Introduction and summit welcome

Hey, everybody. Dr. Diane, your libido doc here. I'm so excited for our next speaker here, Nicole Marcione. Welcome to the Summit. I'm so thrilled to be talking to you.

Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here. This topic, this summit, all the speakers are just so near and dear to my heart and my work's mission. And I am just so happy to be part of this whole community.

Awesome. And we're happy to have you. And we have such a fun series of questions and topics lined up. You guys, we're going to talk to Dr. Nicole about all sorts of things, aging and sensuality and how to really get the most out of midlife, how to live mid life to your fullest from an aging gracefully, from a sensuality perspective and more.

So let's start with that. Let's talk about how sensuality and how sexuality are really tied in to the bigger picture of health and wellness, especially as we do age.

Yeah. So what I noticed when I first got into this work, which my Ph. D. is based in longevity and gerontology and aging and health and nutrition, these types of things, exercise and well, I was working with clients.

What I would find is it's not just about eating the kale and doing the yoga and meditating. Now, don't get me wrong, those are all very important, but they're very foundational. They're very basic.

How sensuality supports healthy aging

And as I would start digging into things that were deeper with my clients, what we discovered was so much more about identity and loss of connection to themselves and their desires and their dreams and their bodies.

And almost like self-loathing. And a lot of times, especially in midlife, as we were going through perimenopause and maybe even into menopause. So I'm in my late forties, I'm in perimenopause right now.

Like this body that we're. In. Is all of a sudden betraying us in so many ways. And so a lot of times people just focus on the nutrition, the movement, the stress, resilience, and those are important.

But then once we truly, truly look at what does living longer mean for us, we start going deeper into our relationships with others, our connection to our bodies, all of these things, because really, who wants to live to 100 if they're not happy or they don't like themselves and maybe don't want to live to 100?

But however, whatever age one wants to live till until and there's so many more studies now coming out specifically with sexuality and having sex, whether it's with ourselves or with a partner or multiple partners, that actually it keeps us younger, quote unquote.

And our physiological biological systems like working at a higher, better level. And so this is my I believe my kind of specialty is blending. So I call it sexy, smart aging, which is blending the science of longevity with the art of sensual living.

Because I think if we just have one or the other, we're missing two huge pieces of the puzzle when it comes to aging well and not just aging well, but really aging extraordinarily.

And so to be able to integrate those two really, I feel, is the key to true longevity, to really living our best life for as long as possible. Yeah, yeah.

You tied in so many things, and I think it's so true. There's just this, you know, this misnomer right in in the society around. Oh, like getting older is supposed to mean death and this is just happening because I'm getting older.

And you know, I remember when I was young, I remember hearing people like that were in their thirties already saying things like, Oh, I'm just getting old.

And then, you know, of people in their forties and people in like and I'm, I'm not, I'm just a couple of years younger than you. I'm in my mid-forties and I just I can see it to myself.

I can see it in others that I work with, that we can actually start. We can really feel better and better as we age. And it doesn't have to be this decline.

Right. So I want to talk about your you know, your great thing of why the term anti-aging is total BS. But before we go there, like let's let's just take a step back for a second.

Like this degree you had this doctorate in longevity is super interesting, right. And I'm sure there's other people that are wondering like, well, how did this happen?

Because it's it's not something we hear about very often, people actually getting educated to the level you have on this topic. So how did you get to where you are?

Yeah, it was kind of by accident, but I guess the universe never has any accents. So I was I didn't go to college right after high school for extenuating circumstances that I won't.

That's a whole nother story. But I was always interested in health and wellness from a very, very young age. I ended up teaching Pilates and doing is teaching Pilates for a very long time.

20 years ago I started and I noticed a lot of my older clients how they their aging process was so dependent upon how active they were, physically active, mentally active, engaged with others.

And this just really piqued my interest. So I decided to start my college path, you might say. And I start with community college, which I tell people, don't be ashamed if that's where you start, because that's where I started.

And then I transferred to USC University of Southern California, and I got a bachelor's degree in Lifespan Health through the school gerontology, and then it just kind of snowballed into getting my master's degree in gerontology. And while I was getting my master's degree, I was very involved in research and my mentors lab.

Nicole's path into longevity and gerontology

And so the next kind of natural progression that I felt and was encouraged to go into was to apply to the Ph. D. program. And so my actual dissertation work doesn't have anything to do with sexuality or sexuality.

It was on how mind body interventions affect mobility and cognition in older adults. So it was a lot of neuroscience, a lot of biomechanics, the interaction between the two and yeah, I just kept going.

So I started in 2010, the end of 2010 at Community College, and I finished in December 2019 with my Ph. D. I mean it just like I did. It took me a while to get there, but once I got there, like, I did not stop.

And so, so yeah, that's how I learned about and I just I've always really been interested in longevity and aging, and I have cancer that runs in my family.

And so that's been kind of a backdrop of what I don't want to have in my own life and how so many cancers are preventable through lifestyle choices. Not all, but a lot of them are.

And yeah, so that's what put me on this path. And then pretty early on, because most people probably thinking, well, if you have a Ph. D., why aren't you a professor?

Or Why don't you have your own lab and are continuing to do research? And a couple of years in, unfortunately or

fortunately, I realized I don't want to spend the rest of my life writing grants and looking at data that my grad students have collected and kind of being a jerk to my grad students, because that's kind of the hierarchy in academia for any of us who have either been students or professors.

And I decided I don't want to go on that trajectory. And let me tell you, I got a lot of flak for it, but I'm so much happier now that I'm not sitting in an ivory tower somewhere with my thoughts and discoveries being published years after the fact.

But I can be like boots on the ground working with clients directly or through group programs or through my writing. And it feels so good to me and to be in this spot right now.

So thank you for asking. Yeah. Yeah. And you're still doing research. You're just doing research on people when you're talking to them. So it hasn't changed really.

Exactly. And I just want to say, for anyone listening out there, don't feel too old to go back to school if your heart is really pulling you that way.

I mean, I graduated with my Ph. D. when I was 45, I guess 46, and I was always the oldest person. Right. It was older than some of my advisors and the people on my dissertation committee.

You know, but it was okay. And people looked up to me in some ways, you know, and and other students. And so if that's a calling for you, but you think, oh, no way, I'm just like too old for that.

No, you're not. If you really want to do it, just go do it. That's yeah. Thank you for that advice. I actually had a couple people in my medical school program that were in their fifties and even one that was in her sixties.

So never too late. And that's a perfect lead in to talk about anti-aging. So thank you for setting this up. Well, so let's talk about why anti-aging and why that term.

Why that's the. Yes. Yeah. I just cringe and sometimes I have to use that term anti-aging just to get a point across because people understand what this common definition of is.

But really anti-aging, the only true anti-aging is death. If we are alive, we are aging. And that's even if we're 20, if we're 20 or we're 60. And so that's why I say anti-aging is B. S.

because there is no anti-aging. We can age well or we can age poorly. Those are basically the choices and those are the choices in our hands. And so when people talk about anti-aging, it's really not you're not we're not against it.

Because if we are against it, then like I said, that means we're dad. And so to try to get our mindsets to shift from and and really it's anti anything right from anti-aging to pro aging or to I just wrote a post recently on like a lot of people ask why do you how do I define aging?

And again, it's like we don't want to defy it. That's resisting, confronting, standing up against. It's like, no, this is inevitable. All right. If we everyone wants to live longer, but nobody wants to age and that just can't be true.

People have to happen. And so how do we reconcile all those two really comes with our thoughts on it and our feelings about it and how you just said the like hope that there's hope and opportunity that lies ahead as opposed to, oh, all my good years are behind me, which we hear so often, and that just isn't true unless you make it true, which I think we've all met the grouchy curmudgeon older person who just everything is about the good old days.

Right. And yet we've also met people who are in their eighties and nineties, maybe even 100, if you're lucky enough to know some centenarians. And they are vibrant and bright and happy, and it's because they have realized that the best days aren't behind them.

They might have a lot of great memories behind them, but that every living breath and every day is a gift and a privilege. Right. Think of we all know people who have died young.

Why anti-aging is a misleading idea

And so aging is a privilege. It is not something to fight against or be anti and really today is the youngest will ever be. That's neither good nor bad. Just a fact.

So what do we want to do with that fact? Do we want to sit and sulk that, you know, I have gray hairs and more wrinkles and like my cheekbones are a little sag here than it used to be, or my ass is a little sag here than it used to be or is like, wow, this body has carried me through so many experiences, amazing and hard, challenging and celebratory.

And it's it's keeping me going. And I'm so thankful for that. And so really, it's a lot when I work with my clients. Yes, it's nutrition, it's movement, but it's so much more about mindset and belief and tapping into our inner knowing.

Wonderful. And I want to make sure to circle back around for our listeners just that. Remember what Dr. Nicole said in the beginning of this around aging in the process of aging is also connected with sensuality and sexuality.

And there's a way to do all of these things gracefully and beautifully in the intertwines. So I just want to make sure nobody is losing that connection here.

And you bring up a really great point with thinking about, you know, beliefs and minds and all these things with with aging and the aging process. So if people are really trying to promote aging beyond lifestyle, I know a question that people are asking is like, what about all those anti-aging products and services out there?

So so what do you think about those? What are your opinions? Yeah, I mean, I feel like some of them are good to help. Maybe, you know, our skin is an important organ.

We want to keep it healthy. Right? So don't not take care of your skin. And perhaps the products that have anti-aging and the label are the right ones for you or services.

But a lot of stuff is being especially true in this age of biohacking. And don't get me wrong, I do. I love a lot of biohacking things, and yet so many people are touting that it causes people that it causes you to live longer.

And for most of these things, the research, the evidence just isn't there because we haven't lived long enough to look back, you know. And so I do love things like blue zones, where it's actual epidemiological, you might say, evidence, as opposed to intervention or experimental, because we just don't know if taking certain peptides or, you know, meds are going to help us to live longer.

Maybe the studies have been done in mice or yeast or worms or flies, which are a bunch of these models that longevity research is being done, but most of it has not been done in human beings or the ones the studies are being done.

It just needs a lot longer time for us to know whether it works or not. And so my caveat is to know why are you looking at this product or service? Is it the gimmicky marketing that they're just getting to you with or is it really based in evidence?

And if they say it is, you want to ask for that evidence to not just believe it, because everyone you know, there's so many people and you have your doctorate.

I have my doctorate, but there's so many people out there that are claiming to be experts. Not that you need a doctorate to be an expert. I'm not saying that.

But so many people that are claiming to be experts on certain things and they they're just Googling it and and like

preaching the message on YouTube in a in a really great way, you know, and so be smart about when something is called anti aging because I don't know, there's just so many ways that these things could go wrong or maybe they're not even harmful, but they're not even they're not useful either.

Yeah. Yeah, I think it's such a good point. I feel like the anti-aging movement is like becoming with the weight loss movement was or still is. Right or it's like how many times is there is this new product and it's like, Oh, the way I describe stuff like that to my patients is like, Okay, well, carnitine or Nadi or these things that we sometimes say for weight loss can help you with weight loss.

If you are the percentage of people that your weight gain is related to that. Right. So it's like, I think what some of what you're saying some of the take home message is like if you're going to use some of these peptides, right, to say do things that are more closely related to the study, like perhaps it's to lower inflammation or help, you know, digestive function or sleep.

Some of the things that are directly studied for use them for that, right? But not necessarily for like the extrapolated component that maybe down the road it's going to help you from an aging perspective, right?

Totally. And a lot of the studies that are being done in humans, guess who they're being done on? Not women, not cycling women, that's for sure. They're being done on men and probably older white men mostly. Yup.

And let's we all know sitting here, for those of us in this world, like those results don't always transfer to women. And most of the time do not transfer the same to women.

And so yeah, to do really feel into if you do do decide to do some of these therapies or use some of these products to be committed to yourself in knowing, okay, this doesn't feel good or I, there's something in me that I know just I'm not feeling better or saying and to stop it as opposed to being like, oh, well, they said whoever they is. Ah yeah.

Because I think that's the other thing like oh well I heard so-and-so say it, so it must be good for me and I'm just going to push myself through it, you know, I feel like crap, you know, and, and so too, we talked about this on the podcast.

Desire, burnout, and reclaiming pleasure in midlife

You were on my my gas and Lauren's last week and how to not push yourself through a certain thing like we're all an experiment of one and figure out what works for us.

So I'm not saying don't dabble in things or experiment, but also make sure you know when to cut it out of your life and move on to something else. And I what I hear in that too is like, follow you and your intuition and follow your feeling like don't forget about that. Yes.

So I want to connect this all back to desire and desire back in midlife and and the libido from that standpoint. So where does desire go? Why do so many people get to midlife and all of a sudden get to this point where I hear some people say things around like, I just don't care about sex anymore.

Right. So so what happens there? Yeah, I think we're exhausted and we can't have one more thing on our to do list. And that usually is what falls off the schedule, you know, and it makes sense.

Midlife women, they're called the sandwich generation, basically, because most of I don't have children, but most midlife women have young or children still at home, or they're getting them prepared to go off to college as well as aging parents that they're having to figure out what do we do with mom and dad now?

Because maybe their health is not doing well or their cognitive ability or they don't live near them. And so it almost always falls on the daughter now.

Not always, but almost always. And especially as an oldest daughter, I feel this as well. The eldest daughter, if

there's more than one, typically has the feeling of this burden.

And then that's just family, right? That's not work. So you might have a career in a corporate job, you might be a C level manager or VP or something, senior VP, you might be an entrepreneur.

So everything is on you and have teams. And so women in general just have so much of life pulling at them all the time. And living in the society we do does not celebrate you taking care of yourself.

In fact, it celebrates you putting yourself at the lowest point. Oh, you're such a good. You sacrifice everything for your family. You're such a good daughter. You're such a good mother.

Like you do everything for everybody. And we kind of get off on. I'm thinking of like if you've read Existential Kink. Yeah I have put together last name but anyways like we that feeds our egos for sure.

Feels good when people acknowledge that and yet we don't acknowledge our own desires. And if we can just sit and a big one and how to know what your desires are.

Because a lot of people like I don't even know. It's been so long since I've thought about what my body wants, what my desire is. I don't even know. I like to say what you get envious of when you see someone else doing. Hmm.

Maybe it's another woman taking a trip by herself. Maybe it's a spa day. Your friend got to do it a whole day. Maybe it's just taking a nap. Maybe someone has their mornings free like they made an hour every morning for themselves.

And you're like, Who does she think she is or must be nice? That should put out an alert, a red flag. Like that's something my heart actually desires.

And how can I do baby steps or even big leaps to bring more of that in? And so a lot of that comes back into connecting with our bodies, connecting into our pleasure.

Now that can go from the pleasure of enjoying a beautiful cup of coffee in the morning, listening to some music you like all the way through to like a mind blowing orgasm.

And you don't. There's so many steps in between those because I know some of the listeners are probably like, Oh yeah, I could drink a nice cup of coffee for 5 minutes.

Quiet time, but mind blowing orgasm? No way. And yet it's these baby steps that get us there. And I'm sure there's so many tools in the summit that are going to be talked about or have been talked about of getting ourselves to that.

And so you need to, you know, explore a little bit with your own body, bring in some toys, talk about some fantasies, even read some books. It might feel a little bit uncomfortable and a little bit risque, but it's going to start to open up things in your body and intelligences that we haven't tapped into, wisdoms that we haven't tapped into in a very, very, very long time that are still there and it's like all of a sudden the veil gets opened, all the crap gets taken off, and you're like, Ah, I can take care of these things for me and take care of my family and do the work.

And actually tapping into this pleasure and desire and sensuality is going to make me even better at whatever I'm doing. More productive, more loving, more generous, because we're not freaking grumpy and resentful of everyone around us because we're doing everything for them and doing nothing for ourselves.

And people start noticing that. And then what the great thing is, they start helping you create more of that in your life because they notice like Mom isn't so cranky or my partner is not so busy or which do you want to have more playtime, you know?

And so it's like this snowball effect that is really hard to get started, but once you do it gains momentum and starts

to feel really, really good. Yeah.

Oh, there are so many things that tease apart and what you said. I love it all so much. One of the things I want to just comment on is I think there's a a misperception in our in our culture, in society, around two words common and normal.

And what you're describing right around like, oh, so busy, so busy. Take care of the kids. Take care of the job. Take care of the house, take care of the partner.

Like all these things, right. And because it's common that we get this way as women in midlife, that it's so easy to miss, to confuse common with normal, that this is a healthy normal, just part and healthy or not just a normal part of life.

And what I really like what you said is like, but it doesn't have to be. It's just that that's like the program and the cycle that we've gotten into and we can get out of that somehow limits on that.

And also just that I really, really appreciate what you said about envy, too. There's a great book by Daniel Laporte. I know if you read this one is called Desire Mapping, it goes into desire and how to Find Your Desires.

And so it's a really cool resource for people. But you really broke down like let's keep it simple, right? Like let's keep it simple. Like emotions are flags like envy is looked at sometimes as bad, but what you're bringing up is like this also like this is information about your desire and what you want.

And so I think that reframe on that emotion is just huge. And I definitely wanted to mention that. And and then my next question is really on desire and and as people and as we age, especially in midlife, like why do you feel like we're not really speaking about desire much like is it taboo?

Like, what do you think is going on there with why this is like who desire? Okay, this is a thing I'm going to say maybe by, you know, after listening to something like this with my girlfriends or something.

But beyond that, we're going to keep it hush hush. What's happening there? Well, I think for years, women's needs, wants and desires. And when I say years, I mean millennia have been shut down.

Sometimes it was dangerous, like you would be put to death if you were talking about certain things in some societies. And then just coming to the modern day, we live in a patriarchal society, right?

That for women to be able to succeed and reach certain levels, we basically have had to act in a very masculine go do everything you need to do hard, hustle and grind way.

Even though we're women and we don't operate a lot of times in that way without suffering in some other part. And so in order to get to certain levels of either in our work or our family, to gain approval of people, to look good to others, to not seem like we're too much.

We don't talk about sex. We don't talk about desire because that's selfish and that's, you know, for those of us who were raised in high control, evangelical, strict religions.

Oh, my God.

Why women hide desire and how to reconnect

Are you you talk about your sexuality or your desire or your last or your pleasure outside of, like, procreation. It's sinful. All right. And even if you weren't raised in that, ah, condition, with that, it's still we live in a very puritanical culture, especially.

I know people from all over the world are watching this, but here in the United States, it's very puritanical, especially

in some areas. And so there's this air that is permeating everything we take in that it's not acceptable for women to talk about this.

Women should be nurturers, women should be mothers, women should be caregivers. And yes, we do do all of those things, but we're also like free and open.

And we are creators and we are made to receive pleasure and so many different levels. And yet we shut that down and it's been made to be shameful. And so that is really and I know this is part of your mission, too, and the summit is like to bring this into the forefront.

Like we don't have to talk about BDSM and kink unless you want to like we could go there too, but it could just be like, I want something, a furry blanket to lie in or a really beautiful wheel to massage myself in and make myself feel good and sensual and touching my body in a way.

So it's like, again, there's so many different ways to do this but to not be ashamed of it and to find which you mentioned, talking about girlfriends, watching this with girlfriends and then talking about like community is so important because a lot of times I feel like women should feel isolated, especially if they're so involved in their careers, so involved in their family and just pushing forward.

And don't take the time to have that community around them where they can speak about these things. And it's not being looked at as judgmental, but it's like, Oh yeah, you should try this.

Or I found this product or, you know, tell me more because I'm really interested. That's what got you going and lit you up and made you feel alive. And again, this could be sexually, but it could also just be as a human being.

Aliveness is. I feel like we've lost that and instead we're just trudging through. And then again, it comes back to this patriarchal society expecting women to just be quiet, do their job, take care of everyone else.

And once they're done, having babies set out to pasture because, you know, menopausal women, once we get to that point, like what are we good for? Which we're good for a time, let's just say.

But this is kind of where society has put us. Yeah, I say a lot that I think like the feminist movement was amazing for really helping with rights and getting feminine more opportunities and all these things.

But what you're tapping on is like everything of course has its way of, say, integrating, right? So that was needed during that time to integrate feminine and you know, in the female more into society, especially here in the United States.

But there was a cost to it and the cost was exactly what you're talking about. It's like entering society, but doing the roles of society, whatever they are in a more masculine way in order to get that capacity right.

And there is that loss there. And I'm starting to feel like I did after you interviewed me on your podcast, The Femme Factor podcast, like I could talk to you all day long, but fortunately we don't have all day long.

I make sure we leave people with some actionable steps. So then how to get a hold of you? And so from a standpoint of I do see tips that people can do for their sensuality.

I feel like you already mentioned some like some small things like, you know, day to day, find your pleasure throughout the day. Is it that wrap is with that cup of coffee.

What is your pleasure? Right. You know, if it is something more dramatic than that, that's beautiful, too. But what other tips do you have from a from a sensuality perspective that are actionable for people?

One, I really want to mention, because we hit like you said, we had a bunch of them throughout this conversation. But is environment and environment is so important.

And if you can take yourself out of your usual environment either for an hour or a day or a week, this is why retreats are so powerful or days at the spa because you can truly find what your thoughts are without being distracted with the laundry or the human beings or whatever is in your usual thing.

And here's why I'm so passionate about this. And just a quick story. I thought I was broken. Like I thought I was maybe even asexual. Like I was so uninterested in sex.

And even though I was working on this journey and all this, and I was like, well, maybe it is perimenopause, maybe it is just because I'm hitting 40 and blah blah and I went to a retreat in Baja and the conversations that I was having with people were so interesting and so stimulating and like, I wasn't having sex with anyone down there like this.

I mean, it's really much like I was so turned on, so turned on, like juicy wet turned on. And when I went back to my room, like Self-Pleasure, I don't even think I've talked about this on the podcast or out loud, but I think this is the time to do it.

And what I realized is like, Oh, wait a minute, I'm broken. She's like a lot down there.

Practical sensuality tips and changing your environment

It was my environment that needed to be switched up, my conversations that needed to be switched up, bringing in interesting people to have these conversations that needed to be switched off.

So feel like that is one of the juiciest tips. If you can put yourself in a different environment and maybe it's a little bit scary or out of your comfort zone, but you will discover things about yourself that will just transform you when you are on your own, when you're brave enough to step out of your usual place of being, of thinking.

And yeah, so I would say that is one big juicy tip along with all the others that we have done. Amazing. And just so you guys know, Dr. Nicole giving you a amazing guide on more juicy tips for improving your sensuality at midlife.

So make, sure, you go and grab that because that will help continue this conversation for you and tell us how people get a hold of you and know you have this great membership where people can work with you, where you can you help them.

Tell us a little bit more about that. Yeah. So if anyone wants to reach out to me, I'm on Instagram @drnicolemarcione and I createdthis membership called Sensuality, Sexuality and Aging, specifically for what we were talking about, to create a safe space for women to gather, to bravely talk about all the taboo topics, whether it's you're not feeling it, you're totally feeling it.

Toys, experiences, and there's nothing to be ashamed. We'll work through conditioned beliefs, but it's just somewhere I just wanted to create a space where people could feel they could come and talk about or be a fly on the wall.

Like, not everyone's willing to speak and but I, as you can see, can talk a lot and for days on this topic. And so I just felt there was a big gap like a lot of people are either talking about hormones or they're talking about like sex very clinically.

But to bring in the sensuality and pleasure power and tapping into our bodies, just like you talking about libido and really bringing in the more I don't know if you want to say woo woo side as opposed to the clinical side, but like a spiritual aspect, a deeper, you know, connection to yourself on the topics that a lot of times are so isolating for us.

Yeah, wonderful. And you guys, we will definitely have all of that in Dr. Nicole show notes as far as how to get that information, sign up contacts for and more.

So thank you again. This has been so wonderful as always. Really appreciate your time and thank you for joining us. Thank you so much. And enjoy the rest of the summit.

We will, see you guys next time by everybody.