Introduction to Bio Optimization and Jessica Sherman

Hi I'm dr amy Welcome to the bio optimized summit where we explore the next level of physical and mental health that you can reach through intentional and targeted bio optimization. Today I am so excited to have Jessica Sherman with us. She is a former teacher, a registered holistic nutritionist and a family health educator and she specializes in nutrition for brain health and resilience for kids. In fact, I have her book right here of raising resilience and for over 10 years now she has worked alongside naturopathic and medical doctors, family counselors and psychologists, occupational therapists, teachers, parents, whoever are trying to bring a deeper understanding of this role of nutrition and kids and their behaviors and how to set them up for success.

And so she works, she runs an online program where she breaks us all down, gives recipes and really shows the power of nutrition when it comes to kids and their biology. So thank you so much Jessica for joining us today. Awesome. Thanks so much for that lovely introduction.

Yeah, well I have loved being able to work with you and I know that we've got some more projects planned together but I really wanted to bring your experience and your knowledge because this is so needed right now there are so many kids who are struggling with behaviors who are struggling with anxiety or A. D. D. A. D. H.

D. And parents don't have a lot of salute these days because so much of what they're still being told is pushing medications which for some kids that maybe the right answer. But what you've realized and what I've realized is that so much of this is their biology that we can actually change and optimize through nutrition. So that would be my first question for you, Jessica is when we talk about optimizing a kid's biology through nutrition, what does that mean to you? What has that look like for you?

Yeah, it's a big question. Um and it's an important question because um, you know, for for a long time the brain in the body of thought it was separate.

Right? And so, and this is what I noticed when I was a teacher, is that when someone was struggling with something brain related, we'd send them to a brain person, a psychologist, a psychiatrist like that, but never in all of my years of teaching, did did someone come back from that brain person with any kind of um toolbox for how to help improve the health of the body so that the brain would function better?

Um and so bio optimizing the or optimizing the health of the body, I have learned affects the function of the brain and vice versa too, like the brain is going to affect the body, the body is gonna affect the brain.

It's a two way street because it's just the same thing, it's the same ecosystem. Um So, so that's what I have seen is, you know, a surge of research and practical application of this approach to say if we can if we can take steps to improve the biology of the body nourish it deeply deal with, you know, stressors and understand what's going on in the gut and all of the stuff. Things that seem to have nothing to do with brain, kids start to think more clearly learn better.

Have fewer tantrums. They can basically respond to stress better. Um, so regardless of diagnosis, it helps them feel better so that they function better.

Um, so that's that's sort of what it means to me. I mean, we're talking about cellular nourishment, right? The cell is the is the foundational, you know, lego piece.

If you will of the body and cells work together to create issues which work together to create organs which work together to create systems. So any time you're dealing with a system problem, which is usually where we think, um, you know, the, the nervous system or the um muscular system or whatever.

Then really if you get down to that cellular piece, we need to nourish those cells.

How Nutrition Shapes Brain Health and Resilience

So that's what we do. That's what we do in our programs. That's the approach that we take in our community. And when you provide the cells, this nourishment, then that's really when, like you're saying, a child can do their best because they naturally feel their best, they're not having to struggle against their biology to get their schoolwork done to be able to be nice to be able to, you know, comply and and go along with the family program that day. It's they're feeling better and so they're naturally going to do better in every area of their life.

And I think that's what you mean when you talk about resilience and you've written this amazing book which again, I highly recommend people go and read this.

What does, what does resilience mean to you? And how are you building that through the nutrition? Yeah. Well what you said is a really good way of framing it, which is um they're not struggling against their biology right?

When we can understand, I mean behaviors, every everything has a root, right? Everything. A symptom of behavior symptom or a physical symptom, everything's got a route to it. And we got to find out what that route is and when they're constantly struggling against their biology, um they're constantly struggling right to meet expectations.

So I really, really like that framing of it. Um what was the question resilience resilience, what does resilience mean to you? And and yeah, give us fill in the details on how like the nutrition piece and giving the cells their nourishment actually helps them be more resilient.

Yeah. So resilience essentially when I i it was a few years ago, the book came out in 2017 I think. And it was a few years before that where I I fell upon the concept of resilience and it's something that that I, you know, I had I had learned about as a teacher, it's sort of developing, you know, strong resilience because I was an outdoor education and experiential education.

So we were doing a lot of like um you know, pushing boundaries, self discovery, like putting, like creating experiences for kids so that they would, you know, come to their own conclusions and that's the kind of educational training that I had. And so resilience was not a new a new topic, but um when I but when I started studying nutrition and then I could and then brought that applied that concept of resilience to nutrition, to understand that resilience isn't just mental capacity isn't isn't just resilience is our ability to respond to stress, whether that's a physical stress or whether that's a mental emotional stress, whether that's a, you know, a stressful event, traumatic event and he's a virus, like any potential stressor that comes into the body, our resilience is our ability to handle that and we have remarkable mechanisms in our body, like fascinating unbelievable mechanisms to help us tolerate stress, whether it's physical or mental or emotional.

And um when you get a symptom what I what I sort of came to when I applied this concept of resilience to the body, I came to this understanding that a symptom whether that's a physical symptom or a mental emotional behavioral learning symptom signifies a situation where the stress that's coming into the body is outweigh outweighing our body's capacity to handle that stress, manage it, tolerate it, so you get this imbalance and it looks like a symptom.

And so I thought, okay, so that's the scenario we're dealing with. We've got two ways to work. We can reduce the stressors that are coming in and we can also improve the stress tolerance of the body by nourishing it and feeding those mechanisms those amazing mechanisms that we have to um to tolerate stress.

So and so then when I looked around and sort of took my head up from the from the research and from my thinking and my deep thoughts and journaling about it, what I saw was that there was quite a bit of talk about reducing stressors and particularly as they pertain to kids, um stressors were definitely increasing.

I mean our kids are under more stress than ever before, whether it's pressure or um families scenario, standing situations, economic pressure um or academic pressure or even environmental toxins. Um The food is becoming

more expensive, harder to find harder, harder to get into kids. So there's a lot of stress coming in the body and at the same time um I'm seeing this general erosion of stress tolerance in kids. Um and that's the piece that I don't think enough people are talking about. How do we actually boost our stress tolerance.

What are the mechanisms in our bodies that help us tolerate stress. And when we look at that we realize that they all are driven by nutrients. Like if you have nutritional breakdown those systems, they don't work well your detox doesn't work well your digestion doesn't work well your methylation doesn't work with all these all these these processes don't work well they run on nutrients.

So so there's a two pronged approach to reduce the stressors improve the stress tolerance by deeply nourishing and then you get a more resilient kid. Yeah. When we talk about stress like this is this is so much of my work as well is how do we move that line of overwhelm where something has become a stress but it's overwhelmed our system and now become overwhelming and that's really where it has the long lasting effect impact on our whole biology system as it's trying to meet this stress that has completely overwhelmed its ability to respond.

And so I love how you describe Brazilians as we're not only talking about meeting and responding to current stressors. We're talking about increasing the capacity to even handle more stress and not let it overwhelm the system not let it become overwhelming and cross that line where there's going to where we have to start calling it trauma because of the lasting impact that it has on the biology.

Yeah. And I think that window of tolerance. I mean there's gonna be, there's gonna be a tolerance level to stress. There's gonna be a point at which it's just you know, past capacity, right? But that window of tolerance I think is getting smaller and this is we've talked about that this a lot and and I see this happening in kids or you know, more and more kids can't um you know, yes, we're putting more and more pressures on them. That's the thing, that is a real thing. We need to take a look at.

Um but there is this produced window of tolerance that they can't handle as much stress that um they should be able to handle in a lot of cases. And and when we look at that subgroup of people, you know, we can we can look we can find some nutritional issues there for why that window of tolerance is lower than it might be for other people. So that's where I like to work.

Stress Tolerance, Window of Tolerance, and Nervous System Load

I like to work with those, those guys who are just no parents will usually find me when they're noticing. Like, I don't think this is right, Like I don't think these overblown reactions are normal.

I don't think, you know, this not being able to settle down and sit and focus and or you know, whatever, whatever it might be. Um the hitting, the aggression, the outlast these responses and kids are all.

And that's the one thing to realize that kids are always responding. There's something's coming in, their master responders. So when they, when people start to get curious when parents start to get curious to be like, what are they responding to? Um you know we can see there either responding to something or they're responding to the absence of something and um and we can we can fill those holes. Yeah. And I love how our work aligns so perfectly right. Because what what we've done is basically taking something that is traditionally been seen as psychological, right? Something like resilience, something like behaviors and mood and or maybe that it's been seen just as a simple chemistry imbalance in the brain and you take this medication and then it's solved and and what we've been able to look at is no, like so much of this is their biology at the cellular level and that is where the root cause of this is at.

It's not just that they're thinking is off. It's not just that you know, they have a simple chemical imbalance that can be fixed with one thing like their whole system, their whole cellular system needs this support because they either have too much coming at them and and that can be emotional but that can also be physical toxins or stuff that you've mentioned already in the environment or they can have too little of something. They've got nutritional deficiencies, They've got some deficiencies where they've got too little of biological resources and that's the reason for them reacting the way they are in their environment because they don't they don't feel like they've got what they

need to be able, you know, a certain level. Can I give you just a quick example?

Because I mean like at a certain level, this is like this is intuitive because because we've all felt, you know what it feels like to, you know, like not have eaten, you forgot breakfast, you had three cups of coffee and it's like two o'clock and you haven't eaten anything. Like we've all felt that like you don't feel good, you feel funny in your brain, you feel jittery um you know, or you know, if you Yeah, so, so that's just like a quick example and what that is is blood sugar, right? That's your blood sugar mechanisms trying to keep you safe, you're getting an adrenaline surge to keep you from passing out um and your nervous system is on high and you're probably gonna snap at your kids and you're probably gonna do a terrible job at whatever task you have been tasked with for work or whatever, you probably can't focus. So, so all this to say it's like on on the one hand, we have all experienced the brain body connection, we have all experienced what it feels like to be um you know, have a stressor put on us without having a low stress tolerance and and this is the same thing that we're talking about, what what you and I think are saying is that is that that's a small example, but that's what that's it, like that's what we're seeing on a mass scale and it and it turns into a whole bunch of symptoms. Um but essentially that's it.

It's you got the stressor and you don't have the resources to manage it. And so you respond in some way. It's usually not a positive way. Right? I mean, it's gonna be a stress response, right? It's going to be in some way and not only a reaction, but an overreaction because of the stress and survival response exactly.

Which is which is, you know what your nervous system does. It keeps you safe, right? And this is something that I've learned from you. It's like your nervous system is working great.

Like good check your nervous system is good because that's what it does. It keeps you safe and it keeps it what protects you well. But in doing that it also keeps you, you know in patterns.

So and it needs and it's very hungry. The nervous system very hungry. Yeah. I mean, it takes a lot of energy. And so if we don't have the resources, the biological resources, if we have anything that's impacting our ability to provide all the energy that our nervous system needs in order to keep us alive, both in the subconscious, you know, things like our breath and our heart beating but then also with the daily, so stress of work and chores and life. Yeah, we're going to see that in reactions and Overreactions or even shutting down and anxiety, all kinds of stuff like the, there's no end to the list of what it can look like for each person, depending on their specific situation. Yeah. And just one little piece of that too, is that usually when you say energy as it pertains to food, people start to think about calories to, because that's what unit of energy is when it, when you talk about food. Um but we got to go deeper than that and say it's actually nutrients, it's actually vitamins and minerals and fatty acids and glucose molecules. It's actually the, it's actually a step deeper than just calories. Those are the things that are really creating energy, right? So that was one of the things that I wanted you to speak more on actually, is when we're talking about nutrition, are we just talking about food or what, what are all the nutritional pieces that you have seen, important in truly nourishing the cells and building their resilience?

Yeah, big question because I, so, you know, I'm a nutritionist, I kind of identify as a nutritionist, but I somehow, I like the word nourishment better than the word nutrition.

I think it's more accurate when we think about what our, what our kids need, they don't really need. I mean they do need nutrition, but a broader word is nourishment. They need nourishment.

And as parents, we nourish our kids in many different ways and the nervous system requires all those, all those different types of nourishment. So, I, I think of nourishment as being food obviously.

So what they eat, but also and what they drink, like hydration is a part of that too, but also how they're sleeping, how they're moving, how they're thinking, and what their self talk is, what they're, you know, what the loop is that's going on in their brain, um and also their sense of connection and safety and their attachment.

All of those things are nourishment. And so sometimes when I'm working with a family and they have, you know, they come to me for nutritional advice, We don't start with nutrition, we start with nourishment, we start with, we don't, we don't let me let me let me break that down and just say like, we don't start with what they're eating, we

might start with how they're eating.

Are they eating meals together? Are they fighting about food all the time? Maybe we'll start with sleeping, maybe we'll start with getting more water into them.

Um so, exactly, all of those things are really nourishing, um and and this piece of connection to is really important because I realized, you know what I'm working with. I work, I realized working with a lot of parents that dealing changing the nutrition of a child is a very unique beast and it's, and we have to think about it differently.

It's very different from changing your own diet or trying to get your parents. I mean trying to get your parents to eat better. Like that's the whole candle wax too.

But when you're dealing with a child, you have to, I think because all of my work is very much rooted in attachment theory. Um, I think we have to talk about food through that lens.

I I know we've talked about this to you would agree that, you know, the food has to be more helpful than stressful and if changing your child's diet is becoming, you know, battles, restriction, fear, anger and conflict. It's it's doing more harm than good.

Yes, you you do need to consider doesn't mean like give your child anything they want to eat. You do need to consider their nutrition, but you have to do so.

Um or I encourage parents to do so in a way that also fosters connection because food can I have seen both, right. I've seen food issues tear families apart and just become terribly stressful. And I've also seen the opposite where food can become a uniting factor and a nourishing factor. Um, and then then we're onto something Well.

Nourishment Beyond Food: Sleep, Hydration, Connection, and Attachment

And as you're talking, what makes makes me think of that attachment piece of course, right. And our initial context around food and nourishment was, I mean, hopefully right being breastfed.

And it's this time where there is this emotional nourishment at the same time as nutrition nourishment and and that type of connection between food and emotional nourishment. We want to continue because that's when our digestive system is going to be working at its best when we're eating at a time when we are connected and calm and laughing and sharing rather than in a time where we're rushing, we're stressed, we're distracted, we're doing something else rather than being able to keep those two types of nourishment connected. Yeah. And if people are, if people are listening to this going, oh yeah, that would be lovely.

But it's just not realistic, you know, it's important because I have this conversation a lot in my, in my coaching group and and just with parents all the time to, to just remember that we don't live in a health promoting kind of world, right? It's like we've lost a lot when it comes to healthy connecting, healthy eating healthy living, healthy moving.

It takes it takes a lot of conscious effort to bring those things into your family because they're not the default norm. They used to be like, maybe I don't even know, but you know, it's not the default, it's not the norm anymore. Um, so we need to actually think about it.

So what I encourage parents always to do is first of all recognize that things are not the way you want them to be, if that's the case and then um, have a conversation with your parenting partner if they're in the picture and talk about?

Like, what is it that you actually want for the health of your family, What does it look like, what does it feel like? And then um and then really just sort of pulling that apart and examining what pieces are not present that need to be president.

And um it takes some effort. It's not, it's it's intuitive when you stop and think about it, but a lot of us don't have the

space and the time unless we consciously make it to like stop, hold the presses like wait, hang on, we need to change course here. So if you're just listening to this feeling like it's kind of overwhelming and out of reach, just recognize that we never learned about nutrition, we never do as parents. It's like you have this beautiful baby and you're like, oh this is all great and exciting and then you run into some kind of problem and then, you know, you have all these choices to make and you have no idea and then all of a sudden there's a problem, it's like you go on the treadmill, right, you get on the treadmill and you're just like climbing.

Um So yeah, so just, you know, we gotta cut ourselves some slack and just recognize that yes, this is important. Yes, it's not weird, but you don't know it if you don't write.

So how would a parent know if the nourishment, the nutrition piece of the nourishment is not actually helping or optimizing their child's biology and for me like this conversation is so important because it was not until I was into my thirties that I recognized that how I was eating and how I was brought up to eat everything that I had been told was healthy and I thought, and truly believe that this was the healthy way to be eating, that. It was not what was actually helping my body and it was actually causing a lot of inflammation.

And for me to struggle against my biology. And I wish that I would have known this many years before and I wish that this would have been something that my parents could have seen. Like how I was struggling and been like, oh, maybe we should look into the diet and see what effect this is having on, on her energy, on mood. What?

So how would a parent know if maybe the, how their child is eating is actually not helping them. Maybe they have a food sensitivity or allergy or whatever it is, right? There's many different options.

How would a parent know that? I think the same way you knew it. I mean, you it sounds like you knew it because you weren't feeling well, is that the case? You weren't feeling?

Well, maybe a diagnosis popped up? Um, something, you know, you work on this trajectory and then you kind of went on this trajectory and any time that happens, this is worth considering, because, you know, nutrients, feed yourselves and cells create tissues create organs create systems.

So if there's a system breakdown somewhere and that can, you know, from a nervous system perspective, which is what I typically work with. Um you know, breakdown in the nervous system looks like, but a poor ability to respond to stress and expectation, um moodiness and all that stuff.

So um whether or not there's a diagnosis right? There might be a diagnosis, diagnosis just means it's it's been progressed to a point where it fits a category.

Um But most parents can sense if they really sort of stop and take notice that something is amiss. And I I tend to I tend to focus parents in on three areas which is the skin, the bowels and the behavior.

Um You know, it can it can pop up anywhere. I mean, any any problem. There can be a nutrition relationship, but those are the three areas that I see most of.

If you've got a kid who has weird stuff going on with their skin diagnosis or not. So, you know, maybe it's just super itchy or maybe it's getting rashes all the time.

Or maybe it's when I see a lot is um an overblown response to um lights and things like that. That's just like out of, I would have normal abnormal. Um So skin and then of course it could could progress into things like eczema or psoriasis or something.

Um And then the bowels like constipation is not is not healthy, it's normal, But pooping less than 1-2 times a day is not uh not healthy for the body. So constipation or diarrhea, the other side of things, or just pain bloat, um Nausea, um refusing certain foods because they make them feel Yucky. They're not digesting them all.

And then the third of meals tired after meals, yeah. Is another one. Um Weird weight gain or weight loss. That just

doesn't seem right to you based on what they're eating.

Um And then, and then with the behavior, I mean, that's a huge category. That is anything from how they're learning how their their moods, their their sleep. I put in there as well, um you know, their responses. So basically everything right?

Like, I think I really try to go underneath diagnosis and I love working with parents who don't have a problem yet. They just want to optimize the health of the body. And it's the exact same process that I take them through whether they have a diagnosis or they are just sort of kind of think something is starting to be amiss.

Um or they don't have any problem, but they have issues in their family or their just starting their family and they want to get ahead of this, the same process because the body needs the same things that you might tweak the, you know, individual supplement plans and such, maybe, you know, maybe there's food intolerances that there's little tweaks to make.

Signs a Child May Need Nutritional Support

Um But it's the same the same things that we that we explore, right? And when we look at how much food we intake every day, if there's something off, it's going to cause problems, it's going to show up in different areas in our system because it's not like it's something that we do maybe once a week, right? Like we're eating at least three times a day.

So there there's a lot of room for problems which again, like if there's problems it's going to show up and parents who are aware of any issues, nutrition is a good place to start.

Even if you don't know for sure if there is anything wrong with the nutrition, it's a great place to start. I mean, I I wish, I wish it was in parenting classes. I wish, you know, I knew this before I got pregnant. Um because like I say like it's just not integrated. It used to be sort of an oral tradition of, you know passed down and we just don't have that anymore.

So we need to consciously seek it out. Um But nutrition, I mean fundamentally if people leave here with like one little nugget, it's that nutrition drives every every function in the body, every single function of the body requires a steady supply of nutrients, all of them. There's not like one specific one you need, like you need all of them that's that's and so I break that down actually into eight categories, which I'll just tell you what they are.

So people have them on their radar. So there's the fats, minerals and proteins which often get the stage and then there's the vitamins and minerals. Did I say? Yeah, that's but that's fats, proteins and carbohydrates. Did I say that right?

Fat protein, carbohydrates and then there's the vitamins and minerals which sometimes get a little bit of attention. But then there's the phyto nutrients, the plant chemicals, there's the bacteria and there's the enzymes that we also get from food.

Uh and those don't get talked about very much unless you really dig for it. Um but they're very, they have a lot, they have a very profound effect on the body.

So we need all of them. And luckily they're beautifully packaged in real whole foods. So we don't actually have to think about the plate as a series of, you know, nutrient categories.

And I don't, I don't suggest that we do. But at the start it's helpful to break it down and be like, well is everything represented here, what we need.

And it also helps to be able to teach our kids that to be like what's missing on the plate guys. So they can start to have that language and I know that sometimes you talk to parents about it would be a good idea to get them tested for certain deficiencies or different things like methylation.

Can you tell me a little bit more about that and what is it that you see that makes you think, hey, maybe this would be a good time or a good situation in which testing would be helpful to us to really target their nutritional plan.

Yeah, good question. So I usually bring that in at a later stage because typically when people will, you know, it'll depend on where people are at when they come in to my world. But usually where I start them off is nourishment. Do you know what these eight categories are?

Do you know how to find them? Do you feel relatively confident that your child's eating them every day? Do you need more recipes? And we can we get people, can we get them eating together?

Are they super picky? Like that's a whole area to work in. Can you get these foods into your child? And in some cases, you know, we've got super picky eaters, we have to figure out why because every behavior has a root and picky eating is a behavior. Um and sometimes we need, we need supplements in there just to make sure those nutritional bases are covered because for whatever reason we can't get food in.

Um So we might bring in some foundational supplements there. Uh and then, but I don't suggest. Usually usually we want that in place first and then doing some testing if things if the symptoms and the issues that we're worried about, don't level out when we flood the body with with nutrients because sometimes they do, sometimes they do. Sometimes it was like just a blood sugar issue, right? And we added more fat and more protein and more fiber. And we kind of reduce shuffled the carbohydrates a little bit. So they didn't have these peaks and valleys and we have a different kid, they're sleeping better, they're focusing better, they're responding to stress better. And it's like okay we don't need to do further testing on that, right? We we found the diet.

So sometimes that's the case. If it if it doesn't settle out then we might do some some testing to see. And I call in my medical partners to do that And and you know, get more, you know, specific to the biochemical imbalances.

That's interesting Jessica because we have a very similar approach and I didn't even know it because that's actually the exact same thing that I do when I'm working with a family who has a child with either attachment trauma or insecure attachment.

And we're working to repair that attachment and build that internal sense of security and safety. I don't do the testing for the biochemical imbalances until at least a month or six weeks into the program first.

I want to establish that connection. So we're walking the parent through all the different dynamics of the relationship, changing those dynamics, doing the very intentional attachment parenting and then I see where the new baseline is at because their nervous system is going to be going through a lot of changes during that time.

And I want to see the new baseline before I bring in the biochemical testing and any supplements that we think we might want to add. So it's interesting that you very much do a similar approach where you're working with the bigger picture. First of the nutrition piece, the macronutrients, all of all of the big picture stuff.

And then you see where the baseline is at. And if we're still stuck in some area then that's when you encourage the testing, whether it be for the methylation, the pira luria, the copper excess zinc deficiency, all of those can play a very important role. Yeah, see that is absolutely true.

It's usually like it's usually like a month or two in where and we're like okay let's do some testing um with the with the caveat that sometimes if a family is really in crisis and like the kid is just totally off the wall and like unmanageable and things are super stressful. We might do some testing first or we might try some amino acids. Like some some really targeted.

Um I would call them band AIDS, they're not really band aids but some some real targeted things to see if we can't just buy ourselves a little bit of space and calm and then go and deal you know with the because at that point like the parent doesn't have any bandwidth, doesn't have any energy just managing their kids.

They need some breathing space, they need something like heavy hair. Right? So yeah, you know, we might want

to do some some some testing or some some targeted nutrient therapy first and then go back.

Right? But we have to go into that nourishment piece. That's where I that's where I find, you know, people sometimes get stuck. It's like oh we found tryptophan or oh we found you know something that gaba or something like that is okay. Problem solved.

It's like no not problem solved. Like you found you found a breach a pressure valve. But now let's go back and and see if we can't help the body make those things and make the serotonin not need the trip to fan and things like that. So why why is that a pressure valve?

Right? Like it doesn't, it doesn't just end there. We keep asking the question of well why why is that? Why is that? They're a deficiency. Yeah.

Key Nutrients, Testing, and Targeted Support

Always that that's the question why is this happening? Why can't the body do this itself and what's it missing and right or you know too much stress? Not enough stress tolerance. Like those are the two prongs.

How can we better balance that out. We go back and forth between the two, the two prongs to try to level the field, so can you share with us Jessica some of the examples that you've seen in families that you've worked with kids that you've worked with, what difference the nutrition piece has made, Like, how how do you know by evidence that this is actually making a difference in optimizing their biology?

Well, there's a few different levels like my parents, I work with continue to surprise me with their with their stories and with um it's not, I mean it's not that surprising, but when you take something that you you've looked at in research and then it gets transposed into real life, it's very, very exciting, right?

Um And and it's not a little thing to say that sometimes the um sometimes the improvement or the results are in just the confidence of the parents to be able to talk about nutrition with their kids to be able to sort of um you know, take sort of an alpha role and that which translates into their attachment and just feel confident that their kids are well, nourished.

That's a big deal. Um and it has such a trickle down effect. So that's that's one thing I see a lot of parents just sort of grow into their mother and usually it's a mother, not always, but it's a 95% of the time it's mother's um grow into that confidence grow into that confident nurturer role um is really exciting transformation to see. Um and then on the kids side, Amazing things. I mean, I had a kid who was 12 years old, never slept a night on his own ever in his life and uh never, not like wouldn't sleep on his own but also wouldn't sleep through the night was always waking up um and that was one of the cases of just like this family needs a pressure valve, oh my goodness. Um and we got him on some trip to fan, we got him on some V six, we got him on some um Gaba Um and he started sleeping through the night and so at that point he was 12 years old, like that's a long time for the parents to be like, they must have been exhausted, exhausted, exhausted and he was exhausted, right? He's going into puberty, like that's an intensive energy time, right?

Um So so that was exciting and then, and so then then all of a sudden it's like okay, mom had more bandwidth to like focus on the diet and like with a superstar with the nourishment stuff and started creating all these tools for her kids to learn and get them cooking and all of this stuff. So, so that's just sort of a a little, a little story and again the question to be like, well why does he need tryptophan, why does he need Gaba? You know?

And um that family ended up doing a paleo kind of modified paleo diet gluten was a big deal for them, some of the beans were causing a lot of digestive distress.

Um So we, you know, another layer deeper, like constipation started going, anxiety started going um we're still we're still getting, getting there, but that's sort of, you know, some of the some of the kind of uh kind of things we can see. It's like just finding those biochemical um stumbling blocks. I was gonna say holes but they're not really holds, they're just like speed bumps, you know, bigger than others.

Yeah. Yeah. Um and giving the body what it needs in order to function well. Yeah. And I love that we can be so targeted about it right? Where we can look at what's going on sometimes even just like you do based on their symptoms and have a very good idea of what things we can be very intentional and targeted about.

That will make a big difference in the short term. While we figure everything else out and ask those deeper questions of, okay, this is we can we call it just a symptom what is the deeper root cause of this and how do we give the body what it needs in order to do this on its own?

Like it's supposed to. But I love that, right? Like there's the big picture, but then we can also be very targeted and very intentional and make some big shifts happen relatively quickly.

Yeah. Yeah. And that that sometimes, you know that requires a conversation with a doctor who knows what they're doing in terms of nutrient therapy and and targeted tests and stuff because you don't really want to mess around with biochemistry without really knowing what you're after. So there are some broad strokes things like we can we can always bring down in information, we can always nourish the cells, We can do all of that stuff with food and some sort of broad, broad based supplements. Um but when it gets down to those really, really specific targeted even amino acids are fairly safe to try because if something weird happens, you stop them and they don't accumulate in the body.

So um Yeah, so that that's something that we can do without testing. Um but there are so many levels to go with. Exactly, there's so many levels. And what's coming to my mind right now is even just being able to work with someone to do the experimenting with their diet because for many people, they do have a problem with wheat, maybe it's not even gluten, it's just the bigger category of wheat.

And they haven't known that that's a problem because they've always eaten that. So it's always been in their system, that's their normal, they wouldn't even think that that's a problem or for other people it is it's more the beans and the lentils and those types of things that for their system is it's causing problems for other people, it's not.

And then even with the fruit stuff there's a lot of people who for lack of enzymes are having a hard time breaking down fruit, those sucrose and so they go and they have what they think is a healthy Meal with fruit and carbohydrates and then 30 minutes later they are struggling with fatigue and are really tired and need to go take a nap.

And so it's it's these it's very individualized and yet there are some some big picture things that people can start to do to just experiment around in a safe way to see what would be an optimal diet for their body. Yeah. Yeah and this is why it hasn't made its way into you know doctors office protocols, right? Because we can't say oh you know nancy mom nancy like your your if your kid has a D. H. D.

Put them on this diet we will never get to that point because it's way too individualized. Um And so you know back your question earlier which was like how do you know whether you should be attending to diet? You know there is no one prescription for what diet is good. And so if you if people listening have fallen into that um I don't I don't know what to call it.

It's not a trap. It's just a way of thinking of being like oh vegan is best or vegetarian is best or paleo is best or fruit terrian is best or you know X.

Y. Z. Whatever diet is the healthiest way to live. Just check yourself because because ultimately what's right for you and what's right for your child is going to be the way of eating that makes them feel and function their best.

So symptoms are coming up showing you that they're not feeling or functioning their best, take a look at what they're eating. Um It's a great place to start and it will depend on their genetics and it will also depend on what environmental insults they've had in their lifetime whether infections, viruses like that changes everything.

And so it's not it's not the same for everyone, it's not gonna be the same for all of your Children, right? Every child

may have their own unique way that they need their diet optimized in order for their biology to be optimized because they have different stress stressors. Exactly. Yeah.

So given that this is so individualized Jessica where would a parent even start if they wanted to optimize their child's biology through nutrition? And I would say whether or not they have a diagnosis right? Like you talked about this, where even if they don't have a diagnosis, but they just want to optimize their child's ability to handle life stress better and be set up for success.

Where would they start? So where they start is going to depend on a few things, but there are there are really four things to explore and people are going to find their answers through these four things um Are all of the nutrients coming in like like the eight things we talked about, Are they coming in on a regular basis?

Um Are they eating something that's irritating them? And that might require some testing? Or there might be other irritants like an infection you mentioned or molds or something like that, that's a bigger kettle of wax but it is something to explore.

Um Are they eating for good blood sugar stability or is there blood sugar going up and down up and down? And usually you can tell these kids kids with very unstable blood sugar um They're often terrible sleepers waking up at night, they're often very grumpy towards the end of the day.

Real-Life Results and Practical Breakfast Strategies

They're often hungry all the time. Um What else do I see? There is often not hungry in the morning. Um So those are some sort of red flags to look out for.

So are they eating for blood sugar stability? And they're also often sugar addicts, carb addicts or sugar addicts right there responding right? They're really smart, their little bodies right?

They're doing they're keeping them safe so that blood sugar and then the last one is got are they you know you have to explore what's going on in the gut so you're gonna find your answers in those, in those um somewhere in those four things and if you if you know how to how to explore those things? just start with whatever is easiest to start with, What do you, what do you know, passed out of those things.

A lot of parents say they know no, they know about nutrition, they know about nutrients and where to find them. They just need a little bit of help getting them on the table or getting them in their kids or whatever, right? Um If that's the easiest place to start, then start there, if uh you know, constipation has been an issue for years, maybe that's where you where you start. Um But the blood sugar one is usually a pretty uh pretty not, I wouldn't say simple but pretty straightforward fix, which is get more fiber into them, more healthy fats into them.

A good solid breakfast that has that's lower in carbohydrate and higher in fat and protein and fiber is gonna help. Um easier said than done. I know a lot of people are like, oh my god, they just won't need anything other than cereal.

I get it. Like we got to work through that. But if you can shift that up, you're gonna see some some improvements. I have seen huge changes in a kid's behavior and ability to be do well at school when we've changed their breakfast from a carbohydrate heavy breakfast to healthy fat and protein breakfast. So, so I guess that would be my next question, Jessica is, do you have like a sample breakfast for resilience for kids.

Yeah, sure. And it's often a starting point for me too. It's like I'm a big fan of the breakfast, milkshake, like big fan and I call it a milkshake, but it's not really a milkshake, I mean it's not like you're going to Mcdonald's or something, but but because it tastes like a milkshake and and here's the thing, here's just a little quick tip, I'll give the recipe and you guys can you can send it up to people if that's helpful. Um But so milkshakes or smoothies, you know, you can call it milkshake smoothie or ice cream depending on how thick you want to make it, right, that's the same thing.

But milkshakes are easier in the morning, so they're usually too high in sugar, right? They're usually packed with fruit carbohydrate. Um And that's not gonna help. So what we need to do with the breakfast milkshake is we need to make sure it has some fiber in there.

Um And my favorite sources of fiber are Jerusalem artichoke, which might be one that's new to some people, it's also called a sun choke. Um And when you know like people are like what the heck.

But when you know what to look for, you'll see it in grocery stores. It's a little root, it looks a little bit like ginger um It's a great form of uh of carbohydrate uh so that or if you can't find that um pureed pumpkin is also a great source of fiber. I tend to not put in things like flax seed because there can be gritty unless you have like a really really good blender.

Um So it's going to depend on your kid and how picky they are. But those two things really like blend into nothing. They don't have a lot of flavor and they don't have a lot of texture.

So those are helpful. And then um uh if you want to put protein in there you can get some um Sometimes I like putting soft boiled eggs in there because again it sounds weird but when you put them in a smoothie and you put some like cocoa powder in there, you can't even taste it. Or you can use protein powder if you want protein powder. Um You need some fat in there too.

So I like M. C. T. Oil for that. Really easy to digest fat that's used as energy. Um So I'll send I'll give the recipe t you can send that out but I'm a big fan of that and and for those of you who have really picky eaters who just want cereal or a bagel or whatever, you got to meet your kid where they're at right you can't just be like pull the rug out from under them and be like we're changing everything tomorrow because you're gonna get pushed back and remember you have to look at diet changes through the attachment.

So you can't freak them out too much. You can take your alpha role and be like, guys, we're up leveling our health, all of us, we're going to do this because this is what our bodies need. You can feel better and we're gonna feel better.

Yeah. Um So, if you have that kid who, like, is really doing push back, just give them a little bit of milkshake on the side, give them their cereal or whatever they're used to, whatever's familiar.

Plus this. So, you're you're adding, right? I always want to add stuff before I start taking stuff away. So that's the place to start that. I love it. Yeah. And I will definitely provide a link to the recipes that you share so that people can look at those.

And yeah, I mean, breakfast, whatever we're taking in, really sets the tone for our metabolism and our sugar levels for the day. And that's really where I was going wrong for most of my life, is starting off with a carbohydrate, heavy breakfast.

And then, not only was I struggling with energy, but then I was chasing my sugar levels for the whole day and it was exhausting. I would get home from work and be exhausted, not feel like going out and do anything else. And yet there was still several more hours of the day that I could have been living even more if I if I had my diet dialed in like, I do now. So yeah, difference, you know, there's two caveats to the, to the, to the breakfast thing because we harp on breakfast too. But I have had quite a few clients whose kids won't eat breakfast, like they're just hungry in the morning, or um they are well, or, or they have, or they're just addicted to carbohydrates and they will eat nothing other than something sugary in the morning.

So that's a real thing. And if that's happening to you, you're definitely not alone for people listening. I'd say the things to start with there are, it sounds weird, but sleep, if they're not, they're like, take a look at their sleep because typically these kids are terrible sleepers and that's partly a blood sugar scenario.

So if we can get them sleeping better, I have actually seen blood sugar and pickiness start to stabilize a little bit. So that might be a place that's still nourishment. It's just a different arm of nourishment.

Um and then the nausea and the, and the not hungry in the morning is often, we've talked about this too, is often a symptom of viral aurea, so that's something to get checked out, it's easy, easy to test test for.

Um and it's a fairly easy nutritional fix, but you do need, you know, a doctor who gets it and knows what to test for and knows what it is. Um, So, if your child all this to say if your child is complaining of like you know you know what to give them for breakfast but they just won't do it.

There's probably a reason why they won't do it. Um So just get curious before you start forcing the breakfast milkshake down their throat. Just get curious and ask why why they're saying what they're saying.

I know that I have parallel area from testing and I never even knew that I wasn't hungry in the morning because it was just this belief that I had that breakfast was the most important meal today and so I had to eat.

And so it wasn't until I actually did the testing that I'm like wait a second let me actually just fill this out. And sure enough like in the mornings I am not hungry and even taking my supplements for the peril area that hasn't changed much.

And what I've been able to do is yeah like I don't eat a substance for breakfast but I am definitely taking in the fat. I use a lot of M. C. T. Oil in the mornings so that I'm getting those calories in. I'm stabilizing my blood sugar levels without forcing myself to eat solid food that I'm not I'm not interested in in the mornings.

So that's been a helpful thing for me knowing that I've got the parallel area knowing that I've got this you know some blood sugar problems if I don't eat though and being able to yeah intentionally set myself up for success despite that.

That's so interesting because what it reflects to me is this this this change we've seen over the years to to individualized medicine right? Which is you used to be you know our mothers told us oh breakfast is the most important meal of the day, you have to have breakfast. I grew up with that as well.

Um And now what we're able to say is nourishment first thing in the morning it's important right? Which is which is a slightly different thing than your breakfast because breakfast could be a bagel and a waffle and a can of orange juice right? Like which is not a good breakfast better off without it. Um But what you just said is you know you need some M. C. T. Oil, you need some fat, you need some nourishment you need your supplements whatever but your body might not need a full breakfast it does need nourishment. So that's the distinction.

Good well Jessica we're out of time for today. I could talk with you all day long. I know this, we already know this but I want to thank you so much for being willing to come on and share your experience share your knowledge with our audience.

Thanks. It's been a real pleasure. It's such an important topic and if I you know could could leave with that one little nugget it's just remember that nutrients drive function and we think of nutrients as parents, we think of you know bones and teeth and you know that sort of thing.

But you know all of the functions that are going on in your kids are based on nutrition and if you don't know this stuff, it's you're not weird, you're not missing out, you're not in some kind of, you know, it's not your fault, it's just that it's not part of our our parenting manual.

Where's the where's the parenting manual? So yeah, but it is edible and it is doable. Exactly, no shame, no judgment. But yeah, let's let's uplevel the health of our family and especially our kids because their future really does depend on that.

Yeah. How they show up in the world, right? Like you're asking for examples, it's like I see kids show up differently in the world when they're well nourished and we've got their stress under control.

Um They and then they can do anything when they've got their health. They can do anything so really important for

for you to be having this summit and spreading this. Thank you and thank you, Thank you for joining us. Thank you for showing up for yourself and for your Children here and together. Let's work towards finding that next level of health and aliveness