Introduction and the Power of Connection

Welcome to this episode of the Reverse Alzheimer's Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Heather Sandison, and I'm delighted to introduce you to my friend Jason Prall.

He's a health educator, practitioner, author, filmmaker and a neighbor of mine. In 2018, his independent research and experience as a practitioner led him to create the Human Longevity Project, a nine part film series that uncovers the true nature of chronic disease in our modern world.

He's currently working on his next film series that explores ancient methods of healing, mind, body and soul from indigenous cultures around the world.

He's recently released his new book titled Beyond Longevity A Proven Plan for Healing Faster, Feeling Better and Thriving at Any Age. Jason, welcome. Thanks.

I love that you threw in that I'm your neighbor as like a qualification here. So this is. I feel good about that. Well, I feel so lucky. We have facilities and brick and mortar places right around the corner from each other.

And I had the privilege of checking yours out. Recently you've been to mine. And I think it's just having that camaraderie and that collegiality that, you know, so much is.

I think we've lost in the digital age where everything's on Zoom. Like I've met you in person, which I can't say about everyone on the summit. And there's a different level of connection and maybe we can even, like dive into as we talk about longevity, maybe we even start there, like talk about the value of connection.

I love this and I think we just kind of wandered in. Here is an unexpected, but it's so fitting to what I think we're talking about in terms of brain health and longevity.

It is the number one factor, I believe, and research has kind of implicated this that connection and feeling connected, feeling connected to others, to something greater to the self, to pets, to the earth.

There's just there's this idea of connection and this feeling of connection. Right. It's an embodied recognition of connection. And that is unbelievable for brain health.

It's unbelievable for our mental faculties to be able to maintain our memory, to be able to maintain our sanity, to to to not get depressed and not get anxious.

Right. There's there's this something so inherent about connection that when we are able to establish it, of course, when we're young, supercritical in the developmental process, and then be able to maintain that and have that as we get older is unbelievably critical.

And and you you said it when I actually moved down to this North County, San Diego area where we're at, I would actually get asked a lot like, hey, I'm looking for a practitioner or a neurologist or a chiropractor or such and such.

And I'm like, I'm sorry, I know about 50 people online around the world. You know, to help you, but I don't know anybody here. And that always kind of disappointed me.

And that's something just now establishing a brick and mortar outside of my online presence in the community has has created this opportunity to build this web of connections again.

And it feels so good. And I can just speak for my my personal experience here to be able to have this network to

both rely on and also to support, because that's the other part of connection, not only to receive the support, be able to give support, and when we're able to offer support and and that can look like a lot of different things, but be able to offer that support, it's nourishing to us.

Right? So there's so, so much to be gained from that. And when we did the Human Longevity Project and went to, you know, Ikaria, Greece and Sardinia, Italy, and these kind of the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica and Okinawa, the longevity regions of those places, they weren't necessarily everywhere.

Right. Sardinia is a big island. Right. So we were in the city of Cagliari where that airplanes land in the city is we had to go up into the mountainous regions, into these little villages.

And that's where you find like the heart of community. And it was so important for their survival, right? So it became kind of a part of the way that they lived and in that it supported this idea of being healthy as they age.

So it's it's such an important thing.

Circadian Rhythm, Light, and Brain Health

And you said it like as we have become more self-reliant, as the tools that we have at our fingertips to be able to to to be self-sufficient, are there we've kind of forgotten that, that it's still a necessity, even though we can survive kind of on our own, more or less.

It's not the optimal way to thrive. Right. And so it's just to remember that there's something beyond this idea of using technology and and connecting through online media that that, I think really benefits us as we get older, even into the elderly care facilities.

Like, I mean, to have people that you can establish friendships like I remember when my grandmother went to an elderly care facility, it wasn't the greatest, but there was an aspect where she kind of was moving into the dorms again. Right.

And it was like the coolest thing to watch because it was just her in my grandfather. And after he passed, she was kind of lonely. And now she has like friends and stories and all these things.

And I was just like, it's the coolest thing to watch. People checking up on you. Yeah. So I want to brag for you for a minute that you were out learning from centenarians in the blue zones before it, back before it was cool, but like before it was a Netflix special.

You had traveled to these blue zones, including you know, what comes up for me is Loma Linda, which is just here in Southern California, and it's the Seventh Day Adventist community.

And it is community you mentioned and we alluded to the digital world being something that makes us isolate a bit more and not connect in person, but aging itself, you know, losing your confidence, driving, potentially losing your driver's license, having it take more effort or energy to get out to the card game or feeling tired in the evenings or not as confident going out after dark.

Those kinds of things can make it easier to isolate. And so I think both of us are messages like make the effort, go out, make those your friends wherever you are, make sure that you're you're making those connections.

Yeah. And one of the things I see, too, as people get older and I've seen it many, many times, and I'm sure it's not the case for everyone, but it's such a pattern that I recognize, which is that and there's this idea of I don't want to be a burden, right?

So once people get into their seventies, eighties, nineties, maybe even beyond, there's the idea that I'm a burden on my family and I'm a burden on other people because they need help.

And so that mentality creates, again, that more of that cocooning where it's like you're hiding away in this cave and that is deleterious. Right? And then the ironic part is that if you want to think about in terms of being a burden, then you actually become more of a burden, right?

So the way to not burden, the way to actually be more self-sufficient is to ask for help. Right. It's kind of ironic. And so to be able to have that support and to feel safe in that support will actually create less of a neediness as you age.

But but as we age, we all need support, like we're going to need support at some point. And so I just kind of want to point that out that if you feel that way, then it's like, how do we shift that right?

And it may take some work, right? Because some family members may actually see you as a burden. That's that's that's that's kind of rough. And so that's on them to to fix to you.

But but wherever we can go to be able to find community, to find support, to feel connected, that's going to ultimately, you know, benefit us in the long run.

Hugely Well, I know that we have an agenda for what we do want to talk about in terms of circadian rhythm and light and sleep patterns and, you know, creating community with people who are on the same patterns and rhythms as you as also important.

So talks through light exposure. These are we think about supplements and nutrients and foods and exercise all the time but light and sleep make and certainly how light affects sleep.

These make massive impacts when it comes to brain health. So can you talk. Yeah works totally and this is this is an area on circadian rhythms, circadian biology, chronobiology, as it might be termed in the research and literature.

But it kind of got popular in the biohacker community. Right. And that's great because it brought it to light a little bit. But I think this is such an important aspect of just fundamental human living that it doesn't have to get into biohacker territory to get there.

And so the idea that light is the fundamental source of nourishment for the entire planet is a key concept that that we must not forget. Right? It is.

It plays such an important part of our biology and our internal biology that it's ancient, it goes into every organism, has an aspect that is related to the life cycle.

Right. Whether it's plants, insects, fungi, you name it, does it matter? Everything is guided by the light. And so it's one of those aspects that we've we've been taught to fear because of skin cancer and on these other things, which that's a whole other mess that we would have to tackle.

But but it's really critical that we actually go into light right? And we get light exposure on our skin. There's a ton of important factors that that that are at work.

When we get light exposure to the skin, our skin is designed, so to speak. It is adapted to absorb light, right, to reflect light, to transform light into various things.

Right. And of course, we know about vitamin D, but it goes so much beyond that. Right? So the other thing that's not really talked about enough or that's understood enough is how light enters our eyes, sends an electrical signal to our suprachiasmatic nucleus our hypothalamus, our pituitary, and these among other brain regions, govern the function of our entire body.

Right. So if if we're worried about hormonal function, hormonal balance, light is going to play a central role in how your body utilizes and the rhythms of your hormones throughout, throughout your life.

Right. So it's not something that is for the biohackers, it's for the young. This is for every single person. And I've worked with so many people that have had chronic issues, and when they come to me, it's one of the fundamental things that we work on.

In other words, it's very difficult to heal when your circadian rhythm, when your late cycle biology is off. In fact, it's kind of impossible at best.

You're just going to be chasing your tail. So when we start to get that in alignment, then every other aspect of healing that we're trying to do starts to get so easy.

In fact, some of it just falls into place naturally. You don't need supplements, you don't need the hormone creams, you don't need the other things. Perhaps once you get this in place and I'll tell a story of a of a lady that I worked with have a number of immune issues.

She she had pain, she had excess weight, and she had poor sleep. And this was her main her main complaints. And she had a series of other things in. And the thing that we started with was like, so I told her in the morning, when you wake up first thing, go go outside and get light in your eyes for at least 15 to 20 minutes.

Take off your glasses if you can sit there and drink tea, whatever the case is. But ideally go for a walk and whether it's raining, whether it's snowing, it doesn't matter.

As long as the sun has risen, the light is coming through the clouds, it will your eyes will detect it. And when she she did this for probably three weeks and she came back and reported that she had lost 5 to £7 without changing her diet or trying anything new, her sleep has improved dramatically.

She was dreaming more. Her and her hair and her nails improved. So her nails were a little bit more rigid and brittle. They were growing faster. They were more supple.

Her hair was was, was, she said, healthier. And the craziest thing was, is that her eyesight improved. So she was not used to getting her eyes in exposed to the daylight.

The reality is, is our our our eye cells, every aspect of the cells in our eyes are just like the cells in the rest of our body. They can regenerate, they can repair, they can heal.

And one of the repair mechanisms is reliant on that light getting into our eyes. So doesn't mean we stare at the sunlight, but it means that the exposure to the outside world without sunglasses and sometimes even without our our other glasses, can actually improve.

And contacts that can improve our eyesight. And so she said, I can I can hold my phone at arm's length and see and read the text for the first time in 20 years.

And so these are the type of things that can happen when your biology starts to harmonize again. Right? And so oftentimes we focus on sleep and getting the sleep dialed in.

That's great. But what starts that process is getting exposure to the daylight in the morning that sets the time clock of your of your body so your body knows when just when it kickstart cortisol and all the other host of hormones that get turned on in the morning.

Right. Including ghrelin and neuropeptide Y and the hunger hormones and all these things are related to light cycles. How well we eat, right. The cravings that we have, all of that is related to some of these hormones that are related to light cycle.

So if we get that right, then the sleep gets better during the during the night. Right. So it's the most important part of sleep and of being healthy is tying your sort of sinking or yoking your biology to the daily life cycle so we can kind of pause there.

But it is it is such a critical aspect to health that if we don't get it right, everything else is going to suffer. And so we're exposed all sorts of light all day long screens and phones and computers and TVs and, you know, the lights, just incandescent lights and LEDs in our houses.

What type of effect does that have on our circadian rhythm and are there things that we can do about it? Yeah, it's actually really fascinating. Even right now, I've got some bright lights in the room.

These lights aren't nearly as bright. Right, just in terms of the capacity, the lumens that the sun is putting off, even on a cloudy day. Right. So the exposure to daylight is a very different thing than whatever light source we're getting inside. Right?

The spectrum of light is very different, right? When we used to use an incandescent bulbs, that was a little bit more of a balanced spectrum and it contained infrared and red and orange and the whole spectrum, even a little bit of UV.

Now, the LED lights and these they've been designed, engineered to save energy. So in other words, they're trying to put out the optimal light for for the visual aspect of what we can see in our household without wasting, quote, unquote, wasting energy.

And so the light source that's coming out, even though we may not be able to consciously detect the difference, it is a massive, massive difference in getting outside.

And so the other thing that's very interesting to think about is that our skin color and our eye color actually matter in this regard. So if you have really dark skin, if you're of African descent, Indian descent, these type of things you actually need you're required to get more sunlight on the skin and in the eyes in order to be optimally healthy than somebody like me or you.

Right. We have light eyes and light skin, so we don't need as much sunlight now. We also can't handle as much sunlight either. Right. So there's there's a balance to be had there.

But but it's an important factor now, I suspect and I don't I haven't seen a lot of research to this degree, but I suspect that the indoor artificial fake light will be slightly more, let's say, harmful to you and me than it would be to somebody with darker skin, darker eyes.

It again, hard to say, but the most important thing is to recognize that the indoor lighting is nowhere near the same as the outdoor lighting, and we are required to get that outdoor lighting.

It is so, so critical. Our eyes can detect the subtle differences in the the angle of the sun. Right. So that as the sun rises, right, some of the rays bounce back into space.

Right. The short rays, the UV rays, the blue, the purple get, get, bounce back into space. That's why the sunset is red. And you might see purple and pink on the clouds if that reflected back.

Right. So our eyes can detect this. And as the sun rises, our eyes are detecting these subtle shifts as the wavelengths start to shift, our brain is now determining, Oh, I know what time of day it is.

Let's turn on this. Let's turn off that. Right. In fact, I was looking at a study that looked at thyroid transcription factors in other words, kind of how the genes for thyroid function turn on and off.

And it was at 9 a.m. there was something like 700 transcription factors turned on and 500 turned off at 9 a.m. based on the light cycle. And then at 5 p.m.

it was something like 32 transcription factors and 48 transcription. So in other words, there was a massive shift in how the thyroid functions just based on the light cycle.

So if you're somebody with Hashimoto's, you're somebody with low T3, etc., etc.

Seasonal Changes, Sleep, and Practical Light Habits

, it may be due to not only just your sleep and how while you're sleeping but your light cycle. Are you getting attuned to the light cycle that you're in?

Right. So these are the type of things that honestly magic can unfold for some people when they get it right and all the other things that you're doing can start working.

You know, some you see this all the time. People are doing five or ten or 12 different therapies and they may all be actually very beneficial, but they'll say, Oh, this didn't work.

I tried that. It's not working, etc. Well, there may be something blocking it from working. In other words, it's a good therapy. The acupuncture you're doing is fantastic and it's being done the right way.

But if there's something else blocking the flow, blocking the ability for that, that to actually take hold, then you're just going to keep spinning your wheels at Bass Strait.

So this is oftentimes why something doesn't appear to be working, because there's something else blocking the natural function or the healthy function from taking hold.

Got it. So there's all these red light therapies and even blue light therapy for certain conditions. There are all these light therapies out there. But do you think they serve a purpose or should we really just be getting outside and using the sun?

I mean, they can, right? So they can serve a purpose. Right? I'm one of the things that we did. I was really stressed when we went to the various blue zones and around the world and studied longevity from the lens of the centenarians that lived in these other cultures.

The important thing that I tried to to to get across was that they lived that way. We don't really live that way anymore, and I don't think we're going back to that.

Right. So they grew up without refrigerators and without electricity. Right. Like they they lived an entirely different life and still do in a huge way today.

So we live in a modern world. So I think it's okay to some degree to accept what we're dealing with. We have our own unique challenges here that we're dealing with that they didn't have to deal with. Right?

So I grew up in Seattle. It gets very gray and very dark and very depressing for about four months straight. Right. So can you introduce some kind of blue light therapy to help you address the seasonal affective disorder?

Yeah, like that's that's that's a solution, right? The more natural way is actually to go outside, even in the rain, even in the cold. But people don't want to do it.

And I understand that I didn't want to do it, but their nature has an unbelievable way of balancing things. So one of the things that we notice from the research is places like Sweden, Norway, etc.

they have a massive shift, seasonal shift in autoimmune conditions. And and it's not explained by vitamin D alone. In other words, these conditions get worse in winter.

The autoimmune conditions and the immune related stuff gets worse in winter and gets better in summer. And that's because of the massive light difference in those very northern regions.

Now, if people were living like they used to, they like outside of these sort of modern boxes that are temperature

controlled all day long, then they would have been out in the cold, they would have been building fires.

So the cold actually has a benefit. It can actually correct some of these things. So and they're outside, right. And especially there when there's lots of snow.

If you've ever been outside on a snowy day, it's sometimes bright, even if the sun is not specifically shining. There's so much reflective light, right?

So nature has these unbelievably clever ways, so to speak, that we have been accustomed to. So if one is living in a more natural way that you don't get seasonal affective disorder, they're out in the cold, they're out getting this this light in their eyes, right?

So that cold therapy, this ice bath therapy that everybody's kind of talking about these days does serve a purpose when it comes to hormones, when it comes to mood, when it comes to, you know, all these things. Right.

So so all that to say that if you can live in a more natural way, that is the optimal way. It's not always the most fun. So, yes, you can bring in some of these blue light therapies, you know, infrared saunas and regular saunas, cold therapies.

These are all great ways actually to harmonize and to create a more resilient body and mind. Sorry. Sleep deprivation is one of the things that we know is a risk factor.

When it comes to dementia. Do you think that someone could use some of these practices associated with light exposure to help with something like insomnia or sleep deprivation?

Absolutely, no question. I think the number one thing in my opinion is, quote, it's it's it's sometimes difficult, especially we get all the to start to play in the cold.

But if we can I've seen it number of times that nervous system disorders all kinds of brain issues you just start taking some kind of cold bats or cold showers or you can you can even dunk your face in cold water.

Right. So there's so much that you can do to start engaging with this stuff. And then, of course, yeah, any kind of sauna is probably the most enjoyable.

It's probably the, I would say, one of the best investments somebody can make just because especially if you if you like the if you don't like the heat, then maybe not, but but the fact that you can sweat, the fact that you can detoxify chemicals and metals and all kinds of things that were that are huge when it comes to brain health.

Right. As well as everything else. It brings just a calmness and a peace. Right. So I'd say Sonos are fantastic. Really, really good for sleep. All right.

So one of the best things actually for sleep is cold. So you can do a little bit of cold before sleep, cold shower, even just a little, little small exposure.

If you're not if you're not really into the ice, that thing is very, very good for sleep. So and most people, they can play around with this stuff. It's also good for waking up.

So it's a little paradoxical in that sense. It's one of the first things I do is, is take a cold bath and a nice plunge in the morning and it wakes you up like crazy so actually helps kick start that that that waking response rate that cortisol response in the morning that wakes you up.

And that's really what we're looking for. We're looking to establish our rhythms again. Remember the body knows what to do. And it's not like we have to force ourselves to sleep or create sleep.

It's just we just have to remind our body of some of these rhythms and it will start to get back into a flow right. And

the cool thing about sleep is that once you start sleeping, there's this entrainment that happens.

You start getting in train to these rhythms, and now you start getting tired at the same time and you start waking up at the same time, right? So that becomes the key.

And of course, as we get older, our sleep patterns do tend to get disrupted, right? So it does require oftentimes a little bit more of a concerted effort to slow things down in the evening, maybe take a bath.

Right. Maybe do some light movement or, you know, yoga or breathwork is fantastic. Breathwork is really good, right? There's the four, seven, eight breath that you can do, which is a very common one.

Inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds and then exhale for eight. And that is a really, really good way to engage the parasympathetic, right?

So kind of what we're what I'm talking about here is engaging the sympathetic with the cold and even the heat and then engaging the parasympathetic right with the breath.

We're going to the sort of extremes. In other words, remembering, reminding the body what what a stress response should be in a healthy way and reminding the body what relaxation and what parasympathetic tone is all about.

Right. Most of the time, or caught in no man's land. In other words, we think we're resting. People can meditate and be stressed out internally on the brain and nervous system level.

So when we include some of these things like heat and cold look, things like breathwork, calming, breathwork, activating, breathwork the fire breath. Right?

And there's these type of things we're now influencing the nervous system, influencing the biology and reminding it how to get to the extremes and reminding it how to get back into rhythm.

So this these things are kind of creating anti fragility, a resilience factor that are unbelievably important. As we as we get older and the research is abundant when it comes to cold exposure, to sinus, to sunlight, to sleep, to breathwork, when it comes to detoxifying the brain, when it comes to balancing the nervous system, improving hormonal regulation, improving mood, this is these are all really, really key factors.

And sometimes it does requires us to get a little bit uncomfortable and get a little uncomfortable meditating, get a little bit uncomfortable doing breathwork, get a little bit uncomfortable in the bath, in the ice baths or the the cold shower or that or the sauna.

Right. And and what you find inevitably, as you engage these practices is that you start to enjoy, that you start to crave them. Right. It's it's this interesting thing that I don't know how to explain it, but there's there's like this deep memory of what it means to be healthy in the body, starts responding in the brain starts responding, and your mood starts responding.

And as this harmony takes hold, it's like it just becomes part of what you do. So incredible. And you describe this phenomenal nervous system response, that contrast between sympathetic and parasympathetic, that contrast hydrotherapy is what we called it in natural topic.

So we had a whole semester of learning one of these foundational to really, that's it? Yeah, it was really fun. We like got to try it all. We did it like we did it for each other.

There were we set up the ice baths and did cold plunges and went back and forth from the heat and cold and then prescribed this in our teaching clinic for years.

And really profound stuff happens when you get that contrast. And I think, yes, the nervous system is part of the mechanism at work, but the blood flow just circulation clean and selection is another huge component of this.

And as you mentioned, turning on the hormones and the signaling that's associated with that core medical factor, that that stretching of what's comfortable, then you get the these responses that actually build resilience over time.

It's such a fine three simple thing that you can do to promote health and longevity and brain function that doesn't require I mean, I've kind of set you up to be like, Oh yeah, buy this gadget.

Or My favorite is that gadget. And you're like, No, no, the sun, the cold, the heat. Like maybe a sauna, but pretty it kind of comes back to the basics, like the foundations of what our ancestors were exposed to.

So just a really fun and accessible way to, to think about this webinar. And just to kind of go off your feedback. The thing about this is that oftentimes when we're looking for these other solutions, whether it be a supplement or certain technology, it's it's it's hyper focused on trying to solve a problem or are some imbalance.

And that's fine. I'm a believer in those, too. The thing about when you get this circadian rhythm right, the thing about the cold and the heat, the thing about exercise and movement, this stuff impacts the body, it impacts the mind, it impacts the emotions.

It impacts your relationships. It impacts how you carry yourself through the day. Like that's the thing that's that's so different. When I got into the cold for the first time and I just bought my ice bath and I'm like, Oh, God, here we go.

I didn't like it. I didn't like it. I knew the science, I knew the stories, and I knew all that, but I didn't like it. And then there's an aspect of yourself that goes, You know what if I just sat in there and just dealt with it, you know, like, and just dealt with the cold.

So there's a mental hardening that takes place. There's a mental resilience that starts to happen. And you start to kind of becomes meditative, right?

And so breathwork can be the same way. A lot of people don't like breathing, don't know why. Like it's a very funny thing. Like, we don't like going into doing Breathwork because it's kind of like work, right?

And same thing with meditation. Meditation is a different kind of work, so to speak, of, of, of watching ourselves and allowing. Right. And so these things can be uncomfortable.

And so getting familiar with the uncomfortable territory comes with so many benefits. So for me, it's like I'm always looking for the biggest lever to pull right in, especially when I'm working with somebody.

It's like, What can we do to hit all these things? As opposed to targeting supplements with certain things or targeting a device and doing this and that?

Those are good too. But again, if we're not doing these big picture things, then we're missing such a big aspect of what we can do. So that's why I focus them in.

Look at it, they're not sexy. Most people don't want to do them. And I understand that the way to do it is just to tiptoe. Just go in and just start trying.

Once you start practicing these things, then it doesn't get so hard. You start realizing the benefits. My wife is a perfect example like she she was willing to get in there, but she was like, Oh gosh, this is this is not fun.

And even still, there's times I was like, I don't want to get in this ice bath. And I do it and I'm like, Oh my God, I'm so amazing. I'm so glad I got it right.

So there's just so many benefits. Like, that's that's why I think it's such an important thing to focus on. Well, full circle back to community. Find five people who do this already and hang out with them. Right.

We become the guy that the most time with. If there are people who we're here recording this early January. Right.

We all make these New Year's resolutions.

And when I think about my New Year's resolutions, I always go, Who's already doing that? And Can I like text them or reach out to them or befriend them somehow?

So that I can just, like, jump on their bandwagon? And that'll help me be more likely to just continue and make it a part of my practice, part of my life.

So if you can think of anyone who's that or even, you know, if you are somebody who's plugged into social media like follow a few of them so it stays top of mind so that you see it come up.

Oh, it's wintertime, right? I mentioned it's early January and it's cold and I don't want to go outside. It was 30 something degrees this morning. And also it's dark so early.

How do the seasonal changes play a role in circadian rhythm? And like while we're at it, do you want to talk about the bane of my existence? Daylight Savings Changes?

Can we put. I was I was just thinking about this morning I'm like when are we going to stop this act, this nonsense? Like it's it's been proposed in legislations.

There's certain states that don't, you know, play this game. What are we doing? Yeah, the data is quite clear, actually. When we when we change time zones, we see increased heart attacks, we see increased car accidents, we see learning, suffer with kids and more sports injuries.

Everything suffers by just changing the clock. One hour. It's unbelievable. And of course, this happens when we when we go forward, right. So when we when we move the clocks forward is when we lose an hour.

Right. That's when we see all these issues. When we we go back an hour, things actually improve. Right. So our limit. Getting exactly two to take it easy. Right.

So this is it's very clear in the research is it's it's it's not controversial whatsoever. Right so the thing with with with the seasonal shifts. Right.

Daily Routine, Resilience, and Where to Learn More

And it's it's it's really difficult again if you live in the, you know, the northern regions, you know, the Norway's the Great Britain is the Canada, you know, because your light cycles are vastly shifting.

Right. And so it's a little bit more difficult because we live in indoor life again. If we were living more of an outdoor life, it wouldn't be as impactful.

We would our bodies would naturally adjust theoretically again, if we were living that way or if we're in a modern world and still getting outside a lot, then our our bodies, our our, our eyes, everything's picking up to the seasonal shifts.

So it's going to start shifting and our bodies are going to start shifting. Right. There's research that has shown thyroid function actually decreases during the winter.

Right. That makes sense. Right. Like intuitively speaking, when you understand what the thyroid is kind of governing in terms of of metabolism, you slow things down.

We go into a bit of a hibernation mode. We put on a little extra weight like this is how we actually should be functioning. And theoretically, if we're living more of a indigenous type of lifestyle, we would slow down.

We wouldn't be expending as many calories, we would be more stationary. Right. So especially in those northern

climates. Now, of course, if we're living near the equator, that's a totally different story.

Now we have wet season, dry seasons, fruits to change like animal migration pattern, hey, these type of things, right? So in the northern climates, we do the best we can.

The key is to get as much daylight in your eyes as you can, right? So you get up. Before I remember getting up in Seattle at 5 a.m., way before the sunrises, you know, I drive to work and I would be in a basically a box for most of my day, and then I'd come home.

And by the time I'm driving home, it's already dark again, right? So I get the challenge here, especially in the winter, if you can go outside, if that's you, then go outside during your lunch hour and go for a walk, go to it, walk to the restaurant, whatever the case is, just get your eyes exposed to light because that signal is still there and it's required.

So, you know, during the winter, during the summer, it's like the key is just to get your eyes in particular exposed to the daylight as much as you can. Same thing with summer. The more sun you can get exposed to the higher vitamin D that the higher your melatonin production in night, the higher cortisol waking response in the morning.

Everything starts to function better when we get this light exposure right. It's imagine that we in fact, there's been studies where somebody has gone down in essentially a cave with no sunlight exposure.

And what happens is, is their sleeping pattern starts to drift. In other words, there's no cue for the body to say it's morning. So the body's naturally wandering.

Essentially, the rhythms are just completely off. He doesn't doesn't know when to sleep, he doesn't know when to eat. Everything just starts to get chaotic because that light is not cueing, it's not sinking.

The body's rhythm. Right? So we need that. It is a requirement for a body. So I'm sure I sound like a broken record, but this is what I would have to do with my clients every time.

Like you don't get like you must do this. So I would just, you know, I tell them what to do and they do it and that's great. And but it's so important.

And it and it runs so contrary to our our some of our patterns normally that it's difficult to break the habit and to get outside of our kind of way that we're operating.

So put this in super practical terms. If somebody wanted to have the ideal routine, what would it look like? And maybe people would be listening to this probably in the afternoon.

So like start with an evening routine. Sure. Yeah. Eating routine is essentially no matter what season it is for you as the sun is starting to set, that's a cue to your internal biology to slow things down.

So ideally we wouldn't be exercising after the sun goes down. Right? Imagine yourself living in a more native way, right? What would you be doing? Right.

You'd be eating dinner probably before the sun goes down. Imagine you didn't have lights to turn on. You only had fire and candles and these type of things.

You wouldn't be exercising. You wouldn't be running, you wouldn't be doing pushups. You would be starting to clean up the household. You'd be taking things, you know, getting ready for bed, putting the kids to bed, whatever the case, everything starts to just calm down y because you have to get up in the morning to tend to the craft, attend to the animals, to do the work for the day, etc..

And when does that start? Basically, when the sun comes up, the sun comes up or even just before, right? All the animals start waking or the birds start waking.

Life starts to come to life right. And so as that starting to happen, that's when we get up and we get up and we go outside and we tend to the to the crops, we tend to the animals, etc.

We build things, we do things right. We're starting to start our day. So it's the movement so, you know, at night or slowing things down and following the rhythm.

But we're preparing our minds. We're preparing our bodies for sleep, which means don't overstimulate. Ideally, we're not watching screens. Ideally we're not, you know, we're reducing our stimulus as much as we can.

Now in the Western world, we may need to add some things. We may need to do some meditation. We may need to take a bath and listen to some beautiful music.

We may need to read a book like a real book, not a Kindle, right? We may need to start doing some of these things to engage that restful parasympathetic activity.

And we can use essential oils and we can use even the lights and we can do all kinds of cool things to to assist that process. You know, orange lights are great.

And in fact, a lot of my clients, I would have them buy orange lights and put them in lamps so they can shut off the overhead lights, turn on the orange lamps, and they'd have this glow of orange and they're in their house and their neighbors thought they were crazy.

But then they started getting sleepy at 8:30 instead of 11:30. Right after some time, without that much exposure, without that much stimulus, the body starts gone.

And then that's what you're looking for, right? You're looking for the body to actually tell you, hey, we're tired and go to bed. And so as that's happening, you don't have to force a bedtime because the body's telling you it's time and then you're going to bed and you're sleeping.

Eventually you're going to sleep a little bit more thoroughly. It may take some time, right? This this this re synchronizing of the rhythm can take three weeks or more. So.

But ideally, we're going to be sleeping better, deeper, longer, and then we'll be waking up when the sun comes up, right? So ideally we'll be waking up just before the sun or with the sun and going outside and getting that sunlight.

in our eyes. Right. And when we start doing this, the digestion starts to improve in the middle of the day. So we get really good digestive capacity, we get really good cortisol spike in the morning.

So we're energized, we're ready to go. Our pain is decreased. We're not particularly hungry like all these signals that that are kind of dysfunctional in many of us.

But when we're not on our optimize circadian rhythm, you know, start to improve. So we're not craving the sweets and the caffeine and all the things in the morning just to get going.

Our bodies naturally doing these things, the hunger is a little bit blunted right? So so that's kind of how it starts to become. And we, we eat our big meal during the day are most of our exercise should be in the middle of the day.

Ideally right now. Again, this is this goes contrary to our modern lifestyle. So if you can't do this, then that's understandable. I'm just kind of trying to paint the optimal of what we can do, right?

Yeah, I think that's perfect. What's ideal is I've heard the metaphor. It's like the horizon, right? We're never going to arrive there. But sometimes if we can shift just a few things like our light exposure before bed or what time we wake up and how we expose herself to sunlight, doing some breath work or doing some movement, then that may be enough.

Like our bodies have built in, designed to heal and be aligned with these rhythms. And so just a little nudge in that direction can lead to tremendous benefits, as you've mentioned, I've also seen it over and over again with patients and I've experienced it myself.

So really valuable stuff. Jason, thank you so much for sharing. I want our listeners to know where they can find out more about you. Yeah, so you can go to awakenedhealthacademy.com That's where I have a lot of the content that I've filmed over the years and some courses and that kind of thing.

And then if you're in the San Diego area, we have a physical location that we just opened up called Sarah Set. And this is like a brain retraining kind of technology that allows the neural patterns that have been created over years due to various head injuries, due to stress, due to chronic illness, due to a number of different things.

We all have these sort of brain patterns that are a little bit more wired for stress and interrupts a lot of the natural processes of our body and prevents us from being healthy fully healthy for for many of us, we can actually reset that with this technology.

And it's unbelievable because it all it is is sound. It's just you put earbuds in, you hear some sounds. We read your brain activity with MRI technology and your brain's able to sort of see it's it's it's function, see, it's activity and then correct itself.

So, you know, it's something that I'm super excited to to bring to the San Diego area. So it's unbelievable for anxiety, for depression, for for memory issues, for traumatic brain injuries, for addictions, for a number of different conditions that are related to the brain and how it's functioning.

So those are the two main places. What a phenomenal resource. Thank you so much, Jason, for being here for your time and generosity. It's a pleasure to see you.

Always. Thanks, Heather