Reset, Rebuild, Restore: A Functional Medicine Approach to Chronic Illness Transcript

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Introduction and guest background

The idea is to kind of start with the fundamentals, you know, where, okay, what are the pillars of health? Because there's a lot of us who don't even realize that we're maybe not doing the things that could be helping us.

We're trying to eat healthy, but maybe we're not as much as before or not moving or what have you. But, you know, the the things to really look at is food.

Food is medicine. So what are you eating? How are you eating it? How is that working into to this process? Are you moving? Even if you're really tired and you know, taking a shower is exhausting for you, what can we be doing to help make sure you're moving a little bit to your body's ability, and how important that is.

How well you are stressing this is doctor talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most. Hello, welcome to Truly Healthy MD.

I'm Doctor Monica Harari. Today we have one of my friends, Doctor Casey Kelly, MD. She is a leader in integrative and functional medicine. She blends both traditional medical training and a personalized, holistic approach to health and healing at Case Integrative Health, which she founded in 2019.

She is board certified in family medicine and in integrative medicine. She has a very strong focus on Lyme disease research, treatment and education. She lectures nationally on these topics.

I've. I met her initially at an elite conference, and she was, gracious enough to want to be here on this podcast. I'm so grateful. A little bit more background about her.

She graduated from the Ohio State University College of Medicine, included her family residency at Saint Joseph Hospital in Chicago. She is a 15 year member of the Institute of Functional Medicine, AFM.

I did not even know it's been around for I didn't know about it 15 years ago, so that's amazing. She's a past treasurer of the International Lyme and Associated Disease Society, which is Eilat.

Additionally, she serves on the faculty at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Very, very amazing stuff. Thank you for being here. And we were just talking about a course that you're putting together.

And you said this is for your patients, for the public. Tell me about about this course that you're putting together. Thank you for having me. Yeah, absolutely.

You know, I we have so many patients calling us from all over the country, and it's, you know, there's not enough Lyme doctors out there. So the weight for Lyme doctors is pretty long.

And so I wanted to create a space for patients to help themselves to get started on the basics, to get started on the fundamentals. And then we'll build from there and go into deeper topics so patients can start to the healing process on their own and can advocate for themselves.

So it'll be up and running in the spring. It's in the works right now, but we're really excited. It'll be up on our website. And yeah, I just wanted to help more people, you know, and help them find their health in as many ways as possible.

Yeah, that's that's great because, you know, I also I like I said we met at Eli's I also treat Lyme.

Creating a Lyme self-healing course

And I know it's so hard because we there's only so many patients that we can take on. And there's so many people out there that need our help. So that's that's amazing work.

I would love to hear more about this, this course that you're putting together for, for people to be able to start healing themselves. Well, they get in to see one of us Lyme doctors.

Yeah. So what was that like structure of the course or what kind of things are you going to teach people? Yeah, so it's an online course. So it'll be videos and things. You can go at your own pace.

And especially for those of us who are struggling with brain fog and those kind of things too, we can repeat it. You know, you can watch it again and you can kind of re it there and get in there and see it.

But the idea is to kind of start with the fundamentals, you know, where, okay, what are the pillars of health? Because there's a lot of us who don't even realize that we're maybe not doing the things that can be helping us.

We're trying to eat healthy, but maybe we're not as much as before or not moving or what have you. But, you know, the the things to really look at is food.

Food is medicine. So what are you eating? How are you eating it? How is that working into to this process? Are you moving? Even if you're really tired and, you know, taking a shower is exhausting for you, what can we be doing to help make sure you're moving a little bit to your body's ability and how important that is, how well you are stressing.

How are you managing your stress? So many of us live with this kind of chronic, just perpetual background stress that we're almost immune to, are numb to.

Yeah, we don't even notice it anymore. We don't even know how high it is. And so but that has a really, really big effect on us. And if we have a chronic illness and we have chronic infections, that's a stress on our system as well.

So how are we managing that? How are we relaxing and kind of giving ourselves a break? It's really important how you're sleeping, sleep. You know, it's it's often a hard one to to get in there, especially if you're really sick.

You are exhausted and tired and all you want to do is sleep. But it can be elusive and it can be really hard to kind of get into that deeper, restful sleep.

But it's important, and there's so many of us to work so hard, and the only time we have a night for is for ourselves, right? So we stay up too late and we don't make sleep a priority.

And, and that's I think can end up causing more harm than good. Yeah. And I mean, even if we're not going to achieve perfect sleep, just getting the basics and of some sleep hygiene can really that's really low hanging fruit.

That's something that will go a long ways. Maybe you and I can't completely fix somebody's sleep, but there's a lot of things that they can start working on to achieve a lot better sleep.

And that's that's really, you know, the, the foundational work. I know that we get patients all the time that are thinking they, they can just come to us and get some medicine or some, you know, nutraceutical.

We both work with both pharmaceutical nutraceuticals to get better from Lyme. And they don't understand they have to do all this foundational work that's so important.

So this is excellent that you're putting this out there for people to to learn about. So tell me more about your your approach as far as what you teach patients as far as food is medicine, what's your philosophy behind that?

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find us and we truly appreciate your support.

Yeah, well, it's hard because there are so many different diets out there and there's not one right diet for every person. And so some people do really well with the ketogenic diet.

Some people don't. You know, some people need to be gluten free. Other people can maybe get away with some, but need to be dairy free.

Food as medicine and foundational nutrition

You know, there's so many differences. So it is hard to kind of hone in on that. But for me, food like I said, food is medicine. So the first thing we need to do is try to make sure that we're putting good, healthy things into our mouths.

So we're not eating the fast food. We're not drinking the soda. You know, we're not eating candy and all the junk, right? So and it sounds easy, but we live in such a fast paced world.

It's just sometimes, you know, all you can do is go through the drive thru because that's what you have, you know? And it's also less expensive sometimes to for sure a lot less expensive.

Yeah. And it's also, you know, preparing food takes a long time as well. And so, you know, it's this process and but food food is important. So we have to make sure we're putting good stuff in.

And then we have to really be mindful. I mean the the three things when it comes to a chronic infection that I think really impair our immune system and our ability to heal are gluten, dairy and sugar.

So you're kind of three big culprits and we can build from that. We can do bigger eliminations, we can do bigger things, and we can try different diets depending on what your symptoms may be and kind of what's going on in there.

But I also like to kind of hone in on the what you can eat, because I think it's also hard and too negative to just focus on what you have to cut out.

But for detox, for example, I really love cruciferous vegetables, so adding cruciferous vegetables and fiber, adding those things to the diet, which a lot of us are kind of not getting a lot of broccoli, cauliflower kale can cause a little bit of upset tummy if you're not used to it, because it kind of feeds some of the good stuff and can.

Yeah, you gotta you gotta slowly integrate that. You can't just go from having a diet super low in these, these vegetable products, and all of a sudden from what to the next, say, hey, I'm going to beat my 25 30g of fiber, right?

That is not the way to do it. So yeah. Yeah. So but the fun part is if you get a new chance to try some new foods too. So when you have to cut these things out, a lot of people also go kind of deer in headlights.

And now what do I do? Because we're just so used to eating the same things all the time. But there's a lot of really cool, delicious vegetables and other things out there that maybe you didn't try.

And it's an opportunity to have fun with that and to learn some new recipes and try some different things. And it's so much easier to be gluten free and dairy free nowadays versus five, ten years ago.

So it's easier to incorporate these things. But if you're not eating the good food, food, if you're not putting the good fuel in your system, it's going to be those pills and nutraceuticals that we're recommending.

They're not going to work, you know, and you got to help yourself get in there. So that's starting at the start at the basics and getting the right food in. As important.

Absolutely. That foundation is just you cannot, cannot, cannot heal without found without that foundation. Every every cell in our body is made from food that we ate at some point.

Right. So you just you just have to have that good foundation in order to be able to, take on these treatments because, yeah, these treatments are difficult for our body to deal with.

People come to us, they're very sick and usually been sick for, for years. And then we try to put them on these complex treatments. So it's phasing them into getting them healthy enough to accept those treatments.

Sometimes it's even harder than actually treating them. I find that it's not actually so, you know, obvious. It's hard to treat, these chronic, complex illnesses, but to me, it's harder to get people ready for the treatment.

I'm saying I assume that's the same struggle you're having. That's why you're creating this course in part fatigue, brain fog, mood swings, weight gain.

If you're a woman in your 40s to 70s, you've probably been told that it's just aging. But what if it's not actually healthy? M. D. dot com we look deeper hormones, nervous system health, hidden toxicities.

You're not broken. You just need a doctor who really listens. Visit Fully Healthy a ecom ad book a consultation. Today it's time to feel like your real self again.

Yeah. You know, and when someone's really sick and even try the supplements, you can try the medications. But sometimes their system is not ready to and you end up creating more problems for that patient.

You're trying to heal. You're trying to kind of you're trying to treat whatever is going on, but their body is not ready to handle it. And you create more and more toxic issues, more inflammation, more immune reactions, which just creates a bigger mess to clean up.

So start, you know, trying to be, you know, have better foundations to begin with is important. And and these are some of the ways to do it. There are other ways, you know, we use some supplements as well just to help build a cellular foundation.

So our cell membranes are so important. They are the brain of our cells. And when we're really sick they get they're just they're crummy and they don't have the right phospholipids and they don't talk to each other and you don't do all the right things.

So even something as simple as fast potato, choline, which is a fatty acid, and we'll do it intravenously as well as orally for patients. But building that up can be another way to help build some of these foundations, so that their cells are stronger so that you can go, you know, go forth with the treatments.

Yeah, absolutely. Such important things that people need to understand, because I know they're coming to us at a very low point in their lives. They're they've been sick for a while.

And it's it's a lot of information that I have to take in just to start healing. It's hard to get somebody who's not sleeping at all to get them to sleep really well.

But just the initial troubleshooting is, is huge. What sort of, advice do you have for them for sleep issues? Yes. Yeah. You know, one of my favorites is to tape your mouth closed, which is just really fun, you know, to say and joke about and have a little laugh about anyone ever tell you to take your mouth closed?

Sleep hygiene and practical sleep hacks

I don't know if these are the jokes that this is what makes you know, makes me laugh. Just breathing through your nose, you know, force, you know, kind of forcing that issue a little bit, which helps with snoring and other things, but just making sure that that air is going through your nose that help actually, you know, open up your passages and

humidify that air.

And we get better sleep when we're not just kind of trying to drag it in through the wrong hole. And so taping your mouth and there are, there are, there are tapes you can buy for this.

You can also use medical tape to kind of keep it closed. And you can still open your mouth. I know like some people, you know, get concerned that they might feel like they're kind of suffocating by having that on there, but you could still break the seal and you could break the tape.

Like you can make that happen, if you really needed to. But often doing that a good for a good month will help with sleep. It's important for kids, too.

If your kid is a mouth breather that actually affects how their palate forms and grows and that can affect their teeth, and that can affect other, other issues too.

And if you know, if we're not sleeping, that affects our cognition and our ability to focus in school the next day and whatnot. So those are just those are some simple tips to.

But if you're a snorer, if you are waking up, you know, and you need to get a sleep study, really need to go and take that next level and really kind of get and make sure there's no sleep apnea or other things going on then.

Yeah. Rest. Absolutely. I mean, these these things that you're suggesting, it's not for everyone. If people have a medical condition, please, by all means get it checked out.

Go get a sleep study. Don't just feel like you can resolve it by by taping, by by doing these things that we're recommending. But but yeah, for the great majority of people who don't have sleep apnea, that's, that's that is a thing that I've, I've heard other people recommend.

I haven't tried recommending it myself. So this is a this is a great conversation to start. Learn about it. Are there any other ways that you like to help people troubleshoot sleep issues?

Yeah, I also really love binaural beats. So this is usually with headphones. You can listen to that. And it helps to reset the brainwaves to a sleep pattern for example.

So there are different binaural beats for for different brainwave patterns. And our brainwaves actually correlate with sounds. So you can get the right binaural beats.

And the difference between the two ears affects. And it's kind of how this works. And that Hertz that comes up is correlated with do you want sleep? Do you want focus? Do you want anti-anxiety.

You would pick whichever one you want, but that can kind of help trick the brain to getting back into sleep. And that is, there are free apps where you can find this so that, you know, it does require headphones.

So that kind of can disrupt sleep in its own way. But even just doing that before you go to bed instead of watching TV, instead of with the blue light instead of other kind of like revving yourself up or not, allowing yourself to rough down can be a nice way to kind of go, okay, it's time for bed.

Now I'm going to listen to this. Trying to get my brainwave into that sleep zone and try to ease it to bed after that. So that's a nice free one. It's worth trying.

Yeah, yeah, I really I love all the advice that can be, you know, free advice. That's not something that people need to spend a ton of money on or bought pills.

I think as, as physicians, we were trying to add more pills. More pills. And then sometimes when we go from being commercial doctors and learning all the integrative stuff, we just want to add nutraceuticals instead of

pharmaceuticals.

But it's not just that being a great doctor is recommending all these things that are not more pills, right? Not more things that you to put in your mouth, but other modalities.

So so that's I always love those recommendations that are not some another pill that people need to take that is that is really, really good advice. Any other sleep hacks that you have for people?

Another good one, especially if you wake up around 3 a.m., that tends to be more of a liver stress. Time to wake up. Having a fatty snack or a protein snack before bed.

So a handful of pistachios, a half an avocado, or something like that to help keep your blood sugar more stable. So that's often a time when the adrenals are going to kind of stimulate some glucose production and or drops.

So you could have kind of a shift in your blood sugar and that can wake you up. So that could be a part of why we're waking up at 3:00 more stressed or kind of waking up anxious.

It's actually a blood sugar issue related to the stress and things in our lives. But if you can keep that blood sugar steady throughout the night, might sleep a little bit better.

Does it require a lot? You don't need a full meal, but just, you know, a handful, like I said, a handful of pistachios, handful of nuts or something. If you're not allergic, can can actually help you sleep a little bit better.

Yeah, absolutely. Those are those are really great hacks that are either free or super, super low cost and I'm sure will help a lot of people sleep better.

Once you sleep better, a lot of things to start going to place the next day, right? You're in a better mood. Everything just comes to you a lot more easily, so it's so much easier to heal once you are sleeping better.

So such such important advice. And you mentioned earlier stress management. Oh my gosh. That is, I find in my practice the the hardest thing for me to be able to help patients with.

So I'm really, really interested in hearing what you have to say about the tips that you give people regarding stress management and the support that they need in order to to manage this correctly.

Yeah, this is a tricky one because we all, especially in the American culture, it's it's a go go go go go. You're constantly giving, you know, and as a working mom it's unending.

There's just always things to think about and things to do. So I like personally have to work on managing my stress on a regular daily basis. And it is work.

You actually have to put some work into it. When most people think about it, they think about meditation and trying to kind of be in that Zen mode. And a lot of us have a lot of trouble with that.

And there are other ways to help de-stress in there. So if you can meditate or like work through that, please do, because there are a lot of studies proving that meditation is very, very helpful for stress, for focus, for all of these things.

But really what we need to do is find a way to relax a little bit. We end up being in that fight or flight state perpetually, and that can mean that background noise that just kind of lives us here.

So we're up here living, and we don't even realize how stressed we are. And our bodies are not designed for that. They are meant to, you know, be up here when the lion is chasing you, but when the lion is gone, you relax.

Yes, yes, yes. But we don't. You know, the zebras do that. You know, we we need to learn from the zebras, but we

don't. We end up just staying here perpetually.

And maybe we're here, but we're just here, and we never actually get to rest and digest and relax. And that's tricky, and that's hard. And that is different for everybody to try to figure out some ways.

But even just some deep breaths can help to release some of that pent up energy and remind you to take it a little slower. Most of us are also not breathing with our full lungs.

We're not using our diaphragm. We're very shallow breathers up here. And our shoulders, stopping breathing, just even for a few seconds, can let some of that stress out, let some of the air out of that.

And I use for an eight just because I'm simple and it helps me remember stuff. But you breathe in through your nose for four out through your mouth for eight.

Do it for two eight times in a row, 4 to 8 times a day, and it can be at every red light. I used to say when you were watching TV in a commercial, but few of us are seeing commercials these days.

That's true. When you go to the bathroom every time you go to the bathroom, you know it doesn't have to be something big and take a whole lot of time or add extra stress to your life or one more thing on your to do list.

But it can give you that. Even if it's just for a few seconds now I'm going to reset all all of that stress. And I mean things like bathroom or red light or things like that, just as a trigger to remember to do it as a way to just kind of and then you start to, to do it more and more often.

And it can be a simple way to kind of let it go a little bit here and there. Yeah. And there you go. Another another thing that's completely free and think something we're doing already.

Right. We're already breathing. So we might as well take the breathe that we do and use it to our advantage. So those little things are so important. What else what else do you use for for stress management?

Laughter. Laughter is another good one. Not enough of us are having enough fun.

Stress management and nervous system reset

Not enough of us are playing enough. But we need to laugh a little bit. And I mean, you can look up Laughter yoga on YouTube. You can listen to a comedian that you like, you can read a funny book, whatever it takes.

I like to have little like laughter wars with my kids and get the giggles going. It doesn't have to be anything serious. It's supposed to be silly and having that fun, but that can actually help a little bit.

Do you use any like vagal exercises with your patient? That's something that I try to teach my patients to just like bring them out of that fight or flight mode and back into the writing digest mode.

I try to teach patients some vagal exercises. Do you employ those two, or is that is that something that that you don't use as much? Yeah, yeah. We talk about the vagus nerve all the time.

And you probably see like I have a stimulator on and there's certainly things out there that you can use. But and I actually honestly find myself humming all the time, just not even thinking about it, because I think I'm just subconsciously trying to get that vagus nerve to calm a little bit.

So yeah, that's a great there's and there's lots of tools to do that. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I remember when I first started learning about the vagus nerve and about those techniques and humming, I would just like I was driving, I would be driving.

The kids would be fine in the back seat. I would just start, I would start humming and all of a sudden then fine in the

back seat, me fighting traffic was just not that big of a deal anymore because I was able to manage it so much better because I was humming.

So those little hacks really go a long way. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, for sure, for sure. All right. What what? I know that there's so much to cover. Let's talk about, for example, movement, the importance of movement, the guideline.

What what do you what are you building into your course about those things. So any kind of movement is good movement generally speaking. But a lot of my patients are so tired and they have no stamina.

So there's no way a workout is going to be part of their day. And that's not what I mean by movement. I don't mean, you know, a high intensity workout in there.

If you're able to and you feel better when you do that, please do. But most of my patients just even, you know, taking a shower, that's the event of the day, right?

So the it's more about doing small things frequently to get that movement. And I know people use the word exercise, snack or the phrase exercise to me. Not.

But if what you can do that day is shower, then you take, then you shower, you know what you can do that day is walk to the mailbox. You walk to the mailbox.

But I just don't want people to be sitting all day, every day. We've got to move a little bit, and then you'll find you'll be able to move a little bit more, and then you can move a little bit more, and it will slowly build up to a spot where you're able to do more and more in there.

And so it doesn't have to be climbing Mount Everest to be considered a movement. It can be taking the stairs instead of the elevator that day. You know, it can be a little things, but we got to move.

We're meant to move. We're not meant to sit all the time. Absolutely, yes. When the body moves it, it does start healing. And just that, that movement.

And there's like so much science behind the, the, the why getting our lymphatics to move if we don't move or there's no, there's no heart to move lymphatics. Right.

So our movement has to, has to provide that for our lymphatics. So so yeah, so many reasons plus our, our endorphins get activated when we move. Right.

So there's there's so many reasons to move. That is and it's true. When we tell people you got to go move, it's not like okay, you got to go get a gym membership or train for a marathon.

It's it's your daily movements in your life are going to make a big difference, a bigger difference than if you just go and work out for an hour and then sit the rest of the day.

So those. Yeah, I, I recently heard, I learned that term that you said that exercise snacks. That is such a good concept of having, you know, taking breaks from your work, from whatever you're doing and doing a little bit more each day.

And I love that. I know, I love the phrase it's I know it was. Yeah. When I heard I was like, that is awesome. What other movement recommendations do you give your patients?

You know, so some of the other things are just, again, I kind of go back to that fun thing, having fun, you know, what is good for you. So some people really have gotten into pickleball, which is awesome.

Some people really like dance. Other people would rather walk. All right. What are the different movements? What are the different things that we can do that we enjoy, that we're going to want to do more of, you know, is, you

know, because I don't want to go to a weight training class.

That's not fun for me. That doesn't make me excited. But I could go to a dance class any night and have a fun time and not even know I'm working out and don't even know I'm, you know, pushing myself.

So I'm having fun. So I think that's important too, and is kind of creating that movement for you and for what gives you joy and what helps you feel better afterwards, not what makes you feel like it's a chore.

Yeah. Because yeah, I know there's so many people out there that are like, I hate exercise. And I'm like, that's because you haven't thought about the ways that you can exercise that are going to be fun for you.

And sometimes it's taking a walk with friends and you're you're talk to your friends while you're walking and then you forget you're walking. You forget that you're doing exercise because you're you're walking.

So there's just a gazillion different ideas of things that people can do. So that's just really, really, really good advice. What about so another thing I want to talk about, and I think this is a huge topic.

We could probably talk about this again for a long time. The importance of detox support. What are the things that you you teach people during before they start treatment with you and also during treatment?

Because that's a lot of the stuff that we work with, with our patients when they're undergoing treatment for a chronic illness, is making sure that their detox pathways are open.

How do you approach this with patients? Oh, yeah. 100%. I don't know if there's any chronic illness patient who's walked in here who does not have an issue with detox.

Everybody has trouble with it. And it's important because there's so much in our environment and it does emulate, you know, toxins bio accumulate. So my grandparents toxins affected me and I have to deal with that.

Movement, exercise snacks, and joyful activity

Plus everything that's going on right now toxicity. So you know, our our bodies are designed to detox all of our cells detox our liver detox, our lungs detox.

We're meant to detox. The problem is there's so much coming in we can't keep up. And then when we have an illness, we have a chronic illness. It just adds to that sludge and that toxin burden.

And it's even harder to really get those toxins out. And if we can't get them out, then they just re accumulate and we reabsorb them and we don't get rid of them.

And that can make you feel really crummy. I often think really that that Horkheimer reaction, that die off reaction that can come from Lyme and tick borne infections is in large part because of the toxic burden.

So when we detox, we actually help a lot with those type of reactions. And there are so many different ways to detox. I will always caution you can over detox, I've had patients trying to do all the things all the time, all day, and they end up feeling just as bad, if not worse, because they're moving too much of the toxins all at once and their system doesn't know what to do with all. Absolutely.

Yeah, we try so hard, our body tries to suppress the toxins and kind of hide them and put them away so that we can deal with them later. So if we start then moving them all all at once, it's too much when you think about, you know, but it can happen for sure.

You know, starting from the core then to food is also supportive of detox. I mentioned a little bit about cruciferous vegetables. Those are really high in sulfur compounds.

And that's really important for our conjugation pathways. In our detox pathways, fibers really important for detox. Enough water and having enough fluid kind of in our system is important for detox.

So food is first, you know, making sure that we're trying to help our system, help itself to detox and using that. And when it comes to toxicity, really the first thing I always think about is trying to limit exposures.

Not gonna be food. So if you're eating crummy food that's toxic that can be our environment. It could be our house. Our house can be making us sick with mold.

We could, you know into the air. If you live in a big city like I do, you know, maybe there's some toxicity there that's causing a place. So what can we do to help lower that burden?

First and foremost. And so eating cleaner foods, trying to get cleaner beauty products, cleaning cleaning products, making sure there's no mold, etc. in our house, cleaning our air, cleaning our water.

That's the first thing is what do we do? How can we reduce our exposure and we can't get rid of it? We can't live in a bubble, but we can be mindful and really try to cut back.

So yeah, there's there's a ton of stuff that we can do day to day. And even those people who have spent years working on decreasing their, you know, increasing their awareness so they can decrease the toxin load, I think we we continue to learn things every day.

As far as how we can continue to, to decrease the toxins that we take on. It's just it is a very toxic environment, unfortunately, that we live in. So yeah, absolutely.

Taking less toxins in and like you said, helping us move the toxins within our body, helping move and move them out, starting with food hydration. Yeah. Super basic, basic things.

I'm I'm sitting here listening to you wondering how much have this course available for, for the public. Because all of this foundational work is just it's important for absolutely everybody and not just people who are dealing with Lyme disease, people who are dealing with any chronic illness or any person on this, on this planet needs to listen to this advice to live a healthier life.

Yeah, yeah, that's the hope. It's really to help people help themselves and make these small changes that add up. And that alone will often make you feel, yeah, 20, 30, 40, 60% better just from that by itself.

Absolutely. All right. I want to talk more about detox. I just I just love this topic. What other pearls do you have for people listening as far as how they should conceptualize, detox or go about it?

I know that people want to find an easy way out. They want to go purchase a detox package that's a ton of supplements. I personally don't recommend that under.

If you're not being supervised by physician, somebody that guides you how to do that, I, I, I personally try to get people to, like you said, use their food, their movement, their water being to clean up.

Detox support, toxins, and constipation

Right. What what else do you try to how else do you guide people in this process. Yeah. So after you try to kind of cut back on your exposure, it's the next thing that I kind of think about is flushing those toxins out, kind of opening the access.

If you think about a sink that's overflowing, you know, if we can open the pipe a little bit and start to flush these things out, we're going to move more.

And that's that can be as simple as movement. Like you said, walking with the lymphatics, for example. But even

exercise and sweating and just kind of getting that out in a different way or breathing can help us kind of work through those toxins as well.

There are there are supplements that can help with this too. Include a thigh bone, milk vessel, liver support. That kind of stuff can definitely help, with that process and the foods that we talked about as well.

But I just like a good old fashioned Epsom salt bath, you know, do is in another way to just kind of open up some pathways and start to get stuff moving so that you can get it out.

And so again, it doesn't require or necessarily gobs of pills or powders or other things. And those can be useful, you know, when you, you know, there's probably a good amount of us who need to do a concerted liver diet, you know, liver detox 3 or 4 times a year.

You know, if not more. Yeah, yeah. And I mean, I, I meant I didn't mean to say that nobody should be taking pills and supplements for detox. I feel that once people are under the care of a physician or another clinician who can guide them through a detox correctly, these pills are not only important, but sometimes they're essential or to help get the toxins out.

Right. But it's it's scary to me, seeing people try to do it on their own without really understanding what they're doing. Yeah. And because you can over detox, like I mentioned before too.

And so you could feel really bad. And if you don't have someone there can kind of walk you through that and help you support that process, then you actually might end up making things worse.

Yeah. I've seen yeah, like you said, you can either do things too fast. I've also seen people take things like bentonite clay or other things that pull toxins out, but they don't understand that it'll also pull minerals and will let them absorb their nutrients as well.

So again, these things are important. They're very valuable tools. But we need to understand the potential risks that come with them. Just because it's something that you can buy over the counter doesn't mean there's actually no risk.

Also, another thing I was going to say was I like to talk to people about bowel movements because they're doing all these other things to try to detox, but they're only pooping once every three days.

And I'm like, you got to poop every day. If you want to detox, you can't be detoxing if you're not pooping every day. So that's like usually my first question when I'm working with people is like, okay, let's talk about your poop.

That's all right. That's that's part of being a doctor. You just talk, right? Great. I pull out my poop chart. What's what's it look like? Tell me about it.

Yeah, yeah, I know I like the Bristol stool chart. I'm like, okay, what number are we at right now? What's what are your best hacks as far as like trying to get people to because there's just people so many go with chronic constipation.

Do you have like some go to hacks for people that have chronic constipation? I obviously it has to be very individualized. Everybody's constipated for a different reason.

But like in general, is there like one a few pearls that you can give our listeners? Yeah, yeah. You know, I hate Miralax. So I hate that that gets prescribed a lot.

I don't think that's a safe way to deal with constipation. So I usually try to get people off of that and onto something else. One trick that I have found especially helpful in kids, but it's useful in adults too, especially if we're just really sensitive to things in general, is just putting some prunes in your water bottle so the whole prune into your water and I mean you can eat the prune greens are great for that too.

But if you know kids are fighting it or don't want it or what have you, just putting it in your water actually can help as well. Just kind of gently get things moving.

A little bit there. Oh, that's really cool. I had never heard that hack that is. But that's a that's a really good one. So it's a good one. You know, it's so funny because prunes are just dried plums.

You would think kids love them. You know, it's like a big raisin but not always. But the water works and it really does kind of help. And it gets people to drink more water too, which is also can be very helpful for for constipation and bowel movements as well.

Yeah, I think most of us are just chronically dehydrated and we don't we don't notice. I never myself, I have a hard time drinking enough water. It's not until I get exercising that I'm like, oh wow, I'm really thirsty.

I should have been drinking all day. So most of us are chronically dehydrated for sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah. All right. Oh, man. I feel like we've been talking for five seconds, but I just looked at my clock and I'm like, okay, let's.

We've been talking for a while now. Okay. Final topic that I want to talk to you about. In general, your what is your approach as an integrative medicine doctor, as a functional medicine doctor to these chronic complex diseases?

I know it's a super broad question, but I think there's always it's always useful to ask people, you know, how do they approach it? How do they wrap their brain around this?

What's what's your approach to it? You know, I think that Lyme disease is really a masterclass in functional medicine. I think in order to really, truly treat these chronic, complex illnesses, you have to know how the system works and how these things are intertwined.

So for me, it's not just about finding, you know, the the culprit, which we're always trying to do is what's the root cause, what is driving this? But it's also about healing and repairing the system and cleaning up the mess along the way.

Lyme causes a host of issues and it can cause all kinds of immune issues and adrenal issues and, you know, gut issues and all the things. And you can just treat it by giving you antibiotics.

You also have to deal with healing and repairing the gut by detoxing properly, by helping then the vagus nerve enough that is sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system getting them back on track.

You really have to be able to look at the system as a whole. So I don't have a lot of set protocols. You know, if A then B, it's who's in front of me, who is this person?

What is their history? What are their symptoms, what are the nuances and intricacies of that person. And then trying to treat them individually. And it's it's it would probably make my life a whole lot easier if, if there were, you know, more set protocols or so.

But absolutely. Yeah. I think I say at least three times a week, people ask me what's your protocol for such and such? I'm like, protocol. What do you mean?

I don't have protocols?

Functional medicine approach and key takeaways

No. It's like it's Bob's Lyme. It's Sue's mold. You know, you have to treat them uniquely and adjust and adapt and continue that process and unravel the layers of healing.

And I tell everyone it's a marathon. It's not a sprint. This is not an easy thing. You've been sick for five, ten, 15 years. It could take a while to get better, but you're going to see changes.

We're going to get better work. There are improvements that can happen. So that's that's you know how I try to approach it and and really learn about my patients and, and what makes them tick.

And if I can push higher doses or if I need to stay at lower doses, what makes sense for them and what's right for them as a person? Awesome, awesome.

This has been, like I said, like, I feel like I've been talking to you for five minutes. I know it's been way longer than that. And we're probably going to wrap things up pretty soon.

This is, you know, to me, this is privileged to have you here. You've been in the integrative space so much longer than I have. You are a mentor to so many of us that are learning how to are do are in the space of, of chronic complex illness, a functional medicine of Lyme disease.

I know that you've mentored a lot of my colleagues in the Lyme disease world. So such a privilege to have you here. We just blurted out like a gazillion things.

And people are like, okay, that was a lot. So I always like to have people have three takeaways. If you could tell people what the top three takeaways would be, what would those be?

I know, I know, it's impossible to summarize everything we said, but just to help people. Okay, okay, okay, I'm going to start with these three things.

What would those top three takeaways be. So I mean I would kind of sum it up with starting with the basics. You know going to those fundamentals. Are you eating well? Are you sleeping well. Are you stressing.

Are you moving well. You know, are you detoxing. Well let's go back to those foundations because that's very controllable things that you can work on starting today.

So go back to those basics. Learn how to play again. Try to have fun again with like even if you feel crummy, there's joy and there's light. And that's important part of this aspect.

And trying to find what that new joy and light play for you is. And my third tip and kind of take away would be to be your own advocate. And that's the hard part with this too.

There's so many of my patients that I've just been, you know, heartbroken by the by the medical system. And they know something doesn't feel good and they know there's something going on.

And you just have to continue to fight and find that provider who will listen to you and hear you and believe you and help you get to those next steps.

And so I think that that's important to not give up hope. There are people out there. There's lots of providers like us who will listen and take that as an honor and a privilege to help you along that journey.

So keep on it. Find the doctor and find the provider who's going to help you through this process. Absolutely. Wow. That was such an amazing note to end on.

I love knowing you. I love the energy that you bring to this world, and all the healing that you bring to your patients and the way you mentor us physicians.

And I'm looking forward to, you know, getting to know you more in the future and learning more about your course. Thank you so much for being here, doctor.

Casey Kelly, thank you so much for having me. It's been great fun. Thanks. Thank you. Bye. Thank you for tuning in to Doctor Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

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