Rethinking Keto: Maria Emmerich in Healing, Balance, and Listening to Your Body Transcript

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Introduction and guest overview

Welcome back to Everyday Ancestral, the podcast that brings ancestral wisdom into modern life. I'm your host, James Berry. There is a great quote from Maya Angelou, do the best you can until you know better, then when you better do better.

And that really sums up my next guest, Marie Emrick. She's a bestselling author and leading voice in the keto and carnivore space. she joins us to share how reversing her own struggles with depression and fertility and body dysmorphia through nutrition led to a global food as medicine movement.

From parenting in a junk food world to decoding health myths, this episode is raw, real, and deeply empowering. Thank you for joining us. Please enjoy Maria Amrik.

Maria, thank you so much for joing me. You are just known really around the world for your, the keto diet, now for carnivore. And I have to ask after all these years, of supporting people in dieting, specifically with keto.

Is there a secret to losing weight? Well, first off, thank you for having me on. It's been such an honor. Seems like yesterday we were hanging out in Tennessee together.

Yeah, very fun. Secret is, I need to know what your why is. Because what you're why, is it's going to drive how I design a program for you. Let's be honest, 99% of people want to lose weight.

Right? And if your, why it is to loose weight, you need let your body fat fuel your ketosis. You don't need be piling a stick of butter onto a ribeye.

and drinking coffee filled with MCT oil, butter, and cream, because that will have you gain weight rather than lose it. Does that make sense? Yeah. So your fat intake, so basically you're saying that you can get too much fat.

Doesn't matter the source. 100%. When I test people's blood, when they are adding a stick of butter to a ribeye, And they are not athletic, they're not lean, their triglycerides are going through the roof, Their blood sugars are getting worse.

If they already a type 2 diabetic, They're needing more insulin. So it is not safe, it's not healthy, It's is what I would recommend. What I love about how you've talked about it on other mediums is you kind of talk about in a very ancestral way.

You're like, if our ancestors were eating meat, they wouldn't go and try to create butter and find a stick of butter to put on it. No, they didn't have a butter chur.

You know, that's, and if you think about, we can talk about hunting later, but wild game, it's all very lean, right?

Keto weight loss and fat intake

It's pretty lean. And we didn' have the luxury of just choosing the fatty ribeye. We talked about this when we were at Meadstock. We did not have the luxury to just choose the ribs.

And there's this theory that we gave the lean meat to the dogs. No, we did that. We didn't glue that! We wouldn't have wasted that, yeah. What I also find interesting, I had the great pleasure to go to Africa and we were on a safari.

All of our guides said that their favorite animal was a wild dog. because it's very rare to see. We were lucky enough to a wild dog run in front of our car and kill an impala.

Do you know what the first thing it ate was? I can assume that orgamates, but you tell me. Yep, ripped the organs right out. That was the thing that it did and then it ran to get the rest of its tribe and they devoured the last of it.

But I just find it interesting that This carnivore community, they just talk about eating beef, bacon, butter, eggs, and that's not how our ancestral.

They didn't eat that way. And if they saw a strawberry patch, They weren't like, Ooh, I'm a carnival, or I don't need that. I was just talking about that, like if anything, the anthropologists are now coming out saying like we weren' t one specific diet.

We were opportunistic. If there were strawberries on the ground, we ate them. Yeah. 100%. And I just think there's this dogma that, oh, you know, can't eat this.

But anyway, I digress. If somebody wants to lose weight, it's like they're not putting together that your body fat can be your fuel for ketosis. And it can, but you have to let it.

So I use fat as a lever. I always ask people, what's your why? If your is to lose weight, we're gonna turn that fat lever down. If you are doing it for epilepsy, seizures, Alzheimer's, I'm gonna to turn fat dial up because that is the only reason why I would just check somebody's ketones.

Cause a higher ketone number does not mean better fat loss. It usually means the opposite. You can put MCT oil all over white rice. you're going to gain weight but you'll have higher key tones.

Interesting. But someone who has epilepsy or seizures, Alzheimer's, it is a big deal and ketones do matter. So I would definitely turn that fat dial up.

What is the difference for you between the keto diet and carnivore? Because a lot of people, I always saw them as very different, but some people are kind of seeing them a similar.

How do you see it? I see carnival as an extension of keto. You have ketosis and Carnivores just one extension So, and I do think it's kind of an ultimate autoimmune protocol.

If someone is very sick that comes to me with a lot of auto-immune diseases, I would go to a carnivore level one. But if it is for weight loss, we do these weight-loss challenges usually in January.

And we meal plans for them. The groups love it. They just gobble that up. So Craig does these meal-plans that are Ketovor, And then we have a carnivore meal plan, right?

Guess which one loses the most weight despite the macros being the same. Carnivor? The Kinovore? Really? Why do you think that is? Because when you go carnivo and when someone wants to lose weight, I cut out dairy.

You know, and I think people that do the carnivore diet, they consume quite a bit of dairy, including butter, cheese, all of that, because it's already a very limited diet.

Where if I open it up a little bit and include things that don't have a lot of anti-nutrients in them, but they add a lotta flavor to food, it all about compliance.

And when you can comply to something that has more flavor, because you can't have the dairy in either of them, the ketobor usually does a little bit better because then I can use, you know, I have like a Wendy's Frosty that's all protein and has a bit of sweetener in it, people love it and it's a great way for them to hit their protein macro without adding fat.

For sweeteners though, what are you a fan of? Um, something that I use daily and I'm not afraid of is like a stevia glyceride. It's a non-bitter stevea that like, and you know, I don't mind adding a little bit of that to like I am really into this like protein ice cream right now.

Anyway, um, Something that, Allulose is, if you can tolerate it, it's actually very helpful for people. it lowers blood sugar. And acts like GLP-1. Are you familiar with Dr.

Nadir Ali? I'm familiar with the person, yeah. He's a cardiologist out of Texas. And he did a lot of research about how just having two tablespoons in the morning, whether it be in your coffee, tea, whatever, you will naturally eat, I don't know what the percentage is, but quite a bit less throughout the day because your hunger signal is just not as intense.

Carnivore vs keto and sweeteners

I know Dr. Dom DiAgostino has done a lotta research on So he's pro Ali Los also. Yeah, that is his favorite. And similar to what you're talking about, he believes that it's the best out there for you.

Right, I do believe it is the Best. I however, am trying to gain some weight. So I don't use it like my sweetener all the time. Let's talk about the gaining weight, because I've been seeing you posting about that.

What stirred that? I didn't want to cry on you, I do want you to cry at me. I ended up in the emergency room three times in February. You did? Yeah. Um, I literally had to ride an ambulance.

But I ended up getting quite, so I don't have a lot of buffer, right? You've met me, I got the flu and everything made me like very nauseous. I didn't want to eat anything.

It was forcing food down, but I still wasn't eating enough. So I, got down to a really low weight and it wasn' because I was anorexic or anything, my husband's like, please gain some weight because I'm afraid this is gonna happen again where you get the flu and you can't eat and whatever.

I was nauseous for about a month and that's when I ended up, they had to call the ambulance. It was a whole fiasco. My kids saw everything. Oh, I am so sorry, Maria.

No, it's, you know, fat is our friend. You know, you need a little buffer, your hormones need it, and I get that. But my whole life has been about losing weight and helping other people lose weight.

And I felt almost like a hypocrite trying to gain weight, right? And I've talked about this on my YouTube videos about it, but you'd get a high. Like even though I felt like crap, I got a hi off that super low number.

I was like, whoa, and my whole set point kind of got lower. Hey, this is my new lowest point. Even though it was hard to lift weights, it hard just to live.

And was telling my good friend, my best friend about my situation. And this was about a month and a half ago. With tears running down her face, she said, do you want to die?

She's like, Do you Want to Die? And she's this total hippie, she would never go on social media. And to hear such a kind-hearted person kind of wake up Maria.

Yeah, like bottom line it, yeah. She talked about how strong I was in the past because we, how we met was, I think it was 15 years ago. I used to lift weights a lot at the gym.

this class called body pump. I don't know if you're familiar with that. No. It's kind of like an endurance training, but strength training. And her mom came up to me and she's like, wow, do you know how to swim?

I was like yeah, I know, how do swim. She goes, Do you how, to sail? And I said, no. The thing about sailing is you

only get four people on the boat. These sailing races, And the lighter your boat is, the faster it can go.

So you want really strong people that are small. And you met me, I'm like five feet, right? So we had all really small women that were really stronger.

She said, do you remember when you sailed with us, how strong you were? She goes, go back to that. You know, so it was just- What's different from then versus now?

Like, what did you do differently? Did you just go too far, you think? Oh yeah, went too for. Yeah. And I know all the tricks to help people lose weight and I just used them on myself.

Do you think that, see, this is fascinating to me because I'm constantly trying to balance like health with mindset. And really what you're being very vulnerable about is that sometimes that mindset of like what we're striving towards can get dangerously extreme.

and skewed, right? So our image of what we look like, you know, what is that? What did they dimorph it? Where your thought, how you see yourself is not accurate.

I'm constantly wondering about that. What's your relationship to that Like when I look down at myself or whatever, I think I looked fine, but I'll see a picture, like a pictures from meat stock or wherever.

You look like skeleton, that's not really you. So I see picture and be like, oh, it doesn't look good, right? But when would see myself in a mirror or just looked down on myself, I felt like I looked fine, good, whatever.

But already it's been maybe a month and a half and I've gained about 14 pounds since my lowest weight. Nobody saw me at that lowest wait because I was disgusting.

I look like a skeleton. Everybody's like, are you okay with this? I'm like yeah. What scares me is the sound of the ambulance. Yeah, and my whole life has also been about giving to others.

And so I work really hard. I wrote three books in a year. That almost killed me. My husband was really sick with Lyme disease. Everybody's like, oh, what's a big deal with lyme?

He couldn't even get out of bed some days. Oh yeah, Lyame is very serious. It is very serious, especially when we didn't catch it for like 10 years. Which is most people, that's the issue for most.

That and mold, right? Those are the two that people don't touch, but they're prevalent. Mold treatment with that, Babesia, Bartonella, like he was really sick.

For me, I was like, okay, I need to make sure I run my business. I make money so we don't lose our house again, because it's happened before. So that was very stressful.

And to think about I've never even sat down to a meal except for Christmas and Thanksgiving.

Maria's health crisis and weight gain journey

Because you're working so much? Yeah, usually I'll take a bite, do the dishes, take it by do laundry, you get by right, right. You know, like or whatever.

But I never would sit down and enjoy a me I do now. and it's much more enjoyable, but it was- What do you think that's about though? Because even when we were at Meat Stock, you wouldn't leave the kitchen.

You were constantly working, supporting, and that wasn't even why you were there. you weren't brought in to do that, yet you even admitted, if I'm here, I have to help.

Where did that come from? Well, first of all, they needed help- That's true. That's very true. And I don't want to be the person where like everybody's like, oh, I can't believe you're here.

I was like I'm not too big or too egotistical to help out in the kitchen. and I wanted people to know that I am a real person kind of thing, but I also really enjoy it.

It was really fun talking to you because I think like we understood each other, But I would rather be in a kitchen than small talk. Like I just don' want, that's just not my thing.

So I'm a busy body, like I can run marathons without getting tired, but to sit and chat with somebody just draws my energy, right? You know, I am an introvert.

They come. Yet what you're, it sounds like what your going through is in terms of having to shift your, you know really your intention and your mindset around your body is being, is its own challenge.

100%. And you mentioned about the dysmorphia. I think that people really get into intermittent fasting and extended fasting because they get almost a high off of it, right?

And people just need to, they're walking a delicate line when they do that because it can start taking over and I don't necessarily think intermittent fasting is bad.

I do think extended fasting can be very detrimental to muscle growth and things like that. But just being aware of that, there's just such a delicate balance of food.

And we live in a society where people are They're hard on you, they judge you. They write mean comments to you whether you are heavy or thin or whatever.

I remember I talked about this in my YouTube video, but someone's like, how do you stay relevant? And I was like what do, what you mean? They were like with all these beautiful young women coming into the carnivore space, How do stay you relevant.

Well, I didn't know that they had an education in nutrition. but bring it on because they're telling people to eat sticks of butter on top of a ribeye.

I don't think that that's going to work for the average person. Yeah. Well, and you have the experience to back that up as well, right? You've worked with thousands, thousands of people.

What do you think is the issue right now with how this diet culture is being presented specifically keto and carnivore versus the reality of what we need as humans, you know, in a sense, ancestrally.

What's the issue in your perspective with how modern society is handling a very ancestral concept of eating? Like the modern, I'm sorry, not understanding the question.

Well, I guess because you brought up this kind of trending, this new person who's all these women that are now following the carnivore diet. but you're seeing that, well, how they're portraying it is not how you would portray it.

So what do you identify, or is it just the fat? Do you just identify the issue with how these diets are being talked about by the majority of people is that they think that it's a free for all with fat or are there other issues around how those diets have been portrayed?

They're being portrayed that as long as you eat carnivore, everything will get better. You will lose weight, your thyroid will heal, you will not need medicine anymore, which couldn't be further than the truth.

And in all honesty, I work with a lot of young women who are in their reproductive years. When they go carnivore, despite eating plenty of calories, they often lose their cycle.

And I think it has something to do with gluconeogenesis, which parts of your body do need glucose, right? So it will use the protein to make that glucose.

Which is not like, we don't have to be like all proteins turning into sugar. That's what is enabling people to eat carnivore and eat keto, However, it's a very demand-driven process, a hard process on your body.

And I think when it is going through that, other parts of your bodies say, I don't think I should have a baby right now. Interesting. Yeah. It's almost like what diet you're feeding yourself is informing the rest of yourselves how to respond really, right?

if you're putting your body under that strain, then other biological systems are like, oh, okay, I'm going to shut down because clearly they're not in growth mode or they are not build mode, or whatever it is.

Right. And, you know, they say as long as you eat carnivore, calories don't matter, which I think is really funny. I heard someone have a conversation saying, oh, I thinks it's the carbs in the heavy cream.

That's why I'm gaining weight. No, it is the calories. It's fat in there, right? It is ridiculous to think that. It's like the minute carbohydrates in a scallop or an egg that's causing the weight gain.

That's not true, it's going to be all of the calories in that cup of heavy cream that you just consumed. Yeah, it's so interesting because I'm going back to that ancestral kind of way of thinking around diet.

I really have become like if there's any change for my 20 plus years in the health industry, It's that I do value small amounts now like the micro dosing things like so for organ meats, for example, I am not a big fan of like having a huge plate of liver like I actually believe a little is all you need every now and then, that the concept of getting these in microdosing but frequently is better and more absorbable personally.

That's what I found. But what has changed in terms of your perspective around dieting and just where you started versus now? Is it just what you've recently learned about, hey, I went too far or have there been other learnings?

No, and I don't think like my experience is the same as anybody else's. So this is my thing. I was just under extreme stress and food was the last thing on my mind.

And my whole life was out of control, I could control that. That was only thing I can control. Right? So it was a lot, we adopted kids if you don' know, everything was outta control and that was my control when it comes to diet, Um, what were you?

What was the question again? Uh, we'll just asking like what's changed for you. Yeah. From, you know, back then till, till you versus now. I mean, Back then, I mean, it's been over 20 years that I've written my first book, you know, Almond Milk and a lot of oxalates.

And I do think that, almond milk is not a good idea. I think nuts and seeds are something people should consider, especially if they have an oxaloate issue.

Um, some people can metabolize them better than others, but like raw spinach, when I remember when was told raw, spinach was bad, I was like, what? You are crazy.

But then being open to learning new things. I think that's what causes my husband's a scientist. And I that what helps us grow and help people more because, you know, we did get caught up in the dogma.

was about 10 years ago, like that you need more fat and less protein, right? Because protein turns into sugar. That was the thought. And He was all about like, we need to test people's blood.

We need find out more and realizing that no, more is not better, especially if they're in its lipotoxicity. So most people only have a certain amount of fat cells.

After about toddler age, you don't grow more fat cell. you just make them bigger, you fill them or empty them, right? So this is why it's called like the Asian paradox where people in Asia, they often can be thin and still have type two diabetes.

Stress, body image, and diet dogma

I've worked with a woman who was 105 pounds and had type 2 diabetes, she was so bad she had having strokes. And she said, we're such a vain society, I wish that I would gain weight when I cheated because I don't.

So I think I can get away with his diet or just eating all the sugar and I cant. So what people don't realize is that fat has only two places to go. It's either gonna go to storage or gonna use it for fuel.

Only about 8% has passed through the stools. If you had any more than that, do you remember Elestra, the wow chips? Yeah. you would have anal leakage.

This is not a good thing. So it has two places, storage or you're burning it. Most people are not exercising like they should or moving their body like should.

And so most of it is going to storage. When those fat cells get stuffed, that's like insulin is like a net holding everything back. I can't hold it back anymore when those cells are getting stuffed.

That's going happen with excess amounts of fat. So I just want people to be aware of that. I'm not saying eat no fat. But putting butter on top of a ribeye is excessive if you're not already lean.

Do you see if someone is eating a lean protein, whether it's fish or wild game, do you think that they should add it then? Or is it more like you are getting enough fat in your diet?

Ideally, you don't have to add to these other Foods? It's important to know where they're at. If they are trying to lose a hundred pounds, eating the fish alone is just fine.

You know, you only need about maybe 30 grams of fat a day. And most people get that if you're there eating some whole eggs, um, some salmon. They're going to get those 30g.

It was very, I have a protein sparing modified fast books. I don't know if your familiar with that. It's almost, it's very hard to get below like 20, 25 grams of fat.

Like it was really, really hard. Even using egg whites, even using fish, chicken breasts, you know, It was hard get that low. So your point being either way, like if you're just eating animal fish proteins, You're gonna get sufficient protein.

Fat. Oh, sorry, gotcha. Yeah. So what are you doing differently than to gain weight? Are you just eating more or are changing those macros? Both. More.

And I am adding more fat. I should maybe document just eating sticks of butter and people will realize how much fat you can put on. But that's not my goal either.

Also, I was featured in Muscle and Fitness magazine about 10 years ago and I want to get back to that. So body composition is also really important to me.

And just drinking all the heavy cream and eating sticks of butter, you can't, You're not going to build muscle on that, so. I'm just focusing on nourishing my body every day, sitting down and, eating and just prioritizing myself.

Like they tell you on out flight, put your mask on first. That's for a reason. You can help anybody else if you're passed out. And I have to imagine something that you have gotten exposed to in these last 10 or so years.

It's like your reach has grown a lot. You have a lots more opinions that your exposed too. As you said earlier, you're hearing, no matter what your body looks like, your hearing people's opinions left and right and no one seems satisfied.

But I had to wonder if we are truly designed to know what thousands and thousands of people are thinking, you know, and if that knowledge and awareness is causing all this stress and this buildup of stress.

Probably because I get the weirdest comments, messages, this and that. Someone actually asked me, I can imagine how upset you are at your body for not giving you your own children.

And I was like, what did you just say? Everybody says that my kids are lucky. No, I'm the lucky one. If you have the honor of meeting my children, you will understand how I am sure people see us as an adoptive family, we're different colors.

But to us, they're an extension of my arm. For someone to say that, and it's not even about just my size or whatever, It's everything, it's why did you adopt black kids?

Why did, you know, your husband can't stand up straight? It was like, dude, if people just had a little bit of kindness and compassion, and my latest YouTube video was with a few of my girlfriends.

I had little get together, I rented a cabin, they came from Canada, Ohio, like all over the place. And I was like, hey, do you guys want to be a part of my weight gain video?

Because right now they're all different sizes and they talk about how, yeah, I really thin at one point and now I'm heavier and this is my struggle. And my whole point was that just by looking at somebody, you don't know their story.

even though I'm pretty open, you still don't know my whole story, and to have compassion for people because I think we've lost it with the online community.

Yeah, absolutely. Well, I wanted to dig into more of your story actually because something I learned from you when we met was that You hunt, like you grew up kind of like a very, very outdoor, what we would call kind living some very specific ancestral lifestyles.

Can you share about that? My dad owned a plumbing and heating business. And so he was working all the time and I loved him very much. I wanted to spend time with him and he loved to hunt.

We don't gun hunt but we bow hunt with a bow and arrow. Everyone's like, bull hunt? I'm like no, bowhunt. Um, so I started bow hunting when I was 11 and then when was 12, I could go by myself or, you know, sitting in the stand by my self.

And so deer is, whitetail deer, is primarily what I bow hunt. I go every single fall and actually I live in Hawaii in wintertime and there's no season for hunting, access deer there, but you can hunt all year round.

But what's the, is it boar? What's it primarily? Access deer. Oh, that's primarily what you can hunt. What about, I thought there were all these wild boars on the island.

Yeah, you but I've never hunted them before. I'm not super familiar about the strategies, but deer I know a lot about.

Hunting, ancestral eating, and family food habits

And access deer is such a nuisance in Maui specifically that you could hunt all year round, which I find very fascinating. Cause here, it starts about September 16th.

And I'm out there all the time. Bow hunting is like the most primal way to hunt. So what is that like? Cause you can't mess up, right? No, you cant mess it up.

You need to be a really good shot. And it's always a joke that in the family, I'm the best shot cause my brother, he just gets so excited. He'll just shoot and it has to a perfect shot, they have to so close to you that, if the wind is wrong, their gonna smell you.

With a gun they can be so far. But it's a lot of strategy about where they're going to come from, which way the wind is blowing. Cause I have a bunch of stands.

We have lot a land here. I've a a of bunch stands and the stand I'm going pick is depending on which the way wind blowing that morning. Right. Because I don't want to sit in that stand if the winds going that way.

It's going towards the trail that they come. But also you have to be a really good shot. I have had the opportunity to hunt moose in Saskatchewan. With a bow?

So here's the thing. I was going to go with a bowl and my dad's like, don't. Yeah. He's, like don' because you have to be so close. They can be very aggressive and you don''t know that animal like you know a deer.

Like I know right where to shoot for a dear. And he's that animals so big and your not familiar with it. just had a lot of good advice with that. So there was a long story where I wasn't able to go, but hopefully the invitation's still open, so hopefully I'll have time.

There's just too much work right now, I can't leave. Well, imagine like, well, wait, you grew up, your dad was hunter, said you ate a lots of- Venice?

Yeah, venison, right? But then you did go through a period where you, had kind of fallen into that kind standard American diet, right? Was there a disconnect or was that always kind prevalent?

They both coexisted in your youth. They both coexisted. We hunt, we fish, and you don't get to hunt or fish if you're not going to eat it. That was kind of the rule.

Our freezers were always filled with meat and stuff, but it was always paired with rice, pasta. I was a really picky kid. If I didn't want to eat the stir fry they made with the venison, I could eat white rice with cinnamon and sugar and skim milk on it.

Like, what? That's terrible. But yeah, no, we always ate venisin. It can be gamey, but you have to know how to make it, yeah. You've written about how food impacts mood and behavior, especially in children.

What is it that you wish every parent knew about this? I think people should know that their lives could be so much better if their kids ate less sugar, less food dye, all the things.

My kids are awesome. I love to be around them because they eat such a healthy, I don't make them eat carnivore, but they're very animal-based. It seems real food-based too, right?

Real food based, yeah. And they know how to cook. They're 14 and 16 now. they have known how cook for many, many years. I think that's becoming a lost art.

But not just that, I wouldn't want to be around my kids that much because they're throwing fits and have an attitude. They can just, people in general are much more pleasant.

And I wouldn't have been able to handle my own stress if I would have eating a standard American diet. I have a puddle, I don't need a therapy. You know, nobody knew what was going on.

So you very much kind of credit your diet and your food choices with kind supporting your mental state. I was able

to surf that wave really well because I mentally okay because of what I ate.

How do you think we can support people in better connecting what they eat to how they feel or to their health? Because it seems like that's one of the most challenging things to adjust.

To your point, you were a pick eater, I would pick you too. And you even said this earlier that picky eating or eating in general and we are picky is a sign of like, hey, this is what we can control.

It's a side of, Hey, I need to control this cause everything else is crazy. So I find that most people don't change their diet unless they themselves get sick or someone they love gets sick.

How do we get them to support their health earlier than that? Well, it's kind of my story. Like my husband wanted me to change and gain some weight for a long time.

And he's like, I should have been more strict. I was like Craig, It's telling an alcoholic they can't have alcohol anymore. My goal is to give people the tools and like show them that you name your favorite food.

I probably have a recipe for it. Hostess ding dong cupcakes, Twinkies, ice cream, like everything that gummy bears, whatever you want. And when you make food that tastes great, that automatically tells your brain, wow, I feel great.

I can't believe I produced this to the point where there's a hospital locally that asked me to come in to help them make kitchens. And it was primarily to their most depressed patients cook food, give it to other patients to boost their mood and it worked.

Sometimes it's not just about following a specific diet, but it's about making, I find this as well, almost like meeting people where they are and helping them to not feel like they're being deprived.

Still making the gummies, still making these things, just changing the ingredients you're using so that they' re more real food-based. Right. But then also meeting them where their at, saying, okay, if you want ice cream, you have to make it.

the act of making it yourself boosts your confidence, boost your mood to the point where, hey, I wanna keep going. Hey, yeah, wanna to keep doing this.

I want to make good food for other people. And it's kind of like, what do you say?

Kids, food behavior, and practical meal prep

I forgot what it was called, but like passing it on, making, you know, passing on to somebody else, helping them feel good. Oh yeah. That passive forward kind.

Passive forward. Yeah. Interesting. I feel like as parents, we face a lot of challenges and hardships, particularly with our kids around. Not only navigating, you know, what food they're willing to eat, but then also once they get out in schools or into public, they are now getting exposed to how everyone else eats.

And I'm sure you face this as well. Like I just had my daughter come home from a camp on Monday and she was crying, just saying, I don't want you to give us, give me this.

We've given her a quinoa salad. we don' even normally do that, we're trying to get more vegetables in there. She likes them. So we were giving her that she's like, I don't want this anymore.

All the kids are eating something different than that. And it's. Like, you like this? And she was like. Yeah, but I want to be, like I. Want to. Be normal.

I wanna be like everyone else. It's hard because I look at what's normal or that standard American diet and I go, well, that's not. That's actually bad.

To me, I judge it. I'm like, that is not healthy and it's not sustainable in terms of your health. Your health is no sustainable on it and anyone kind of eating certain ways, they may be paying less right now in It costs less than, you know, making some of this food from scratch and getting these kind of more quality ingredients.

But you pay for it later in hospital bills. And I know that some other stuff is cliche, but I found that to be true. I've worked with so many people and I see how this stuff plays out and it's not good.

How old is your daughter? How older? You have two daughters. Two, 13, younger than your boys, thirteen and nine. So. We live in areas where there's not really any other black kids.

They're used to being different. I myself have always been an outsider. Not that I didn't have friends, but I've always different, and I'm okay with that.

And I think, I know I've instilled that with them, they're okay with being different. They're OK with wearing something that nobody else would wear. And they are OK doing their hair like nobody would do.

There are okay eating something nobody will eat. So as they were eating their hamburger patty, looking at their friends, that looks like cancer, sugar, diabetes, and I can't believe you're eating that.

First of all, instilling them the confidence of being different, because being the same is boring. I want to be different. Look what it brought me. look at my life.

If I would have been the Same as everybody else, I'd be working at a cubicle. Boring. So teaching them to be different and second of all, teaching what the food does.

Like they've seen all my presentations. They know what The Capri Sun is doing to those kids. Because The capri sun was on the, we just watched like Lilo and Stitch or something.

Caprice was big on that. And they're like, dude, you know, get rid of the sugar. So I think those two paired together is very, very powerful. But also, guess what?

I'm really good at making delicious recipes. So they don't feel left out. First of all, they love the food. Second of, all they're very confident. And third of they know what food is doing.

They're like your brain, like, oh, gosh, that's going to put you in the hospital when you get older. How do you speak to people though around time management around this stuff?

Cause that's of course the probably the top two excuses are it's expensive. And then the other one is I don't have time to make this. Okay. Nobody's busier than I am.

I'm working with celebrities. We homeschool our children. Like I told you, I wrote three books in a year. I had a sick husband. The average American watches five hours of television a day.

It's about priorities, right? We set aside money to buy this new car or whatever, but we don't. prioritize what we're feeding our family that night. That's just ridiculous to me.

Second of all, we did a YouTube video. This was probably, I don't know, 10, 15 years ago where I stayed at home with one of our kids and my husband and the other son went to Chipotle.

So we made Chipotle at Home. They drove to chipotle got it to go. And it was about 2.30. It wasn't busy. They are the only people in line and it's only like four miles away from our house, all highways, so super fast.

By the time they came home with the Chipotle, we were done cleaning up. We had leftovers. and It was a about a fourth of the price using organic beef, All organic ingredients.

it Was so much cheaper. more expensive to eat healthy, it's expensive go to a restaurant. It takes a lot of time to get food to go, right? It just takes time.

Uber Eats is super expensive when you add up all the charges, but I'm also all about showing people how I do it, how do I as a busy working mom with homeschooling.

When I make stuff like, my kids love my Italian chili. It tastes like pizza in a bowl. I'm not gonna make one batch of it. And then you freeze it, right?

I don't actually, they eat it so fast. They're like teenage boys, but you could freeze half of that if you want to, But they heat it up as needed. You know, it's super easy for me.

they love My Mama Maria meatballs. That's not named that after me, It's a whole story. But I'll make the meatballs and I will do a quadruple batch. and most of them go in the freezer.

And so they can just take a couple of out, five of em out and put them on a tray, put em in an oven, like they know how to do that. When I make anything, it's all about planning ahead.

If you don't like to cook, get a slow cooker because it does it for you, or an Instapot. I still love my slow-cooker. But slow cooking is great to do in the summertime because it doesn't heat up the house.

It does it all for you. You come home to a beautiful smelling house, and this is what I would do when I had a real job and I'd had to leave the home. I will fill my slow cooker the night before, I have three of them, so if I wanted different things, fill them the next night, put them in fridge, take them out in morning before I left for work, turn them on, then we'd come to delicious smelling home, just make sure you plug it in, one time I didn't plug in.

You know, it's a really… good point about slow cookers or even pressure cook is not heating up the home. I had never actually thought about that, but it's so true.

Cause anytime you turn on the oven or the stove top, you're immediately heating it up at home during hot months. And it was just no fun. That's why I think so many people do either eat out or they stick to salads a lot during the summers as they're trying to escape that.

People think of it as a winter thing or a fall thing. Like no way, that's when I get them out in the summer. Yeah, no, it is really smart. Because I want to be on my bike ride.

Like, I don't want be at home cooking. I wanted that to cook it for me. Yeah. And I find them also really forgiving. As long as you put enough liquid in, the food always kind of turns out great.

You add some flavor, but for the most part, everything gets cooked perfectly. It just always seems to work out with a slow cooker. Oh yeah, that's why I'm a big fan of the slow cooker, 100%. Like whether it be chicken or even like venison.

You know, you get that toughest piece of venisin. It can tenderize that when it's slow cooks.

Building an animal-based food culture

And then you infuse flavor, like people don't, I know you know about fish sauce, but add flavor, add umami to all of the broths that are going on, because that's going to infuse so much flavor.

You're like, wow, why do I like going into a restaurant rather than eating at home? It's because you use powdered garlic. Use real gar, not garlic, ginger, use real ginger.

We use a real garlic use fish sauce. use the stuff that makes really delicious flavors that you're looking for at a restroom. Yeah, I always say it's like use ingredients versus things that have ingredients.

I love that. Okay, so last question. If you could design a modern food culture from scratch based on what you know now, what would it look like? I like the word animal-based.

I don't know who started that, but I really like animal based because Protein should be the center of our plate because our bodies are always turning over.

Our heart tissue's always turn over, our liver's are turning always over our skin, we're shedding so much skin right now as we are sitting here. our hair, nails, Our whole body, it's like our house.

It's the building blocks of your body. And we always shedding, always breaking it down. You need to rebuild it. If you don't eat enough protein, It's going to break down your muscle because guess what?

Your heart tissue is more important than your muscles. And it needs amino acids. So I would build that plate off of protein. Whatever protein you like.

I want you to love the food, right? And then with that, you know, I think that it would be important to have enough carbohydrates so you don't need to use gluconeogenesis.

That protein can go towards rebuilding your heart, your liver. And then adding fat because most protein does have, like a rib eye does, have enough fat and stuff, but for your hormones and things like that is important.

But that's how I would design it. And I want people to realize that they might think, oh, this is too hard. I don't want to change my diet. I really love my gummy bears or whatever.

Your taste buds turn over every 14 days. If you give yourself 14 days, because I think some people are like, oh, I can never have this. Oh, now you're going to try.

But if you'll give yourselves, say I'm going do it for 14. After those 14, days your taste buds are going change to whatever you gave it during those days.

So a lot of times giving yourself that short term goal will set you up for long-term success. Yeah. And I want to just also honor you as we close this, you shared in this how you're being vulnerable about your process with not only this journey in the health space, but just specifically with your own body.

And what I think you are modeling that we cannot underestimate is that it doesn't matter what our heads think. We have to listen to our body. And if your body is saying, hey, you're getting hospitalized or this is going on, You gotta listen.

You got to Listen. Doesn't it matter if you head's like, but I'm thin or I am perfect. But I talked to people about losing weight. So that means I have look like this.

Like, no, your don't. Your body, is gonna inform you of what is working and what's not working. What our job is, Is to LISTEN. And so I just want to honor you for listening.

I wasn't listening, I would be so hungry in the middle of the night, and I'd curl up in a little ball face down because it was the only way the hunger would stop.

So I'm listening I promise. And I hope you'll also hear this. I'm just feeling called to say this, but like, I know we've known of each other for a while but we really got to know each better at that meat stock.

And, and I just wanna mirror back to you that you are such a beautiful person. You're such kind and generous person and that, you don't owe anyone anything.

You are enough, exactly how you are, and I just wish only the best for you and Craig and your boys, because you deserve everything you have. You really do.

And you've nothing to prove. I appreciate that. Thank you so much for just coming on the episode. And thank you all for joining us. I've thoroughly enjoyed spending time with you, Maria, and I hope we get to do this again in person or on the podcast.

Yeah, we have to hang out again, for sure. For sure All right, everyone, thank you so much for joining us and please stay curious, listen to your body.

It's our job, we gotta listen. We gotta to these signs. Take care. Thank you, so, much, for joing me on Everyday Ancestral. If you enjoyed this episode, hit subscribe so you don't miss the next one.

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Stay curious, live well, and keep it ancestral.