Introduction and Guest Background

High glycemic ultra processed foods. So these are like the foods that are fast foods and you know the stuff that we buy at the grocery store have a direct impact on the incidence of depression.

The more ultra-processed foods, that a person ate, the more likely they were to experience depression and why is that the case? We've got to ask the question, what is this food doing to my chemistry?

Understanding that every single cell in our body is made from the food that This is Doctor Talks. Sean, my friend, it's always such a pleasure seeing you.

You're so much fun. We've done so many podcasts together. My best are when we do it in person in your studio. So that's going to happen again soon and you've got to come to my studio, but I'm so pleased to have you on Doctor's Talk because every time I talk to you, and it has been a couple of years now that we've been doing stuff together, I learn so You have such a great story, such great backstory.

You're also so educated and you approach everything just how I like it from a very scientific angle, but you really put the whole thing of living holistically together into a really neat package to manage our mental fitness.

So I'm thrilled to have you join us and welcome. Thank you. And I've got to say, as I always do, I'm a huge fan of you and everything that you do. My daughter, when she was in high school, her class was reading one of your books.

I love sex. You've been in my life for a long time before we even met, and now that your in life is even better. I remember that first time I met, that actually came to a studio.

I think the first I interviewed you on my show, then I came into your studio and you showed me, or you held up the book in the one interview, I can't remember when, of that book that was, 2008 or something.

It was really a long time ago and your daughter had been doing it at school and she had notes. So, so special. So thank you for that. Sean, you have a great, uh, You've got quite a, quite pedigree here.

You're the author of the USA Today National Bestsellers, Eat Smarter, and the Eat Smasher Family Cookbook, as well as the International Bestselling book, Seep Smarser.

you had the Model Health Show, which is phenomenal. It's really fantastic. One of top shows in health, millions of downloads. And you're a graduate of The University of Missouri, St.

Louis. We studied business, biology and nutritional science. and you became a co-founder of Advanced Integrative Health Alliance. Tell us just in a nutshell how you got to this place.

I know your backstory, but people are going to love it. And then tell us what's been going on in your life this last year. We were having a little chat behind the scenes and you've had a lot of challenges this year and really grown through this with your mental health and everything.

Well, I have a literal backstory. You know, as a person I had this kind of like connection, yeah. When I was 20 years old, you know I in college at the time and I diagnosed with degenerative disc disease at 20. And so I severe degeneration of my L4, L5S1 disc and that was just finally getting the diagnosis.

I wasn't pain for quite some time, loss of function and at track practice a couple years earlier I actually broke my hip. at track practice, my body was just literally breaking down.

And you know, you hear stuff like this is reserved for people much older, typically. But I was basically a very old person inside of a young person's kind of biological age.

I mean, I'm sorry, chronological age and, but going through the traditional means of treatment, You know, I learned a lot and I often learn what not to do, right?

So going to that first physician when I broke my hip, you know I asked, okay, so what happened? How did this happen? What do I need to to get better? And he just gave me some NSAIDs.

He said, stay off the leg and you're gonna heal. You're young, whatever. But he didn't ask how did a 15 year old, 16 year-old kid break his hip at track practice.

And again, it was just kind of a string of injuries from there, a lot of pain, going to the physician every time I leave with a new drug and a recommendation for bed rest.

And so not only was my spine and my bones beginning to atrophy, but the rest of me.

Sean's Injury, Recovery, and Career Path

was, you know, and also, of course, like this is going to translate into some severe struggles with my mental health. And, really starting to have a lack of purpose and meaning and just a lot of desire to get out of bed because I didn't want to face another day of kind of limping through campus and dealing with pain.

Again, to put the story into a nutshell because we've got so much to share today. Obviously the story has a happy ending. It does. And it took two years.

There was two of seeing different physicians and getting, you know, different recommendations, but pretty much again, the same line of thinking. I decided after I saw the last physician for this condition who said, I'm sorry, son, there's nothing we could do.

We could just help you to treat these symptoms with some pain meds. and I decide to get well. I decided to get well and I cannot stress how good that is because so often I was going in just to like trying to give myself over to them like please fix me and i wasn't asking what i can do and everything changed like in a split second when i was sitting at home by myself And my grandmother, actually, I just got off the phone with her.

She kept calling and pestering me for those couple of years, knowing I wasn't okay, but I was just like, Grandma, fine, like stop worrying about me. But she saw so much greatness in me, you know, she helped to raise me and just saw this potential.

And here I am just wasting it away by giving my life away to people telling me that I can't get better, that can do anything that want to do. And so I decided to get well.

And also this isn't just a kind of moment of revelation, everything instantly changed, but my mindset changed. We talked about this before. We have this really powerful faculty of the human mind.

It's called instinctive elaboration. Our minds are always seeking the answer to things that we pose it. So we all have a dominant question that were always asking, guiding our life and our focus.

And so for those couple of years, my kind of dominant question was, why me? Why me, I was constantly asking that subconsciously as well. And now my question is, what can I do to feel better?

What can do feel good? And I start to see all the solutions that were there this whole time, they were already there, but I'm just getting more attuned to them and I transformed my health as you mentioned.

When you're not sleeping well, you are not healing. My nutrition obviously really provided my body with the raw

materials to regenerate my tissues and movement.

You know, the thing that I was told not to do was really a really key important part of this healing equation. And within about six weeks of that moment of revelation, I had lost almost 20 pounds, which is not typical by the way.

I kind of like the skinny kid in my family and I gained a lot of weight. But the pain I'm experiencing, every single waking moment for the past two and a half years was gone.

And when I got my scan done, completely regenerated, those two discs, I could see the light shining through them again. My bone density went to that of somebody that was in my age bracket, fortunately.

He didn't even ask me, he said, whatever you're doing, keep doing it. Because we haven't seen results like this before. When I, of course, tried to tell him about what I was doing he's like, oh, that sounds nice.

Well, yeah, that's terrible. And this was how many years ago, Sean, again? This was 23 years. 23 Years ago. So I want to stress a couple of things. You said you decided to change.

you've been to all these medical procedures, some procedures medications, doctors, but you decide to heal and you mentioned three things, mindset, nutrition and exercise.

and your switch back to university and actually studied. in the field and got the degrees. And so you went and decided you were going to, and then you had some professors.

What's the story about those professors that you would challenge? And I love that story. Tell that Well, one of the coolest examples was after I transformed my health, people started just coming up to me on the university campus.

And like, I was walking out of class one day, it was a marketing class and the professor was like Sean, can I see you after class for a second? And I'm just like what is going on?

What did I do? You know, and he, you know everybody left out and kind of pulled me to the side. He was, like What'd you do and I, was again, what did you I did?

He's like you look so healthy. And I was just like shocked how much he noticed that, you know, because I didn't realize it because i was living the experience.

I did not look like a person who lost weight, I looked like someone who was radiantly healthy. When I see pictures of myself prior to that I really look a ghost, i just look so lifeless.

And he asked me like, can you work with me? Can you teach me some of the stuff you're doing?

Family Loss and Mental Health Challenges

And so my professors became some of my first clients, fellow students, faculty at the school, and I just kind of became the man on campus with fitness and health.

And that led to opening my clinical practice, working as a nutritionist, speaking, writing books, eventually doing the show. That got me here with one of superheroes today.

Oh, well, you're one of my superheroes too. That's the abridged version. People can go to my podcast and also go and listen to Sean's podcast. You'll learn so much.

And at the end, Sean, we're going to hear how people can get hold of you and learn from you. But let's dive into some questions. When we interviewed you about your most recent book, which was the Eat Smarter Family cookbook, it's just fantastic.

I love it. It's one my favorite cookbooks, seriously, if not my favourite. And one of the things that when you, not one, so many things you said were fascinating.

And I know a lot about this field, and not as much as you and people talk about us all the time, but you have a very unique way of explaining the importance of nutrition.

But you say it's something that really stood out and that was the important of eating together as a family. You quoted some studies. Can we start around those studies?

But before we dive in, I just want to quickly track to the second question I had. I don't want you to forget about that. We're going to come back to this.

about this year's been a little bit of a year for you and how it's a bit a mental health challenge and, how have you managed your mental? It's probably a big question, but if you can kind of give me a bridge version and help people to just, when life's full of challenges, what do you do?

I've got to share this with everybody, you know, because I was even hesitant to tell you, still, but that's me doing the work and actually opening up.

Because, when people ask you like, how are you doing? How's everything been going? You could just be like I'm good. You know what, this last year has been, it's been tough.

And right before I started doing interviews and things like that for the new cookbook that I'd worked for two years on, poured my heart and soul into to really help families right to really focus on family wellness and the health of our kids specifically yeah something i'm very passionate about right before that happened my father passed away and you know it's just like what i i couldn't believe the timing of it because so hot he was a part of the process of writing a cookbook because he wasn't executive chef right i am not talking about him teaching me how to cook it was just a But so many times I saw him make something out of nothing.

Like we had a couple of random ingredients in the house and he turned that into a pizza or some kind of experience that we never forget. And he also, this was during the crack epidemic.

So I lost a lot of family members to passing away, severe dysfunction or ending up in prison. He actually was in assisted living for about 12 years. because of brain damage from drugs.

And so we knew that it was imminent, you know, at some point it's going to happen. But the timing when he passed away, it just made it very difficult to go through and do all the media and all this stuff and go to Good Morning America and because it is just on my shoulders, and fast forward a little bit, I kind of pulled my way through it and got the book out.

It was the number one cookbook release in the United States, which was awesome. But then just like my older son moved out, like literally a couple of weeks after that, you know, he's 23 and, but it's still a change our family dynamic because in the household, it was my wife, my oldest son, and my youngest son and me.

And my younger son changing schools, going into middle school during this time and like the application process here in Los Angeles is ridiculous. I'm from St.

Louis. So I wasn't accustomed to how crazy these processes can be to get little kids in a school. and then this was bookended you know again ups and downs through this year book ended with my wife's father passing away oh my gosh a year after my father so this years been challenging to say the least and what I've really learned is and for myself being one of those people who have that tendency to like I got this I'm the person who you can count on yeah for me to start counting on other people and from me start sharing and talking about these things.

And I've cried a lot just talking, but I don't usually talk about them, because I'm so busy making sure everybody else is good. You're the guy with the smile on your face, you have everything together, and you always know what to do.

because we can hide behind that persona because I'm also kind of similar to that. And yet these things knocked you and you had to face them and now you're talking about them.

So thank you for sharing and thank for your vulnerability. Can you talk a little bit about what's got you, like you made the decision to get your health under control.

This has been a year from, literally a from hell. I mean, it's been an up and down year for you. Some great stuff and some really, really sad and hard stuff, and challenges and changes.

How did you manage that? That's such a great question. And it really, you know, even when life presents us with some of the most challenging times to be able to have a foundation of health, a Foundation of wellness and some Of these tools I cannot, I don't even know where or what I would be without these things.

and it's really just helped to keep me grounded. Even when I mentioned crying a lot, A lot of these tears have been just from, from absolute joy and gratitude for, You know I lost my father, but I just, had a mental framework to take the beautiful things that I picked up from him and to discard the other things, you know, because they weren't serving me.

And, being able to be able process and think some of these things out, and I'll tell you what, one of the most remarkable things and actually, mutual friend Daniel Amen shared this with me, how important it is in the grieving process because he lost his father a couple years ago, to make sure that you are sleeping.

He was like, because that's one of the things that tends to get omitted, especially when dealing with all this stuff and just really prioritizing my time to rest and also for my family and to have some more downtime than usual.

Sleep, Devices, and Bedroom Environment

And we'll talk a little bit about, matter of fact, we could just dive in and talk about that. Let's dive, let's, dive. What did you do? Cause you've got you, you were going to talk three science backed habits to improve and protect your mental health.

So let us dive into what did do, cause it's great. You've given us context and these are things people can apply and this is what you teach in all your books.

Awesome. Well, I'll share one quick study with everybody. So there was an awesome analysis that was published in the International Journal of Molecular Science and the title of the study was depression and sleep.

And I'm going to read a direct quote from this study for you guys. And the study stated, essentially, impaired sleep is both a risk factor for depression and a symptom of depression.

But interestingly, the researchers noted that poor REM sleep quality, and this is important, poor rem sleep and depression go hand in hand. Yet they state, this the direct, quote, most antidepressants suppress REM both in healthy volunteers and depressed patients." So again, we might be treating a symptom that might A big percentage of our struggles with mental health, mental fortitude is a lack of sleep.

We are the most sleep deprived culture in the history of humanity, of course, and the biggest impact is happening to our kids. And we're seeing a dose response relationship with the less sleep that we get, the more anxious and depressed we are getting.

So what do we do to address this? As you mentioned, My book came out almost 10 years, we're almost at the 10 year anniversary. And this was, and this is true story, I don't usually talk about this, literary agents, you know, was in different discussions about.

This and they were like, Oh, no, your should do a book on fitness or nutrition. Like sleep books don' sell well. I was like no no this important part of the health conversation is not being talked about because 10. Years ago, it wasn't.

a grand way, right? It's difficult to not hear about this. But I was able to, I ended up getting 11 offers for this book, because I self published it first, and then including the big five.

So it became like a bidding war, Because the book people really wanted this Book. And since then, of course, other great books have come out since but we really changed.

It was the first Sleep Wellness book to become an international bestseller. I'm saying all that to say, What I put in there, 21 clinically proven strategies, they're all very simple.

Simple things we don't have to turn our life upside down. And I'll share a couple with everybody, which unfortunately, some people get this. I've gotten this since the book has come out.

Some people are still struggling with this, the biggest deterrent of our sleep quality is our devices. It's the big hurdle today. We've got some research from some researchers at Harvard who found that being on your device before bed, that spectrum of light that we did not evolve having this exposure is throwing off our circadian rhythm, suppressing melatonin production and increasing cortisol in the evening.

And it's really kind of creating this phenomenon where you might pass out from exhaustion, but you're not going through your sleep cycle effectively. In particular, I just mentioned REM sleep being so important in helping us to defend our bodies and our spirits against depression.

And so we're just feeding the problem being on our devices, especially in the evening. Now I watch a show here or there in the evening, of course, but I give myself a screen curfew.

And especially for my kids, right? Just having some time to wind down, to allow melatonin production to normalize, increase, and also to lower cortisol.

Because I was one of the first people out here promoting blue light blocking glasses. At my clinical practice, you know, 12 years ago, I had a blue-light blocking thing on my computer.

That's great. but it's still stimulation, like so much. If you're on your phone, you are watching a show, House of Dragons is fantastic. All right? So it is just give yourself a little bit of downtime.

And now here's the thing, with any addiction, and we've got to be honest, we're addicted. Yeah. All right. This is an intervention too. We are addicted and you got to acknowledge that you are.

And we cannot just come in and put our like, I'm not going to get on my device and just sit there and twiddle your thumbs. You need to replace it with something of equal or greater value.

That's really helpful. So finding what those things are for you in the evening. What does your evening downtime look like? Is this a time where you go and take a nice bubble bath?

Is this a time where you listen to an audiobook or a podcast that you love because you don't have to stare at a screen to listen? Is it a moment you spend with your kids and decompressing from the day or your significant other or just getting on a call?

stare at a screen to be on a phone call, or reading a book. People love books still. There's a couple of great books out there, and you've written many of them, you know, just being able to unwind.

What does your evening unwine time look like? And give yourself permission to do something you enjoy that feels good, maybe journaling, whatever the case might be.

But again, journalling might not be as sexy as House of Dragons for most people. So you got to find out what that looks like for you. So that's number one, give yourself a screen curfew.

And number two would be to, it's really about the environment. influenced by our environment. We are, in fact, products of our environments. But we're also creators of environment, we can create an environment that automatically affects us in a positive way.

So making sure that your sleep, I call it a sleep sanctuary. You know, you get it set up in way that really supports great sleep. And that's going to be a room that is ideally very dark.

All right. Now, if you live out in the woods or something like that, where you don't have a lot of what we call light pollution, from street light lamps and your neighbor's porch light and stuff pouring in through your windows.

That's not a problem. Moonlight, starlight all that stuff we evolved with. Deluxe is very different. But if not, you probably want to get yourself some blackout curtains because the researchers at Cornell actually took a test subject, put them into an otherwise dark room, but put a light the size of a quarter behind their knee.

And that was enough to disrupt their sleep cycle. Our skin picks up light, has photoreceptors that in all what's happening, every cell in your body is trying to say, what time is it?

What time it is? Let's figure this out. Let us get on one accord. And so a cool environment as well. We got tons of studies on this now. When we're hot, sleep can suck.

All right. So getting yourself a cooler environment. Also, you know, ideally you want to have your bedroom set up, be in a way, if possible, I've been a student before where it wasn't possible.

My bedroom was my desk, was everything.

Sleep Nutrients and Whole-Food Vitamin C

But if you can, create an environment where there's a neural association for your bedroom and sleep versus I go into my bedroom to work on my laptop or lay in bed and type away or be on phone or watch television.

Alright, if at all possible, it would be very advantageous to your sleep. And so the last thing I'll share is you can do all these things I just mentioned, these kind of mechanical outside world things.

If you don't provide your body with the raw materials to build your sleep related hormones and neurotransmitters, so I'm talking about very key, what I call good sleep nutrients, you can do all that fancy stuff, but your bodies still not going to be able to built these things efficiently and your asleep is going suffer.

And so what are those things? I'll give you a couple. Again, there's many that I've articulated in a bunch of my books, even in the cookbook I talk about this is so important.

And so one of them being, we'll start with tryptophan, right? So a lot of people have heard about this amino acid in the context of probably like turkey and like getting sleepy and all this stuff.

But trypophane is a precursor for making serotonin, which is the precursors for mellatonin. And trypsophene is pretty abundant in a bunch of different foods, not just turkey.

But Triptophan is very important for helping to regulate your sleep. Another good sleep nutrient is Vitamin C. Vitamin c is kind of like the swiss army knife.

When it comes to health, like we generally attach it to immune system support. We got so many studies now on it helping to defend our body from stress and our stress response, right?

So like they gave some folks that were about to do a public speech, which for many people is the biggest fear. They fear that more than death. And so just seeing that their cortisol levels stay lower when they had adequate amounts of vitamin C in their system.

But when we're under stress, our adrenals basically just dump out a lot of vitamin C to help to modulate that because also it's a threat. So we might get injured, right?

Because that's how we evolved. When we have this sense of threat, something bad might happen. We need to ramp up that immune system function and our stress.

But when it comes to sleep, specifically some researchers, and this was published in PLOS One, they found that individuals that were deficient in vitamin C had more interrupted sleep.

So they woke up more often during the night. And so making sure that we're optimizing our vitamin c levels. This is the benefit of being able to hear from me versus just hearing this kind of surface level information about this.

When we think about this, a lot of us might turn to take a vitamin C supplement. I've been screaming this out from the rooftops for about the last two years now, and now I see a bunch of other people out there on the internet talking about it.

About 99% of the vitamin c supplements that you find at the checkout counter, these little emergency packets, they're made from genetically modified corn syrup and corn starch.

All right. They're trash when it comes to actually like the sourcing and also in clinical studies. And so putting that up against, and there was a study that was published in the journal of cardiology looking at smokers, which is a very kind of oxidative.

kind of damaging habit and they had them to take a kind a typical vitamin C synthetic supplement versus a whole food concentrate of vitamin c, which in this case it was a camu camo berry, a very dense source of Vitamin C.

There were no changes in the vitamin response in body and oxidative stress. that kind of inflammatory response in the people taking the synthetic vitamin C.

And there was significant improvement by taking camu camubarri, so like a whole food-based concentrate. So get your vitamin c from food or whole-food-base concentrates.

So Sean, you were busy with telling us about the vitamin C. We were having a discussion about vitamin c and we were both talking around the fact that it needs to be in whole foods.

There's been studies out showing that that's not the safest thing to do. So you're very much a proponent of whole food, eating and mental health. If you could talk for a few minutes about that and then I'd love to transition over to the family, the importance of eating as a family and community and that.

And then also a bit about mindset, a little bit more about mind set, but let's go to The Vitamin C whole foods concept first. Awesome. Yeah. So, you know, we've kind of shifted over and become and by the way, You handled this like a pro just so people know you figured this thing out.

You're amazing. Just so, people will know again, We evolved eating food and today we are faced with an entirely different food terrain, which is one of the, if not the biggest culprit behind our epidemics of mental health issues.

And this isn't just me saying this, now we've got really sound, robust sets of data that are affirming this. And one of them is an analysis that included 70,000 people.

This is a big data set.

Ultra-Processed Foods and Depression

fast foods and the stuff that we buy at the grocery store have a direct impact on the incidence of depression. And the scientists found that there was a dose response relationship, meaning that the more ultra processed foods that

a person ate, the more likely they were to experience depression.

And this is just one of many studies that are now affirming this and why is that the case? And that's what it's about because it not just like, oh, you know, Twinkies are bad for you.

They make you sad, whatever. No, I mean, like some of these things create great food experiences and a lot of pleasure in the moment. But we've got to ask the question, what is this food doing to my chemistry?

And in particular, understanding that every single cell in our body is made from the food that we eat, including our brain. So we're providing our brains with the materials to make itself and to rebuild itself.

And if we are not providing the nutrients needed to keep our neurons healthy, like signal transduction, to literally create structural fats in the brain and to enable plasticity for our brain to change and get better.

We're going to suffer. And so a big part of this has to do with the impact that it's having on our gut. Now, I'll share one more study with everybody.

This was a fascinating study, by the way. It was published in a journal, Trends in Microbiology, just last year. The researchers stated, microbes within the gut can produce, degrade, and modify hormones in quantities that are biologically significant and affect host physiology.

our microbes, we're feeding them the Twinkies and the potato chips and all the other ultra-processed foods and it's really creating this massive disruption in the chemistry that they're making.

And we know today, the microbiome is having a big moment. So it is like what we are creating our tissues out of and also what are we doing to our microbiomes.

The third part is the Chemistry itself because food isn't just used to make our tissue, It's used to make our neurotransmitters and our hormones and the energy that allows ourselves to communicate is all built on food.

It is built upon food and so again, I ask you if you're giving yourself high quality fuel for your system to run on versus really low quality degraded newly invented stuff that we're seeing the ramifications on and so I could share a couple of the most important nutrients that We found again tons of data on this to support our mental health if you want Absolutely, let's spend just a minute on that because I'd love to get over to the couple of other things.

All right, so the big one, when I talked about the brain in particular, and this enables, this is a structural fat or the human brain. This enables signal transduction.

There's a huge role in memory, in cognition. People have heard about this before, but I'm hoping that this hits in a different way. Omega-3 fatty acids, in particular DHA and EPA, they have express ticket to get into the brain through the blood brain barrier.

Your body is always seeking out these fats to support your cognitive function. There was a meta-analysis, so this is a study of multiple studies published in the journal, Translational Psychiatry, and they found that omega-3s have a beneficial effect on individuals with major depressive disorders.

So not even just mild or moderate forms, but major depression disorders have improvement with omega 3s included in their diet. Now why is this? Well, some researchers, and this was published in the journal Neurology, looked at a bunch of human brains and they found that people who consumed the least amount of DHA, in particular DHEA and EPA, but D HEA in particularly, had the highest rate of brain shrinkage.

So their brains were literally losing volume, losing our brain matter. when we're not getting these omega threes and it is a big deal.

Omega-3s, Brain Health, and Mental Fitness

All right. So please everybody today, if there is one nutrient to go after and also in the journal neurology, they found that people who eat at least one seafood meal per week do in fact perform better on cognitive skills tests.

There's something special about seafood, all the blue zones. They've known about this for a long time. We're talking about fatty fish in particular, but also protein dense, more protein-dense fish.

Things like cod as well. We've got some really remarkable studies showing its benefit because protein is that other nutrient that I wanted everybody to think about.

Just to finish this off really, really quickly with the omega-3s. So we've fatty fish, we got obviously fish oil is a huge supplement industry. You got krill oil, which is microscopic shrimp.

It's rich in acizanthin which protects those omega 3s And if you're doing a vegan or vegetarian protocol, then you want to look for an algae oil. Now we know that the DHA and EPA are there, but we don't have a lot of randomized controlled trials to see their efficacy in humans.

All right, so just keep that in mind. I'm not talking about the omega-3s and chia seeds and flaxseeds, that's ALA. We need Dha and Epa for your brain, literally.

So keep in that mind, and also you could find it in egg yolks and grass-fed beef and other things like that as well. That's what I wanted to say because your big thing with your recipe book is that all the recipes in that recipe are holistic ways of getting all these essential nutrients in for good mental fitness.

A nice way to think about it, just in terms of summarizing it all, is our mind is separate from the brain and the body, but the mind runs the Brain and Body.

So if the Brains and The Body are not functioning in a healthy way, the Mind has to work through this tangled web and that just then feeds back and increases our mental challenges and makes managing our Mind so difficult.

That's why we can't just, we have to, work on everything. We've got to But you've got to use your mind to listen to what you're saying, Sean. You've gotta use our mind, to process what your saying.

Use our minds to do what we did in the beginning, which is you chose to make yourself better. YOU made the decision, you can come alongside all your clients, so can I.

And you tell all these people all of these great things and what they should do about their mind. How to eat and so on. But until a person makes a choice in their decision.

your mental and physical health is not going to improve. It's really up to us to make that decision to use our mind, which is so important. Now, a big part of that is eating together as families.

Can you talk a little bit about that research as our final question? And then I want to just let people know how they can get help from you. Awesome. Yeah.

So a couple of studies I'll throw out for everybody. One of them was conducted and published in the journal, Pediatrics, looking at children's health and the act of eating caregivers or parents.

And so what they found was that children who eat with their parents or caregivers, three meals a week was the minimum effective dose had dramatically lowered incidence of disordered eating.

So this is really tied to mental health as well, and significantly lowered incidents of developing obesity as people that care about them.

Eating Together as a Family

And this holds true for parents as well. So another study was conducted by conducted on some people working in tech, which you know, can be very hectic and stressful.

These were people who were working at IBM. They found that when employees were able to consistently make it home and eat dinner with their families, they were Their work morale, productivity, all these things stayed high.

But as soon as work obligations cut into their ability to eat with their family on a consistent basis, their productivity work, morale unhappiness, excess stress went up.

All these. Things started to really have this really terrible side effect. And again, why is that? When we're together with people that we care about, and you've talked a lot about this, our chemistry changes, you know, oxytocin.

We're very good humans. You know this kind of cuddle hormone or love hormone, we produce more of it when we are around people we love. But in particular, Like the dinner table is a unifier, right?

But the research indicates it doesn't matter if it's dinner, any meal, so getting together proactively with our friends, family, having time to go for coffee or getting lunch together, sitting down and having brunch.

But I'm going to implore everybody three meals a week, again, appears to be that minimum effective dose in multiple studies. And just keep this in mind, it is this experience, yes, we're changing our chemistry, But also the act of talking like you and I were talking before we even got started is super helpful.

to be able to share and to talk and feel seen and how important that is for our kids. And they go through different stages as well. But we know our kid if we're paying attention and being able have great questions and conversations and ways for them to show what's going on in their life.

Also, this is a very important way for us to catch things. Kill the monster while it's little before it becomes something big. You can actually just pay attention, hear what's going on and talk about things.

And just being able to talk and to feel seen is a really important psychological need for all of us as human beings. We can do that while enjoying delicious food together.

I love that. I mean, three meals, how hard is it? The research is saying just have three meal together as a family and you already, what was the statistic?

Three meals together and what were the rest of the statistics, Sean? Were the three, minimum three-meals together a week? Yep. Three, it could be any meal.

So this could breakfast, lunch or dinner. The impact of that, the impact? Yeah, so dramatically lowered incidence of disordered eating, of obesity, nutrient deficiencies that lead to chronic diseases.

That comes from research from Harvard. So we're talking about depression, anxiety, we are talking heart disease, all these things. We have a significant decrease in pretty much all manner of chronic illnesses when we eat together.

Again, a minimum of three meals a week. With our family, it's really special. Imagine now if you doubled that to six a week, which is not even difficult.

I mean, you think of it, so in a nutshell, Sean, You're telling us that, that you're, telling you to eat together, eat whole food, make sure that work in the planet, to get your sleep organized and they can get all of this in detailed guidelines in your book.

So how do people get help from you? Awesome. Yeah. So of course the East Marta Family Cookbook is available at stores nationwide. And of your favorite online retailers.

It is such a special book. We recently did a talk at my son's school and we brought books for all the kids third through eighth grade. The weeks after that leading up to the summer break, He was like, dad, almost every day a kid comes up to me and says, like oh, we just made your dad's, you know, cherry frozen yogurt pops like last night and they were delicious or whatever.

He's just like dad like I know these kids. he always talks like he's older. I knew they would be happy to get a book, but I did not think these would make the food and have so much enjoyment in making it.

Closing Remarks and Where to Find Sean

Like, he's like, I can't believe it. He knows what it's, like living with us, but he knows that kids are different, you know, and their family cultures are, different but it is getting kids together with their parents.

Like these kids, are wanting to be in the kitchen and to make food and also the food is delicious. We're big fans of deliciousness. I'm a big foodie and so we can marry all that together.

But I can't wait for you and I'll be promising to do a meal together at some point. So that's still going to happen. We're going come and have a nice family fun time at your place with your wife and kids or at my place, with Mac and family.

And we're gonna cook those meals. Sean, thank you so much. Thank you for working through the tech issue with me. It was just at the end. This was a dynamic and greatly informed, wonderful interview.

Thanks so, it's always such a pleasure talking to you. and thanks for doing this for Doctors to Doctors. 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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