Introduction and guest welcome

Hello, ladies. Welcome back to Mastering the Menopause Transition 3.0. I'm your host, Dr. Sharon Stills. And if you've been here before, welcome back.

We have all new talks and all new information this year. And if this is your first time joining us. Welcome. We do menopause very differently around here.

So you are in for a treat. And today I have a dear friend dear colleague. Some of you may know her as the gutsy gynecologist. And I'm really excited to have her here because in general we often say, you know, don't go to your PCP or your primary care or your gynecologist because they live in the the stone ages, and they're going to hand you a birth control pill or tell you it's all in your head, or give you an antidepressant or any of these things that make zero sense for you.

And so it's like such a joy to have someone on who is an actual trained gynecologist, but who gets it and is here to support you and empower you. And she has a new book out called Fast to Fade, which I love.

So we're going to talk a bit about fasting, which I know every patient who comes to see me always has questions about fasting, so we'll get those answered for you today.

And faith. And you know, no matter what your faith is, having faith in general is a really important part of healing and the journey and truly is good medicine.

So you're in for a treat today. Dr. Tabitha Barber is in the house, so welcome. It's wonderful to have you here. Thank you Dr. Sharon, I'm so excited for this conversation because you are right, conventional medicine is failing women.

And I know because I was part of the problem. I was in that system for a long time. And so I'm here to debunk some myths like let's uncover all of it.

Yes, let's do it.

Dr. Barber's origin story and healing journey

And before we get started, I asked you before we came live if you would tell your story because I have heard you tell your story before and it's so inspiring.

And I think, you know, no matter where you're at or what's going on, when we hear other women who have overcome, it just gives us faith in ourselves to know that it's possible.

And so maybe you can just tell your story real briefly, because it really is so inspiring. And to see where you are. Well thank you. I think it's really important for any woman watching to hear my story, but to think about your own life and what you have gone through because these trials and tribulations that we experience, they are a set up for growth and for us to evolve and turn into the amazing women that we dream of being.

Right. So when I was little, I wanted to be a rock star. I like had all these big dreams. I was a wild child. I didn't care about school. I barely passed, I got pregnant in 11th grade and dropped out.

I didn't even do 12th grade, but I had a very traumatic delivery and pregnancy. I was on food stamps, Medicaid, the whole thing. I had this horrible doctor assigned to me, and he made it clear I was a second class citizen.

You know, so there was nothing explained. All kinds of pills and procedures and very invasive things done to me at 16 and 17 years old and during that traumatic delivery, I had a come to Jesus moment.

You know, I begged God to get me through and save me. And, I essentially said, I'll do whatever it takes. And, after my delivery, I'm looking at my daughter.

You know, she's crying over in the warmer, and I just, I had this overwhelming sense that I needed to protect her and give her a voice the way I didn't have one.

I didn't speak up. I didn't say, hey, what are you doing? Why are you doing this to me? And, God made it pretty clear that I needed to get my crap together, go back to school, figure out how to help women have a voice and a choice when it comes to their bodies and their health.

And so I had no idea what that looked like. Right? But I got my G. E. D., I went on to a community college. I realized I was great at school and got all the four points, got scholarships, went to medical school.

Fast forward 15 years. I am broken and a broken system. I mean, I was barely functioning. I was on 5 to 7 different medications at a time. I was on Prilosec for heartburn, Zoloft and Effexor for depression.

I went through all of them. You know, the Prozac, the Lexapro. I know them all. bento for irritable bowel syndrome. And just like every drug I had to try because I was in the system, I was being failed by the system.

But I didn't know any better. Right. Like, I thought becoming a doctor was an answer to helping women and giving them a voice and a choice. But it turns out that isn't actually what was happening at all.

And I had to go through my own health crisis and figure that out and find this whole world of health and wellness, and then come back for my people and say, ladies like, this is not okay.

What? What's happening over here? You need to come with me. And and I need. So I'm on a mission to pull women out of that broken system because it's Band-Aid medicine.

You talk about this all the time. It's just trying to cover up a symptom or get rid of a symptom. But here's the truth. Symptoms are messages from our body, and our period is a vital sign.

It's trying to tell us something. So if your period is painful or heavy or irregular, or you have crazy PMS or depression, all of those things leading up to menopause, those were signals from your body that things were out of balance and stuff was happening.

And sometimes you carry those issues into menopause, those root cause issues of what's actually going on. And so you want to find a functional gynecologist or a functional provider who understands the difference and actually wants to figure out why you're having these symptoms and teach you to listen to your body and get back into and with it, because your body is incredibly wise and, you know, I would just love to make this point really quick, that I spent four years becoming a surgeon.

OB GYNs are surgeons, but I couldn't actually heal you, right? Like I could cut you up and cut the skin and cut the fascia. Cut the uterus, take the baby out.

Take out the uterus so you back together. But your skin, your muscle, it grows back together and does the healing. I didn't heal you as the doctor. Your body healed you.

And so if we can really start to comprehend just how incredible our body is created to be, then we can start to empower it. Like, yes, I can reverse this autoimmune condition I had Hashimoto's, my numbers were like off the charts.

Now my numbers are single digits, like my TPO antibody I think is five. So you have to believe your body and give it

what it's begging for and just start to listen to it.

So that would be like my overall arching theme of my story is always look for the silver lining, always look for the lesson, always flip it around on its head and do whatever you can to come out stronger on the other side.

Right. I love that so much. I just want to reiterate like what you're saying, I always say like the symptoms are like the sacred messengers. And I always ask women even if like a woman comes to me and she's 70, I always go back and ask what were your periods like?

Why conventional medicine misses root causes

Yeah. Because it does. It gives and they're like, why? Why do you ask that? You know, I don't have periods. I'm very in 20 months, 20 years. And but it's important because all of these things are clues.

And I think we've been so trained as women. Right. To think we don't even think a second about having PMS or anything, because we think it's what we are supposed to be experiencing.

And just because we think it's normal and there's, you know, that's saying just because it's common doesn't mean it's normal. And so absolutely, that saying really speaks to that.

So tell me about this book you wrote. Yeah. So, you know, I run a virtual medical practice. I see women in the in all kinds of transitions. Usually the perimenopause menopause transition.

And I kept seeing the same themes over and over and over. Women being diagnosed with hypothyroidism, being told your thyroid is just sluggish. It's just not functioning anymore.

Here's your medication. you're going into menopause. Here's your antidepressant. Like these common scenarios, mood disorders, anxiety, depression with IBS, irritable bowel syndrome, or chronic vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Like all pointing to gut issues. Like everything kept going back to the gut and root cause issues. And so I had this download like just tell women what you learned becoming functionally medicine trained.

I know it's a lot, right. But give them the gist of what's going on in their body throughout these systems and how everything's connected. Because when you go to conventional doctors, they act like your systems are working in a silo.

You go to the endocrinologist for your thyroid and the gynecologist for your periods and the gastroenterologist for your diarrhea. Well, guess what? It's all connected.

All of those systems are talking to each other. And so when you affect one system, it's like a huge cogwheel. They all are affected. And they all turn and respond accordingly.

So the idea of let me understand what is going on in my body because there's some, you know, basic few overarching themes that we see in women during midlife.

And it is chronic stress, adrenal issues causing menopausal, you know, premature menopause and excess symptoms. It's gut dysbiosis and gut problems, lead liver issues causing hormone imbalances.

A lot of times estrogen dominance. We see that a lot, gut issues causing mood disorders like the if you can start to figure out what is going on in your body, then you can feel empowered to actually ask the right questions or say no thank you when you're offered an antidepressant because you know, hey, I think my gut just isn't making enough serotonin because it's got the wrong bacteria living in it, and I'm not metabolizing my hormones.

And you can start to decipher what's actually happening. And then you can search out a doctor who can actually

help you, as opposed to just this Band-Aid medicine.

So the book is essentially this is potentially what you're going through. And then here's a solution that's probably going to fix about 80% of your hormone imbalance issues, because so much of it is just our basic foundation that we're neglecting our diet and our lifestyle, how we're managing our stress, how we're not processing and handling our relationships, those types of things.

Because at the end of the day, our body, our mind and our soul, they are connected. They are talking to one another and they are responding accordingly.

So I like to say to women, like, think back to a time when you were super angry and like your blood was boiling. Think about that argument. You had that big fight, and if you do that for a minute or two, you will physically start to feel those feelings.

You will get sweaty palms and shaking. Your heart will raise and you'll you'll feel that anger again, because thoughts produce chemicals in your brain.

Those chemicals go through your body and send signals and your cells respond accordingly. So it really, really, really matters what you're thinking throughout the day.

If you're thinking negative, destructive thoughts, you're going to be inflamed. You're going to have destructive processes happening in your body. And Doctor Joe Dispenza does an amazing job of showing this.

And the research like this is science. Like, I'm not making this up. And if you think healing positive thoughts throughout your day, you make healing chemicals that talk to your cells and you can reverse things. So what talks to your mind?

Whatever's nourishing your soul, either you're feeding it with fear or you're feeding it with faith.

Faith, mindset, and the power of thoughts

And so if you can start to really shift the paradigm of instead of letting your body run the show and your your fleshly desires and your cravings, if you can like, start to realize what's happening in your brain and get control of that, you can shift how your body feels.

And that's what I want to teach women, is I get back control. You are more than your flesh, I promise you, right? I love that you said so many important things.

And I was thinking about when you're saying, like, think about how you're feeling. And that's that's so true. Like the vibration we put out, right? We talk about affirmations, but we have to really be in it and be vibrating in it.

And when I teach mindfulness based stress reduction, which is Jon Kabat-Zinn work, we do an exercise just like you were just saying. I was like smiling to myself where we have everyone, you know, get into an anger state for like two minutes and then we sit, we like put up on the board, you know, physical, emotional, spiritual, mental columns and say, what are you feeling?

And so people start to, like you were saying, the sweaty palms or the heart racing or muscle tension or anger, all of these things. And when you end up with all these lists, you can like put it like, here's cardiovascular disease, here's gastrointestinal disease, here's here's, you know, musculoskeletal, like all the disease processes that we seek help for, you can see how they're all rooted in this stress, anger feelings.

So I love that you brought that up. And so as you were talking, my question was like, so fast to Faith, which is such a great title, is that fasting on negative thoughts to have faith, or are you actually talking about fasting from food?

Yeah, that's a great question, and I would love to just reemphasize the fact that I unfortunately see regularly in my

practice when women have emotional things that they're distraught over, that go on for a period of time, they get diagnosed with the disease, they get diagnosed with very aggressive cancers and bad things because that chronic stress does create disease.

So I don't want that piece to be overlooked. Like you said, it's common, but it's not normal. So we got to get control of it. And what I have found over the years of running fasting programs with women online and just studying the Bible, I'm going to be like straightforward.

Jesus is my jam. That's who I love. But like you said, you just need to realize there's a higher power at work and you can actually tap into that intelligence and that energy and work with that energy to create an amazing life and to be healthy and to thrive.

So that's what I want for every woman, no matter what that looks like. But when you fast your body, you stop eating food. All of a sudden all the fleshly uncomfortable things come up like oh, cravings, hunger, irritability, hunger.

And I teach women how to combat those physical things and why it's happening. I talk about why we're all addicted to sugar because of the food industry, why we're addicted to gluten, and how that's destroying us.

but as soon as you can start to flesh away some of those desires, you get so much mental clarity that you really can reconnect with your higher power so much quicker.

And it's like this super power. You just get to tap into. It's like, oh no, I'm not just of my flesh, I am my soul. Let's really tap into that. And so I teach women a process called faith that where you you start to fast for focus and then you ask for guidance like, why am I feeling this way?

Why am I struggling? Why does this cycle keep repeating? We keep getting patterns of lessons that need to be taught to us. For me, it was. I kept falling in love with broken men who couldn't be fixed.

Like that was a pattern that I couldn't see until I really started to fast and ask for guidance. And I recommend inking it for clarity, like writing things down because if you do start to pay attention to your mind, you will realize it's a jumbled mess and it's like a broken record for us people you know, from the older days.

I like to say that's what my kids call me from the 1900s. It's a broken record that's just on repeat, and you're playing these recordings in your mind that probably aren't even true.

Like, you're fat, you can't lose weight, you're getting old. You're never going to be this, you're never going to be that. And you might not even know those recordings are on repeat because they're subconscious and they're not necessarily at the forefront, but they are driving your decisions throughout the day in your choices.

So if your subconscious believes you're never going to lose weight, you will continue to reach for the donut and to sit on the couch and not do it because you have mentally already been defeated.

So if you can start to get some of that stuff out of your brain and onto paper, you can start to see, oh my gosh, this is really what I think of myself.

This is what I believe. And then what does my creator think about me? What does my creator say about me and believe about me? I bet you're going to say he thinks I'm pretty amazing.

He created me and he believes in me, and I have strength to do all of these things. And you can see that contrast of where you are and where you should really be.

And so then you get into this attitude of gratitude, and that's the T thank him for the unconditional love and for how far you've come and the things you've learned, like I told my story, that was painful, but looking back, I wouldn't have it any other way because it has brought me to the place I am now.

And so if you can get into that attitude of gratitude and focus on all the good things that you have done and you have accomplished this and you have just experienced, you're going to start to shift those thoughts and they're going to make better chemicals to heal your body.

And then you have to hear the plan like universe, what do you want from me? Like, why am I here? What is my work supposed to be, especially in the second half of life?

Like I hear women all the time. I did it all.

Fasting for clarity, healing, and metabolic flexibility

I got the job, I got the house, I got the car, I got the kids, I got the husband. I'm not satisfied. I'm not happy. Some things missing. There's a void.

It's because we need to be connected and have a higher purpose for our time on this earth. So I really love helping women figure this out and then initiate action and trust the timing for your life.

Like, for me, I always want it yesterday or now. Like I never want to wait. And I am in a major season of learning patience. Like over and over. God keeps telling me you are waiting for my timing.

And the amazing thing is, the more I lean into that, the better life. It's like it's just been more beautiful the more that I just keep trusting that the universe has got my back.

I'm always like, God's got me. God's got me. Like, stop stressing, stop worrying. And if you start shifting your mindset like that, like everything shifts.

My health got better, my hair grew back from Covid, like so many things have improved. I wrote a book. I actually wrote two books like. It's incredible what you can accomplish when you really tap into the universe, or God or whoever you believe in and help them on you on this journey.

You don't have to do it alone. We're not supposed to do it alone. I don't believe that. Amen. I believe that, you know, the things that you're talking about are so vitally important, so much more important than do I take three drops or four drops of vitamin D?

You know, not that vitamin D is not important. But, you know, when we really look to this bigger picture and, you know, every morning when I wake up, you know, I say a prayer for thanking God for giving me another day in Judaism, we have a prayer to greet the day and, you know, and then I say, all right, like, what are we co-creating today?

How can I be of service? Like, how can I make my day special? Who can I help, how can I contribute? How can I share my gift? And like when we start living from that place and asking these questions, then life becomes so much more richer.

And I, I actually just became a certified death doula. And, which is like a birth doula, but it's for the other end of the spectrum for when we die. And I think when, you know, in our society, we tend to like, really, we don't want to talk about death. We don't want to think about death.

If someone's dying, we don't, you know, and when you really start to think about these things and you think about this stretch of time we're given here on the earth, then you start to see things from this broader perspective, like you're saying, like, what is your soul's journey?

What are you here for? And it and it really brings it all together. So hopefully that you can be doing these things now. So when it is your time, when the end of your life comes, you don't have regrets.

You just feel like, okay, I feel complete. So yeah. And I love that so much. I think that's really important. And I would

say for me, I knew that I spiritually had started to mature when I came to the realization one day that I thought to myself, if I die today, I I'm okay.

Like I'm cool with whatever's next. I'm at peace with what I've done so far in my life and and what's to come. And that's a really cool feeling because now it's like, game on.

The rest of this is just like, fun, you know? Like, I feel like I've come so far. I mean, granted, I have a ton more to learn. I'm sure I'm going to have lots more of adversities, but to feel that peace already is incredible because I remember, you know, being in my 20s, 30s and early 40s and just having such nagging, miserable longing for things, like I was just feeling like I was never going to be at peace.

So if you're feeling that way, like that would should be your priority. Like, how do I find peace? Because peace is going to bring health. It is going to bring vitality, and it's going to slow your aging process.

So I would be chasing after peace of I was for you. Yes. Chase peace right. That's a good slogan. That's just transition. Chase peace. I like that. And I to say you you know, all the major religions use fasting as a tool.

And. Spirituality. And so I love that you're using fasting in that context of not so much fasting and lose 5 pounds, but fasting and get clear and get connected and get your message and get your mission.

And so I'm just curious what that that looks like. Are you a proponent of intermittent fasting or are you doing longer fasts? What does that look like? On a more practical level?

Yeah, that's a great question. So when I was studying the Bible, I realized any time people wanted clarity and they wanted to be able to have a conversation with God, they would fast.

And so to me, that just made so much sense. And then I started thinking about my training as a surgeon and how after surgery, we would write an order and go to the nurses.

And that would mean don't feed my patient and I, they couldn't feed the patient until I wrote another order to feed the patient. And it's because eating actually uses resources and uses energy.

And so if you need to get into a true state of healing, you want to divert those resources to what needs to be healed and taken care of. And so fast is actually just a natural state of healing that God created for our bodies.

And so the question is when? For how long? What does that look like? Right? And if so, what I did is I just started studying the human condition and civilization, and it turns out we didn't used to have grocery stores on every corner. We actually had to like, hunt and forage for our food.

And we went times without eating. I grew up watching little House on the Prairie and they were not taking snacks to school and eating six times a day, like they were grateful if they ate twice a day.

And here's the truth we're our body is not created to eat from dusk until dawn. We have done this as a society. We have created major metabolic dysfunction.

Our body is so used to burning sugar for fuel or carbohydrates, which are just a bunch of sugars connected together, that when we go a couple hours without it, we feel terrible, we're hangry, we're irritable, we're snapping at people.

We're she again. We're like, where's our snacks? You know, God forbid you go on a plane and don't have a snack for two hours. I just love it. They're just like shoving it in your face every ten minutes.

But it's not how our body was created. And so we're actually in this dysfunctional, sugar burning state, and we have a whole nother state called the fat burning state.

And that is where the magic energy is. That is where, like mental clarity and true energy come from our burning ketones for fuel. And if you're really healthy, you can do both.

You can have sugar burning mode and fat burning mode. It's called metabolic flexibility. So we have to break up with sugar and teach women how to turn that system back on.

So I do a progressive fast over this 40 day program I run where I teach women how to break up with snacks, how to eat three meals a day that are so nourishing that they're not hungry.

An hour or two later, we're not eating enough fats and protein as women. We're just not. And then you shrink your eating window, and then you drop it off and do a dinner to dinner fast, because that can really start to tap into the excess fat stores.

For women who do want to lose some extra weight. And then if you want actual like autophagy healing because you have precancerous cells, or you're growing tumors like colon polyps or skin tags and skin cancer and all these things, then you want to do like a three day water fast.

And so we progressed to lead up to that. And here's the key for women. We need to carb cycle. We just do what feels better. We can't fast like men. We will lose a little bit of weight.

We'll lose five. They'll lose 30, will hate them.

Book, podcast, and closing remarks

And then we'll gain it all back and so that's a set up for disaster, right? So you have to follow your famine day by a feast day. And it's really important.

So what I have found over doing this every which way is if you eat low carb fiber six days a week and then you know, you have a nice high carb day where you're loving on your sweet potatoes and your quinoa and all the things that really teaches your body how to get back into that metabolic flexibility you had when you were 15 or 20 years old.

Like, I watch my daughter down those carbohydrates, I'm like, oh my gosh, I miss those days. If I did that, I would gain 20 pounds in week. I just, you know, that's just different.

And so it really depends on your goals. Like are you trying to release some excess weight. Are you trying to just get into autophagy, which is your body's natural state of sending out cells to eat up all the bad cells.

They look like little Pac-Man. They go around and they eat up the bad cells. They recycle the nutrients in the proteins and the vitamins. but that is how you prevent disease from happening.

Is that autophagy process? So that's what I teach. I teach the whole gamut. So that way you have all these tools in your toolbox like, hey, this is my lifestyle.

This is what I do, and I can change it up as needed for whatever season I'm going through in my life, for whatever my goals are. And really, it's just how our bodies are created to be.

I truly believe that. brilliant, brilliant, brilliant. I love how you just cover it all from the spiritual to the actual physical. So where where can ladies get the book?

Where can I get the book? What? Yeah, I will say it's just fasttofaith.com And we have an app you can go. I love when women join us in. This is their hood.

Like doing this with other women is so powerful because you learn so much from each other. One woman will say, like, does your blood sugar go up when you drink coffee with cream?

And 20 women will be like, here's what happens to me. And we all get excited because we're experiencing this together and we can learn from each other and and we can celebrate our wins.

And it's not a competition. It really is this sisterhood of women lifting each other up and like, it's my dream to just make this sisterhood so big and so powerful that it's a movement.

Women are just like, no longer needing to go to their doctor. Like, we just don't need conventional medicine anymore. That would be my dream. Honestly. I want to put myself out of a job.

Yes, yes, yes. Well, that's so beautiful. You're so beautiful. Your mission is so beautiful. Fast to faith F A S T TO FAITH. COM Right. So go to. And you also have a podcast, right?

I do, I do, formerly the Gutsy gynecologist show. I'm in the middle of reworking it. It's probably going to be called fast Faith by the time this comes out.

So you guys will find it, I promise you so much good information, though, because I love helping women understand from a functional perspective what's happening with your body, with your hormones, with your thyroid, with your gut, all the things.

And so I cover all of that. Awesome. Well, go check her out. She's got so much wisdom to share with you all. Go check out her book, Join her sisterhood because it really, truly is about sisterhood, right?

Like women, we just do so well. We thrive, you know, we tend and befriend. We we connect up there and it's really, you know, it's there's so many ways of intaking medicine and having connection and community is certainly one of them.

So I thank you for being part of my community. Thank you for coming and sharing your wisdom here at the summit. And thank you all for being here. And you know, just for having the opportunity to just dwell in, you know, she's just such a beautiful light and so much to share with you. So, as promised, I told you I was going to give you amazing interviews and this one certainly lived up to that.

So thank you all for being here. I it's humbling to me that you all come and you listen and you learn and you take time out of your busy days. That means the world to me, that you are on a mission to also empower yourself.

So thank you for letting us be a part of a mission. And thank you for being here at the summit. And we'll be back with another talk. So sending lots of love.