

-- Speaker 1 00:00:27 Hi everyone. Welcome to Dr. MCs Self-Care Cabaret podcast. I'm Theresa Melito-Conners, a doctoral level educational administrator and mental health practitioner focused on helping you our world's helpers. Every day we have a choice to prioritize our well-being, to incorporate reflection, recovery, renewal, and resilience strategies into our lives. However, those of us who step up and serve our communities in healthcare education, non-profit spaces and more can struggle with putting ourselves first. I've seen this firsthand. It's a challenge. Enter Dr. MCs Self-care cabaret podcast. Here we have real intimate conversations with leading experts, passionate about accessible, sustainable self-care in its 10 domains. It's all about the hard work we can take on together to find our spotlight. Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to lead you through practicing some deep breathing. Deep breathing is so wildly underutilized, and it is such a powerful thing that you can do anywhere at any time, and it's free.

Speaker 1 00:01:44 So I wanna just practice that with you, and I'm gonna give you a pro tip on your exhales. Make them longer than the inhale. Exhale longer than inhale. What that does is it stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system, which helps to activate your rest and digest response, which is the opposite of our fight or flight. It's your relaxation response. Okay? So if you're in a place where you can do this with me right now, I want you to sit up comfortably in your chair, feel your feet firmly pressed on the ground beneath you and your body supported by what you're sitting on. And if it feels comfortable, maybe close your eyes or lower your gaze. And then I like to put one hand on my chest and one on my belly. But play around with that and see what feels good for you. And when you're ready, we're gonna breathe in through our nose. And I really want you to feel your belly fill all the way with air. Brief pause and a long exhale. Yeah. And make that exhale longer than your inhale. Let's do that again In through the nose, fill the belly all the way. And a long exhale.

Speaker 1 00:03:06 And really make sure you empty that belly all the way on the exhale. Let's do that one more time in through the nose. And a long exhale. Nice. If you do nothing else throughout the day, just pay attention to your breath. See if you can give yourself some opportunities to just do three to five rounds of deep breathing. See how it feels.

Speaker 1 00:03:37 And today I am delighted to welcome Courtney LaCava to the podcast. Courtney is an Ayurvedic practitioner, certified health coach and mama to two little boys. Courtney discovered Ayurveda through her own health crisis with chronic fatigue back in 2005. Ayurveda is an ancient wellbeing tradition that means the wisdom of life, a sister science of yoga. It teaches us how to thrive, not just survive in our overwhelming modern society. This system of healing revolutionized Courtney's health and all aspects of her life. Through her essential living coaching group, she empowers people to heal the root cause of their challenges so they can live with less stress, greater vitality, joy and pleasure. I personally started studying Ayurveda around the same time that I started learning about self-care. And I love it. I incorporate many are veic practices into my daily routines and have certainly seen the benefits over the years. And without further delay, here's our conversation. We're off and running. Thank you, Courtney, for joining us today.

Speaker 2 00:05:03 Yeah, I'm thrilled to be here and to meet you.

Speaker 1 00:05:05 Thanks. Likewise. So, I'm so excited to dive into Ayurveda and teach our listeners more about what is an awesome thing to get into. Um, so first question I like to ask all my guests, how do you like to practice self-care?

Speaker 2 00:05:21 Well, self-care for me is really about what I do every day. And not just the idea of like, someday I'm waiting to do this. Someday in the future there'll be time to do this.

Speaker 1 00:05:30 Yes,

Speaker 2 00:05:31 <laugh>. So for me, it really is about the time that I spend to continually, um, kind of uplevel my practices. Not in a way where I'm forcing myself to, you know, pushing myself, but how can I sink into more rejuvenation and more rest in these small ways every day? Because I think so much of our culture is always being pl --

-- ugged in, always being on the go. And I think self-care for me is about, you know, really all the ways that I focus on rejuvenation and rest and little ways throughout the day.

Speaker 1 00:05:59 I love that. And I like how you highlight that it's not, you know, it's the little things you do every day because that really is self-care. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, it's not those, oh, someday I'm gonna take a spa day or someday I'll go on vacation, or maybe someday I'll do this. It really is about the things you do every day and they can be small that really help you care for yourself at your most foundational level. So you show up as the best you possible. I love that. So let's talk about Ayurveda. Can you share a little bit about how you got into it?

Speaker 2 00:06:34 Sure. Um, well my background, I had several years of practicing yoga and I was, I kind of was raised in a family where we were focused on natural healing and healthcare. So I, I was kind of wired that way to think about, um, natural healing from a young, young age. And then I went through my own health crisis after graduate school. So I really burned out after graduate school and just realized that the things that I was doing wasn't really working for me and I couldn't find any answers through western medicine. So I finally got myself well enough to go to a yoga teacher training. And in that yoga teacher training, someone came in and started speaking to us about Ayurveda. And I had that kind of like heavens opening light bulb moment <laugh>, where someone was speaking the language of what I was experiencing in my body and in my mind.

Speaker 2 00:07:18 And so at the time, I was still fairly sick and it just really made a lot of sense for me. And I started going to practitioners and they started giving me simple things to do every day. So how I was eating, um, how I was moving through the day, not only what I was eating, but the way in which I was eating, the way in which I was sleeping and resting. Learning that I was really trying to do too much in my life and I really needed to simplify in certain ways as a way to rebuild myself. And that over time my strength would rebuild. And also really working with the mind and digestion, which is a huge part of Ayurveda. So that was how I got into that. I had a pretty significant case of chronic fatigue and I healed myself through Ayurveda.

Speaker 1 00:07:57 Yeah. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah. Now I'm wondering cuz you, you said, you know, you really burned yourself out and, and to the point of, um, being sick. Can you describe, if you wouldn't mind, maybe some of the warning signs that were kinda leading up to that point? Do you recall? Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:08:14 Yeah, absolutely. I think that the warning signs for me were cumulative over the years. A lot of it was just high levels of overwhelm and anxiety. I had digestive issues, I had terrible skin. Um, a lot of like cystic acne. And really, I think it was mostly the mind and the emotions that I would go through these phases of intense energy and pushing myself and working really hard and kind of all the turmoil that came along with that cuz I was really overriding the signals of my body of right tiredness and, and needing trust and perfectionism. A big part of it was like everything had to be perfect. And so I was driving myself towards this future that I believe existed that was better than the current place that I was and was continually pushing myself to be at that point. And then it was then my, my energy would crash so I would crash and I would have to really rest.

Speaker 2 00:09:06 And, and then over time that, you know, that cycle would happen so much. And it got to the point where I really crashed and burned out and wasn't even able to do my yoga practice in the way that I had before. I really could only meditate at that time because I was so exhausted. And so it was in that process of realizing a lot about what I needed to do to heal myself. And I think part of why I do this work is that I don't want people to have to get to that point. It is much easier to preserve your health and it is to rebuild it.

Speaker 1 00:09:35 I love that it's much easier to preserve your health than rebuild it. Yeah. That is a powerful takeaway for

Speaker 2 00:09:42 Sure. And, and in Ayurveda, we have very specific an understanding of why that is. That person has something called ojas, which is akin to the i --

-- immune system. It's our kind of storehouse of vital energy. And we work to rebuild that, you know, kind of every day through our self-care practices, um, and maintain that. And when we're in the state of constantly pushing ourselves, we will burn that out over time. And to rebuild that takes a lot of effort and time and investment and can, you know, when we do get so depleted to that place of burning ourselves out, there can be a whole, you know, domino effect that cascades for the system of health issues.

Speaker 1 00:10:20 Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much for sharing. Um, I feel like you say so many really powerful things there, especially the piece about overriding the signals your body is giving you. I think that's super common. Yes. That a lot of us are just like, go, go, go. I mean that's how society's set up, right? So we keep pushing and pushing and pushing and ignoring the signs and Yeah. So definitely something to think about. So

Speaker 2 00:10:49 Can I would love to speak, oh, can I speak to that for a second? Yeah, yeah. Because I think that's such a huge piece of what I see with, with the people I work with. I work predominantly with women and I see that, you know, it's this kind of lack of embodiment that we get to that place of, we have something that's very strongly culturally reinforced, which is that our value is determined by our productivity mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And you know, it's so deep-seated in our system and it, it comes to this place of we just have to override the signals. We have to override the signals. And so what happens over time is we've stopped listening and we actually, or we get to that place of we never knew what the signals were saying to us. So we just keep pushing through, we keep pushing through, and then over time it gets to this place of really kind of being disembodied. Yeah. And so we don't trust our body. We have all these symptoms that are coming up. We, we ha it's like whack-a-mole. Different symptoms can come up. We don't know what they need. We don't know how to interpret them. And so I think the beauty of Ayurveda is it gives us a whole language and system for interpreting the signals our body is sending us and the toolkit to respond to that and really insource our healing rather than just being reliant on other people to heal us or to tell us what's wrong with us.

Speaker 1 00:11:57 Yeah, absolutely. And that's a great segue into what I was going to ask you, which is can you just explain a little bit about what Ayurveda is for our listeners who may not be familiar with it?

Speaker 2 00:12:08 Sure. So Ayurveda means the knowledge of life or the wisdom of life. And it's a four to 5,000 year old practice, um, with its roots in India and it's a sister science of yoga. So there are really two sides of the same coin. So if traditionally yoga, we think of yoga as like yoga poses, but yoga is really this whole body of practice to elevate our consciousness or bring us to a state of greater enlightenment. And so the ancients understood, all right, if you're gonna do that, you really need to have a strong and vital and stable body in mind. So this was the way that we understood how to take care of our bodies. And so I like to think of it as like the owner's manual for the human body <laugh>. And it also recognizes that we are part of nature that, and this isn't like some woowoo concept of like, oh yeah, we're part of nature.

Speaker 2 00:12:55 Like, you know, we have to go running through the woods or something and commute with nature. No, it's based on this idea that we are connected to the rhythms of nature. Just like we have light dark cycles of the day. We have our circadian rhythm and our body functions optimally when we move in rhythm with that. As women, we move in rhythm with a moon, we have a moon cycle, people that have, uh, female hormonal systems and we also have seasonal rhythms. So Aveda recognizes it's based on, on the five elements theory and that really everything is composed of those five elements that we are, we have our own specific mind body constitution based on those elements. And we can learn what that means and what's predominant in our system, what tends to get out of balance and how to balance that through how we eat, through how we move through our day through herbs and all sorts of things that we do to support ourselves.

Speaker 1 00:13:45 Yeah, awesome. It really is a fascinating healing system. --

-- And to think that, you know, four or 5,000 years old, I mean it out, it's more like yeah. The oldest healing system in the world. It's, it's very cool. So one part of Ayurveda as I, as I know, you know, but for our listeners is Adina Charia your morning routine. So I'm curious, what does your dinacharya look like?

Speaker 2 00:14:11 Okay, good question. <laugh>. Um, so this is what I do for my work. I actually teach people dinacharya. Um, so I have coaching group that's based on that. And really what I do for my day is, um, I start with the night before. So I start with dinner and what one big thing that we do in our culture is we tend to eat these heavier late dinners and Ayurveda recognizes that our di that our body's a reflection of the natural world and the fire element in particular rules digestion. So our digestion's the strongest midday when the sun's at the highest point in the sky. So we wanna be eating our, our foods that have more proteins and fats. So if we think about like what, what dinner's usually like, we actually wanna be having something like that for lunch. So we're fueling ourselves during the day when we have the greatest capacity to break that down.

Speaker 2 00:14:59 And that helps to build strength. And we talked about ojas and vitality and also keep the mind and the energy calm throughout the rest of the day and stable. So I start with that. So I have a, a larger meal for lunch, not a huge meal, but it's my largest meal the day. And then dinner I have, um, usually by 7:00 PM six 30 at the latest. And that tends to be a lighter, more plant-based dinner. And that helps me to actually go to bed earlier and sleep earlier because I'm not digesting all this heavy stuff late. I'm usually in bed by 10 sometimes earlier cuz I have little ones, uh, <laugh> and

Speaker 1 00:15:30 Then, oh, I go to bed early and I don't have little ones <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:15:33 Yeah. You know, well go ahead. Good. And like the thing is we think about like, okay, eight hours of sleep is what we wanna aim for, but eight hours if you're going to bed at midnight to eight is not the same as eight hours from 10 to six. You're actually getting much deeper, much more restorative sleep if you go to bed by 10:00 PM So that's what I do. Um, I usually wake by 5 36, I wake with the sun typically. Nice. Nice. Naturally. And then I practice some, some yoga and meditation in the morning or do some like at least 20 minutes of movement in the morning. I do, I I hesitate to share cuz I know some people that are new to this are like, oh my gosh, that seems like so much. But I just want you to know I've been doing this for 15 years, so I have built up to this practice and everyone starts somewhere. Um, then I often do a practice called Albani, which is a oil massage before I shower. And those I think are the really, like the most, I drink warm water first thing when I wake up as well. And I think those are the most important parts of my, of my dean Charia. There's certainly other things I bring in, especially seasonally. I might shift it a little bit. Um, but those are the pieces I would have people start with for sure.

Speaker 1 00:16:42 Yeah, I didn't know that about the sleep that, I mean, I have to get like eight hours of sleep, but I had never heard that before about like the, the time of night, like going to bed before 10:00 PM you said? Yeah, I usually am in bed personally before 10:00 PM anyway to get my eight hours. But yeah, that, that's really an interesting piece and I love how you, you kind of frame that, that you start your day, your morning routine actually starts the night before setting you up for success. That's a nice, um, I like that. It's a nice concept I like to do. I do tongue scraping.

Speaker 2 00:17:17 Yes. Which is

Speaker 1 00:17:18 I love that one. I do too. Yeah. You do that every morning.

Speaker 2 00:17:20 Yeah. Nice. Once you start doing it, it's kind of like if you skip it, it's like not brushing your teeth, you ha you can't stop doing it.

Speaker 1 00:17:26 Yeah. It's just like what you do. I've been doing that for years. So for folks that that don't know, you wanna explain a little bit about what that is?

Speaker 2 00:17:32 Yeah, so, um, tongue scraping is basically, well there's two pieces to it. Essentially what you can't fully digest, we always wanna support digestion because it's the root of health in the, in the body. --

-- And when you can't fully digest something, it turns, it turns into what we call ahma, which is kind of like a metabolic toxicity. The stuff that your body can't fully break down. So you'll notice if you start looking at your tongue in the morning, if you have a little coating there that is essentially ahma, it's the stuff that your body couldn't break down and you don't wanna keep redigesting that into your system. So when you tongue scrape, you wanna take, I use a metal scraper, a stainless steel scraper and um, you scrape from the back of your tongue to the front, you don't have to press super hard, you're just like scraping it. So you're getting the coating off seven to 14 times before you brush your teeth every morning. Um, and then to kind of go even deeper, the tongue is actually a map has a map of all the organ systems in the body. So if someone chronically has a tongue coating, we would say, okay, this person's got some stuff. We would look at what's going on in their tongue, they've got a chronic tongue coating. We would see that there's definitely some buildup of this toxicity in their system and we want, we'd wanna help purify that.

Speaker 1 00:18:41 Yeah, awesome. I also do, um, do you do oil pulling?

Speaker 2 00:18:46 So it's, it's funny. Oil pulling is something that I never got super into and like I, but I know people that swear by it and I do teach people that, but So that's something that you do too?

Speaker 1 00:18:55 Yeah, I do. And um, I don't know, I don't have any cavities. My dentist seems, um, please buy itself <laugh>, that's kind. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:19:04 Good.

Speaker 1 00:19:04 Great. Yeah. So for that, do you use sesame oil if you do it or?

Speaker 2 00:19:08 Um, yeah, yeah. Typically sesame one. Yeah. I know people that use different ones and there are companies that have specific wash, you know, oil form

Speaker 1 00:19:15 Washes. Yeah. Like Banyan. Yeah, yeah. As a company, if anybody's listening Banyan botanicals, they, they don't sponsor us, but they should, um, yeah, <laugh>, they

Speaker 2 00:19:23 <laugh> sponsor my life basically.

Speaker 1 00:19:25 Yeah, exactly. They offer like a, I think they call it daily swish or something like that. It's a, some sort of, um, I, a little concoction that you can use, but traditionally it's just like a mouthful of sesame oil. And the idea there is, correct me if I'm wrong, but kind of if you have any like gunk up in your gums, it kind of draws that out and helps strengthen your teeth and, and oral good for your oral flora and hygiene.

Speaker 2 00:19:48 And then there's also the piece around the tongue showing, you know, being a map of all the organ systems in the body. So there is a belief that with oil pulling, you're actually helping pull that toxicity out of the deeper tissues of the body as well. Cool.

Speaker 1 00:20:01 So yeah. Yeah. No it's awesome. I think those are, those are kind of the ones I do abi occasionally as you've described. Yeah, I do the oil pulling. I tr I don't do it daily, I'll be honest. I try to do it a lot though. Tongue scraping. Definitely every day I do the rose water spritz in the eye. Do you do that?

Speaker 2 00:20:20 Um, I've done, I mean I've, I have done all different things. <laugh>. Yeah, you done lots of things <laugh>. No, it's

Speaker 1 00:20:27 So

Speaker 2 00:20:27 Cool though. Texas. I've done that. I don't do it regularly, but yeah.

Speaker 1 00:20:30 Yeah. And the idea is to kind of cleanse all the senses the does the nausea oil also to kinda use and that actually I was sick back a few weeks ago. I just, I had like a sinus infection and like I was using the nausea oil like all the time, like get this out, clear this out.

Speaker 2 00:20:45 Yeah. And Netty Netty is something that people know about, right? It's very, oh yeah, pretty common. And that is actually an Ayurvedic practice. So I was telling you that we're under renovation and when they demoed this past week, I don't do netty as much. I tend to do more nausea, but I learned the power of Neti when I was like every day just using Neti pot to clear out. So if you're someone who has allergies, if you have high sensitivities to things, doing Neti pot is a really powerful practice. And naia what NAIA is, um, what Teresa was referring to is where you put a little bit of oil in the nostrils so there's speci --

-- fic and you can really, it's, it's not even, there's oils that can treat all sorts of things. Um, not just our sinuses, but they can be administered through the sinuses or just putting a little bit of oil in your nose after you do netty. So it's kind of a protective, it, it's a protective kind of coating to the system.

Speaker 1 00:21:35 Yeah. Yeah. Very cool.

Speaker 1 00:21:39 Did you hear the news about our exciting new offering from the self-care cabaret? We're calling it talkback. If you're familiar with the theater space, you may have participated in a talk back before, after a performance the cast and crew will come back on stage to chat with the audience and answer questions. Think of it as a casual guided discussion. Inspired by this and by popular interest, we've come up with a talk back for the self-care cabaret podcast groups will listen to a podcast episode or two of their choosing, then I'll come and leave your discussion either in person or virtually of those episodes expanding on the big ideas. It's a great option for groups looking for short impactful professional development or smaller teams looking to get an introduction to self-care and wellbeing. We have done a few of these so far and let me say they have been so much fun. So if you're interested in bringing a talk back to your group or organization, email, podcast, dr mc self-care dot com and now on with the show.

Speaker 1 00:22:44 Okay. So I'm gonna go back to something you said a little while ago cuz this is something I struggle with. Uh, and we have a lot of listeners here that are educators and other helping professionals. And when you work in that type of environment, having a long enough time to eat a substantial lunch can definitely be challenging cuz it's very fast paced. You barely get any time you're running from thing to thing, class to class, uh, meaning to meeting whatever it is. So if you were working with someone like that, what would you give them for suggestions about kind of trying to make that lunch the biggest meal of the day?

Speaker 2 00:23:17 Yeah, um, well I really appreciate that. I just to say that I, my background is in social work and then into academia so I understand, you know, the pressures and, and just what you're carrying in the level of burnout that can happen and all these kinds of help helper professions. Um, so what I tend, the way that I tend to support people is really kind of looking at the whole picture of what's going on in their life. And if they are finding that there's a lot of resistance to certain habits, habits we would wanna start with things that feel not so tricky for them, that feel easy. And then what that happens is they are maybe we start working more on, on dinner, you know, and maybe we're not there yet with lunch, but we start working with stabilizing other habits and then over time as they start to gain some strength and power from doing that and maybe easier for them to start working with having that larger lunch.

Speaker 2 00:24:04 So meal planning can be a really powerful thing to do and you know, there's, there's great apps that people can use for that taking. One of the things with food is decision fatigue. Like you're having to figure out at least three times a day typically where you're eating <laugh>. And so what we wanna do is help streamline people's lives, you know, when, how can you spend less time doing this? So if you can take one day a week to think about what is it I'm gonna eat this week and kind of shop for that. Um, and really working up to that, that may feel like a huge jump for someone to do right now, but it may be taking a food thermos to work, you know, cooking something the night before and bringing in for lunch the next day. Um, so that would be one of the, like some of the ways that I would work with people on this and it really is dependent upon that person's specific situation.

Speaker 1 00:24:50 Yeah, nice. I like how you broke that down and, and almost like, you know, some, let's start with dinner, let's try, yeah. Maybe start with some easier thing cuz it is a really hard uh, you know, thing to kind of figure out. But then also, you know, maybe it's only one you start with one day. I mean it's one day you do that and then you can kind of build upon there. I love that because you know, a lot of my work and just talking about self-care kind of big picture stuff and all the different domains, you know, nutrit --

-- ion and hydration is of course one of those domains, but just everything is just teaching people to kind of break it down little things if you do some little habit and kind of build it from there. And I gotta tell you though, saying about decision fatigue with meal planning and food and like what you're gonna eat so much so <laugh>. Like, it's just a constant like, oh

Speaker 2 00:25:40 Yeah. And I think food is such a really a loaded thing for people. There are a lot of people that have an, an antagonistic relationship to food. It can bring up a lot of anger and grief and sadness. So this is one of the huge things that I see coming up with the people that I work with. So I think the beauty of Ayurveda and, and you know, it helped me as well really heal a lot of my issues around food and my digestive issues and just to really embrace and love my body was that I was learning not about what I had to create a limit with what I had to push outta my life, what I had to control. It was about how do I need to be uniquely nourished for who I am and my specific needs and really see that nature is always trying to nourish me.

Speaker 2 00:26:18 And when I start to feed myself in the way that is optimal for me, that opens up so much and it helps to stabilize the mind and the emotions. My body's gonna start to function way better. I'm gonna have more energy and more, more power that comes from that. So the thing that I love about Ayurveda, it's not, sometimes people think, oh, it's so overwhelming or it's confusing and like we can see self-care as like this other to-do list, right? Oh, here's a whole list of things now I gotta do for myself on top of all the things I've gotta do. But one of the most important things that I try to impart to people is this is really about simplifying and doing the things that don't have the greatest impact. So you're not wasting your time and energy doing stuff that's actually not that effective.

Speaker 2 00:27:02 Hmm. And the best metaphor I've heard is that it's kind of like a wind tunnel. So when you can create, you know, you create the structure of the wind tunnel so that things move, really the wind moves really efficiently through it. And that's essentially what Ayurveda is, is it's giving you the specific habits that are going to be the most stabilizing and supportive for you. So you don't have to spend all your time trying to feel better doing all this other stuff cuz you're doing the right stuff that actually is I optimally nourishing and nurturing for you.

Speaker 1 00:27:31 Yeah. Awesome. Yeah. And food is definitely a, a charge topic. I am, I, my listeners know, but I talk regularly about being in recovery for multiple eating disorders. And so in that healing journey and learning to kind of feed myself from a place of love instead of a place of restriction has been my own journey in just understanding even what that means. And it actually was, uh, Dr. Deepak Chopra who's like the Ayurveda master, um, hearing him talk about eating as an act of love. I remember I did not understand that for the longest time. Yeah. And until more recently when it's like, oh, now I, oh, I am sorry. Done. And my healing starting to understand that when I was in my disease, that didn't really make sense to me. But yeah, no, definitely. I mean, an important thing we have to eat, but can certainly,

Speaker 2 00:28:19 Oh, I think that's part of the challenge, right? Yeah, yeah. This is something you gotta do. So

Speaker 1 00:28:23 <laugh> Exactly. Yeah. But can definitely be, um, challenging for a variety of reasons. So I love that just kind of breaking it down and seeing what you can do and looking at kind of the big picture of all, all that goes into being who we are.

Speaker 2 00:28:38 I think the, the deeper piece for this too is really about our disconnect from nature. So, you know, modern culture, and this is pretty recent history, right? Where we have interrupted these certain cycles and rhythms that are natural to like seasonal rhythms, you know, our daily rhythms moving with the light dark cycles of the day. We have a multitude of ways that we can disrupt that we can get food from all places in the world, you know, at this point mm-hmm. <affirmative> so we can be eating non seasonally. Um, so we don't have an intuitive sense of like, well, what's growing around me? What is being made for me specifically at this point in time? We have, uh, you kno --

-- w, as I said before, people typically were eating their midday meal as their largest meal of the day. And then as, as we became more industrialized and people had to work these longer hours that got pushed back to evening.

Speaker 2 00:29:23 So these are just a few examples of how that, that rhythm with nature has become disrupted and we're not really understanding how our physiology kind of moves with it. So it creates this disconnect. And I kind of liken it to like, almost like the mother wound, right? We have this, we have like this mother earth who's trying to, has so much abundance that she's always trying to nourish us. And yet we, we've lost that understanding of how that relationship exists. And so food becomes something that we're confused about mm-hmm. <affirmative> because we're not really understanding how we're trying to be nourished and what's right for us. Um, it, it, it's in some ways it's like we lose a sense of our identity.

Speaker 1 00:30:01 Yeah, that's a really valid, valid point. <laugh> for sure. Um, another major part of Ayurveda is the dos. Yeah. Yeah. And I'm, I don't know, we don't need to go into the nitty gritty of, of all three, but if you wanna give kind of a little high level of what a doche is and then I'm curious as to what your doha is.

Speaker 2 00:30:21 Oh yeah, good question. Um, so a dosha, a dosha. So basically Ayurveda, as I said, is based on the five elements space, air, fire, water, and earth. So we understand everything in the universe and the world around us and in our physical bodies composed of these five elements. And these are, and so the doshas are basically these elements grouped into these three forces, like forces of nature, and they carry out the physiological functions of your body. So there's vata dosha, which is the air and space elements think of like wind kind of. So the, the quality of that is it's very mobile and grounded, um, light and it rules all kinds of movement in the physical body. Pitta dosha is the fire element and a little bit of water. So it's hot, it's sharp, um, like the fire element. And this rules digestion and transformation.

Speaker 2 00:31:09 So anything we take in needs to be broken down, digested. So it can be used as building blocks of our system. And, and then kafa, which is a water and earth element. And so this rules, and so water and earth is stable. Um, it's grounded, it's steady and that rules the stability, the structure of our body. So muscles, bones, fat, the thing that, you know, keeps the, the integrity of our system. And so we all have all three of these, but at the moment of our conception, we have our own unique bounds of these. Often there's a genetic relation. So we will likely take on some kind of mixture of our parents. And so each of us, this is called your <unk>, your mind body constitution. This never changes throughout your lifetime. And so, um, each of us has our own unique constitution <unk> And then over time, because we're always taking these qualities in through the food we eat, through the environments that we're in, um, when a dosha becomes elevated, it creates an excess of that dosha.

Speaker 2 00:32:06 And that's where we start experiencing symptoms. For example, someone who is, is eating like, you know, drinking tons of coffee and lots of alcohol and eating spicy food and has like a super intense work environment and they're very competitive and they start getting burning indigestion. There's a lot of fire elements in that lifestyle. So we would see a fiery kind of manifestation like burning indigestion, uh, and that's called your victi, your current state of imbalance. So as a practitioner, we work towards getting people back to their prakruti, their I optimal state through all sorts of practices, nutrition habits, lifestyles, stress management, so forth. Awesome. My PR is, I'm uh, usually it's on a one to three scale. So you would say like, so I'm three Pitta, two Vata Tufa.

Speaker 1 00:32:54 Yeah. Ida pegged you as Pitta <laugh>. Yeah. I think we can smell our own <laugh>. <laugh>. So what's your Yeah, so Pitta with Kaa tendencies is definitely, and I know when I'm like more out of balance that like that KAA piece can kind of take over, but that fire, that Pitta is still there. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:33:15 Well and that's such a strong combination too cuz if you have, you've got that stamina and that stability, but the Pitta gives the drive. Yeah. S --

-- o it's a really like, you know, it's a really strong and steady, um, combo.

Speaker 1 00:33:28 Yeah. I'd say that's accurate. <laugh>. Yeah, <laugh>. No, it's so cool. It's so cool to like to think about and to study this and yeah. Do you have a favorite Ayurveda book that you like kind of always go back to or?

Speaker 2 00:33:42 So, oh gosh, I, you know, the books that I'm reading lately are not like the intro to Ayurveda books. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, so I can't speak as much to those. Um, Dr. Robert Kubota and Dr. Lad, they both create, you know, they both written several, you know, amazing books on Ayurveda. There's one book that I love. Um, and I think we connected cuz I did a hormones in the nervous system workshop that I posted on Boston Businesswoman.

Speaker 1 00:34:04 Like

Speaker 2 00:34:05 Oh yes, we had, yes. So, um, a book that I really love, you know, for all women and people with female hormonal systems is um, um, balance your hormones, balance your Life by Dr. Claudia Welch. Yep. So she was one of my mentors and I, I really teach a lot around this idea of hormone imbalance and how lifestyle really contributes to that. And yeah, it's, but it's in a way that's really digestible and we, it can be really empowered to, to change and shift.

Speaker 1 00:34:33 Yeah. That's something that I am, um, trying to figure out for myself actually. Uh, right now it's been a bit of, a bit of a journey. I took myself off of hormonal birth control, not in an attempt to get pregnant, but in a, I just, I didn't wanna do it anymore and I was reading some things about synthetic hormones and decided this was no longer for me. And, um, but the journey to kind of rebalance myself from that, we could do a whole nother episode on <laugh>. Yeah,

Speaker 2 00:35:00 Well I'll come back. I would love to talk about

Speaker 1 00:35:02 It. Yeah. Cuz that's, um, that's definitely been, um, challenging and I've actually turned to some alternative healing modalities, like acupuncture to kind of help support that. Um, and it's actually, it's definitely gotten better, but it's still still something that I'm, I'm figuring out for myself. So definitely an important, important topic.

Speaker 2 00:35:24 I feel like I'm hearing from so many women that are at that place right now too, where they're, and, and even I had a conversation with someone about a young woman, she's in her early twenties and she's like, I just don't wanna be on hormonal birth control. And so it's, it's such a loaded question. Yeah. Obviously, because this is about choice and freedom and I think, you know, my position is is I, I wish that that every woman or person with a female hormonal system could at least have the chance to see how their system kind of functions on its own without something kind of controlling it. Yeah. So that you get a sense of what that is like. And I think we're so quick to say, oh, someone has, um, some kind of, you know, pain or, or irregularity. Let's just give them the pill or give them something to kind of put a bandaid on it.

Speaker 2 00:36:07 But it's not really healing the roots of the issue. And those symptoms are speaking to us about something and there's so many women that have symptoms that are related to reproductive health. So I think that's one piece. And also to recognize that having, having symptoms, you know, menstrual symptoms or other things related to our reproductive health, it's not, I don't wanna use the world word normal, but we kind of normalized it. Like, well our bodies are just naturally broken and it's just painful to, to have these things and so we need to be fixed. And I think that's such a damaging message to give to women that we have these inherently broken bodies. So everyone I think has to make their choice. I get a little frustrated in, in seeing how many women are not really being given all the information, they're just kinda being told that things are like totally safe and that there's no side effects and, and that's absolutely not true. No. So my belief and what I want for women is to make really informed choices and to be in touch with their bodies and allow themselves to just feel what they're like naturally so they can see if there's things that are amiss there and start to work on the roots of those things if they can.

Speaker 1 00:37:12 Yeah, no, a hundred percent. And actually it was Claudia Welsh's book, Dr. Welsh's book th --

-- at you just mentioned where I was reading that synthetic hormone is still classified as a carcinogen and that like really just like screamed at me off the page and I was like, oh my God, why am I taking this? Why am I doing? And you know, at, at 20 years old, you know, wanting to avoid pregnancy, it was like, yeah, sure, whatever. Like I'll go on birth control and then, you know, decades go by and now you're like, what? Like definitely I've learned more in the last couple of years in this journey than I never, ever knew about how the whole system's supposed to work because doctors, you know, traditional medical doctors don't teach you that.

Speaker 2 00:37:53 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:37:54 And it's very infuriating, <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:37:55 Yeah. It is infuriating and it's a loaded topic. I think it's, it's such a loaded topic because for some people it really is about, you know, the financial health and their mental and emotional health. You know, that having a baby at the, at this point in their life is not something that's gonna be helpful for them. Um, so it's not to say that like these things are all, all bad <laugh> or that there isn't a use that's important, um, and liberating for some people, but it's, it's that I want people to have all the knowledge Right. And all the information about that, you know, and to make informed choices and, and to not, and to be taken seriously when they have concerns about them.

Speaker 1 00:38:31 Yeah, a hundred percent. I remember when I first went on birth control, I actually read through all the like scary pamphlets that they give you. Oh, good for you. And I, I actually went back, no, I went back and asked my doctor though some questions. I was like, okay, I read cause I wore contact lenses at the time and the doc it said, could experience difficulty wearing contact lenses. I'm like, what? So I went back to the doctor and asked questions and he was like, oh, don't worry about it. Like just completely blew me off and was so I was like, oh, okay. I mean I didn't, I don't think it contributed to difficulty wearing contact lenses, but other things it may have done that. Like I was just quickly though dismissed and like not given the information. So Oh man, that coaching, so that's part of your essential living coaching. You'll do the hormone stuff also.

Speaker 2 00:39:14 So I really work with, um, supporting women to, to heal themselves, you know, so there's all these different ways that symptoms can manifest. So there's a multitude of things that people come to me with, but a lot of the things are sleep issues, digestive issues, burnout, um, anxiety and overwhelm, and just really this desire to understand how their body speak, what what their body is saying to them and to be able to understand and respond, uh, and to be empowered to do that. And so many women that are like, I want to be healthy, I wanna take care of myself. I keep trying, it's not working, it's not sticking. How do I make it stick? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So in my years of working with women, I used to just work one-on-one, but I realized that being part of a group is so powerful and it because the pull of, uh, dominant culture is so strong that we really need to be in a container that's anchoring people in making these small incremental shifts over time so that they can move into a practice of, of regular self-care.

Speaker 2 00:40:08 And that there are ways, there's a psychology behind how we make habit changes stick. So the container of my essential living coaching group is basically what we do. I teach women, you know, they learn about their constitution, um, they learn the most essential habits of Ira Aveda. They really heal themselves deeply through this work and receive one-on-one support from me as well. So it can be they're learning the, the most important overall habits, but also having it be customized to them as well. And it's, I am, I never cease to be amazed at how profoundly people's bodies can, can heal and can heal quickly and heal things that maybe they were being told, you have to get surgery, you have to be on meds for this. And then they start doing these simple practices and then they heal that, you know, their energy goes from like a zero to an eight or, or they don't have to get back surgery anymore and they don't have back pain or they get off meds or they, they lose 40 pounds, so mm-hmm. <affirmative>, when you're doing the right thing, you --

-- r body's always moving towards that place of, um, of balance and we just have to give it kind of the right support to do that. So I, um, the next round of that starts February 12th, so I'm enrolling for that now and I bring people in until the end of the month. So that window is till the end of February and then I enroll every quarter of, uh, February, may, August and Dec and November as well.

Speaker 1 00:41:21 Awesome. Well, by the time this airs, I think folks will miss out on the February one, but you said next one is in May?

Speaker 2 00:41:28 In May. Yeah. And people, I offer free discovery sessions, so anyone who would like to speak with me about their challenges and just to, so I can learn more about what's going on with them and um, help to clarify what their goals are and just talk about the possibilities. Anyone can book a discovery session with

Speaker 1 00:41:43 Me. Awesome. And how would folks find you? Like what is your website or social media handles?

Speaker 2 00:41:48 Sure. Um, my website is [courtney lacava.com](http://courtneylacava.com), so Courtney with a c <laugh> and uh, my Instagram is Courtney LaCava underscore Ayurveda.

Speaker 1 00:41:58 Awesome. Pretty simple. We'll make sure that's in all the episode notes and we'll link to the Dr. Welsh's book too. And maybe a couple other things for folks. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. It was great to chat.

Speaker 2 00:42:10 Yeah, it was lovely being here. Absolutely. I love talking to Ayurveda, so I appreciate this.

Speaker 1 00:42:15 Awesome. Thank you. Have a good night.

Speaker 1 00:42:25 Courtney gave us so much to think about and I just love talking about Ayurveda and a daily routine, or my own Dina Charia and all of the aspects of it. It's fascinating to me to explore other modalities of healing and looking at the body. Ayurveda offers such a wonderful perspective and pieces to consider with the mind body connection and how we heal. I also appreciated how Courtney shared her lived experience and how Ayurveda and her daily routine helped her heal herself in others without having to go the traditional Western medical route, which would have likely included some combination of prescription drugs and or surgery. Lastly, we touched upon the groundbreaking work of Dr. Claudia Welsh and how healing our hormones can have life altering effects on our wellbeing. I shared a bit about my journey in this episode, but I will share more in future episodes as well. Thank you so much for listening. I hope you're feeling more energized and empowered. If you liked what you heard here today, please subscribe and leave a review for this podcast on your preferred player. Follow along on Facebook and Instagram at Dr. MCs Self-Care and Dr. MCs Self-Care Cabaret on LinkedIn. You can also visit my website, [dr mc self-care dot com](http://drmcselfcare.com) for the latest updates and to sign up for the cast party, my eNewsletter. And if you're interested in having me present to an audience near you, email info@drmcselfcare.com. Thanks again, stay well and do good.

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