Opening Takeaway on Small Improvements

I can't do it perfectly. So I'm not going to do it at all. So there's room for doing it better than you're currently doing it right now. We almost probably ought to end on that point because I think a lot of people will listen to this and they'll say, well, I didn't start when my son was born.

So where will I go? Right. And I think that there are ways to improve. Yep. Yeah. I don't know with a 10-year-old if you could do 2% each day, but you could do 2% each week easily, right?

That's great. And it's just a matter of stacking wins, right, as the football coach would stay. Imagine what you could do with a 10-year-old if you just did 2% better each week.

I mean, in a year, you would be completely revamped. Your health is shaped by more than symptoms. Through real stories and expert insights, we explore how your genetics, environment, and daily choices affect your wellbeing.

We uncover root causes and share practical tools to help you find the healing you need.

Podcast Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome to the Forum Health Integrative Medicine Podcast. Welcome back to the Integrative Medicine podcast with Forum Health. Today, Dr. Andrew Peterson sits down with Dr.

Brandon Crater, one of our newest partners, to talk parenting in a functional medicine world. Food, sleep, screens, labs, supplements, and raising resilient humans.

We're talking real food, real limits, and real life. This is a grounded, refreshingly honest look at health at home with practical takeaways. Enjoy. Welcome back, everybody, to our podcast here at Forum Health.

I'm Dr. Andrew Peterson, your host, and we're going to have a great episode today talking to Dr. Brandon Crater. Brandon and I met at the recent Forum Summit, and it was a pleasure to meet him.

It was a pleasure to meet his son, Cam, and to meet a young man that had grown up in functional medicine with parents that understand health in a different way.

And quite honestly, in my opinion, in the way that really makes a difference. So, I was excited when Cam agreed to be interviewed. And I thought, you know, what would make the most sense is if I talk to his dad first, and then I'll get the alternative view, and it'll probably match.

That's how it is with Wright. So, Brandon, welcome. Dr. Crater, welcome. It's great to have you here. You can tell me a little about yourself if you want, like your background in medicine, or we can jump right into your, to the parenting.

Well, I'll share a little bit about my background because I think it's relevant. Professionally, my doctorate is in chiropractic and I went to chiropractic school to learn how to be a traditional chiropractor, not realizing that things would get turned kind of upside down for me.

I would find my passion in the healthcare space. unknowingly, I basically started studying what was functional medicine before functional medicine was a thing and really learning the connections between food and physiology and health and biochemistry and at a pretty deep level.

And that was a game changer for me as far as my perspective about life, about health, about eventually raising kids and having a family. And really, I never looked back since those, you know, the early beginnings of my education.

It really shaped how I would operate in the healthcare world. Right, that's fascinating. So you went to school intending to be a traditional chiropractor, probably mostly adjustments, right?

But then the classes that spoke to you were more the biochemistry and the physiology and that sort of thing. Yeah, and actually, that particular education was outside of the formal curriculum of the school.

It was on the weekends. It was in 100-hour courses. But you're right. I went to school thinking that I would be a traditional, you know, musculoskeletal chiropractor.

I had a very life-changing experience.

From Chiropractic to Functional Medicine

I believe my junior in high school, I was a quarterback of the football team and I woke up one morning on a Friday morning in Louisiana, which, you know, maybe not as big as Texas, but pretty big Friday night lights in Louisiana was pretty big.

And it was game day and I tried to get up out of bed and my whole neck seized up on me. And I had never heard of the word chiropractic. I'd never been to a chiropractor.

My dad said, we're taking you to the chiropractor. And I'm like, Okay. And all I could do was sit in the waiting room and cry. And ultimately it was an old school chiropractor.

He worked on me for about an hour and it was not pleasant. But at the end of the day, I played football that night. And that kind of was nice. Now, was it the small town?

He knew the high school. He was like, oh, this is the star quarterback. Let's get it right. Well, it wasn't that small, but I was one of those guys. I practiced in a little town in Texas like that and it was fun to think, okay, I got to do good work here because otherwise we won't win on Friday.

That's awesome. So that probably inspired you and you were like, oh wow, I was able to play. Yeah, and that was a catalyst for me approaching that particular healthcare space.

And again, like I mentioned, it got completely turned upside down and it led me to what eventually became the formal healthcare space of functional medicine.

Right. Well, I love that too. I think functional medicine is really, I think, people from different backgrounds recognizing the importance of what we can do, what we've done and okay, here, what are the limitations?

And whether you're a chiropractor or a DO or an MD or a health coach or a naturopath, we're sort of coalescing to this middle place of being able to say, the piece of the truth that I've had isn't the whole thing.

And some of the piece of the truth that I've had maybe isn't as true as I thought. And I think I will say that myself as a DO, I wasn't as skeptical of chiropractors as a conventional MD might've been because we do manual manipulation.

But there's these prejudices that exist, right? And you're like, what do they learn? But then you look at the curriculum at school and they have very similar classes.

It's not like they don't learn biochemistry, right? So I think that there's a lot of misunderstanding there. Well, so then that means that you, and you did not have children until you had finished school, is that right?

That is correct, but shortly after. Shortly thereafter. Shortly after, and quite honest probably, that's the time when you're the most, at least I was, the most passionate about some of these new things I was learning.

Yeah, the most passionate, the most dogmatic. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. So let's jump into that. So now you're freshly graduated from school. You're a healthcare provider.

You probably didn't go right into the thing that you thought you were going to when you started school and you've got children, right? So talk to me about that.

How did it change how you parented? Well, I think from the get-go, my wife is a doctor as well. She's a functional medicine provider. We're lucky enough to be very much in sync on many things in life to include, you know, our health paradigm.

And from the get-go, it was natural all the way. She was going to have a natural birth with a midwife at home and all of the things. And we went down that path.

It got time for labor and she was, and this is not an exaggeration, literally in labor for four and a half days with the midwife in our little Billy apartment in Colorado, and it wasn't working out well.

And if it wasn't for our extreme passion in the natural healthcare space, maybe some dogma. We probably would have went to the hospital earlier. But nonetheless, we were in a safe place, but eventually we had to kind of raise the white flag and went to the hospital for help.

Natural Birth and Early Parenting Lessons

And that was the birth of our first son. So that's interesting because it's like you've got these ideas and then you said, maybe my ideas could still be true, but I do need help from lots of different spaces.

That's a good point. And it was, I don't think at the time it humbled us to the extent that we needed to be humbled, but looking back on it, there was definitely a message and a lesson to be learned.

There is obviously a place for all forms of healthcare when applied appropriately. Right. Yeah. Yeah. Which I think is a bigger idea than it sounds like, right?

Because we all pick our thing that we think is true. We pick our team to be on and being open-minded enough to say, well, I like my team, but I'm going to need this other team sometimes.

Sometimes that's hard. So. Yeah. I've been going to a conventional chiropractor for some, you know, back problems recently. And I can't find a DO that does any manipulation because they all stop doing it.

And it's been great, right? Like, thank goodness. And then I found a Feldenkrais specialist. And anyway, so now you've got this little boy who I got to meet.

And what is he now? Is he 20? He's 21. How old is he? February. And he's a physical specimen. He could be the starting quarterback as well. Or linebacker.

Not imposing in a bad way. Yeah, or linebacker. Not imposing in a bad way. Imposing in a good way. You're like, oh, I want this guy on my team. I was standing next to him.

I think we were in line for something. But I'm like, this young man just looks like an athlete. So as you were raising him, as he was growing up, talk to me about sort of that experience, whether your first conversations about gut health were when he was a teenager or whether you started in earlier.

when he was three, talking to him about what foods are healthy. How did you approach that, knowing what you knew? I think what stands out is the first Maybe the first conversations we had were based around the question of

dad and mom.

Why can't I have those things that the kids are eating at the birthday party? Why are you guys so weird? Why you're so mean? I'm an, you know, like it was like the black sheep, the black sheep phenomenon of his friend group.

And we were pretty, I wouldn't say, we were 100% non-compromising on how we decided to raise him, what we were going to feed him, how we were going to manage his health.

It was pretty non compromising. So there was a lot of conversations that were initiated by that type of question. Why can't I have it? Right. So what are some of those things?

I mean, I can guess what they are, but tell it for our listeners. You said, Hey, this is how we eat. What were those things? What were those guidelines?

And then I looked at your son when I was, and he's physically in peak functional and health condition, right? Like, obviously what you chose to do was very effective.

What were those things so that our listeners could say, Oh, well, maybe I could do that. Yeah. I mean, the baseline was eating real foods, whole foods.

clean protein. You know, at the time he was born, maybe we weren't always able to afford, you know, organic and things of that nature, but we did our best.

But I think the main focus, you know, so it was meats and vegetables. I think the main focus was what we would stay away from. There would be absolutely no refined sugars, no junk foods, no refined sugars.

There would be no bread, pasta, rice and potatoes. There would absolutely be no gluten, dairy, corn and soy.

Raising Kids on Whole Foods

And for the, you know, when he was an infant and, you know, he was breastfeeding. So it was, he was feeding from mom and mom was cognizant of what she was eating because of the awareness of what she's eating is being transferred in the milk to the baby, et cetera.

For sure. So I think that was the focus. I mean, all of the basics of good health, which I think often functional medicine providers forget about, were in place.

Like good sleep habits, hydration, good food quality, staying away from the junk food. And did you find that he would, and I know you have two sons, and did you find that there was, I don't know, age five or six, they're at the Valentine's Day party or the Halloween?

Were there times when he was like, oh, I don't want to tell my dad, but I just had a bunch of Reese's cups and I feel sick? I think there were times, I mean, we were pretty focused on working with the school that they were in and the teachers and making sure they understood how we wanted him to eat.

And, you know, if there was going to be like a Valentine's thing, we would make sure maybe they had a gluten-free, dairy-free muffin there or something that would include him in, you know, the festivities.

But our older one, he was always the one that would And still to this day would be sneaking the things that he knew he couldn't have. Right. Our younger one, our younger one was more of the rule follower and the one that would experience the symptoms of eating poorly.

I think my oldest Cam would experience the symptoms, but I think that the pain he would experience was in his mind worth it because of the ability to eat the thing.

Anybody that knows this makes that trade-off. If they make a trade-off, they know what they're going to pay for it, right? I have patients who are terribly gluten-sensitive and they're like, yeah, but I'll have a headache for two days, but this is going to be worth it because it's a Christmas cookie or whatever, right?

And that's not the end of the world when people make trade-offs, but it is certainly going to cause harm for a period of time, like some transient period of time.

They're going to suffer the consequences. And sometimes longer than we think, you know, if a person's dealing with any particular condition, sometimes even longer than the initial symptoms that you connect with that dietary indiscretion.

Absolutely. The immune system stays hyper reactive for quite a long time. Yeah. Yeah. So when you talk about gut health with your kids, did they ever roll their eyes or did they get it because at such an early age, this was part of who they were?

Yeah, I think I'm, I don't really recall them at least early on rolling their eyes or having that. It was just part of the culture of our family. My wife and I have always owned their own business and our hobby is our business.

So we're always talking health. Right. So it was just part of the family culture. I think as they got older and we started to hang around more families that didn't have the same habits that we have, it became more obvious to them that we were kind of the weird parents.

But I think that to a certain degree, they always, they embraced it to being different to a certain degree, but the complaints would come from that, you know, We're different.

Why are we different? Why don't they eat the way we eat and that sort of thing? Was there an age when they started to embrace it and say, Oh, I feel better.

I'm faster. I'm quicker or whatever, where they started to maybe proselyte their friends on why it's good. Cause I've seen that in my own son. So I think.

I'm just starting to see that now. And they're 21 and 19 and you can begin to see them educating and informing their friend groups now because their friends watch their habits and say, why do you do that?

What's going on? Can you teach me why you're, why don't you eat this? Why don't you drink this? Why do you have these habits? They want to, they legitimately want to know.

And I have heard several stories about them educating their friends currently as young adults. So that's actually pretty intriguing. It never really happened up until more recently, but it's intriguing that people in their age group, young adults are legitimately interested in these types of health habits.

Right. Yeah. My son, he's 16 now and he's on the lacrosse team. He was on the football team until he wasn't good enough to be on the football team. And when you're not good enough to be on the football team and you still want to hit people in Utah, you play lacrosse, right?

I see. He's on the lacrosse team. He is somewhat notorious for telling his friends, if you drink that soda, you're going to be so much slower. Right. And he's, he's harping on them worse than I'm harping on him.

So he, I think, I think maybe he just likes to tell other people what to do. I'm not sure, but it's cute to see. Yeah. Thinking back, like we were, they were early adopters into personal training.

They were able to have access to that and weightlifting and these types of activities. They were, they're, they're very athletic and into, into high level sports.

And now that I think about it, a lot of their peers at that level were like, hey, like, what are you doing? Because they

were more muscular, they were stronger, they were, you know, in many aspects faster.

So their friends did ask, like, what's your routine? What are you doing different than I'm doing? Right. That probably helped your sons to be able to say, okay, well, and maybe it's good to be the one that's different because I'm trying to stand out in these good ways that are athletic.

Yeah, I think so. So let's talk about some of the, I guess, emotionally resilient part of this, right?

Handling Social Pressure and Food Choices

Like, how do you think functional medicine changes the way that you respond to your kids' emotional needs or their stress? Do you think that there's a role there?

So let me make sure I understand your question. So you're asking like a functional medicine lifestyle and how you parent your kids and how a parent reacts to the emotional needs of the kid.

Is that right? Yes. And the reason why I think it's relevant is because we recognize that stress more than just biological stress does affect all of this.

You mentioned sleep earlier, for example, right? So, I guess first, before you say how does it make your parent differently, what sort of guidelines did you have?

And then based on that, we can come back to that other question about, you know, how do you respond to their stress? Yeah, I mean, guidelines, again, always focusing on the fundamentals of good health.

A normal sleep wake schedule, going to bed at a, you know, generally speaking, a specific time every night, waking up every night, making sure they're properly hydrated, eating good foods, taking good supplements.

Were your kids just compliant with the curfew? Were they as compliant with going to bed at a certain time as they were with meals? Yeah, they were. That really never was a problem for us.

And I think that's another important point. Like, I think one of the benefits we had was that's how we started with our kids. So the children don't know any different if you start that way.

It's just, it's kind of how they only see different once they start socializing with other kids and families. It's much more difficult when you start midstream.

Like you take a kid who's 10, 11, 12, 13, and you're like, okay, we're making, the whole family's making these huge lifestyle changes, man. That's a, that's a big task.

But, but that was, that was pretty much the extent of it. I mean. running labs on our kids, good food, good sleep, some education in the area. At what point did you say, let's check some labs and see what things look like?

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Learn more at forumhealth.com and explore supplements at shopforumhealth.com. inflammation, maybe some blood sugar problems, things of that nature, essential fatty acid imbalances.

I mean, but because of our health practices, our labs in those years were pretty darn clean. Right. Oh yeah. Well, and a nine-year-old that's eating healthy is going to be really good.

Yeah. Well, and it's crazy because, you know, when I was in medical school, you would never think that a nine-year-old would have diabetes, but that's not uncommon anymore.

Right. And so we sort of have this idea that we don't have to do those types of labs on children, but we probably should. Now, if they were, they were growing up like your kids did, maybe you didn't find a lot, but are there specific labs that you would suggest to a parent who's listening, who says, oh, wow, well, I didn't start that early, but I think these are important things.

What would you recommend they get checked? Hemoglobin A1C, a CRP. I think the more comprehensive you can be, the better. We tend to be a bit, some might argue, heavy handed with labs.

I think, you know, your comprehensive metabolic panels, your CBCs, your lipid panels, you know, full thyroid panels. My wife, who as I mentioned is also a doctor, she has Hashimoto's, so we were checking for that, making sure that disease process hadn't turned on for them, looking at inflammatory markers like CRP and homocysteine, and making sure there weren't any maybe underlying infections that might be going on.

I mentioned essential fatty acid status. I think another great thing is salivary testing for how the adrenal glands are functioning, where their hormones are at any age can be very important just to make sure they're developing properly.

I think that's great.

Labs and Health Monitoring for Kids

I think a lot of parents wonder, is there some test I should do on my kids, right? Yeah. Back to these sort of emotionally resilient kids, I think your kids had this, I would say, it's fair to say that they had some level of stress because they're asking these questions about why are we different.

They handled it really well and you said, well, because it's better for you. And so while they might've been stressed about that they were different, the positive impact was better.

Like I don't mean stress in some long-term negative way, just that they asked that question. And so as you sort of responded to their, stress or emotion, how much of your perspective took on a perspective of saying, well, let's do some yoga or let's do some deep breathing or let's do it.

Not with that question in particular, but just, are there things that you did like that, like gratitude journals or prayer? What sort of things would you say you taught your kid to do that were raising them in an emotionally good way?

The honest answer is we I don't know if what I'm getting ready to say is right or wrong. I think it was right for them because they're our kids, but you could argue that we didn't maybe do the best job in that department.

Our approach is kind of suck it up buttercup. That's the, this is the way it is. This is the, this is the dinner your mother cooked tonight. There is no other dinner you want to eat.

This is what's on the table. And there were a couple of occasions where they chose to go to bed hungry because they didn't want what was cooked. They're like, all right, go to bed hungry, you know.

So it was, from that perspective, you know, there's a part of our family that's kind of, what's the word phrase I'm looking for? Just, I think it was, what we taught there was resilience.

And we didn't really raise our, we have boys, so we wanted to raise men more of the traditional man and nothing wrong with a man who has the more sensitive side or anything like that.

But we wanted to raise them to be resilient men. So that's generally was the approach. Even from my wife, it was not like a lot of coddling. Like this is just the way it is.

We know better. We're smarter than you. Of course, of course we would, we would explain and try to get the information across to them. But when they're young, they really, they can't absorb a lot of the high level information, but you know, I think that that's really powerful.

And I think it's important for parents to hear and say, Oh, so I can simply be a good parent by, by knowing that I know better. I think that's important because we've become soft in the last 30 years.

I think it's fair to admit that we're softer than we used to be and that's probably not helping us. It's not helping our boys or our girls that we ask a five-year-old what they want for dinner instead of saying this is what's healthy.

Yeah, I think we've gotten into a place where we don't want our kids to feel like outcasts or outside of the group. We don't want them to want for anything.

We don't want them to feel any negative things. And I think that, at least for us, that was something that we did not want for our kids. And I think to a certain degree that.

culture that has become a little more pervasive in our society sort of leads people to allow their kids to choose the wrong path with respect to food and things that negatively impact their health.

Because it's like what they value is my kid's not standing on the outside of the group. My kid is not wanting for anything as opposed to valuing the fact that, hey, we're taking care of their health, looking big picture.

I'm sorry. I'll add one thing. I think, you know, as you and I both know. mental health is such a big topic in our society these days, particularly with our children.

And once you have the knowledge that what you, I mean, we're focusing a lot on what you eat. There's other, other elements to this as well, but certainly what you eat and what you put into your body has a huge impact on how your brain functions, your moods, your, your mental status and things of that nature.

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. You can't make your neurotransmitters without sufficient protein and it won't matter how much protein you eat. If your gut is inflamed, you can't make your serotonin, right?

But let's talk about some of those other things briefly. What about phones? What about screen time?

Building Resilience and Emotional Strength

What about, like we talked about bedtime, but what about, you know, other things that are, I think have a negative impact on our emotional health, right?

Like we're, we're connecting too often over social media, as opposed to talk to them, talking to a person, a handshake or a hug, right? Physical contact.

What sort of guidelines would you give to parents on that? We were pretty strict on that up into a point. Like we resisted phones and iPads and Game Boys and things of that nature and video games in the house for quite a while, I think.

Maybe until our oldest was in eighth grade. And we probably should have waited longer. But it gets to a point where you're like, you have to like let go a bit because the world is running on these things.

And I think. to a certain degree if they don't have access. It's kind of like me. I'm in that really weird zone and generation where I'm kind of tech slow because I don't really get it because I didn't grow up with it.

I'm in a weird space there. If you don't learn it, you can be far behind in society. But you know, that was a big thing for us, limiting TV, limiting screens, limiting video games.

But once they got it, even though we still kept controls on it, once they have it, it becomes really hard to police it and to manage the time that they spend on those devices.

But we certainly know that these types of. Devices and electronics and screens play a huge role in overall health, brain health, mental wellness. You know, what's interesting, I think you might know like I'm in, I'm in Europe right now.

I'm in Italy and my wife and I have been amazed by the lack of children on devices in Italy. It's hard to find that they're actually on a device. You don't see it.

Yeah. I have two boys as well. I have four girls, but I have two boys. We didn't get video games or anything like that until my oldest son was, I think it was the eighth grade, sort of same age as you.

The difference in how early he got, because his brother is two years younger than him. And Christian, my older son, is the kid that doesn't care about devices, right?

Like he'll check his phone to see if his friend wants to go out to the rope swing and do backflips into the pond. And he'll call somebody, but he is not on social media.

Now, my younger son, who got the video games two years at a two-year younger age, he's the one that it's harder for me to say, hey, Henry, you've got to get off that screen.

It's not good for you. Go outside and touch grass, right? So I think when you introduce these things does have an impact. At least that's what I've seen in my children.

And I think you're right. It is hard to set limits, but of course we have to do that. Henry's phone is in my bedroom at night. Christian I know isn't on his phone, right?

So it's not a big deal. And that's a hard thing with parenting is having different rules for different children. And yet I think it's probably important for children to say, My dad knows best and I am different than he is.

And so if he has two different sets of rules, it's not because he's a hypocrite, it's because that rule matters for me and this other rule matters for my brother.

You know, with Christian, I have to have a curfew because he doesn't want to come home. He'll be out riding his motorcycle or doing backflips in the local pond until 2 a.m.

So he has a curfew, but he can have his phone in his room. Whereas Henry, right, he's not going outside to, you know, go hang out at 1 a.m. So that's not hard.

He doesn't have a curfew, right? Yeah. I've never told him at any point in his life, you have to be home by midnight, right? He's going to be home at 10. Yeah.

That's a really good perspective. Yeah. I don't think the kids think so, but eventually I think they do realize, hey, we're different and therefore we have different things.

Like I have to work on different things. So, let's talk a little bit about supplements. I would guess with your children, they eat so well, they probably don't take a lot of supplements.

Is that accurate or are there supplements that you would say, no, these are good and everybody should take them? No, even though they ate extremely well, they were pretty much always on supplements.

When they were younger, it would be powder-based supplements, more of a multi-type detox supplement that they would be on because it was easier for them to consume it that way.

But as they grew older, they were able to take capsules and things of that nature, liposomal deliveries. You know, they were always doing essential fatty acids, a lot of antioxidants, glutathione.

So is there a list, would you say here are the four things that every kid between, I don't know, zero and eight should be on, you know, when they can take powders, maybe two and eight, because you're breastfeeding until you're, you know, one and a half or two.

So what did you start with? And is there something that you feel really passionately about? I just think our listeners at home are going to think, oh, if will.

If this worked for Cam Crater, I want to do it for my kids too. If I had to pick, I would say if all things being equal and you're not dealing with any problems or diseases or imbalances, I would say essential fats like fish oils, vitamin D, vitamin D, a good multi-mineral product, a good multivitamin is great.

Screens, Phones, and Digital Limits

Maybe I would throw in some glutathione, which is like the most potent antioxidant available. I think those things are a good baseline support, even though the person's eating a really good diet.

Because as we know, and maybe a lot of the listeners know, you're not getting the nutrients out of the food, even if you're eating really good foods that we once got, just because of the damage that's been done to our soil and the mineral depletion.

All the food that we're eating is coming from the Central Valley in Florida or Yuma, Arizona. If you ate lettuce today, it came from one of those two places.

And those fields have been growing lettuce for the past 50 years and there is no minerals left in that dirt. Like it just, we can't keep up. Now, if you grow your own garden in your own dirt, you're going to be better off.

But still we have poisoned our, we've poisoned our soil, right? With pesticides and herbicides and different, what are they? You keep throwing bat guano on the dirt and yes, it will give you enough nitrogen, but that's all it's giving you is the nitrogen.

Yeah, I think we're in a really difficult place there. Farming practices and quality of soil. I think there's a lot of work to be done in that area. I think your point should be well taken by listeners that you can't wait until you're 40 or 50 to start taking a multivitamin and minerals because then you're behind the eight ball.

You need these now because we're not getting them from our food as much as we like. Yeah. And I think, I think, I mean, we're obviously talking about children and raising kids.

And I think most, if not all parents, they want their kids to be, to do well. They want them to be productive. They want them to be successful, happy, healthy.

And I think. It's more important today than it used to be to be educated and informed about the things that are required for kids to be healthy, to set them up to have a great life, to give them the best opportunity possible.

You're not going to do anything to your maximum capacity if your health is degraded. And I think for parents, it's become more of the, again, I don't want my kids to want for anything.

I don't want them to be outcasts. I want them to kind of be like everybody else. And what the masses are typically doing is typically wrong. It's not good for you.

You can be normally sick. So we've talked about foods, we've talked about supplements, we've talked about some of these lifestyle things like screen time.

Are there other things that you would say? have some impact in the way that you've parented? Being a functional medicine provider where you really do think about the mind, body, spirit, the whole thing is connected.

Maybe positive things that you've had your kids do to say, oh, well, you know, we haven't mentioned exercise. What do I do? Is it just play? Is it organized sports?

What are your thoughts on that? I think all of the above. I think when kids are young, just play is fantastic. Play is often going to exercise all of the different aspects of the brain and stimulate the brain in all the right ways.

functionally move the body in all of the ways that it needs to be moving. And as they move into organized sports, if that's their thing, I think trying to get them the play of a riot of sports earlier, because there's such a, these days, a hyper focus on one sport athletes.

And I think, I think there's a place for that, but I think, you know, early on trying to get them to play as many different sports as possible is important.

I think one of the things that. It was more in the forefront right now for our kids, our philosophy. You know, we come from a chiropractic background where it's the philosophy is, you know, chemical stress, physical stress, emotional stress is ultimately the root cause of disease.

Maybe we add spiritual stress into that as well. So we've really always had. an approach of self-development and these types of things, spiritual development.

And now it's formal meditation practices. We've taken our kids on week-long meditation retreats with us and introduced them to those tools and they've been able to leverage those tools into helping with their athletic and academic performances.

Using now those tools to manage stress, to be able to cast a vision for themselves, for their lives and kind of help them understand that their life is to be manifested by them.

And they have control over what they achieve in their life. I think those are some of the things that have been born out of a functional medicine lifestyle that are part of everything as well.

Yeah, that's super powerful that you, you get to decide what you become. It's up to you. And it's a combination of all of those inputs, right? You have to, you have to eat well, you have to study, you have to be physically active.

Supplements, Meals, and Practical Nutrition

You have to, it takes work to be creative, for example. Right. And so put in the work, it takes work to be calm. Right. So learn to meditate and to empower your children, to be able to understand that and say, yeah.

Choose what you want to be, and then go out and become that. That's incredible. I love that. All right, so let's wrap up here. I want to do sort of a rapid fire thing.

Tell me maybe just a typical dinner at your house. Typical dinner is going to be steak of some sort, either a filet, a ribeye, or a New York strip on the grill.

It's going to be broccoli, maybe asparagus. Because we do all of the right things, we might have like a starch, like a sweet potato with some, you know, some butter on that, on that sweet potato.

But usually it's meat and vegetables. not using a lot of starch. Now, as our boys got more and more athletic, more competitive, we started strategically allowing more starch on the plate because they needed that for development and growth.

But we knew, because we had the information, we knew how to manage the starch relative to keeping blood sugar

under control. So that was typically it.

If there was a dessert, it was a gluten-free dessert. That's generally what food gets like. All right, so this one's harder for people because I think what you just described, people are like, I can do that, right?

This dinner, whether they ate a filet or they ate poultry or fish, but they had a protein and they had a vegetable, right? Yeah. Now, what about breakfast?

Typical breakfast at your house? Breakfast would be bacon and eggs. Breakfast would be smoked salmon with avocado. Those are probably the staples. What else?

Occasionally they might have some gluten-free waffles or mom would make them some. pumpkin spice, gluten-free pancakes for a treat on a Sunday or something like that.

But also in the morning, we would always still work in vegetables. Maybe it was, you know, smoked salmon on top of a bed of arugula. So they had a smoked salmon salad for breakfast.

Lots of good fats, olive oils, things of that nature. I was recently in Thailand and it blew me away to see the breakfast buffet that they had. And it's similar in Europe when you're at a European restaurant or a hotel and they serve this big breakfast.

And there's no sweet stuff, right? I think it's only here in the United States that we're like, oh, it's breakfast time. Let's eat a whole bunch of cake and grains and we'll feel good for about 15 minutes and then we'll bonk.

Yeah. The amount of vegetables that they had at breakfast just was remarkable to me. And I thought, wow, if I could raise my kids here, they would be better off.

That sets the tone for how your physiology will be for the rest of the day. That's right. good amounts of healthy protein, high quality fats, good complex carbohydrates, you're going to have a great stable physiology the rest of the day.

If you start with sugary foods, it's going to be a mess. That's right. Yeah. That's why I love that you just said bacon and eggs because, you know, it's so funny.

That's where our roots are, right? If you've farmed in the late 1800s, early 1900s, what did you have for breakfast? Yeah. Well, bacon and eggs. Yeah.

Why? Well, because then you could last all day long. You didn't have time to come home. I mean, you weren't driving the truck home. You had to walk home to get something to eat.

So, you know, we ate the right things back then. And then we decided that Kellogg's and General Mills should run the show. So, all right. So what's your go-to snack?

Go-to snack would probably be low glycemic fruits, berries, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, maybe some dairy-free ice cream. I kind of think what else we would do for snacks.

Sometimes we snack on meat sticks, steak bars and things of that nature. But usually if you wanted, if they wanted It would be fruit, maybe a little maple syrup on the top.

Now I'm going to go out on a limb here because I think that the answer is going to be none of the above. Is there a packaged bar of any sort that you would say, oh yeah, no, my kid could have that if he was on a hike or whatever?

Well, usually most bars suck. But recently I found a bar and I'm not endorsing this and I don't have any affiliation with it as I can see it right here in the apartment we're renting.

It's called Carnivore Bar. It's a steak bar and they have one version that's the garlic and salt and steak and beef and one that's a honey and beef. And I actually find them very good and they're very nutritious, very filling and high quality protein.

Awesome. Yeah, that's the sort of detail that I think people are gonna be like, oh, wow. So there is something out there that is, you know, because our problem is convenience.

Why we're like, oh, it's not convenient enough. It's really not that hard to slice an apple. So it's pretty convenient. Apples are not inconvenient. But but I like that you that there are things you found.

There are things that I think this brings up another point of Sometimes you get paralysis by analysis and you're trying to make everything perfect and you just say, screw it.

I can't do it perfectly. So I'm not going to do it at all. So there's room for doing it better than you're currently doing it right now. We almost probably ought to end on that point because I think a lot of people will listen to this and they'll say, well, I didn't start when my son was born.

So where will I go? Right. And I think that there are ways. There you go. Yeah. There are ways to improve. Yep. I don't know with a 10 year old, if you could do 2% each day, but you could do 2% each week easily.

Right. That's great. And it's just a matter of stacking wins, right. As the football coach would stay.

Progress Over Perfection

Imagine what you could do with a 10-year-old if you just did 2% better each week. I mean, in a year, you would be completely revamped. That's right. Yeah.

Well, I really appreciate your time and talking to us. And it's inspiring to think that this can be done. And any parent out there that's like, no, my kids, they won't.

They will. I promise you they will. Mine have. Dr. Crater's have. Kids want that. They want you to be the parent. They don't want to make those decisions.

They want to be guided because that's what makes them healthier and happier. That's been my experience. I get the impression it's been your experience.

I certainly got that impression from talking to your son. Do you have any parting thought, favorite book, favorite philosophy, favorite supplement, something that you'd say, oh, here, take this home and this could be your last nugget for the listener?

I would just reinforce kind of a theme that you were just talking about. I think kids and children innately want to be doing the right things. They want to be healthy.

Like the whole human system, all the way down to our genes, are looking not just to survive, but to thrive. And yeah, there's going to be some pushback here and there, but deep down inside, they want this.

Amen to that. They do. They want it. They want it. Well, thank you so much, Brandon, for your time. My pleasure. I'll look forward to visiting with your son.

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