The Power Of Hope: How Mindset & Lifestyle Impact Cancer Recovery Transcript

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Introduction to Lifestyle Medicine and Dr. Scott Stoll

Well, welcome back, everybody, to the plant based cancer summit. This is so dear to my heart. As you know, there's so much information I want to impart to you.

And that is important to see that we're talking about that today. The power of lifestyle medicine and all these components working synergistically to give you hope and to give you the actually ability to change the course of your future.

So so today, we're lucky to have with us a dear friend of mine and just a really impressive and wonderful physician, Doctor Scott Stoll. And let me tell you a little bit about him for you.

And today, what we can talk about today, he's an inspiring leader in lifestyle medicine, a board certified physician specializing in sports and regenerative musculoskeletal medicine.

He was on the actually on the Olympic team on the 1984 Olympic bobsled team. And his doctor has been a visionary. He co-founded the Plant Attrition Project and the international plant based Nutrition Health Care Conference and the International Journal of Disease Reversal and Prevention.

So really some important work he's done. He's also served as a founding strategic advisor to the Institute of Healthier, Healthier Living in Abu Dhabi, a UAE, and the creator of the Help conference, which develops regenerative lifestyle solutions for underserved communities across the globe.

So he's been dedicated to helping people his whole life and his health. And this extends to one of the my loves, too, is regenerative agriculture reserves.

And the board of directors for The Rodale is Rodale Institute, bridging the vital connection between human health and the health of our soil, plants and our planet.

He's also served on the Whole Food, Scientific and Medical Advisory Board. He continues his popular one week total Health immersion retreats in Florida, where these life changing events people recover from their health and reverse disease and restore emotional balance.

And he's written numerous books and scientific articles. He speaks at conferences across the world. He's been featured on major platforms like the Doctor Oz Show.

He's had a PBS special in 2018. He's been involved. He's been, interviewed doc in part of documentaries like The Game Changers, Eating You Alive, Disease Reversal, Hope, Plant Wise, and the upcoming revive TV series.

So his work continues to inspire and empower individuals to reclaim their health and build vibrant, sustainable future for generations to come.

Hope, Brain Science, and Behavior Change

And he's exciting to for, for him to be involved here. But to see Doctor Still's work in improving people's health over the whole world, not even just in our own country, but throughout the whole planet, it's just really been, pleasure to watch.

All right, Scott, we're glad you're here with us today and how you can. And thank you. So thank you. And I just want

to thank you at the outset to, many of you might not know that are watching this, that, Doctor Furman was one of my first mentors.

As I started my journey more than 20 years ago, I discovered that Joel Furman lived just across the the Delaware River in new Jersey. And I went and spent time with you.

And, you really helped solidify so many things in my mind and showed me what was possible and gave me hope as a physician. So I just want to appreciate you, Joel, for your friendship and your mentorship in my life.

And, many of the things I'm doing are seeds that you planted in my life. So thank you. That's so beautiful. Thanks for saying that. The same that Scott and I also tremendously value our friendship and and the good you've brought to this world.

So it's been wonderful to see that. Thank you Joe. All right. So I know we've been talking here about this, how powerful life some medicine can be. And I know you add a great value value offer here how these things work synergistically when you Simon, to improve your nutrition and improve your emotional outlook simultaneously, you get more bang for the buck, right?

So go and start with going into that on, what how we use hope or how we can help people use hope as part of the medical solution and why that's not part of modern medicine today.

Why it like they like they're leaving that out. Yeah. Yeah. This is a really interesting part of medicine as you and I were both trained, you know, I think through the reductionism that came in the history of medicine out of the enlightenment period, where we were studying, you know, cells and excited about the inner workings of a cell, we forgot to always step back and say, well, the cells connected to systems and the systems are connected to a human, and the human is not just a body, it is a soul, and emotions and connections and community and relationship to the entire world.

And so in that compartmentalization, we've lost that sense. And some of this also is the, you know, the Greek mindset of dualism and linear thinking that we have we have kind of disembodied, medicine from the holistic aspect of the person.

But the good news is, you know, that out of these fields, like psycho neuro immunology, we've begun to understand that, you know, our emotional state, what we think and believe about ourselves and the world around us, and the emotions that are associated with those belief systems have a profound impact on our immune system, on our inflammatory system, on our even our ability to begin planning and enacting a strategic, lifestyle to intervene for cancer is affected by those thoughts and emotions.

And as we know in medicine, we're not taught these things. We're taught the strict discipline of, you know, differential diagnosis, create a plan around that, write a prescription, do an intervention, order a study.

And oftentimes it's conveyed to patients not in, I hope filled way where we're going to solve a problem. We're just managing something. And I don't know if you ever experienced this to, Joel, but, many patients come to see me and they will say, you know, the doctor told me this is the worst condition.

It's only going to get worse over time. They've never seen anything this bad before. And no wonder they're not willing to try anything different. If they're thinking that there's there is no hope.

It's a shame. Yeah. So and we're talking here about, the importance of action. People taking action and taking a different action to control their health destiny.

So we're saying here that making change can be difficult for people. It can be overwhelming. It could be like they can give up. And right, there's there's something here that you're saying that, utilizing hope impacts their ability to sustain this behavior, change and feel good about it and feel that they can they're doing something that, that it actually helps them emotionally and helps their immune system when they've put this together in a way that the fact

they're doing something is going to give them hope, and the more hope is going to enable them to do something and sustain it works both directions, right?

Yeah. It's bidirectional. Absolutely. And hope is really not just a wish, but it's an actual belief that a future state can be obtained. I'm going to show just a couple of quick slides, if that's okay, that, because I think it's really interesting to, to see, where this where it's actually found in the brain so that we can know that, this is not just we're not just dealing with something that is hypothetical.

We're actually there's there's measurable, impact here. And so they they identified the location of hope in the brain, which I think is so interesting.

That hope is located here in this orbitofrontal cortex of the brain. And what does that part of the brain do? What's involved? It's involved in reward related processing.

So, you know, seeking a reward and processing and feeling good about that reward. Again, it's that dopamine that makes us feel good about what we're doing.

It's involved in the initiation of motivation. So just what you were saying, Joel, it's like hope gives us the ability to be, to take action, to move towards a goal that we believe is possible.

It's involved in problem solving. And this is really important, in, you know, lifestyle change today because we're asking people to make a lifestyle change in a culture that does not support that lifestyle.

The food system does everything to undermine that recommendation of a whole food plant based diet. But when you have hope, you can begin problem solving and you can, you know, be linked to goal related behavior.

And I'll just I'm just remembering, a patient of mine that was the prime example of hope and problem solving. And you've had patients like this, too. This is a woman that came to my office, and she had terrible rheumatoid arthritis, and her son was on opioids at 19 for pain.

And she was in a, bitter divorce, living in a borrowed camper and didn't have much money. And so she said, you know, I don't want to take medications.

I, my son needs help. What can we do? So I couldn't solve those problems for her in my office.

Fear, Cancer, and Reframing Diagnosis

But I told her a story about somebody else that reversed their rheumatoid arthritis with a whole food plant based diet instructor on what to eat, how a plate looks, how to begin getting a good night's sleep, and working on those things that reduce inflammation and, allow the immune system to heal.

And she grabbed a hold of that, and she had Hulk for the first time that she could change her circumstances. So she and her son, without much money, said, we've got to find plants.

Where can we find those? And so they I don't know how they discovered this. I forgot to ask them all, but they said they discovered that at 2:00 in the morning, this grocery store threw away all their produce in the dumpster behind the supermarket.

So they would drive up and they would gather all this beautiful produce out of the dumpster. And she took pictures and showed me the beautiful produce that she was getting out of the dumpster.

And they started eating this food, and she sent her rheumatoid arthritis into remission. Her son's pain got better. We got him off opioids. And now not only was she feeling better, but she had enough strength.

And we had activated this part of her brain that she could find her way through some of the other life challenges.

And so, you know, this aspect of hope is really exciting that, you know, when we're sharing stories and you've always done such a good job with lots of people that have reversed disease, we're inspiring this part of the brain.

That actually helps people to make those life changes. And I think that you're right that the medical profession can actually do the opposite at times.

And people generally, you know, the woe is me, they feel like their life is over when they get a negative diagnosis and is just kind of living without hope, which then makes their disease worse.

Right? That's right. And when we're talking about cancer, you know, cancer is one of the most fear based diagnoses. You know, it's that more than almost any other diagnosis, somebody receives the diagnosis, it creates fear.

And the entire industry of cancer treatment is based on fear, hopelessness. And, there's very little hope in that treatment. And, I have just a couple of slides on that.

So, you know, when we're thinking about cancer in the body, the importance of the body's immune system, as we can see here, the second one, the biological signature of hope.

When somebody has hope, they can actually measure that they have lower inflammatory levels. IL six and lower cortisol levels, which your audience now knows that you know, lower cortisol improves the health of the microbiome, restores balance and homeostasis to the immune system.

Allows, you know, the downregulation of some of the blood vessels that grow in angiogenesis to the, the cancer cells. And it also elevates endorphins and dopamine and immune function.

So these high hope individuals have diminished stress reactivity, more effective emotional recovery. But the last one here is hopelessness, which we often see in cancer today.

And this is a study looking at acute hospitalization. It was a strong predictor of mortality. And those that were were hospitalized. So, you know, inspiring hope is more than just giving people, a better vision for what's possible.

Were actually changing their immune system or empowering their, immune cells to begin recovering, fighting the cancer cells. And healing the body. Yeah.

You know, it makes me think, too, about, how the medical profession promotes fear. Even with screening tests, we're finding now about a third of the people with getting even mammograms who get diagnosed with breast cancer are overdiagnosed.

Those cancers were kind of like an in between the cancers that would have never killed them. And now they're biologically, treated and and they're not only they treated, but now they're living with the diagnosis of cancer, something that they would have never it never had a negative effect in their life.

But they're living with that fear and their hopelessness now. So it's like the we continually skin, instead of giving people things they can do to control their health destiny, we kind of put labels on them and put disease labels on them that create fear in their life.

That's right. And if you're living with just that thought of, you know, I have cancer and there's nothing I can do about it, that's a really difficult place.

That's a difficult place. And, you know, just a couple last slides as we continue our conversation that, you know, when they study a fear versus hope, they found that, you know, fear as we know it kind of narrows down the action repertoire.

So what kind of actions we might take to change our lifestyle, become more narrow when we live in fear. But when

somebody actually lives in hope, it broadens that entire spectrum.

And we begin to see options, pathways and, solutions to obstacles that we wouldn't see otherwise. When we're living in hope. And then the last piece right there, which is interesting, three undoing strategies.

So this came from research looking at how do we undo fear and inspire hope. And it begins with a personal action plan, which you do so well in helping people develop that plan for some fitness, some, you know, stress reduction and how to implement, nutrition, you know, a nutrient dense diet in their, in their lives, social action plan, which you've done so well, is creating this community and helping each other and then reframing your diagnosis in a positive light.

And I think that's really important around this idea of cancer, because, it's very easy to see a diagnosis of cancer only in a negative light. But if you can begin reframing that in some way, and in some aspect of it in a positive light, that under, helps to undo the roots of fear in your life and begins to infuse hope.

Right? There's you know, we know that the majority I can I could say maybe more than my guess would be 90% of adults have cancer cells. Nobody. Everybody has cancer.

It's part of life. And the body is always in flux. Breaking down cells, killing cells. New cells are changing, getting damaged, getting broken down again.

And all of us live with a continual exposure to being exposed to toxins in our environment. But when we take good care of ourselves and we put the right ingredients in and have the right emotional outlook, our body is working in our own behalf.

Our body is our friend, not our enemy. Our body is out to protect us. And whether you have a diagnosis of cancer or you don't have a diagnosis of cancer, you still have a body that's working to protect you and to excel in your own behalf.

And all you've got to do is turn it on, right turn on that light reframing in a positive light, and let that light bathe your cells and do its work. That's beautiful.

That's right. Hypocrisy. Set ceilings not just a matter of time, but also opportunity. And that's where lifestyle and mindset and belief systems enact such a positive, robust response of the body by creating an environment that gives the system that was created to heal every opportunity to do so.

And, you know, I know that we that's why we're always giving people's examples of these positive stories of people who've healed that then give more hope.

But there's actually science behind that. And I think there's science behind the synergy, right, between, making changes in your life and seeing those changes as being worthwhile and important and effective.

Right. Yeah. Yeah, that's exactly right. That, you know, this is interesting when they study the brain of high hope individuals. So people that, you know, have grabbed on to the idea that I can actually do something to change my future by taking important action.

Today. They found in these areas of the brain, which we won't necessarily go into.

Community, Purpose, and the Power of Stories

But, you know, they found that they had, better decision making, goal setting, overcoming challenges, that they were less reactive to negative stimuli and focused more positively on outcomes that they believed in, their innate ability to be able to take action and solve problems, and then strategize multiple ways to achieve those goals.

Just like my my patient that had found a strategy that, you know, we can't afford the food, but we're going to find it

somewhere. You know, there's this problem solving that gets woven in to our lives when we have high hope.

We develop more resiliency, more optimism. And they found that when you have high hope, it protects against anxiety. And, is a, counterbalance to any fear.

So your brain actually gets turned on to assist you in implementing those core lifestyle changes that people are learning about in the summit. Yeah. It's part of the whole lifestyle, the you know, the lifestyle medicine.

We're talking with this holistic view that enables the body to function and to heal. When we don't we leave every stone unturned. We do the whole picture that we think together. Right.

The exercise, the sleep, the diet. And the more you do the more benefit you get. That's right. Is dose dose dependent. That's right. Every dose of lifestyle, has the added benefit.

And you know, some of this hope also comes in from community being in communities where people are speaking positively, encouraging one another, telling positive stories, sharing information, solving problems together.

That is another infusion of hope that comes from, you know, outside of ourselves as well. Yeah, I think that's part of what we're also showing that these studies that show that when people have a compassion for others, it gives them a passion for living and this passion for living and being useful to humanity in some way is more fully expressed and continues.

When a person has a medical diagnosis, and in many times the medical diagnosis can make the person even more feel like they've got to continue to be in great health and take good care of their health because of the work they do.

And the important connection they have with others is important to them, to their life and their life has value and meaning. And when their life has value in meeting due to the compassion and the passion, then they can take that.

Then they also the people who we've shown long term have lost 100 pounds and kept it off, who've transformed to cancer diagnosis and stay. And, you know, they stay home religiously or rigorously with the diet that we've gone to.

Well, the regiment they're supposed to follow, they don't. They want to do everything they can to work on their own behalf because they're so passionate about their life's purpose and staying alive and doing that, continuing their work.

So I think there's a it's like a they don't give up. It inspires them to do good instead of giving up. Right? Yeah. That's exactly right, y'all. I just, you know, this is exactly what you're saying in this slide that, you know, part of this is, is developing a, an action plan to help other people.

You know, it's it's we're working, beyond ourselves and to assist other people and have purpose. And, you know, that is a part of this cultivation of hope.

It's gratitude. It's mindfulness, but it's really, you know, like you said, we have to have purpose and meaning beyond just ourselves. And the unfortunate part of health care today, again, it's so reductionistic that we drive people to only be fearful about their current condition, and we don't help them to see purpose and meaning, even in a diagnosis that they have, and a way to reach out and be of service to their their fellow person around them, their community.

And we know that changes the, the, the milieu of our immune system. It reduces inflammation, it optimizes, you know, our cellular function that every single way when we become purpose driven people that are working to add value to the lives of others.

That's really it's really interesting, I think, because people think, oh, this stuff is so, like, you know, wal mart, alternative medicine and it's so weird and, you know, it's they're so geared towards just fine taking a drug.

And they don't realize that, that how powerful all this information can be, especially when you combine them all these things synergistically together.

They don't know the power. And so people are just, they think the only thing they have to deal with is going to the doctor and taking a drug. It's taking all the power away from them.

And they don't realize that how you've seen and I've seen so many people, he'll turn these diagnoses around and go on and live for decades, you know, or multiple decades doing good work in their life after their diagnosis.

That's right. That's exactly right. Yeah. I remember a patient that I took care of and, she had a diagnosis of cancer, and, the oncologist said, you're going to die in like three weeks.

And he said, no, I'm not. He said, I'm going to live until May, which is six months from now, because my grandson's graduating. He got to six months in oncology.

So I don't know how you did it, but I think you're going to die in another four weeks. He says, no, I'm not. My granddaughter's getting married at Christmas time and I'm going to make it to Christmas.

And it just he kept doing this for years because he had a vision. He had hope he was going to accomplish something. And she he overcame all of the medical predictions of what would happen.

And his body just functioned. And the cancer did not grow inside of him in a way that was fully expected by the science. But, you had he had hope and vision to overcome that.

Cool. All right. Yeah. So, you know, the last thing I want to just share that that you all do so well and so important is the power of stories, right?

Through our history, we've told stories and stories instructed, they shared history. They helped to convey values, but they also inspired hope in people and your community.

And you all have been such an incredible job of sharing those positive stories. And I just want to encourage people that, you know, stories are give us hope.

And so when you're struggling reading a story or watching, you know, somebody's inspiring, story of, overcoming a disease in their life or overcoming anything can help us to to not only gather strength and inspiration, but as we've just learned with the science, it changes our brain in such a way that we begin seeing a different future and strategizing the steps to accomplish that future.

All right. Is it does you have any other and you have such great slides there you I'm going to share this one because this is I just, I love this one too.

This is, it it just really typifies, I think, what we ultimately want people to accomplish, you know, through, through our recommendations in their words, we talk so much about lifestyle.

I, you and I love the science going as deep as possible in the epigenetics and serial cells and mitochondria and all of the pathways. But it's important, again, for everyone to step back and say, why am I doing this?

Why am I changing my diet? Why am I trying to add sprouts and herbs and spices and g bombs? You know, it's it's very important to do that. It optimizes our system.

We understand the the cellular physiology, but we really are trying to create more wonderful life for ourselves and for others. And that is the essence of lifestyle medicine and the holistic view that that we all believe in and advocate so fiercely for, because we've seen it give people a more wonderful life.

And a part of that element hopefully people take away from today is that, you know, hope is not Woowoo hope is a

part of this prescription of lifestyle medicine, nutrient carrying diet.

It's, you know, infusing hope through stories, does help us to accomplish a more wonderful life, for ourselves, our families and for other people in our community.

Thanks for saying that, Scott. Because you know how some people are thinking, you know what they think? They think, oh, I couldn't eat that way because, to that was giving up my pleasure of life.

Who wants to live and eat so healthily? I want to be able to recreate with my unhealthy foods. And they don't realize the the of what we're gaining and what people are gaining.

So have so much more happiness, enjoyment of life, pleasure in life and all these things that people are gaining. They just focus on what they're losing and they don't see how actually taking good care of your health, like we're advocating, brings them a much more peaceful and and happier life, right?

In every aspect of the system. Right. Our choices impact everything connected to the food chain, ecology, soil, you know, biologic systems, amphibians in the water.

Everything is affected by our 100 bites of food that we put on our plate every day. It's one of the most powerful ways to positively impact our planet, and our communities by making those healthy choices that, you know, infuse health, health into our so ourselves, but also from the soil to the planet, providing that opportunity for healing as well.

So it's it is it creates this robust opportunity for a more wonderful life for everyone. Yeah. We, we feel better about we feel better, and we feel better about ourselves because we're doing better for the world.

At the same time. Well, right. Thank you. Thanks for the major contribution you made to this summit with just this, you know, short piece of learning that we've all gotten.

And of course, good luck to everybody in pushing you all best of health and stay tuned. We have a lot more to to come.