

EP 50: The Importance of the Mind-Body Connection Part 2

MERYL: Hey everyone. Welcome back to the Rebel Nutritionist podcast. I am so excited because today we get to listen to part two of my interview with Tamsin Astor and we are going to take a deeper dive into a little bit of the neuroscience.

She does have her PhD in this, and it's really fascinating to just hear what she has to say in terms of linking the science of our biology and the habits and how it's all connected. And of course, we get into understanding a little bit more about how that all relates back to some of what we're seeing now as a result of the pandemic, the increased rates of anxiety and depression and why it's so much more important now, more than ever to really understand what your intuitive voice is saying to reconnect back to your intuition and how that really can promote your health and overall wellbeing. So without further ado, here we go into part two. Oh, look that even rhymes.

MERYL: What we see, we perceive in our own mind, I always say, don't judge, cause you just don't know what someone else is going through. Right. And I think that's so, so, so important.

And you know, it's interesting what you said, and I do want to talk about this from a **neuroscience perspective**, a little bit in terms of, because I always. And I learned through my illness, through my cancer journey. I really felt it's interesting that you say this about your cousin and I'm so sorry for that loss.

But I had a Hodgkin's lymphoma, which is a blood cancer, and I had a very, I had a large tumor in my neck and I had a large tumor in my chest. I had surgery for the one in my neck, and then I had chemo radiation for the one in my chest. But it was interesting because when I went to Mexico for the rejuvenative type of therapy and I met an ayurvedic physician and did the Chinese medicine, and that's where I learned all about, what it is to, to understand Eastern medicine.

Right. One of the doctors had said to me I think it was one of the ayurvedic physicians said, your tumor, it's no wonder we were talking about something. And I said, I had a lot

of anger maybe and resentment. I couldn't communicate well. And he goes, well, it's no wonder your tumor is near your heart.

How our mental and emotional states impact our body

That emotional angst and I was like, wow. And so I do believe, and I'm sure in your, in your studies and so forth, I always say **what goes on in the mind is manifested in the body**. You want to speak a little to that from a, I mean, look obviously from a Chinese medicine and Eastern medicine perspective, you and I get that.

And I think people are seeing it more and more because, because you know, medicine has failed so many people, allopathic medicine has failed them in terms of the chronic long-term. I always say, look, **I am grateful for modern medicine for so many reasons**, absolutely from a longterm perspective and a healing perspective. It's just useless for so many people.

So. Can you, cause I read, I found Candace Pert who wrote the the molecules of emotion. She talked about opioid receptor in the brain. She was one of the first to ever detect that and how right. Doing things that make us happy, make our body happy, kind of like when you're out in nature, but can, do you want to speak to the neuroscience piece of that?

TAMSIN: Sure. So, I mean, there's, there's sort of the two pieces of this that I think are really important. One is the concept of, and **the yoga concept of the koshas**, which I think would be helpful for people to understand and think about the mind-body connection. So the koshas is. I'm going to say idea because if it's a new concept to you, it'll be an idea which is that **our body and mind, and all of that exists in layers**, very similar to a Russian stacking doll or an onion with layers.

And we have this physical body, which we can touch the Annamaya kosha, which is a tangible, physical thing that we can hold on to. But then we have the the mental body. Which is our mind, which we all know can leave our body because when we're sitting here and thinking about something that happened yesterday, or something's going to happen tomorrow, our mind is not in our body.

Right. And on a very kind of crude way, **you can think about anxiety and depression as being my mind has left my body for the past, and my mind has left the body for the future**. Right. But the one that is most interesting, I think is **the energetic body**, the

Pranamaya kosha. And you know, when people are like, what do you mean my energy body?

And I say, well, when you walk into a room, can you feel whether somebody is. Can you feel whether somebody sad and they'll go, yeah. And I go, that's their energy body, which is extending out of this physical body, maybe two feet, maybe three feet, maybe more, and you can feel that right. Then you also have **the intuitive body, which is like the inner knowing**, which I love the way Glenn Doyle talks about that.

And the way that girls are taught to shut that down when they start getting their periods. And like they're supposed to not pay attention to that, but Take them public transport in London from the age of 11, I learned to pay attention to that intuitive body when I would walk down the street and feel that creepy energy, if somebody who was following me.

Right. So when we think about this as an idea, and the reason I'm going into it is that **when they are in alignment There is communication**, right? When your mind, your body, your energy, your intuition, all in one space and communicating because the channels are clear because you're sleeping well, you're eating well.

You're meditating. You're listening to your body. You're listening to your mind. Then **that interplay between mind and body becomes much clearer** and you don't have the physical manifestations. Of the unlistened to mind of the unlistened to intuition. Right? So that understanding and that ayurvedic model, I think is really key for understanding the disconnect that we have in the west between

MERYL: So true. And I was at a conference ever since I got sick and I've been studying. The whole mind, body energetic, sort of universal language of all of this. To me, it's fascinating. And there's never been any coincidence about manifestation. You know what, the energy you put out, you get back and it happens every time without fail, you manifest it, you know?

And so and I'll tell you a quick story about that in a second about my son, but yeah. So not enough people really, I think embody that, so what I was going to say is I was at a conference this weekend in Miami, and one or two of the lecturers happened to be an Indian trained physician in neuroscience.

She was also a neuroscientist talks about **the healing capacity of sound**. Yes at right. So, but again, sound is energy. And then we also talked about **the healing capacity of**

certain foods and the colors of certain foods also emit certain wavelengths. That speak to our bodies right there and go, wow, this is all connected.

And it's even though it's all connected now you're learning how it's all connected.

And it's like, oh, mind blow. Right?

TAMSIN: Right. when you then think about the system of how we connected in that way, then when you then start thinking about the neuroscience piece, right.

How we can use the interplay between the mind and the body

We used to think that the brain was not plastic. I.E., once you got us to a certain age, like if you can't teach an old dog new tricks, right. But there was no rewiring. And **what we know now is that there is this intimate interplay between the body, between the energy between the mind. So. There is an ability to communicate.**

There is an ability to change. So **the mind can affect the body**, right? So when we understand it from these different sort of modalities or different ways of thinking, we can really see that there is huge change there. And **you see it, for example, in people with Phantom limb**, right? So people who lose a limb and it was something that they started noticing you know, during war time was that people will feel the limb even after it's been amputated. Right. The brain is still giving them the signals of that my arm, my foot, my leg is still there. Right? So **the brain is having to catch up to what's actually happened in the body and rewire**, right? So there are these fascinating interplays between the way the brain works and the way the body works and the way they communicate breath, like yogis, I've been teaching yoga for 14, 15 years.

Now, your breath is something that's really interesting to the yogis because it's automated. 90% of the time. We're not thinking about our breath, but what we do know is that when you start to pay attention to your breath, when you start to manipulate your breath, **when you start to pay attention to your breath, it will change your body.**

Your heart rate will change. Your galvanic skin response will change how all of these things will shift. Right? **Your focus will change based on you manipulating your breath.** Right? So there's interplay. We all on some instinctive level know, but we forget.

MERYL: So yeah. I'm like, yes, I love, like I said, I you and I are totally energetically connected on it, but here's the thing, right?

So let's bring this back for a second because. You know, I have people, I'm sure you have people maybe me more so than you in terms of just more of a general population, who's not, let's call it for lack of a better word as enlightened. Right. And, and people are coming from the medical model and they're like, well, yeah, you're sort of my last hope or I've heard so many great things about you, you know?

Start spewing this to them. And they look at me, I have five heads. Like, what do you mean? You're talking about energy and what do you mean? You're talking about breathing and why they came here for a diet, you know? Yeah. And so, and I again, it's some of it's in the messaging and all of that, but how, and look, I obviously you know, you can't make people believe what they don't want to believe, but they're that closed off, but I feel like people are becoming more open-minded to it.

You know, there's more talk about it is not as it was 10 years ago. How do you help be like, **what is the conversation that you'd have with someone who's a skeptic?**

So I would start with what I said to you is **when you walk into a room, can you tell when you're with your partner or your mom and your brother feels angry** or your boss, can you tell if your boss is angry with you?

Can you tell if your boss is feeling sad or distracted? So I would start with something that feels quite concrete. Rather than something that's more amorphous. Right. So something like that, I would start with **as a way of thinking about energy as something being outside of yourself** or something that is there is an interplay, or have you ever noticed that feeling that when this particular person in your life is happy, you also feel happy.

Right or that when you're around this person, you start to feel sad or angry. So I would bring it into kind of common most people, if you've read any of those books on emotion that **most people can only recognize a few emotions**. And there are millions of emotion. Not that there are more emotions people can recognize in people's faces, right.

How the west and the east approach health

But start with some simple emotions and see whether people can understand it in that way. And then I think the other thing that is another really key kind of mindset shift around this, which I've had success with my clients is with the concept of symptoms. Right. **In the Western model of health, we see symptoms and we try and suppress them.**

But if you think about it, **if you get to the point of having symptoms, it's gone wrong**, right? So the more you can stop paying attention to stuff before you get to the symptom before you get to the really, really serious symptom before you get to a symptom that is going to create long-term chronic disease and illness and maybe cancer and all these other things.

Can you slow down and listen to what your body is telling you? So again, I would flip it back on them and say, when have you ever like walked a dark street at night? And that lights flicker off and you have that ghostly chill on the back of your neck. Yeah. What do you think that is? Right? What is telling you?

Don't go down that street. What is telling you? Don't pick that thing up, right? We've all had those experiences, whether or not we really acknowledge it. We've all had those experiences of don't do this thing or do this thing based on some kind of information that we can't articulate, that we're not like this is something that comes from the logical mind, right?

Like the way I sometimes talk about it is like turn off the analyzer, right? Turn off the intellect, which for somebody like me was a really hard thing to learn to do because I rely on my brain. My brain was like my most amazing organ. Right. And it got me so far in life. But turning that off and paying attention, what is my stomach like when I eat, do you feel this or that after you eat, do you feel full, but then hungry an hour later, can you listen to that? Right? When you have a glass of wine, what do you notice when you have two glasses of wine, three glasses of wine? What do you notice? If you go to bed, having eaten a massive steak dinner, how is your sleep right?

Can you start paying attention to things that are in quote unquote, quite common? But you can start paying attention to the energy around that. That makes sense.

MERYL: Oh my God. Totally. Totally, totally. I mean, yes, I, and that, those are great, great analogies because I think people definitely can resonate with that.

So thank you for giving those, but I just want to take a step back for a second. So when you said, well, can you walk into the room and feel this, and do you feel that. Listen, I am definitely tied into other people's energy. I could feel that as soon as someone walks in the room, I mean, people say it all the time in my space here, they walk in and they could feel the positivity, right.

What if you can't feel the emotions of others?

It exudes from the walls here really does. But what about the people that can't, that don't feel it? Because again, I feel like so many people are disconnected and I'm going to totally call Howie out on this mad at me, but cause he listens to all these, but I am going to call them out only because I think this can help other people.

Right. So we had a conversation last week. We were doing something in, in the office and I was feeling a little deflated. Like my energy definitely went down. Right. So we were, I was cooking at home and I was just in my head and my energy. I mean, I knew my energy. You could just, and I thought I exuded that.

Right. And he had a little bit of a sense. Like, he just, he thought I was tired. And so when I confronted him about it the next day, and I said, I said something and he goes, well, I just thought you were tired. I said we're, we're together almost a year. I'm like, can't you read my energy yet. And he kind of looked, what are you talking about?

he goes, well, teach me so on the, on the positive side he's like, okay, well just, just what are you explain it a little bit more. So that is a good case in point, like maybe he didn't, **he knew something was a little, off right. Didn't know what**, okay, fine.

We'll give them the benefit of the doubt on that and, and teach them a little bit more on how to read energy or get more connected. But **I do feel like many, many people. Yeah. I don't know how to read that**,

TAMSIN: Right. And this is something that I am passionate about, and I've also had lots of conversations with friends of mine who are quote unquote, psychic and intuitive and all of that who have all said to me, which I instinctively felt a new and my grandmother was psychic too.

The modern problem of distraction

She'd always be like, darling. I would have been burned at the stake if I was born in the 16 hundreds, but anyway, she was fabulous, but anybody can access intuitive abilities if they slow down and listen. And what, the biggest thing that I see between the ability to do that and not so the ability to listen to your energy, feel your energy and feel the energy of others is **to not fill your brain with all of this kind of stuff**. Right? **Most people are not able to sustain attention and focus these days because they are constantly going, boom, boom, boom, between a million different things**. And when you're going

boom, boom, boom between your phone, between your texts, between your computer, between all of that stuff, right?

You're on the phone, you're responding to a tweet. Somebody texted you. Now you're replying to the email. Then there's a Facebook message. **It takes 23 minutes to get back to the level of attention and focus that you had before you were disturbed and pulled out**, 23 minutes. Most people don't go 23 minutes without having some kind of distraction.

And what that means is that **you're not able to really either get deeply focused on writing something, serving a client, meditating, listening to yourself, slowing down**. So what I say to people, who say they can't, is I say, **how many hours a day do you spend without anything else?** How many minutes a day do you spend? Not on your phone, not reading a book, not listening to a podcast, not driving a car, not responding, just being with your self because it's that concentration. And what's one of the things I get. All my clients do is meditate. Right cause basic calm, abiding shamatha meditation and the Buddhist district tradition is all about cultivating connect concentration because you're sitting there your mind wanders off you come back to the breath, mind runs off, come back to the breath, right?

It's this **constant practice of presence**. And that to me is the biggest issue that we see in our society right now, which stops people, being able to access that. Oh, so I, I throw the glove down, I throw the challenge down. I'm like, do this and then come back and tell me you can't do it.

MERYL: I, that is, oh my God. That is fabulous because you know, it's interesting.

I was talking to a friend of mine, who's a therapist and we were having dinner on Monday night and she said to me, **one of the worst things for people with ADD and ADHD is scrolling on the phone**. Like they think it makes them calmer, but like you said, wow, 23 minutes. That is, I'm not surprised, but wow.

And yeah, we are we're much, much, much too distracted, so, right, right. So yes. You know, so I really think we could probably talk for another half hour on this, but I, and I want to be respectful and mindful of that. But this conversation has just been like, I have really, really enjoyed this conversation.

I am. So looking forward to seeing you later and getting you all to myself,

doing this because there's just so much synergy here, and wow. We really resonate on, on just a level. That's great. So I'm looking forward to that. Yeah, so, and at some point soon, hopefully we'll be able to continue this conversation. And as always anybody out there, any of our listeners who have questions for myself or Tamsin about any of this, go get her book.

Her stuff is fabulous. This information is just invaluable and really thank you, any parting words, any thoughts you want to leave us with?

TAMSIN: I think the biggest thing that I want people to take away from this is that **you have the choice**. I think **a lot of people feel like their life has mapped out for them and I call it "the shoulds"**.

Right. We should on ourselves and we should on other people because I'm a woman, I'm a mother. I have this degree, I don't have this degree. I've got the debt. I don't have this debt. I've got these responsibilities. And **that creates this limited view of what you think your life can look like and what kind of world you can be a part of and can create**.

So **I really want to empower people with this idea that you have the power**. If you are willing to take that radical responsibility for your own experience.

MERYL: I love that. Thank you.

TAMSIN: Welcome

MERYL: Thank you. Thank you for this conversation.

So yes, with that, thank you for your infinite wisdom and your knowledge and your stories and being just so open. So we appreciate that. And until next time, thank you. I am going to leave everybody with Tamsin's parting words because that was just profound. So with that being said, this is your Rebel Nutritionist signing off make it a great day, everybody until next time.