matter if I have $1 million or yes, a little bit of money?

Of course I'm not telling you to ignore your financial needs. Your physiological needs all don't need to be met. There's no doubt about it. You know, you don't need to be poor.

But also, it doesn't mean that you need $1 million before you can be really happy. Yeah, well, doctor, calm, you've busted another myth here today when you started talking about the difference between acute and chronic stress, I thought you were going to say, like a short term event versus a long term event, like long term events.

Cause chronic stress may be related to job or partner or whatever. Yeah. You busted that myth again to by pointing out that it's really our own repetition of that event that creates the chronic stress.

Interesting. It's an interesting take on it. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah. And not that you brought an important point to, it not to undermine, the effect of the chronic stresses in our life.

If you are in a bad relationship, an abusive relationship, if there is something like chronic pain in your life, like migraine or something else, I mean, all those things do have real impact on our brain and our mindset, there is no doubt about it.

But even then, what I'm saying is by giving power to those things, you're making yourself powerless. But if you stop taking that power into your hands, you will slowly chip away those events in your life and make them powerless.

You know, I think that it's a shift in the way that we think that is important more than anything else. You know, that is going to set the direction because you say this is causing problem.

This is causing problem. You're going to go down and sink deep into the pit of misery that you're saying, you know what the problem is there, but it is my perception and what I do or what I not do that is what is going to help me.

Then you are going to slowly come out of that pit of misery and finally overcome that problem. And it may be a long, arduous process sometimes, you know, because we have problems like whether we want it or not.

And that happens and there is a whole complete discussion y and all that. But it is how we are tackling it. Ultimately.

Resources and Closing Remarks

But it is not simply how we are tackling it. What do you know that will help you tackle the right way? That is what the party system is about. Yeah, that sounds so helpful.

And if people want to find out more about your work, how can they do that? Well, they can simply type in my name. Doctor. Calm. Well, my name is Karen La.

I'm a physician, author, speaker. I got this, name from. That is a big story. I would have been, but, that is my brand now. So if you type in simply my name, Doctor Karen, Insha'Allah.

Simply type in Doctor Khan. You'll find me on Google. Or you can go to my website. Doctor. Dot word. Dr. K lm dot w or, and and, you know, a bunch of books that I have written there lots of videos on my website that are free.

You could use it. And there is a webinar what is called happiness Therapy. It is a 30 minute powerful video that you could use it right now. And then for more information, you can always email me or click that free revolution at gmail.com.

And I'm here to help. Thank you so much. I really appreciate you taking the time to be with us today. And I just wanted to say that one more time, doctor.

Calm dot world slash webinars. Dr.. Cal m w o r ld webinars for more information. And Doctor Khan, thank you so much for being here with us today. I so much appreciate you sharing your your myth busting wisdom about stress and what to do about it.

Doctor Bader, I really appreciate you. We had such a great interaction. Again, thank you so much for inviting me to this podcast. And I know you yourself are an expert in migraine and you advocate for calm in people's lives, whether by meditating or doing something else.

And thanks so much for doing all the things that you are doing to help patients and the people in this call, and more

people needed like you. Thank you so much.

I appreciate you saying that. All right. Thank you. Bye.