The day your health stops feeling like work Transcript

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A High-Capacity Woman Struggling With Health

She runs a business. She's raising kids. She runs a business. She's raising kids. She manages a full household. And at She manages a full household. And at some point during her appointment, she some point during her appointment, she said something that got me thinking. She said something that got me thinking. She said, "I'm so good in every other area said, "I'm so good in every other area of my life. I don't know why I can't get of my life. I don't know why I can't get this together." this together." That sentence doesn't describe a That sentence doesn't describe a discipline problem.

discipline problem.

Why This Is a Design Problem, Not Discipline

It actually describes a design problem. It actually describes a design problem. And there's a significant difference. And there's a significant difference.

Because if it were a discipline problem, Because if it were a discipline problem, she wouldn't be exceptional everywhere she wouldn't be exceptional everywhere else.

else. else. She's mid-40s, She's mid-40s, a very high-capacity person. a very high-capacity person. Gets up early, runs a packed schedule, Gets up early, runs a packed schedule, solves problems all day.

solves problems all day. And people around her rely on her. And people around her rely on her.

How Daily Life Crowds Out Health Decisions

Her discipline is not in question. Her discipline is not in question. She runs on it constantly. But when it She runs on it constantly. But when it comes to her health, there's a recurring comes to her health, there's a recurring pattern. She starts eating better on pattern. She starts eating better on Monday. She squeezes workouts in between Monday. She squeezes workouts in between responsibilities. She plans to be in bed responsibilities. She plans to be in bed by 10:00. And for a few days, sometimes by 10:00. And for a few days, sometimes even a week, it works. Then a kid gets even a week, it works. Then a kid gets sick, work spills into the evening, sick, work spills into the evening, dinner gets pushed late, and then sleep dinner gets pushed late, and then sleep gets cut short.

gets cut short. And everything unravels. And everything unravels. And now she's frustrated because she And now she's frustrated because she knows she's capable of more.

knows she's capable of more.

Decision Fatigue and the Limits of Willpower

So she comes in and she says, "I just So she comes in and she says, "I just need to be more consistent." I want to need to be more consistent." I want to explain why that's actually exactly the explain why that's actually exactly the wrong diagnosis.

wrong diagnosis. We carry this assumption that health is We carry this assumption that health is a willpower problem. a willpower problem. That if you could just summon enough That if you could just summon enough discipline, enough consistency, discipline, enough consistency, and when things fall apart, we treat it and when things fall apart, we treat it as if it's a personal failure, a as if it's a personal failure, a character flaw, some version character flaw, some version of "I guess of "I guess I just don't want it enough." I just don't want it enough." But

what I actually see in clinical But what I actually see in clinical practice, over and over again, practice, over and over again, is that the people who struggle most is that the people who struggle most with health consistency are often the with health consistency are often the most disciplined people in every other most disciplined people in every other domain of their lives.

domain of their lives. That should tell us something. If If That should tell us something.

Pre-Deciding to Make Healthy Choices Automatic

If If discipline were the issue, you'd expect discipline were the issue, you'd expect undisciplined people to have this undisciplined people to have this problem. But that's actually not what I problem. But that's actually not what I see. I see high capacity, high see. I see high capacity, high functioning people with the exact same functioning people with the exact same pattern. The common thread isn't a lack pattern. The common thread isn't a lack of discipline. It's something of discipline. It's something structural.

structural. structural. Her life is configured in a way that Her life is configured in a way that makes health optional. Every single day makes health optional. Every single day she's making decisions she's making decisions like, what am I going to eat today? When like, what am I going to eat today? When am I going to work out today?

am I going to work out today? Do I have time for this? Is this the Do I have time for this? Is this the right choice? And those decisions don't right choice? And those decisions don't exist in a vacuum. They're competing exist in a vacuum. They're competing with every other decision she's already with every other decision she's already making. For her business, for her team, making. For her business, for her team, for her kids, her household. Health for her kids, her household. Health decisions keep getting placed at the end decisions keep getting placed at the end of a very long queue.

of a very long queue. Here's what I've observed clinically. Here's what I've observed clinically.

Building Predictable Routines and Stable Habits

You can't win a game that requires You can't win a game that requires constant real-time decisions when your constant real-time decisions when your bandwidth is already fully allocated.

bandwidth is already fully allocated. This isn't a character issue. This isn't a character issue. It's a capacity issue. Decision fatigue It's a capacity issue. Decision fatigue accumulates. Every choice slightly accumulates. Every choice slightly depletes what's available for the next depletes what's available for the next one. And when someone is already making one. And when someone is already making high-stakes decisions all day, the high-stakes decisions all day, the optional ones lose. Health decisions are optional ones lose. Health decisions are uniquely vulnerable to this uniquely vulnerable to this because the consequences are invisible because the consequences are invisible in the short term. If you skip a workout in the short term. If you skip a workout today, nothing really happens. If you today, nothing really happens. If you eat poorly tonight, your labs won't show eat poorly tonight, your labs won't show that for months. So, the brain, quite that for months. So, the brain, quite rationally, deprioritizes it.

rationally, deprioritizes it. What we call inconsistency is usually What we call inconsistency is usually just the predictable output of a life just the predictable output of a life that was never designed to produce that was never designed to produce consistency.

consistency. consistency. I want to draw one distinction here I want to draw one distinction here because because because it changes the way we look at this.

it changes the way we look at this. Discipline is effort applied in real Discipline is effort applied in real time. Every day you show up to make the time.

Reframing the Problem as a System Issue

Every day you show up to make the right choice under pressure, competing right choice under pressure, competing with everything else on your plate. It with everything else on your plate. It works until the pressure exceeds it.

works until the pressure exceeds it. And eventually, it does. And eventually, it does. Design is effort applied once upstream Design is effort applied once upstream before the moment of the decision.

before the moment of the decision. You pre-decide. You build the structure, You pre-decide. You build the structure, and then the right behavior is just what and then the right behavior is just what happens.

happens. happens. Not because you summoned some willpower, Not because you summoned some willpower, but because you removed the decision. but because you removed the decision.

The goal isn't to become more The goal isn't to become more disciplined about your health. The goal disciplined about your health. The goal is to build a life where the healthy is to build a life where the healthy choice is already answered before the choice is already answered before the question even gets asked. Let me be question even gets asked. Let me be specific about what this actually looks specific about what this actually looks like.

like. like. Because it sounds abstract, but it's Because it sounds abstract, but it's actually really not. When protein actually really not. When protein becomes the default, you're not deciding becomes the default, you're not deciding whether to hit your target. The whether to hit your target. The structure is already there. The food is structure is already there. The food is already prepared, or it's already already prepared, or it's already ordered. There's no ordered. There's no deliberation here deliberation here happening.

happening. happening.

Creating a Health System That Runs on Its Own

When strength training is When strength training is non-negotiable, non-negotiable, non-negotiable, it's not on the maybe list. It's on the it's not on the maybe list. It's on the calendar, like an important meeting. The calendar, like an important meeting. The decision has already been made. When decision has already been made. When sleep happens automatically, your sleep happens automatically, your evening runs the same way every night.

evening runs the same way every night. Same time, same cues, same environment. Same time, same cues, same environment. Your body isn't waiting for you to Your body isn't waiting for you to decide. It already knows what's coming.

decide. It already knows what's coming. And here's the shift. When it's working, And here's the shift. When it's working, you don't feel disciplined, you feel you don't feel disciplined, you feel predictable. And something else happens predictable. And something else happens here that most people don't expect. It here that most people don't expect. It becomes boring.

becomes boring. No drama, no extreme swings, no constant No drama, no extreme swings, no constant negotiation. And that's actually not a negotiation. And that's actually not a problem at all. That's actually the problem at all. That's actually the goal.

goal. goal. Because excitement often comes from Because excitement often comes from instability, but boring is stable. instability, but boring is stable.

Boring is predictable. Boring is Boring is predictable. Boring is actually mastery. actually mastery. What I told this patient, and what I What I told this patient, and what I tell other patients in a similar tell other patients in a similar situation as hers, is that the problem situation as hers, is that the problem isn't her discipline. Her discipline is isn't her discipline. Her discipline is actually exceptional.

actually exceptional. The problem is that she's applying it in The problem is that she's applying it in the wrong place. the wrong place. She's using discipline to make decisions She's using discipline to make decisions that that that could have been pre-decided. She's could have been pre-decided. She's fighting a daily battle that could have fighting a daily battle that could have been settled once.

been settled once. And when I reframe it that way, And when I reframe it that way, something often shifts with people. something often shifts with people.

Because now the problem isn't who she Because now the problem isn't who she is, it's how her life is just is, it's how her life is just configured. configured.

configured. And that's a design problem. And that's a design problem. And design problems have design And design problems have design solutions. solutions.

solutions. What actually changed for her wasn't a What actually changed for her wasn't a new habit. new habit. It was just a conversation. It was just a conversation.

We sat down and we wrote out every We sat down and we wrote out every health decision she was making. What she health decision she was making. What she ate, what she when she moved, when she ate, what she when she moved, when she slept. And she decided once how each of slept. And she decided once how each of these would go.

these would go. That was the work. That was the work. Not the follow-through. The Not the follow-through. The pre-deciding. pre-deciding. pre-deciding.

Everything after that was executing a Everything after that was executing a decision already made. And because the decision already made. And because the decision was already made, it didn't decision was already made, it didn't have to compete with anything else.

have to compete with anything else. It wasn't optional, it just ran. It wasn't optional, it just ran. This is the progression. This is the progression.

You understand the framework, you shift You understand the framework, you shift your identity, you shape your your identity, you shape your environment, and eventually it runs on environment, and eventually it runs on its own.

its own. When she came back in, she wasn't trying When she came back in, she wasn't trying to track everything. She wasn't trying to track everything. She wasn't trying to get on a streak. She wasn't trying to to get on a streak. She wasn't trying to be more consistent. She just was.

be more consistent. She just was. The behaviors were there. She had The behaviors were there. She had stopped deciding. stopped deciding. Health had stopped feeling like a Health had stopped feeling like a project and started feeling like project and started feeling like something that just runs.

something that just runs. The goal isn't to become someone who The goal isn't to become someone who tries harder. tries harder. It's actually to become someone who It's actually to become someone who doesn't have to. If your health still doesn't have to. If your health still feels like something you have to manage feels like something you have to manage every day, that's a sign the system every day, that's a sign the system isn't built yet. If you want to see isn't built yet. If you want to see where things are breaking down, you can where things are breaking down, you can start by taking the metabolic quiz. And start by taking the metabolic quiz. And if you want help building this into your if you want help building this into your own life, own life, that's exactly what we do. Please like that's exactly what we do. Please like and subscribe for more and we'll see you and subscribe for more and we'll see you