Introduction to the Summit and Guest

– Hello. Hello everyone. Welcome to the Medicine of Mindset Summit. I am your co-host, Dr. Anita Jackson and I am so excited to introduce to you some amazing experts around the world who are really going to be sharing their expertise in helping you understand the power of your mind, the power of your thoughts, the power of your emotions.

And joining me today is Dr. Keesha Ewers, who is a phenomenal psychotherapist, sex dollar, Doctor of Sexology. Someone to make sure I said that correctly and we're just gonna be talking about what does it really mean to understand how trauma affects your mind and how you think and how you feel and how to overcome it, How to move through it in a very powerful, successful way.

So Dr. Keesha, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy schedule and being with me here today. – I'm delighted to be here. Dr. Jackson, thanks for having me.

It's always my honor. – My pleasure. So what I would love to do before instead of you know, I do have your bio here and I don't want to just read it. I really would love people to connect to you. So would you be willing to share a little bit about yourself? – Sure, I started out as a registered nurse and about I think age 8, 19 I graduated and I was in for about 10 years. High intensity, adrenaline focused.

I'm an adrenaline junkie in my past life. You know, I see you life like doing, doing a lot of really intense medicine. I had four Children. I was raising them.

I was a marathon runner, I drove myself harder than I, I've never seen anyone drive themselves. It was, it was kind of ridiculous. Had to be the perfect mother, perfect wife, perfect at everything. I was always, you know, really like my watch when I was running, I was the one I was competing against.

Dr. Keeshau2019s Health Crisis and Trauma Discovery

And in my early thirties I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and I, you know, it was sort of like someone had taken the batteries out of the energizer bunny. And one night, like I went to bed the next morning I woke up and I was just flattened and I had about 10 extra pounds on me of puffiness all over my joints. And I got in to see a doctor and in the course of the history taking process, she asked if I had a family history of autoimmune disease.

And I said, yeah, I think my grandfather had it and died in his fifties, which I'm 57. He died at the age now and he was wheelchair bound at the end. And you know, and she said, okay, well here are two prescriptions, one for methotrexate, one for a nonsteroidal anti inflammatory drug, take them. And when you get worse, come back. Not if, but when I remember saying, well, hang on, hang on. And she's on her way out the door.

You know, I'm very, very disciplined. I run, I make my own food, I'm very, very interested in learning new skills, Is there anything else I can do? And she said no, I'm afraid, you know this is genetic and you drew the short end of the genetic lottery straw and that's it. Right?

So I remember on my way home thinking my, my model of medicine doesn't have anything for me. I wonder if there's something else. And I went home and started researching it on pub med on the computer and went to my first yoga class the next day cause I found a compelling article in yoga and auto immunity and in the, you know how you hold the pose and the yoga instructor goes around the studio and talks, he started talking about this framework of medicine, that's the sister science of yoga called Ayurveda. He said just enough that my interest was piqued and I went home and I looked it up on the computer and this 10,000 year old sister science of yoga, that's the medical arm of yoga, wow, It said, we're all different, we're not, you know, we're not all supposed to eat and sleep the same way.

And oh by the way, autoimmune disease is undigested anger. And I remember back in my chair going, but I'm not an angry person and thinking, I've never heard of digesting emotion, so maybe this is a problem, like maybe this is something.

And so I started learning how to meditate and one day in my newly formed meditation practice. This word autoimmune kept dancing in front of my third eye space and I was trying to swat away because when you're new meditation thoughts and I finally went, okay, autoimmune, oh that actually means I'm doing this to myself and it is the first time I wanted to die because this is kind of like SIA Dell's suicide diagnosis, you know, auto. And I thought that's so interesting.

And so I started going backwards in my, I call it the breadcrumb trail of my memories and I came upon this little 10 year old version of myself who was being sexually abused by the vice principal of the elementary school I was going to and I remember thinking she did one off the planet. You know, like I had tried to tell my mom and I probably didn't have the right words, I probably didn't even know the word sex at those times at that time I was a navy brat. We lived a lot of those years in Japan with no television. I, I don't think I even had the right words to tell her and I was actually in an all black school.

I was one of two white girls and the vice principal was telling me I was white trash like this is, you know, and so there was like this like I deserve this, this is what you know, And so there was all this stuff coming up where I thought something's wrong with me, I'm doing something wrong and so this is really interesting, this has to have something to do with my autoimmune disease today, I'm sure they're connected and so I went straight into therapy and which I'd never had before and I did E. M. D. R. And you know, brain spotting, you know and and deep trauma therapy and you know my auto immunity went away and I thought now this is interesting, this isn't anything I found when I was searching for it, I didn't know at the time the aces study hadn't been conducted yet.

And so there wasn't this this research tie into trauma and autoimmune disease does yet, except for in the world of aggravated medicine. And so I went back to school and got my nurse practitioner and then also a master's degree in Ayurveda and got board certified and functional medicine and I was in private practice for about three months and I went I have to go back to school and become a therapist because you can't separate the mind and the body right and really helping people to do this lodge that you know and reframe and retrain the nervous system in response to the belief systems they created. So I created, I went back and I got my doctorate and you know, I did a study called the healing unresolved trauma study. And one of the things I discovered is that you know, I kind of said what was going on when I was 10 is you'll have this and everyone's had trauma. You know, whether it's capital c trauma, like what I just described or lower case t trauma, which is a feeling of being betrayed or isolated, not a part of the crowd not accepted. You know, like our brains say if you're put on the outside of the firelight circle, we're biologically wired to have that be a traumatic experience because the saber to tiger can eat you. You know, you're not supposed to be excluded from the community. So any experience, you know, that we would never call traumatizing is can be traumatic.

So in the hurt model that came out of my study, what I discovered is you have this first experience, you know, we call them naive experiences because we're Children and we're having our first right as we're growing up. And we don't always have a well attuned well attached caregiver in our pocket 24/7 that was navigate some of these.

Right? And so you have this first naive experience and then you're going to have a feeling attached to it right away. Like a feeling in my case it was terror. And then and then from there you're going to have a nervous system response, right?

Trauma, Autoimmunity, and the HURT Model

So the fight flight freeze faint, that we call that sympathetic nervous morale in Children, it's never that it's just freeze because we're not autonomous beings. We don't have any power.

So we're going to freeze, but there's nothing to fight, right? We can't fight whatever is happening. So freeze. And then from there almost instantly you're going to make up a meaning about what's going on.

And because your brain is not fully developed until you're 26 years old, you don't have a prefrontal cortex till you're 26 year old always developed. It's going to be from the child mind and brain, which is very much limbic system oriented, which is like, am I safe? Am I okay?

Am I part of that? I am I doing it right? You know? And so like this 10 year old version of myself said in response to this was something's wrong with me because you know, like something's obviously wrong with me and I don't know what to do about it, right? And so then the belief I created about that was that I must be perfect to survive.

And so then the behavior that you then create right then to that meaning. And that belief is an adaptive behavioral response for the wise mind of the child, right? Well, instantly get connected and mine was perfectionism. And so then you go along and that's running you for the rest of your life until such time that you get an opportunity like rheumatoid arthritis to say, hey, wait a second, I don't think this is working anymore, right? And then you can I write and then you can make a decision about, oh, every time I'm upset, I'm present, I get to self confront these meanings, right? And look at the behaviors that I use is adaptive behavioral responses as a child and then see if they're serving me in my, my adult space. Often the answer will be no, – I have to stop you because this is this is phenomenal to me because I have the background as a marriage family therapist. I worked with trauma as well, sexual trauma and never heard this in school as much as I know none of my teachers ever brought forward that that trauma would affect our auto immune system.

So as I'm listening to you and I'm going to the flashbacks of my mind of my own personal trauma, which is a lot like yours, a lot like yours. And then um, to work with the clients that I've worked with and now I'm listening to you going, gosh, I'm so sorry, that piece never came in through our teachings and how powerful because now I'm looking at the women that I work with now who are struggling with autoimmune or adrenal fatigue as well. Because those two are very much connected to and it's interfering with their femininity, their sensuality.

It's affecting their relationships, affecting their ability to receive anything energetically money. Well, it's the whole entire system is just out of alignments. It's fascinating – Validated. You know, believe that go along with a nervous system patterned response.

So I haven't dropped the penny all the way in yet because you just brought up the connection to your immune system. So if you don't do the self confrontation.

So the middle of that bifurcated, here's an adult, you have you have a choice. You can have the willingness to self confront this pattern or the unwillingness to self confront it and keep blaming everything circumstances, people, events from your past, right? And then you're going to ruminate on the automatic negative thoughts that have occurred from before.

And that then creates a repetition in keeping on triggering that freeze state and the belief system, right? I something's wrong with me, therefore I must be perfect, right? Was mine?

And and they're like, you actually have many of these. I'm just helping track one. And so then anyone that comes along, if I haven't done this work, you know, that trick that I trigger from, which isn't their fault that somehow you're not doing this well enough or you're not blending in the crowd well enough. You're standing out, standing out was bad. I used to speak with a stutter.

I had social anxiety disorder. I would turn red if I talked to more than one person at a time, You know, and I didn't get over that until I was the radio host of a radio show called healthy radio about, I don't know, 12 years ago like that.

It's not been that long, you know, stuttering and turning red so.. – It's interesting too, that I think a lot of people, and this is what I have seen is they've been in the trauma for so long. That pattern that you're talking about for so long that it becomes. normal. They don't don't even recognize that they're actually dealing with trauma because it's been a part of their life for so long.

So how do we address? How do they begin to recognize that's a trauma response and it's still playing out in my life

30 years later? – Well, that's a really great question. I'm going to use the example of the radio show, I would have this microphone in front of me in the studio, no one's there except for the producer. And and when I first started it, I got invited to do it and I thought, oh, I had just said the day before, I would like to be able to reach more than one person in time, because I keep saying the same thing over and over again.

And then I got offered a radio show the next day, and so I sat down, I thought I was going to vomit. I was so sick and it was like, oh it was awful, you should have seen it was hilarious actually, but I would get so sick and it didn't go away after a week.

And so I finally sat myself down and went, okay, why, why why is this happening? Why are you so sick, raise it down, right? And I went, oh, because I'm afraid that I'm going to mess up and sounds stupid, stumble over my tongue flub up someone's name, pronouncing it like a million different ways that it can happen. You know, forget completely what it was I was going to say and have dead air and, and I thought, oh, so that's your ego that you're trying to protect.

And I thought you wanted to do this because you want to be a channel, right? And just provide the information and so get out of the way, it's not about you. And so as soon as I did that and said, this isn't about me, right? I used to teach psychic development and intuitive development classes and people would say, isn't your energy sapped?

And I said, no, it's not my energy, right? I'm not using me, I'm a channel. And so like I really got that, that it applied to everything just had fun because it wasn't even about me and I could stumble, I could mess up, I could forget what I was going to say.

I could transpose words and I would just giggle right? And then people started really enjoying that because what was it doing? It was given information that it's okay to mess up. Alright.

– I think we are so hard on ourselves and I often wonder, where did that come from? Who put that on us. I mean of course there are certain circumstances and situations and relationships that you have, where someone is telling you have to be perfect. So I get that.

But nine times out of 10, most of us may not have that kind of experience, but that Ego is telling us we're not good enough because I I think that's where the root of it comes from. To some of the experiences we've had has indirectly told us you're not good enough. So we have to prove that we're good enough.

So we're working so hard that – Yourself superior, just something or someone or inferior, it's your direction. People can often track the superior one, like, oh yeah, that's egotistical. But actually, if you don't feel good enough worthy, deserving, lovable, that's actually ego too.

So it's that's right. Yeah, well it's inverse narcissism actually narcissists, right? So it's like, it's healthy.

Recognizing Trauma Responses in Daily Life

So, you know, it's like, oh, I'm human and so in answer to your question about how can people tell if trauma is running them is to really look at the places where you've got yourself in a corner with, oh, I'm so over scheduled, I'm so overwhelmed, I can't keep up my every time I look at my body in the mirror, I don't like what I see, um I can't whenever I'm stressed or have a hard today, then I feel like I deserve something kind of toxic, I don't understand where that comes in, I deserve this alcohol or this drug or the suite or the bag of chips, right, I've earned it, you know, it's like really hard and it doesn't want you to self abuse, you know, I mean that's you, and so there's there's these connections that you'll start to kind of go, oh wait a second, That doesn't make a lot of sense right here, right? Like needing to vomit before you talk into a microphone as a radio show host. Like, that doesn't make any sense or feeling self conscious about going out on stage in front of a bunch of people.

You know, once I got this, I was like, oh, this isn't about me, you know? And so now you – Have to practice over and over again, because I remember when one of my professors said that exact same thing, it's like it's not about you Anita, and I guess I didn't get it at first because I was really young when I was going to school, I didn't really get

that message till probably hit my forties. I'm in my fifties record towards sixties.

So when it finally kicked in, that's when things started to shift, so you're absolutely right. But when you're when you're dealing with so much, it's almost like there's this um you know, that there's a trauma response, has this conversation with someone just recently.

So it's kind of funny, we're having this conversation now and I get to go back and go, you know, this, this little piece that I didn't even pay attention to within my own system because how my system fell apart because I was under that trauma response from having my own sexual abuse story was pushing myself really hard and thinking, not only do I have to push myself hard as a woman, I'm also a black woman, I'm also a tall black woman, I'm also an educated black woman.

So all these things had indirectly told me I had to push harder because of that trauma back there. That said, you weren't worth being valued in your femininity, in your assist duality in your sexuality.

We're just going to traumatize you, you're nothing more than a thing. So, I think that was playing in the back of my mind. I have to prove the opposite of what happened. Does that make sense? I have – Because we've been pushed and so we think we are back and it's actually, we're arriving at the scene with a chip on our shoulder.

It's like, wait a second. You know, – I will admit that is true. Lovingly. I have gone through some healing, but mine physically came through with migraines, like horrible debilitating migraines that would knock me out for almost three days at a time and it would come with all these other symptoms just as well. The Ickiness that my eyes would, you know, my right eye specifically would almost go blind.

The hearing with chain bright light. I had to be undercover with like a towel over my head that's wet, just so that I could breathe and calm down. So it's taken years for me to really understand that was a trauma response that was going on.

So I'm like, wow, there's so much we just don't know, we don't talk about and I think sometimes our lives, especially now we get caught up in trying to survive that we don't take the time to actually deal with the trauma or we'll deal with it in pieces and the no, you're not living your fullest life – or are we trying to control everyone and everything around us in the hopes that we feel safe, which is an impossible task.

And so, you know, there has to be a time where we wake up to that, you know, and go, wow, I'm a dead on control freak and from my little child perspective why this would be so And so the work comes of really developing a strong healthy, beautiful attuned attachment to your little child self all the ages right. And that you're doing that attachment trauma, wounding, healing and repair. Oftentimes people will talk a lot about attachment wounding and attachment trauma as with another person.

But actually my work is that you learn to do that inside with you, you attached to you, you attached to the divine. You know, you have to build those secure attachments in safe places within you and then when someone else out here shows up and is willing to do that with you, that's like ice cream, it's not the course, it's not the nourishment you're seeking.

It's actually something extra like, oh, that's nice, you know, But you've already got the firm wholeness inside of you built on a strong foundation. And so, you know, oftentimes I find that women will get really resentful because they feel like since they weren't cared for protected, you know, and at some point in their younger lives that they don't want to do it for themselves, right? They didn't get it, They feel robbed and and that actually, you know, you can have grief around that you can work through those feelings of resentment, but those feelings of resentment ultimately resenting any One, any stage of life, anything especially yourself, is that, I think is the most toxic poison we have on the planet.

It's not manufactured by big industry and dumped into the air, water and soil. It's manufactured right here into ourselves and ourselves are bathing in it all the time.

Self-Attachment, Boundaries, and Healing

And so that's where the undigested anger piece from 10,000 years ago, messages from the recesses of Ayurveda said, that will kill you. – So how do we start to change that?

And especially now because, you know, I've been saying this difference, you know, with everything that's happened in the world with the pandemic. I've also said, you know, we're going through PTSD right now, we're all dealing with all this trauma and stress activating other old traumas that are now coming to the surface and you may not even know it's operating because they're all compounding on one another. So what are some of the Strategies that people can start to take away right now to begin to heal that outside of really beginning to attach to yourself? I love that.

I agree with you 100%. That's definitely something I use when I work with my clients and it's what helped me heal when I finally let go of my mind was my mother when I finally let her go and reattached and began to mother myself the way I wanted to be mother that the healing came forward. So what are some other techniques that we can begin to talk about that will help people start to heal especially when it comes to their mind – Set first. Just an awareness that from PTSD can come post traumatic growth And so yeah, just making care that yeah that's there as a compass setting. Like oh here's where I can go with us.

I don't need to just sit in the bucket or the bathtub of PTSD. I can actually then start to mine for the goal right? The pearls, all of these gold rubies, pearls gen right?

They come from places that are hard to reach hard to obtain. That's why they cost so much. But that's actually the same value that wisdom is for us. It's hard one.

You know, like you have to dig for it, It doesn't just appear and so post traumatic I always think about our lives, our spiritual gymnasium, you know, and if you go to the gym and you just sit there and go like this, you're not actually going to grow up nice up unless you put a weight in there.

And so each of these events that we've experienced in our lives, whether they're lower case t trauma or capital t trauma, they're like your spiritual weightlifting and from that you can attain wisdom if you're willing and that willingness to self confront is important, not just looking out here and saying, well I need to I notice that the messaging the highly sensitive people impasse of which I am both is oh well this is why you are the way you are.

And then sometimes people will take that information just like learning their instagram type. Well this is who I am and now everybody else needs to adapt to me. That's not how it works.

No, you know, you go, oh I'm highly sensitive so that how do I turn down my frequency, my intolerance to the world. How do I I start to become more semi permeable? How do I make sure that instead of saying I need to keep all those toxic people away from me, how do I become less toxic for myself first and foremost? Like you always have boundaries with yourself first, Right? And so the the answer to the question where do people start? I always say?

The first thing that you do is first say, oh yeah, every time I'm upset, I'm present. So I'm part of it. Every time I'm upset, I'm present. So exactly.

It was all to do with all those people out there, you know, Or my parents or my experience. And so every time something goes wrong, I'm present, I'm upset.

And so then it's that willingness to self confront, right? That's first. So then the second part, the way that I talk about it is to make sure that you're developing what we could call your observer's mind or witnessing mind where you start to watch your thoughts for 24 hours and just start like, just start observing them. You'll start to notice that what's the tone?

What's the content? How fast are they? Is your train of thought like a Japanese bullet train? It's you know, it's just like or or do you slow down your thoughts and really become mindful where you can see between the cars every

once in a while, Like is there any development that you're doing of contemplative exercises that slow things down so that you can witness your own self.

And so over a 24 hour period, just notice that and what are the The words you use? You know? Do you talk to yourself as kindly as you would to a stranger or to your own child? You know, what's what's going on in terms of the themes of your thoughts?

What are you ruminating on? I don't know who does this, but somebody is counted that 94% of our thoughts from day to day or recycled. You've already had them, which means they're on a loop.

Yeah. You know, is that useful? No. And so if you can slow things down, then you can start cutting the loop and taking out what doesn't serve you anymore. Right. All those bad people who are doing bad things, you know? Sure, that is totally happening and right.

Is it doing you good to be chewing on it constantly?

Post-Traumatic Growth and Inner Awareness

So that's one thing – I think the beautiful thing about what you're saying right now is that when we begin and to take our power back, because once you've gone in that trauma, that power has been taken away from you and sometimes it stays away because you're allowing yourself to stay in that trauma response that you're talking about.

– It's not taken away from you. You were never powerful as a child. We don't have power. – Power. Okay, right. – Not autonomous. We have zero power..

– Right. I'm thinking about the adults in my life who have gone through this experience for so long that now now the goal is how do you take your power back at this stage of your life where you have the ability to make a new decision to make a choice to change the direction of how you were thinking actually – Developing power for the first time, That whole thing, like I want to reclaim my power, I'm like, no, you never had power. So let's start, right. If we get, if we, because it's called arrested development in adolescents, the stage of development in the job we're supposed to have, you know, and younger, we have things like our milestones are tying our shoes and learning how to write and learning how to speak and doing all of those things that we're tracking right in adolescents. That big job is supposed to move our locus of control from external, where everyone else is telling us how to think what to do, where to be, what to wear all of that into internal and adolescents often if the parents aren't aware that their kids are supposed to be learning this, like they're supposed to be cutting the apron strings, right, then that never gets achieved. That's so true.

And so then we have a bunch of adults running around blaming everything around them because their locus of control has never been internalized. This is really important, this is arrested development, We have a whole culture that's arrested development. – Very much so, very, very much so, you know, as we're coming to a little bit of a close now, I would love for people to know what's the one thing you really want them to take away from our our conversation today and then how could they connect to you?

– Well, you know, the thing that you were talking about that was so powerful, Dr. Jackson that I loved is you know, when you're saying reclaiming power, it's who you are. Is this vast, infinite luminous being.

You know, the brain is a reducing valve. It takes impulses like sound and light and through our nervous system, it reduces it down to what we can tolerate.

And then our trauma patterns actually says and what this is what the pattern will look like. But in the reducing right? So then we start coming down reducing reducing, reducing, reducing. One of the things that research has shown us is that when we die and the reducing valve is no longer functioning all of a sudden people are going toward the light, This is actually light, that's around us.

But our brain is reducing it so who you are is actually now much faster than you think. It's this beautiful, clear mind

of luminous awareness. And when you can awaken to that's who you are.

You are not the thing that you think that someone can offend, right? You're not your roles, you're not your skin color, your not your educational level, you're not you're you know, you're not your gender, your actually this vast awareness, right?

Who is connected to the divine. And so it's just like, wow. And so that's what I would say is you are so much more than what you believe you are, you are already power, You are that and it's your brain that reduces you down to a dysfunctional definition of power, right?

And so then we walk around becoming offended when people interrupt our role that we have that our self right, that we think is us. And so then we have all these wars and fights and polarization, right? But who we are is infinite love.

That is actually who we are. – I love the way you're saying it because how I've always said it was you are a spiritual being in a human body. Most people stop there, but I've added on, you're a spiritual being, this beautiful, huge, massive light of awareness, like you're talking about love power, joy, whatever word you want to put to your God, you're the source of the spirit, whatever. And you're in a human body having human experiences that often take away, take you away from the truth that you're a divine being.

If you can get back to that truth that you're a divine being, where nothing is missing, nothing is broken, Everything in you is whole and complete that power will transform your life tremendous. They're not even in words to really express – Right, and then you're gonna be laughing laugh more and not taking things quite so seriously, right? You know, I mean – Your family, your community eventually will change the world. – Yes, Yes, I always think laughter yoga is one of the most powerful things that you can engage in like laugh just, you know, you could just laugh and get started right.

Exactly and there you can't laugh and be anxious at the same time. – You sure can't. A friend of mine has a business where she says you can't blow bubbles and be angry at the same time.

So she carries a lot of bubbles all the time because it brings her a great deal of joy and you will watch people shift so powerfully just by doing something that brings them a great deal of joy. Well, Dr. Keesha, I have absolutely loved this conversation with you. I definitely want to stay connected to you in the future. This has been amazing.

So how can people reach you if they wanted to connect – drkeesha.com D R K E E S H A dot com. – Love it. Absolutely love it. Well, everybody, obviously, I hope you had some nuggets from this particular conversation that I did.

You enjoyed listening to the wisdom and the strength of who Dr. Keesha is. And we're just going to continue to have more conversations with some amazing experts around the world. Dr. Keesha, thank you for so much for being with me today – Thank you, bye everybody – Bye everybody