Introduction to Mind-Body Healing

If you eat the perfect diet, if you don't address the spiritual component and the mental and psychological component, you're not fully healing. And that's true especially more so than anything else with depression, anxiety, loneliness, any of those mental health disorders.

But it's also true with thyroid issues and hormonal imbalances and low testosterone and men. This is doctor talks. Doctor Josh Axe, what a pleasure to see you.

It was a wonderful talking to you. We've been friends for years, done so much stuff together back and forth in our podcasts and seminars and presentations, and you have an absolute wealth of wisdom.

And as a well, I'm going to let my audience you're going to tell the audience about what you do, but you've just released another book recently and you've moved from not just to functional medicine, the physical side, but you really sort of understand the impact of mind on body.

And I'm very excited to talk to you today about mindsets and mental health. So welcome and please to share a little bit with the viewers and listeners about who you are, what you do.

Yeah. So I'm doctor Josh Axe, I'm the founder of draxe.com Ancient Nutrition and Health Institute. I used to have a functional medicine practice, and now I actually do see a lot of patients virtually at the doctor Axe clinic at the Health Institute.

We take care of a lot of people with depression, anxiety, hypothyroidism, autoimmune disease, and a number of conditions. And I just have a passion of teaching people how to use food and mindset medicine.

Dr. Josh Axeu2019s Background and Holistic Approach

And we both, you know, share that. I think we both really believe that health is holistic. It's body, mind, spirit. And if someone is truly going to heal, we need to focus on healing them in all of those areas.

Absolutely. And that's just it's vital the mind drives the brain and the body. It's not the other way around. And and do you experience that very dramatically in a recent as something that happened to you over the last couple of years?

And I'd love you to share your story, and then I'd love us to dive a little deeper into the lessons that you've learned and how this can help people with anxiety and depression, and just getting the mental health to all of us better back on track.

Yeah, so I had this is about two years ago. I had a the biggest health crisis of my life. I went in for a really simple medical procedure, using stem cells to natural my own cells to heal a low back injury.

I had. And when that when that got done, something went wrong. And I ended up getting a an infection in my spine. And so I was sitting down with a doctor.

This is a to almost maybe a year and nine months ago now. And I sat down with him and he said, Josh, listen, I'm going to be straight with you. He said, this infection is really severe.

There's a really good chance you could die. There's the most likely thing, though, is that you're going to be permanently disabled from this. And so Doctor Kelly and I have been teaching people, you know, I've done exercise and fitness videos.

I've, you know, spent my entire career teaching people how to be healthy and fit with food and, and lifestyle practices and all of this. And just a few months before I was throwing my two year old daughter up in the air in the pool, I was squatting and deadlifting.

I could do triathlons, and I was in great shape. I said, yeah, back injury. So to be sitting down with a doctor, him telling me I would likely be disabled physically, I it was incredibly hard to hear until I had about 48 hours of this mental.

Spinal Infection and Health Crisis

And I'll say it's mental, but it was spiritual. It was physical. It felt like I did. There were emotions I had never experienced before that I experienced for the first time.

I, I never, I think, truly felt what despair felt like or hopelessness I never truly felt because I'm a I'm a positive person. Yeah, generally I'm very positive.

But to think, okay, so this doctor, who's one of the leading doctors in the entire world in infectious disease, is telling me the most likely outcome for me is to be permanently disabled, to be I'll have rods put in my spine like that.

That was what he told me. And so I had to go and sort of reset and really tap into God in and also spending some time in prayer and saying, God, you know what?

I believe that you're bigger than my diagnosis. And I decided also and you know this research even better than I do, but I spent thousands of hours reading medical journals and studying neurology.

But we also know that, you know, the placebo effect is very powerful and real. And I was writing a book at the time where I was just starting to write about some of this information about how, you know, back in World War Two, there's a named a Doctor Beecher, and he found with these soldiers had these debilitating injuries, and they ran out of morphine during World War Two. Yeah.

And rather than treating them with morphine, they gave them saline injections. So just salt water and. Yeah. And 30 to 40% of those soldiers experience the same amount of pain relief as if they were taking morphine.

And that blows my mind. But our body can create those sort of chemicals. So I realized that I said, you know what? My best chance of healing is? Believing that I'm going to be completely healed and get back to where I was.

And so I just decided that I was going to do my best to create a plan in order to do that, you know, doing exercises in the pool and getting getting in a hyperbaric chamber, doing vitamin IVs, doing everything I could to heal.

And I went through that process, and it took me ten months before I could walk. Actually, I didn't walk on my own without a walker for an entire year.

Well, and and so, Josh, I can't imagine you like that. I mean, as you said, I know you is a constant on the go fitness guru and health guru and always moving.

So to imagine you stuck like that is, is, is really inconceivable. Yeah, it was crazy. I mean, I my wife took a picture and I don't have it here so I can't I've got it on my phone.

But she took a picture of me and you would have thought that I was, you know, this malnourished. I mean, I, I lost about 40 and went from 182 down to about 130.

I just because I literally the pain was so bad I couldn't walk, I couldn't I didn't it was but going back to the you know, I struggled with some depression, I struggled with some anxiety.

And I get I never had anxiety before at all, never until even as I was rehabbing, I was so conscious about if I did

something wrong, I had so much pain that I started getting this physical response to where if I thought that something like I just would start sweating and getting nervous and like I just in, I wouldn't call them full on panic attacks.

But having this constant anxiety around, did I re injure myself? Did something? Did I did it, did something go wrong? And what I had to do was start really focusing back on and realizing that God was for me, not against me again.

For me, it was a very spiritual thing. And also saying, okay, this is where I'm going to be in the future. And so I really started picturing myself in the future, throwing my two year old daughter in the pool again.

I started picturing myself out running. I started picturing myself lifting weights.

Mindset, Hope, and Recovery Plan

I started picturing myself doing those things that I said, okay, I can only control what I can control. So now I'm going to create the plan in order to make that a reality.

So I knew I had to heal my disc. And so I started doing hyperbaric chamber. And there are some studies around now for helping that. I started going out and getting in the pool and doing those exercises.

I started following an anti-inflammatory diet. I was already pretty anti-inflammatory, but I just took it up to the highest level possible. I drink mostly bone broth, eating wild salmon, lots of vegetables, lots of fruits, omega three fats, Boswell, tumeric, all of those sort of superfoods.

And I just said, okay, all I can do is follow the plan. And. Yeah, and I did that. And now I'm, I'm actually proud to say I just got back from playing around to pickleball.

I started running a few weeks ago. I'm already way better than the doctors said, the absolute best I could be, he said. At the very least, I would have chronic pain every day, and I don't.

I don't so anyways, I think for me the big thing is you get a, you get what you focus on, you need to focus on the best possible outcome, create a plan in order to make that your reality.

And outside of that, not worry about the actual outcome. Just do your best to, you know, get to that point you want to be. Well, that's quite something.

You go in for a simple procedure, stem cells, which is, you know, pretty getting pretty advanced day by day. And you learned that was literally being told that you're going to be disabled for the rest of your life.

And it's taken you. 19 well, that was a 19 month process. And you're playing pickleball and back doing that. Turn your little daughter up in the air and picking up the baby and and you.

But so what's interesting there is that you you went through a process. It wasn't overnight. It was very agonizing. I know, because, you know, I've talked about this in more detail, and it was a long, hard process.

It wasn't just one day you would press in, the next day you were happy. It was days and days on end of not being able to get out of bed and really feeling that heavy depression, and then you sort of make some major shifts when you said you set that goal.

And that's very much related to your mindset. First question I have for you is people set goals and they have those visions and you got it and you got beyond what it did.

You have a plan A, plan B, so we have probabilities that can happen and we have a possible goal. Was it won or did you have if that didn't work then something similar.

Did you have anything like that sort of a range in case you didn't hit the actual goal, or was it broad enough? You know what I'm saying? Well, absolutely.

So this happened in August. So it's actually almost 24 months now. Now, now that I'm actually the exact timelines are about 24 months. And I said, okay, I know I've got this going on now, but I want to be walking again by Christmas.

I wasn't even close to walking by Christmas. In fact, even after a couple weeks of treatment, I felt worse. And so around the Thanksgiving, Christmas, I mean, Christmas is when I started actually feeling a little better.

I started reaching a turning point, but I didn't walk for six months after that. So listen, I kept having to push my goals back further, okay, further back further.

And so that was a pretty constant thing. And but I didn't get discouraged because I started focusing a little less on my goals and more on the progress I was making.

Love that to the daily process of the healing journey, which is up and down, because as you said, you set the goal for December, but then it didn't happen.

And so things you actually felt a little worse when you started some of the exercises. And it's so much part of the healing journey. And there's a lot of the work that I've done is 60, 63 day cycles, and there are these ups and downs, and sometimes we think the dawn, we think, oh, I'm going backwards.

And I'm so glad you brought up the point that you didn't get discouraged. You shifted. So you had this goal, but you shifted and adjusted your goals. And that's that was that's beautiful.

Adjusting goals is a massive thing. Isn't a Josh. Yes. And what I essentially did was I kept I had to ask myself the question because here's the thing I would only feel 1% better every couple of weeks problems.

So I would look back and say, okay, am I better now than I was three months ago?

Adjusting Goals During Rehabilitation

And most of the time I could say, oh yes, okay, I'm better now than I was three months ago. And that was really that started becoming sort of my main gauge of how I was, how I was doing.

That's incredible, because that's from the research I've done the second year, biological research and habit formation and change in your plasticity, the two rewire networks.

It takes these cycles of about nine weeks, which is about three months, and then you start seeing those changes. And these are all the ups and downs in that change.

And then you have to adjust your goal. So you talk a lot in your new book about things. It's not there. And you talk a lot about mindsets and you've mentioned in reference how would you define a mindset.

And yeah, how would you define a mindset in general. And then in the context of what you went through, how did you apply that? Well, the way that I think about mindset is it's a number of the beliefs you have about maybe a specific topic or area or thing within your life.

And so, for instance, you may have a mindset about money. Maybe it's a scarcity mindset. And there are different things you have around that. Like money doesn't grow on trees and you have to fight for every last thing you get.

And you know, I'll never have money. So. So you might have this mindset about money that is made up of several beliefs that you have. You know, I had my mindset about my health in that has changed and shifted over time.

I think from and you'll appreciate this. You know, being in my mid 40s now, I when I was younger, I felt like health was I was invincible. I don't know how to sit, go and say I'm like I was invincible and I just, you know, if I was inactive and eating healthy, then everything else was just going to work out.

And I think right now my mindset around health is very much around longevity. Like when I exercise now, I don't exercise too. Like, you know, I'm not like I just getting done playing pickleball.

There was at one point where I could have dove and maybe got a shot. I didn't because I I'll be playing in my 60s, 70s and 80s. And so I am really focused on longevity right now.

How do we promote cellular longevity? How do we promote neurological longevity? I mean, how do we do that? And so my point there is, is that if you have a mindset and by the way, I think some people have, they might have a great mindset about relationships but a terrible mindset about their health.

And so I that's that's how I think about mindset. I also think mindset is perspective. And so, you know, you and I could be standing in the exact same room right next to each other and see something going on and have a completely different perspective about it.

Completely. Right.

Defining Mindset and Positive Thinking

And so I think that right now, like my my mindset about life in general is I believe I'm called to love God, love people, maker of the heavenly place.

How do we how do I do those things? Like that's one of my primary mindsets right now. And then also you have mindsets that might be submissive or tiered in terms of what may be trumps.

You know, one or the other. And so all that being said, I think that let me tell you just a few mindsets that I think are important for healing. Absolutely. Go for it.

One of them was, God is for me, not against me. Because if you believe that ultimately the world or God or these things are against you, well made at God's big.

So if he's against you or doesn't care about you, well, you know, it would be hard to believe in your healing. And here's the other thing I would say is, I think that people should decide to believe now what they currently believe were not what someone else plays.

You should try and believe what's going to lead you to the best result. I love that. It's like here's an example with finances. Like I think Warren Buffett is an incredible investor says Ray Dalio.

Says Cathie Wood. So these are some of the, you know, most brilliant people in terms of finance. I don't try and think what I want to think. I try and think the way that they think.

Okay. And so when I look at the people that have the best health, I should think about my how I want to try and adopt their type of thinking and model their type of thinking.

And so that's one of the mindsets I have is, is that I want to like I don't feel like being positive all the time. I have a dad, like my mom was really positive.

My dad is really negative and I but I decide to be positive because I know that's going to lead to my best outcome. Again, you know, the placebo effect.

And I just did a whole episode of podcast episode on my show about the placebo effect, and it's amazing. I mean, one of the things that they were showing with the placebo effect is, is that like a lot of like, if somebody had a big

red pill versus if somebody took a little white pill.

The placebo effect is way more powerful. If you take a big red pill that fascinating just because you think, oh, this one, you know, it's a bigger bag.

Yeah. It's better. Right? You feel like the, the, the results are going to be bigger for you. So I mean or oh, you know, it's just it's so fascinating to think about how much our mindset matters for our own healing.

I mean, I don't think people think about this enough. I take care a lot of patients with hypothyroidism, diabetes, autoimmune disease. And when they typically come to my virtual practice, they almost never think that we're going to talk about mindset or that we're going to talk about psychology or any of these things, but we do because it's a big, big part of healing, you know?

And so it's so important. That's why I love what you do, Josh, because it's not just okay, let's, you know, take all these measurements, which we need to do bloodwork and all these things because that's representing what you what your body's doing.

And then putting something in. It's actually that's the one part and it's very important. But the bigger part is you're alive and you're alive now since your mind was brought to soul, working through your body, and you're going to keep your body healthy so that your spirit of mind can work through that.

But if you don't deal with your mind and and we really got to point 50 years into this very new reductionistic approach that the physical is more important than the mind, and the mind is just that, oh, do a little bit of stress work.

We'll do a little bit of mindset, you know, and I think putting this as you know, this battle for the body nearly 40 years now trying to help people understand I'm not saying don't work on the physical.

It's so important go to the experts to get that support. But you can get all the advice from you. Your patients can come to you, get all the advice in terms of an anti-inflammatory diet or as you famous for eating dirt and all these, these kinds of things which are really important, but you're not telling us so much more.

And and this will be kind of part of your message that in order for that to work, your mind is going to drive it. And that's why, you know, it's so important.

I cannot agree with you more. And I wanted to interview you for this, because you really had developed a very deep understanding from your own personal experience with your patients.

So based on that, could you maybe think of an example of you don't have to mention names, but maybe two patients, one that was just coming to you for the physical and they just give me the medicine, give me the give me the supplements, give me the protocol.

And and I'm not working on the mind stuff, you know, that's for whatever. And they didn't do as well as someone who was actually worse off, but they listened and did the mind work alongside the physical.

Patient Mindset and Healing Outcomes

What would I do? Carolyn? First I want to say, you know, I could tell very early on, typically. Now, listen, sometimes people surprise us, but with 90% accuracy, if somebody came in and I would sit down with a patient, I could tell pretty early on if they were probably going to see really good results.

And I just give you an example that's like on my first visit when somebody came in, we might do I, you know, I would, I would have them fill out the patient history form.

Sometimes we do bloodwork, sometimes we don't just depend on the person. And when I would typically at the end

of the first visit, I'd say, okay, well next time you come in we're going to go through recommended eating plan supplement plan, all the recommendations.

But between now and then before when I see you next time, I want you to do this for me. Just change your breakfast. Okay? So I'm going to have you do a berry smoothie with coconut milk and berries and some of these other things, and I would get 1 or 2 responses.

One was like, oh look, can I still do my cereal? Can I still do cream cheese kind can still do. And it was sort of this thing like they kept focusing on all that, that they were going to be deprived.

And in those five months it yeah, those people didn't. They had a hard time getting good results. Much harder versus I had another group who would say, great, let's go.

Hey, you know, is this brand okay. Do I do this? Okay. Hey, this that sounds pretty good. I mean, it was a big difference. And I remember having one patient come in, and I was able to really, I think, help her with her mindset. She came in and she had an misdiagnosis.

She was in a wheelchair. Her name was Sheryl, and she'd been in a wheelchair for several years. And after working with her a little bit on her second visit, I told her.

I said sure, I, I don't know that you definitely have M. S., I said, I actually think there's a chance because you're telling me that you have. You lived in a moldy home.

A lot of the symptoms started then. I think you might have mold toxicity. And I said, I think if we can make some subtle changes, we can get you out of the wheelchair by doing ozone therapy and some of these different things.

Yeah. And but here the crazy part. I didn't even really fully start her treatment. But after her, the next time she came in, this was only two weeks later.

She was completely out of her wheelchair. Oh my gosh, that's phenomenal. He hadn't even started all the treatments yet, right? And I knew the you know what.

Again, part of that had to be psychological. And so there's no doubt that there's a lot of people who are getting diagnoses. This is why I have such a problem with oftentimes people going to the doctor.

And cancer is a really good example of this. But this other one and there's several. And immediately you can just see a decline in their attitude, fear, anxiety over what's going on.

And I think that's actually breaking the Hippocratic oath, because a lot of doctors are weighing harm. The first visit to the patient, because we know how important hope is to healing, even in terms of what we talked about placebo, to think about this and everything else.

And so, I mean, I have so many, so many examples of this, of where people saw amazing changes in their body sometimes before they even made the changes, just because they had a different outlook, a more positive outlook about, you know, the potential for them healing in the future.

It's phenomenal. That's that's such a good example and so true in terms of that, because that's one of the questions I wanted to ask you was in terms of conventional medicine, there's just it's it's so defined that this is the problem.

And this is the only way to heal that we need the chronic.

Conventional Medicine and Holistic Balance

I'm not saying we don't need conventional medicine at all for every type of medicine, but you've hit on the point of

how a doctor in using conventional medicine alone presents the issue to the patient is so important because it shifts it into that mindset, and the placebo kicks in and we know that the mind actually then drives, basically drives the brain in the body.

So we can down funk. We can literally create down functioning in our brain, in our body by the incorrect mindset. And so it's a matter of balancing that out.

Maybe that is the best treatment, but if your mind sits in fear, you're just not going to really benefit as much from the treatment as what you could.

Could you talk a little bit about just that kind of thing, what you've started, but continue a little bit in terms of conventional medicine, balancing it with a more holistic approach?

Yeah. So, you know, and what I'm going to share goes back thousands of years now to the Bible is clear on this. And we have Jesus saying your faith has healed you or your belief.

And so we know that that's he focused on really that sort of the root of the biggest issues. And I think this is true with every condition, but even more so as we talk about mental health.

But when you look at Chinese medicine, there's something in Chinese medicine called the Three treasures. Okay. And by the way, when I say these terms, they may sound kind of strange to you, but they're just all then interpret words.

But yeah, it's Shen XI and Jing. And basically what Shen is, is your spirit. She is your it's really your cellular health and your mitochondria, but it's also your mental health.

And then you have your jing that's physical health okay. So it's it's spirit mind body. And they would always say, if you want to heal, you always have to address all three.

But start at the top with the spirit. And that's really tied to things like your identity and your purpose. And these are things that we really get ingrained to us oftentimes in childhood.

I mean, that's why they're I mean, it's it's incredibly important. And so really, your spiritual life, your identity, your purpose in life, if you don't know those, you can manipulate and do things both nutritionally or with medications, but you're actually still not getting to the root of the issue until you fix your identity and purpose issues and know why you're here and in and figure out that spiritual part of your life.

So that's very, very important. And that's sort of the upstream. And when we look at that, that's also very tied to epigenetics. You know we have see fetus today.

And so yeah we'll see that epigenetics is tied up there. Even things like methylation if we're going to get personal with that, that that's that's tied in there and then being in tune with the Earth.

So our circadian rhythm. So that's kind of live in that area. But really the greatest thing you can do to fix those areas is build a relationship with God, have deepened a relationship with others, develop, go deep spiritually.

And then the next thing and that also is tied to what you worship. If you worship the right things in your life and you spend time pursuing the right things, that's going to lead to better health.

Spiritual, Mental, and Physical Roots of Healing

Now the next one there is is that key which is really tied to our mental, neurological, health or cellular health. And that's where we get into cellular creating ATP, how you create energy.

And in in order to take care of that there are certain nutrients. So kind of up top where we talked about share and

that's prayer, that's meditation. That's getting to the root, you know psychologically of what was going on.

There's nutrients for that as well. Probably connected more to the spirit like reishi mushroom and some other things that are more nourishing for that, things that are tied more to the emotions.

And then as we get into more of the mitochondrial health, it's going to be tied to a lot of B vitamins and things that support. Again, we talked about methylation there.

And so the methylation cycle for your body increasing ATP synthesis. So vitamin B12 vitamin B2, folate, B6, zinc, magnesium and vitamin D those are really crucial for us creating the right neurochemicals in order to heal.

And then aging is really more tied to the physical an exercise I mean, doing, you know, just doing the things we were created to do wise. And I think that the great, you know, and just sharing this, if anybody is wondering what are the best supplements to take, you know, omega three fatty acids, vitamin D, we're going to be at the very top of the list.

And then I think getting methylated B vitamins, those are very important for neurotransmitters, very important for cellular health. Again, the zinc and magnesium, I think those are the biggest nutritional deficiencies I see with people supporting mental health.

But even if you do all of those supplements and you eat the perfect diet, it's rich in healthy fats and amino acids and probably low to mid carbs, and most of those from fruit and sweet potatoes and those sort of things.

Even if you eat the perfect diet, if you don't address the spiritual component and the mental and psychological component, you're not fully healing. And that's true especially more so than anything else with depression, anxiety, loneliness, any of those mental health disorders.

But it's also true with thyroid issues and hormonal imbalances and low testosterone. And man, I mean, it's important for all of those conditions as well.

Beautifully answered. That's incredible. Thank you for that. And it's you speaking. I'm nodding my head here, as you can see, because it's just I totally agree.

You don't if you don't address that spiritual level. The rest we have to address. But it's just that is the main thing. And then that filters down and we can then apply the rest of it to importantly, just last question.

And then I want people to to tell people how they can get hold of you. Just quickly define for the audience epigenetics environment is so important or cellular environment so important.

If you wouldn't mind just explaining that. Yeah. So so so epigenetics essentially or think about it like this. If I use a metaphor, you have switches in your body that can be turned on and off.

Okay. And we have switches that actually promote longevity and some that can take years off your life. And so we we see a lot of epigenetic talk or we did years ago with breast cancer genes like Brac and getting turned on.

But it's important to remember that they have to be turned on or off. Okay. We all have genetics, but you can actually flip them on or off. And so one of the greatest examples of this, and this is mind blowing, I think, is when a, when when a mother is pregnant, the studies show that the foods that the mom liked the child will like, when what they eat during they're pregnant or the health of the gut microbiome is another good example of this.

Greatly impacts the immunity of their children. But yet I want to see it's by like 300%. I mean, it has a dramatic, huge, huge. And they've also shown in studies this probably goes it probably will impact 3 to 4 generations.

I mean that long of of of weight when you're turning genes on to actually not think about that, okay. If you're, you know, you know, you're pregnant and you're eating, you know, eating healthy versus not healthy, does that matter

much?

Yeah, it matters immensely. It matters 3 to 4 generations for your kids, kids and their kids and their kids.

Epigenetics and Where to Learn More

And so epigenetics are really turning on and off genes good or bad, that really impact, you know, a lot of the disease process and aging process. Beautiful.

And that's also trauma, the other one that passes through the generations. And that's why it's so important we deal with our stuff. We go to that, see the top, read the spiritual label.

And so that because that also passes through the generations and it's a very stable scientific factor. Justice has been amazing as usual. There's like so many more things we can talk, but people can always watch my podcast, your podcast, because we'll both be interviewing each other lot in the future about these amazing things.

Where can people learn more from you and get help from you? And you've written amazing books and, you've got a podcast, you've got Instagram. So we can get help from, I'd say a couple places.

One is my podcast is The Doctor Josh show, and maybe there's something specific you want to learn about. So you can also go on YouTube or Apple and search Doctor Axe depression or doctor Axe methylation and watch one of those episodes.

They're also Instagram, very active on social media at Dr. Josh Axe and I have a book out called Think This Not That really types into taps into mindset medicine there as well.

But Doctor Caroline, thanks so much for having me on. It's an honor. I love what you're doing here and helping people heal, with the power of the mind.

So thank you. Thank you. It's been wonderful. Thanks, Josh. 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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