The Real Key To Longevity: Rewiring Your Lifestyle For A Lifetime Of Health Transcript

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Modern Medicine and Chronic Disease

The problem is when 20th century medicine, I mean, when modern medicine takes the same pills that were so effective in the 20st century and tries to apply it to these 21st-century chronic diseases, they may work for the symptoms.

They may be very effective, even life-saving in short term. But the deeply disturbing part is they don't control the progression of most of these diseases where they continue to progress.

This is Dr. Talks. Welcome everybody to another episode of the Exponential Longevity Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Jeffrey Gladden, and I am here as always discussing how we're leveraging AI to outlive disease and live young for a lifetime.

And today I have the pleasure of having Dr Robert Lufkin with us. Bob, it's good to see you. So hey, hey Jeffrey, I'm a huge fan of your work and I really looking forward to this summit.

I can't wait to hear the other speakers you're having. So this is going to be fun. It should be very fun Yeah, exactly. Appreciate that. You know, interesting.

He's been a physician, a medical school professor at UCLA and USC. And he was also a New York Times bestseller. He wrote a book, Longevity Secrets, that he learned the hard way.

And it's really a follow-up to another book that wrote Lies I Taught in Medical School, which is such a great, such great title for a books. So Robert, it is really pleasure to have you here.

We're going to jump into this. Why don't you tell the audience a little bit about your story? I mean, It's a bit unusual for professor to kind of depart from traditional thought processes around medicine.

Maybe you can bring us up to speed on that. Yeah. I mean, my book and my sort of my approach is very critical of Western medicine, but I, you know, unlike many people that have this attitude, I have to admit I'm actually part of the problem because I've spent my whole career as a professor teaching medical students and other young doctors in training.

Also, my lab has received millions of dollars in grants from drug companies and big pharma and food companies, device makers, and even the federal government to do research.

And also, I got to practice medicine. So I'm coming at this from kind of an unusual point.

Robert Lufkin's Medical Background and Wake-Up Call

I am very critical of Western medicine, but I have to admit, I'm a fan of western medicine. I think in the 20th century, it's transformed our lives largely through public health and the pills and surgeries that were developed then truly make the world a better place.

But the problem is, In the 21st century, we're facing a literally a tsunami of chronic diseases, which although they were present in the 20th century and the twenty-first century they're now in unprecedented numbers even, you know, even correcting for population.

And these are the diseases that literally determine our longevity because statistically, who else will die of, heart

disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease mental illness, it goes down the list.

So the problem is, when modern medicine takes the same pills that were so effective in the 20th century and tries to apply it to these 21st century chronic diseases, they may work for the symptoms.

They may be very effective, even lifesavingly short-term. But the deeply disturbing part is they don't control the progression of most of these diseases when they continue to progress.

And I came to this. I mean, I'd like to say, you know, hey, want to make the world a better place. But no, i was dragged kicking and screaming into this when i came down with four of this chronic diseases myself.

All right. Just a couple of years ago and I, at the time I had young daughters that weren't even in middle school yet. They're still relatively young.

And when I went to my doctors, they basically prescribed medicines for me and gave me a prescription for each one of them. And I mentioned to him, I said, hey, what about lifestyle?

And they said it doesn't really work. You're going to be on these medicines for the rest of your life, so get used to it. Do you mind sharing what the problems were?

Oh, happy to. Yeah, completely open. I talk about it in the book and everything. So at the time, it seemed like relatively unrelated diseases. It was a type of arthritis called gout.

You know, and then it was elevated lipids, sort of high cholesterol, abnormal blood lipid and triglycerides as well. And then high blood pressure, which most people today have high pressure.

So, you know. Good company. Finally, pre-diabetes, abnormalities of glucose metabolism type 2 diabetes. I knew it wasn't going to end well, so I took it.

All those are interrelated, quite honestly. All those are, they could all be seen as kind of one disorder with multiple manifestations, right? So, yeah.

And that's, you're absolutely right.

Lifestyle Changes That Reversed His Conditions

At the time, I didn't really think of them that way, and the doctors I went to didn' t think about that, way and many of my colleagues still don't think them in that and that' s the problem because the pills and surgery I was given would control the symptoms, but they wouldn't do anything to the root cause, which, as we're both talking about, is a common metabolic abnormality that's driving all these diseases that pills really don't work for.

But there's an even more powerful medicine that that more than any pills or surgery for most of us, and that lifestyle changes. And by implementing those, I was able to reverse all four of those chronic diseases and basically get off the medications.

My doctors thought the, you know, the machines were, or the labs were broken and everything like that. That's great. So tell us what your lifestyle interventions were.

What did you actually do? Did you lose weight? You exercised what? Lower stress? What happened? Yeah, great questions. And lifestyle, it comes down to the same playbook really for most people.

Different things may have different weights. Interestingly, of course, is the lifestyle play book, in my opinion, going to reduce our risk of the four diseases I have and even reverse them, as well as type two diabetes, of course, As well Alzheimer's disease, mental illness, cancer, cardiovascular disease.

So it's really the same thing. But my interventions were, first of all, I started off with nutrition and made some changes there. I wasn't overweight.

It doesn't take being really overweight, If you have the genetic predisposition, you know, just that abdominal fat is enough, a dead body, so to speak, is really enough.

So, yeah. Yeah, and then I took a deep look at sleep, which as a doctor, I thought I used to be on call with a beeper 24 hours a day, all the time. And I though it made me stronger, thought it was helping my patients.

When I actually realized, of course it's making me weaker and I'm potentially harming my patience. So I looked closely at asleep, not only quantity, but quality.

Then looked at exercise, both mental and physical exercise. Tell us about that. Tell about mental versus physical exercise. Describe what you're talking about there.

Both are important and they're interrelated. Physical exercise is very important. What did you do? Well, before I was light on strength training and I didn't have any consistent exercise programs.

So what I'm doing now is I regularly do about 10,000 steps, which is about five miles when I walk it every day without sobbing. And I wanted to get more of a workout.

I'm not running, but I am walking. So I want to more workout, so basically I began rucking, carrying a 20-pound pack around and that increased the load a little bit.

Rowing, I do 20 minutes a day of rowing every day. Nice. And you know I hate row, it's boring, What I do is I'd do it as a treat. I look forward to it.

It started with five minutes, you know, only once a day, five, minutes then 10 minutes. Then, now it's 20 minutes is probably going to go to 30 minutes but I have like certain TV shows or recordings that I only watch when I'm rowing.

So that helps it and So I look forward to it. You took something that you dreaded doing and turned it into a treat by combining it with something you enjoy, right?

So that's a good take on the audience. Yeah, good for you. And then what about the mental exercise where you started playing games or what did you start doing?

Yeah. I mean, mental exercises, you know, it's all about, instead of listening to music, play the music. Instead of sing the song, its participation. Learning a language is a great thing.

There's so many apps out there. For me, I always wanted to learn Chinese. My wife's from Shanghai. So I got an app, there's a free app. There are many of them out.

Exercise, Learning, and Daily Habit Stacking

I happen to use one called Duolingo and I religiously again did five minutes. It's about five minute a day, every day. And I'm now at 1,500 days in a row.

The next thing you can do with any language, not just Mandarin, Chinese, but when you're learning a language. I took my phone and I switched the language to the, language that I'm learning.

So now, now when I want to set a timer for 20 minutes, I go, Hey, Siri set, a time for her 20. It doesn't do anything because it only understands Mandarin.

And so I have to say Siri comes out. The next level thing, of course, is setting my operating system to Mandarin on

my laptop and my computers, which I haven't gotten there yet, but that's one more thing people can do.

That's great. No, that is really awesome. I think the other thing that strikes me about this is that you figured out a way to actually do these things and kind of incorporate them into your life.

Right? So in other words, you're kind of killing two birds with one stone on many situations. Like when you are doing your walking, and you probably thinking about problems that you working on or going into a meditative state at some point.

When you exercising, your listening to things you interested in or watching something that find entertaining. And so I think this idea of kind of stacking activities to where everything doesn't have to be sequential, you can kind parallel process this and you find that you have time to get everything done that that way.

That's really cool. Yeah, totally. The walking, I mean, it takes a couple hours really. And instead of, the other thing I do is I don't, some people like they work out, you know, once a day for an hour in the gym and they kill themselves, then they go sit for 15 hours.

So what I, do I walk for three miles to a Starbucks and then I work there for a few hours and I then walk another couple miles, to another Starbucks, and work here.

And so it kind of spread it out throughout the day. And then I row and do the other stuff too. Yeah, that's great. I think it's really, if you're thinking about this and listening to this, the important thing is to look at your own life, look your your day and start to architect it in a way where it makes sense, where you where you ultimately, you find joy in what you're doing, but you also have the ability to put these pieces together.

It's really just like a puzzle. And it's very doable if you just look at it like, oh, this is a. How can I make this fun? How kind of make it joyous? And how do I actually feel better and energized at the end of the day than exhausted, wasted and stressed out?

Right. So, yeah. That's such a good point. And it speaks to the third thing, stress and purpose and, you know, having joy in our lives, kind of looking forward to it.

Like when I changed the food I ate, I wasn't going on a diet. I was eating in a nutritionally healthy way that allow me to live longer. I love bagels and donuts and sugar and everything else, but I know that's more likely to cause a heart attack than a steak is.

Right. And I loved those, But I Love my kids more. So I gave them up because I'd rather live to see my kid. I think that that is another really critical point is that if people are doing this and they feel like it's pointless, like there's no reason to do it apart from somebody told me to Do it.

It's unsustainable, completely unsustainable. But if you're actually, if, you have two things, one, If you find joy in doing it, it's an end in itself.

but the other is you realize there's connected to this bigger purpose, right? I want to, I wanna expand my influence in the world. I'm going to expand.

My influence. In the, in my family circle, and my friend circle or whatever it is, want. Continue to contribute in all these ways. Then all of a sudden it was like, Oh, have so many reasons to do this.

How can I not do that? Right. So. That's such an important point. The idea of purpose on why we want longevity is I talk to people about it and I go, Hey, you know what?

You have the potential to adding an extra 30 or 40 years on your life. And it's only going to get more and more as this technology, as his conference is showing is exploding and they go.

They go wow. You know, I've just retired. So what am I going do? Well, like golf, and go see my kids, my grandkids. That great. But. People start thinking of that and they go, wow, and no shade on golf.

I'm a miniature golfer myself, but the idea of playing golf for 40 years, it's going to get old.

Purpose, Mindset, and Longevity Motivation

Even senior dragons, they're going hate you after a while. They're gonna grow up, quite honestly. Yeah. So I think the way we look at this is not just an extra 30 years on the golf course or 30-years hanging around our descendants, The way I try and look at it is to imagine the years from 20 to 50, and how we all changed as people.

We contributed to the world, we grew, We became completely different people, so now let's say you go from 60 or 65, you retire, go to 95. So imagine what you could do in those 30 years, not just playing golf or hanging out with your kids, but actually growing as a person, reinventing yourself, have a whole new life, a new purpose, and really make the world a better place.

We can contribute so much by being elders with wisdom. There is important knowledge that elders have. And we can play a really important role in reinvent ourselves and doing something else.

I'm not against retirement, but you know. Yeah, we're not big fans of retirement because it really is associated with most people slowing down and getting old kind of sort of in their mindset.

But to your point, making transitions right from one thing to another. Now that makes a lot of sense. You know, I think it's interesting for me as I'd think about it.

A lot folks go through life and I was like this at one point where you feel like it your goal in life to actually find your answers. And as a physician, as I was trained, I, was basically trained to have a certain set of answers and the doctors that you went to see have certain sets of answer and we end up getting married to those answers.

And yet all innovation. Right? All innovation, all creativity comes from asking questions, not from the answers. Right. Answers actually put people into a defensive posture.

Well, I don't like your answer. I've got to defend it. Now I got a, now I gotta bolster it now. Got to say that you're wrong, right? I'm not going to make you wrong so I can be right.

And when you drop your attachment to answers and you attach yourself to the questions. How do I live young for a lifetime, right? How did I make 100 to new 30? how do i do these things? How do continue to be vibrant?how do we continue be a creative loving force in the world that's creating new ideas and contributing as opposed to getting married to an answer of I like golf and fishing and that is what I'm going to do.

You see it just changes your whole world. All of a sudden it's like the next decade is more exciting than any decade in your life. Not to mention the week, so I think that shift in mindset is critical.

Just the simple thing that the best is yet to come, that we all have our best years ahead, and it's not a downhill course, you know, we should look forward to it, man.

This is going to be so much fun. I can't wait. Yeah, absolutely. Well, tell us a little bit about, so you stopped taking the medicines for your chronic disorders, let's call it.

But it sounds like you may be still taking some things to advance your longevity specifically. Are there things that you're doing you want to share with us, maybe?

Yeah, of course. Well, I think, first of all, all the lifestyle things, that, you know, the you talk about that I talk, about, very, similar themes in my book, or the things I did.

I believe those are foundational and we need to correct those and get those a good foundation. And then on top of that, we can build and add things. Longevity space is just exploding so much.

It's hard to keep up with it now. And so I mean, I'm not against taking pills. I just take, against, taking, pills that only treat the symptoms and don't treat, the root cause.

So some of the pills I've taken for longevity is, you know, The mTOR pill rapamycin that I take. Mectoformin for Longevity. Sort of an experiment. experimenting with a lot of different things, adding different types of supplements and kind of a longevity stack that I've been working on and trying things.

And it's great. The problem with that, of course, is it is hard to tell the effect necessarily.

Longevity Tools, Biomarkers, and Emerging Therapies

I'm changing so many things at once. It's an N of one. But I feel great, I never felt better. Yeah. I think it's good to feel great. This is where we're getting really high quality testing, where you can actually measure yourself across this mosaic of ages, as we refer to it.

What's my telomeric age? What is my immune system age, what's the DNA methylation age and what is the glycan age. And what does my senescent cell burden actually look like?

Alternating between basically blocking mTOR, which of course we need mTor for growth and development and cell growth, et cetera. And insulin and growth hormone IGF-1 will actually activate mtor.

Rapamycin will block it because it's been shown that blocking MTOR can improve longevity in rodents. I think there's still some question in humans as to how that's going to play out.

But nonetheless, that's a good strategy. But then you don't want to do that all the time because you want MTOR part of the-time. When you're taking your metformin, you are activating AMPK.

AMPk is the other side of teeter totter from Mtor. And so activating that is now activating your sirtuins and basically DNA repair and autophagy and things that you need to kind of rejuvenate and regenerate, if you will.

So I think it's important for the audience to understand that what he's doing is actually hitting two sides of the teeter totter. And it is best to kind of do that in pulses on either side so that you're either on one side of teether totters or the other, but not trying to be on both sides at the same time.

Right. So we find a lot of wisdom in that. Then of course, the cardio that he is getting in there is activating his AMPK also. It's a good strategy. Yeah.

Nice. Yeah, I mean, there's so many things like biohacking things that I'm dabbling in, that so people are involved with, you know, plasmapheresis, plasma exchange, stem cells, exosomes.

Yeah. I know you have a lot of work in that area. And I, mean the papers coming out are just fascinating. The one you may have talked about already with the partial epigenetic programming of chemically induced pluripotential stem cells with a type 1 diabetic N of 1. But after a year, they were able to make these island cells under the abdominal wall that basically got the person off insulin with type one diabetes, which is the unusual kind with insulin deficiency.

It was just mind blowing. They just reversed type one diabetes with stem cells for the first time. Also, there's a paper on that. So, you know, the things that you and I were taught were impossible are becoming possible all the time and we see that like with regards to cardiovascular disease or insulin resistance.

I mean, we reverse this stuff all time, and yet people are, still unaware of it, so to speak. It's really, it's super exciting medicine to practice. Yeah.

Yeah, and it really bothers me that, you know, that our trusted medical institutions that most people go to for advice, I'll just pick one, also the American Diabetic Association.

Sure. When they, their recommendation is to treat type two diabetes, which, we're heading up to half the population getting it before long. And it's a gateway for, it is the metabolic.

It's the gateway disorder, right? And to so many other diseases, insulin resistance. That's right. Yeah, and so type 2 diabetes is their recommendation is to basically, you know, cut down on sugars, but don't cut them out.

If you eat sugars cover it with insulin. And the problem is, in my opinion, there's evidence to show that we look at controlled studies in the book as well that when you treat type two diabetes with Insulin, it becomes a chronic progressive disease.

In other words, we go on to get number one cause of surgical amputations, it's diabetes, number 1 cause renal failure, kidney failure is diabetes. Number one, cause retinal blindness in young people's, diabetes on and on, type 3 diabetes Alzheimer's disease.

people, that's the recommendation to go on these drugs and eventually insulin to manage the type 2 diabetes. But what is not emphasized to people is that with a lifestyle change by primarily nutrition, but other factors as well.

It's possible to reverse type 2 diabetes in the majority of people in controlled studies. Virja and others have done this. But the interesting thing is when you reverse it with lifestyle, it's no longer a progressive disease.

In other words, you've stopped it. That's right. Take two people, put one on insulin, that person on the insulin. The insulin is going to save their life.

They're not going die from hyperglycemia. They're going to, you know, what they're looking forward to is amputations, renal failure, blindness, on and on Alzheimer's, heart disease, cancer, mental illness.

It's tragic. And why wouldn't everyone do the lifestyle? It is tragic that we equate that with treating the disease. Right.

Diabetes, Lifestyle Reversal, and the Future of Longevity

We're just going keep you alive and then… We are palliating it really. That's right. And then once you fall apart, it's really quite tragic. To your point, you know, with some of the lifestyle changes around food, diet and exercise, we've done a couple of shows now on the value of fasting and five-day mimicking fasting, and doing that for diabetics kind of on a sequential basis and having a dramatic impact, even rebooting beta cell function, which, once those are shot, people feel like they're shot.

But we actually see those start to reverse. If you're listening to this, understand that what we're talking about here is not just trivial. It's actually more powerful than any drug your doctor can give you.

So pretty exciting stuff. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I mean, the other thing I learned going through this journey was even though I'm a doctor, I now believe doctors don't make us healthy.

Doctors just make less sick and the lifestyle changes. The lifestyle choices we make will overpower almost any pill or surgery that we're given. And so if we want to make true change in our life, we have to do it with lifestyle because no doctor can fix it.

With a pill, or a surgery, at least at this point. That's right. Yeah, and I think lifestyle, just from my perspective, too, is kind of like the gateway to longevity.

In and of itself, it's not enough. It's a gateway into health. But true longevity, where we live young for a lifetime, requires more. it does require actually doing some of these things where you start to really turn back the clock,

whether it is, you know, rejuvenation procedures like plasmapheresis or young plasma or stem cells or things like that.

There are things that need to be tacked on top of that if we're really going to go back in time. And it's exciting to see that developing as well, so.

Yeah, I mean, it just, of all the areas where we're seeing progress, the longevity science is the most amazing. It's like every week there's a new paper or something.

Right? It is such an exciting time to be in this space. You know, like people talk about longevity escape velocity. That's right. And certainly it is not unrealistic.

I don't think it's that far off. I think so the next three to five years, personally. When you look at all the things that we're currently doing and the rate at which we are learning, and then you throw in AI, which becomes artificial general intelligence pretty quickly.

ASI, which is artificial super intelligence, all of a sudden you have enough horsepower here to actually figure this out, right? At the end of the day, it's a finite problem.

It's not an infinite problem, and I think it will have a solution. So I'm super optimistic about all. Yeah, this is just such an amazing time. Yeah. Very cool.

Well, Rob, it's been such a pleasure to chat with you. I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with us. Thank you! Oh, thanks so much, Jeff. And like I say, I'm going to be looking forward to hearing the other speakers too in this summit.

Absolutely. You'll enjoy that. All right. We'll have a great rest of your day. Thanks. 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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