

MERYL: Hello, everyone.

Welcome back to the Rebel Nutritionist podcast today. I have our very own Amanda Shuh with us. Um, did I say your last name, right? You did. I did. I thought for some reason, uh, Amanda started with us what, a couple months ago. Yeah. And she has just like taken to it and stepped right in and is kicking ass.

So I am really excited to do this podcast because here's the thing, uh, our listeners so often relate to what we talk about. Right? That's the goal is we want people to relate to the stories, relate to the feelings, relate to. To the work that we do so that A it can help them and B they know they're not alone and that there are answers out there.

And I think that's really where your journey started. And I'm gonna let you tell it right. Your whole frustration with the system, as it were and, and how you got here and your continued efforts at, at that it's an ongoing journey always. Yeah. So I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna bumble it up. You take it away, Amanda.

AMANDA: Okay. Yeah. So I'd say my journey started, uh, probably about 16 years ago. Now when I was 19 years old young, I was, uh, my first semester in college, I was working as a waitress. Staying up all night, eating fast food, abusing my body, the way that I feel like many young adults do and I got sick cuz I was run down.

I got mono and I was sick for about four months and I just couldn't shake. I had strep throat back to back and just felt lousy. I dropped out of my first semester in college because I just couldn't keep up with the curriculum and the demands of life. And within six months, my whole entire nervous system changed.

I started experiencing migraines, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, tachycardia. I couldn't even stand up in the shower without feeling like I was gonna pass out. I, I just felt like something crazy was happening inside of me. And I couldn't figure out what it was. I ended up in the emergency room, probably six times that first year with my, my heart pounding out of my chest, feeling like I was gonna pass out and they just kind of shook it off and said, you're having panic attacks.

Go home, take this Advan, go see a therapist. You're having anxiety. And so,

MERYL: They just kept dismissing you dismissing

AMANDA: me. Okay. Yeah. So I started developing anxiety, severe anxiety. In fact, like I was a agoraphobic, I didn't leave my house. I was afraid to drive.

I kind of was plagued by this fear that something was wrong, but nobody could tell me what it is. And you know, fast forward 2, 3, 4, 5 years went by, still no answers. Wow. Feeling like I knew something was wrong internally going from doctor to doctor.

MERYL: That was gonna be my next question.

So like what, tell it, because I think people need to hear that, right? Yeah. People do go from doctor to doctor, to doctor and we really put faith as, as, as we should technically right. Air quotes. exactly. Um, because we think the doctors have the answer because in the olden days, as I say they, they really did.

Care about you as the person? Not that, not to say that they don't care about us now, but sure. The system has failed us a hundred percent. So tell, tell us a little bit, like what, what, who did you go to and what was that experience? Like? What doctor did you get? You know, subsequent, it was this doctor then that doctor, like, what was that experience?

AMANDA: It was exhausting. I saw a neurologist, a neuro ophthalmologist, an ear, nose and throat doctor cardiologist after cardiologist, you know a psychologist and **they all wanted to prescribe me medication, but nobody could tell me what was wrong** and, and doing all the diagnostics, everything came back normal, right?

So they're like, okay, well obviously there's something happening, but we don't know how to diagnose you. So then at 25 I saw a cardiologist and he said, oh, but I don't need to do anything. I just told him my story. He goes, you have dysautonomia, you have pots, you have this condition of your autonomic nervous system that's not properly functioning and there's nothing you could do about it. And I was like, wow, okay. Like in one sense, I felt relief. Like I have answers. I'm not going crazy. But in the next regard I felt very helpless. Right. There was nothing I could do to fix myself. In fact, I'm pretty sure he told me I need to take so much sodium that my ankles would swell.

I need to be drinking tons of salt and Gatorade and chips. And I was like, this seems a little bizarre, but okay. And you know, from there **I started doing my own research** because I thought, well, this isn't fun and I don't wanna live like this. I wanna have some quality of life. And so I actually hired a health coach like 10 years ago.

And that's where I was introduced to this kind of philosophy of like food is medicine. And I learned like how to nourish my body with real whole foods. And so I started seeing a little change And yeah, so that's kind of what sparked my interest in kind of this, alternative way of thinking about healing.

and, and yeah, so then I ended up **becoming a health coach myself**. I went to the Institute of integrative nutrition because I wanted to learn more mm-hmm um, and then I got pregnant and had my son and then I became a stay at home mom and my focus was raising this little human and also at the same time, trying to nourish my body and, and **deal with kind of the ebbs and flows of kind of having a chronic condition that I was trying to heal kind of on my own without the guidance of conventional medicine**.

MERYL: But did so, so back step a second. Yeah. So you said you saw a health coach. Yeah. But never really. Got any kind of answers in terms of, well, let's say at the root cause. Exactly. Right. What was actually going on. So yes. You started to learn to use food as medicine. Yeah. But did you have any answers as far as what was going on inside your body? Let's say with your own biochemistry and all of that?

AMANDA: No. Okay. That came a few years later. So that came, probably the last couple years. So we had our son and then we were able to move back to Florida. We were living out of state at the time. And after that I started kind of feel pretty bad again, postpartum.

And so I said like enough is enough. **I went and saw a functional medicine practitioner where we did a very comprehensive, deep dive** to kind of seeing what was going on in inside. We did a GI test. We did a Nutri eval test. We saw the, that I had leaky gut and dysbiosis and I'm like, oh, okay, well, that makes sense.

that's why I found out what my triggers were, what food allergies I had. **And, by eliminating those things within four to five months, I saw like profound changes.** I mean, I had 15, 16 years of uh, brain fog and cloudiness that was gone and I, you don't even know how good you could feel until you actually, you.

Just so bad. Yeah. Yeah. That's what I'm trying to say. Yeah. You don't realize how bad you feel and so you start to feel good and you're like, wow. Um and my migraines lessened and I was not as dizzy. And so yeah, the diagnostics certainly helped and, and really no conventional practitioner, uh, could lead me in the direction to heal the way that functional medicine did.

MERYL: Right. So, and so thank goodness you found that yeah. Shame that it took so long and really a bigger shame that just nobody could go there for you and, and that it took so long to get there. So, and more importantly, that **number one, you were told you were normal and dismissed as being crazy.** Totally. Yeah, because we hear that all day long from people, right.

I go to the doctor, I'm told that there's nothing wrong. I know here's an antidepressant anti-anxiety and that again is, it's not even a bandaid for a lot of people that's just wrong. Totally. Completely misdiagnosed. And, but, but they either they don't know what they're looking for.

They don't know what they don't know exactly. It's always I say it's the toolbox. They don't have the right toolbox. Yeah. And I feel like when you are dismissed, then it's, it is, it's like that defeatist kind of feel like, like then you really do, like you said, you started to feel anxious that, oh wait, there is something really wrong with me yet.

You know, I'm being told there's not anything wrong with me. Totally. And that **finally finding this functional way of doing things, getting to the root cause allowed you to finally feel the way you could feel, which is, which is so important.** So let's talk about, and so the testing, I, I feel like we need to talk a little bit about that and really a little bit about this process

of what we go through in the functional world, because people say, well, **Why do I need to spend so much time on the initial consultation?**

Right? Like the initial consultations an hour and a half. Yeah. And I say to people, **it is because I need to hear your stories start to finish. It's not just, what are your symptoms now** Exactly. It's, what's the story and for you, right. That story is 16 years worth of story. Totally. And, and for other people it's 16 years plus, right?

Yeah. So that is important to hear, the diagnostic testing is important, and people say, well, why can't I do the labs that the doctors run? Like we do those labs. Why is that not enough? Right. And you realize, well you talked about the nutrient eval, the nutrient eval is the vitamins, the minerals, the antioxidants why are those so important because that's what makes your body run.

Right? That's our nutritional biochemistry and understanding the gut connection and all of that. So was there, like, what was the aha moment for you? or was there one, or was it just like, just this progression of a little bit, a little bit, a little bit, right?

AMANDA: Yeah. I think it was more of this progression of like, I think I always knew that.

That our bodies could heal itself if they were given half a chance to, I just kept saying like, for some reason I haven't figured it out for me yet. Mm-hmm but I would preach this, this knowledge and I was constantly learning. I'm always a student, you know? And um, I always believed that this could work.

And I even remember in my first coaching session, I said I know that this works. I just haven't figured out the right potion for me and she's like, yeah, but you're here now. And like it's your time. And maybe perhaps back then, it wasn't my time. It was just this journey to kind of discovering you know, the path to getting here and, and yeah, so I, I don't think it was this aha moment.

I think it was just like finding that I was really in the right place for it. Right, right. Like I was really ready for it. Right. And it's a big commitment. Right. Mm-hmm because **it's not just the food you eat. It's like, okay, what's going on in my environment? Like, what's my toxic overload.** Like, am I all of those things that really go into overall wellness, that's not just the food piece.

Cause I think I was, I love that. You said that. Yeah, because I **was really focusing primarily on the food piece and I was eating really healthy.** So I thought, but I wasn't eating healthy for me. I mean, I found out that I had an allergy to egg whites that I was eating all the time, thinking that eggs were healthy, but they are healthy for some, but they weren't for me.

Right. And same with almonds and same with same with banana, you know? So it was like **finding out those things that were making me inflamed, even though they were deemed**

as a health food. I think is really the key to kind of figuring out your path to healing. Right. And that's what functional medicine testing really provided me with.

MERYL: Right. So I, the first thing when you said, okay, well, the original straw that broke the camel's back yeah. Was **probably that your adrenals were just so tanked**, yeah. Right. You're working, you're burning a candle up, both ends. And I feel like people need to hear this, right. The stress and the emotional stress and the physical stress, how it takes a toll.

And I feel like we still, for some reason, we still give this, we still give people the badge of honor, like, oh, the more you do, the more you burn yourself into the ground, the more accolades you get, like, why, why do we do that? **Why do we not praise people for taking care of themselves and self care?**

And, oh, you're resting today. Oh, well, that's a good thing. Exactly. Right? Like that, that is the, the. You know, the, the, uh, it's not the norm, right? It's the exception. It should not be the exception. **The exception should be that we're running ourselves into the ground yet our society and our culture rewards us for just the opposite yet.**

How many people are running around, literally burning a candle at both ends and just feeling exhausted. Look, I can tell you this. We've, I've had a couple of weeks of just a lot of stuff going on in my life. Right? Personal stuff, professional stuff. We've had a lot going on. And at some point right after my birthday, I kind of went boom and, and realized that, wait a minute, I gotta take a step back here.

I gotta give myself some self care and just stop. Right. And, and. And recognize that yet, some people would just keep going. No, no, I gotta push through. I gotta push through because I need the money because yet if we don't do that and we don't recharge the tank that it, at some point it, it do, it does catch up.

It's inevitable. Totally. Right. And I always say, we can see the writing on the wall as practitioners. And I have said to so many people look, if you don't stop, if you don't slow down, I can see the future. I know it's gonna happen. And it's bad. Yeah, yeah. Right. It is bad. I mean, I've said to people, look, if you don't stop there's cancer in your future, there's debilitating diseases in your future and you never wanna scare people.

Sure. And you never wanna say, well, right. I do have the magic crystal ball. We don't, but I, but you, but we've seen this enough to know exactly. And so. You know, how do you now look at that and say, I'm sure at some point, whoever you went to talked about adrenal fatigue or, or some dysregulation in that whole, what we call hypothalamus adrenal kind of hormone system, if you will.

AMANDA: Yeah. **That was a big tool that I didn't possess. I really did not know how to kind of slow down in terms of my thoughts, my racing thoughts.** I wasn't moving my body

enough. I wasn't getting in nature enough I wasn't meditating or breathing and doing all of these things for, you know stress management.

And **now that I have that in my arsenal, I can recognize like, oh, I'm feeling really flustered and I know what I need to do** to. Take it down a notch like I do some diaphragmatic breathing. I get out for a walk in nature. Mm-hmm I put on music and I dance. Like I know that those things are equally as important as the food that I'm eating.

And that is really something I learned too through functional medicine, **because while food is medicine, all those other things really are so important for your overall wellness.** Yes. And so that has been a really big takeaway, I'd say towards my ultimate healing as well. Mm-hmm is just having those tools that I didn't possess before.

Yeah. And so that's really been a big takeaway as well and finding the time to do it. Yeah. **Prioritizing,**

MERYL: I love that. I love that. Right. There's always time. You know, we make excuses because we're all busy, but like carving out 10 minutes for self care at any point in the day, whether for mental health and then the physical piece, mm-hmm, the movement piece, but yeah, there's always time.

Right, right. We all have that same 24 hours. How do we use that? And how do we prioritize what is really going to recharge that battery? Because that is so, so, so important. Yeah. And we, we are going to start talking more about, I, I have said in one of my, whatever reels that I did in the morning, like **we're gonna start focusing on habits because people have a really hard time shifting habits.**

And it's the habits that create the behavior. And **the behavior is either going to contribute to your health somehow, or it's going to detract from it.** Yeah. How do we create those habits that create the behavior that creates the consistency with which we do things. And it doesn't mean and, and.

Yeah, we, we joked about this the other day, but it doesn't mean that it's about perfection. I think people need to hear that as well. Totally. We all fall love the wagon a little bit. Yeah. You know, so, and you have to cut

yourself slack.

Right. So how do you find that balance? I know you said you get out in nature and stuff, right?

Yeah. But you're dealing with a little, a little kid

AMANDA: well, also I feel like kids are like, they're like your biggest teacher. Right? And like, I want for James to grow up in an environment, James is my four and a half year old for **healthy**

habits to kind of be a part of his everyday life. Like he sees mom and dad work out, like they prioritize their health we're not staying out all late.

All night and then sleeping the whole next day, cuz we're hung over tired and we can't take him to the pool and do those things. Um, so **I kind of use that as like my biggest motivation**. I want him to see like, okay, mommy eats like a very nutritious diet. That's normal. That's his norm. Yes.

He knows nothing but that and he gives me a lot of slack for not. Necessarily always picking everything that he decides he wants in the grocery store and putting it in our cart, you know? And so that's, that's a whole other realm of, of topic of conversation because that's a a tricky world to navigate kids and their friends, eating unhealthy food and going to the birthday party and going to soccer where everyone's giving him Gatorade and Doritos and all those things.

But getting back on topic, I just use him kind of as motivation to, he sees the example in front of him. So that's his norm. you know, he doesn't have to learn as an adult, like what healthy habits are or what healthy eating is or what a healthy lifestyle is. Right. It's gonna be hopefully just a part of his everyday life.

MERYL: Yes. Well, that's gonna be the part two of this. We're gonna, we're gonna talk about that in just a few minutes. I do wanna talk a little bit more about your healing journey. Yeah, because again I had a message from someone today who said, I, I guess, whatever I posted resonated and she's like, wow, I am in total overwhelm.

I was diagnosed with a, with a certain condition and **there's so much information out there. I don't know who to trust. I don't know who to believe**. You know? And she reached out and said, look, I need to work with you so that we can get some answers because I do need to know what is right for me.

and I feel like that is so like, that message needs to get out so loud and clear because there is, we're just inundated. You go on TikTok, you go on social media, you go on Instagram and everybody pretends they're an expert or claims to be, I don't wanna say pretends, but you know, they, they claim to be knowledgeable and I think we fall for it.

Right. We fall for, oh, this sounds right. I mean, my kids do it all day long. They come to me. Oh, well, I've found this on TikTok. I really, I keep saying this, I wanna bang my head against a wall. Like, are they an expert? Like, what is their degree in? You know, do they have knowledge? And it's not just I did a 10 hour course. Totally. again, I'm not minimizing those people that are out there doing the due diligence and doing the work and putting in the time, uh, to get certified and really help people. Because I, I do think there's more people out there that, that than not, that are genuine and authentic. Yeah.

but I just think they're overcrowded by a lot of the gimmicky noisy stuff. And so we have to be so careful about that, and then also not fall for the general, the general, oh, well this is so, and so

is doing this. I'm gonna do this as well. Like you said, you had to find out what was right for you and the way we do that now we're lucky enough and fortunate enough that I am doing **the genetics and the nutritional genetics.**

How much information that gives us about your unique individuality and what makes your body tick and what works for you and what resonates, whether it's from gut health, to hormone health, to brain health, to how to manage your weight. Right? And as we do those, those kinds of tests and the subsequent test, we get more information about what is good for you, cuz like you said, **what's good for you is not necessarily good for John Jane Doe.**

Right? Exactly. Um, and so how with all this information, like you said, so you started first with the food piece, which is, which makes sense. And then it sounds like you've incorporated some of that lifestyle piece. What has been, I guess t like when did you notice sort of, I guess the turning point, if you will, and was there another, cause we talked about the aha, but what else in your life is allowing you, or is motivating you what have you found to be? So the tipping point for you, if there is one, maybe there isn't maybe it's just the consistency with which you're doing this.

AMANDA: Yeah. I think it's just you know, having seen the, **finally getting the results that I knew were possible and that figuring out what I needed to do for me, for my unique bio, individual, self really just motivates me more to continue to listen to my body, to continue to test and, and see like where what's going on,** even though I'm feeling better.

I still wanna make sure I'm maintaining that right. Because you know, things happen like you might get sick and it might throw derail you a little bit. And, and **I think that's the biggest takeaway for me is the consistency part.** Mm-hmm like, I know that doing all of this has **allowed me to have this life of functionality that I kind of never dreamed was possible for myself.**

I kind of believed it worked for everyone else, but me for some reason, but I would still preach it to everyone else. But inside I was like, am I an imposter? Like, this doesn't really work for me, but I know it works. And so now that I can actually be like a testimonial and say like, Hey, I know this works I'm kind of not addicted to it, but I, I wanna continue to surround myself with things that are gonna just constantly improve my overall wellbeing.

Right. Whether that's mental, physical, spiritual, mm-hmm, **all of those pieces of the wellness puzzle that I was really lacking right before.** Cuz like we mentioned, it was really concentrated in food only mm-hmm and I was really missing really big pieces of the puzzle. And that was I think my natural disposition is to be anxious.

It was kind of, and probably if I did the genomic testing, I'd probably see that. Oh sure. That makes sense. You, you know that, that makes sense for you, but um, learning. Stress management tools to work through the anxiety, as I see, feel it mounting, yeah. Has given me so much more power than I knew that I possessed and that's huge.

And so like now that I have that in my arsenal, it's like, I feel like you can almost accomplish anything. It's like, oh, this is a challenge. Great. Let me take it on like I'm not as, I don't let the fear, kind of stop me. So

MERYL: I love that. Yeah. I love that. And, and, and what you said is important, empowering yourself in a way to continue to do this work.

Yeah. And I think one of the things that I you know, I love in the work that we do and the team that we surround ourselves, cuz the team year is phenomenal. Right. I is that we are all like-minded and, I'm sure outside, right? How many times I get people say, oh, y'all go out to dinner. Oh, you're going to eat that. Or, do you eat that or do you eat this right? It's the whole like, and. You know, **I'm unapologetic about what I do, because here's the thing. I know what I do makes me feel how I wanna feel.** Totally. And, it used to be like, I was, I was defending myself, oh people would be like challenging me and I'd defend myself.

Now. I'm like screw you. I don't really care what you think because I feel really good. And **I know what I'm doing is fueling my body and supporting my body in a way that is allowing me to thrive.** And I don't apologize for that. And I don't apologize for wanting to eat at home most of the time, because I like my food better than the food that they're serving in a restaurant.

Right. And I don't apologize for when I'm on vacation wanting to go work out because it makes me feel good. Right. Mm-hmm and so I think that's part of when you feel like you said, when you feel so good in your own skin, You're not willing to go back to where you were. Yeah. Nor should you, and you wanna just keep doing those things that keep you in that state.

And I think that's so, so, so important. And it doesn't mean that it's hard work. I think that's the other piece of this. Yeah. You know that when people look at what we are doing, let's say, and the work that we're doing here, and we say, well, try to cook a little more. And people who don't like to cook are like, ah, I don't wanna do that.

That's gonna be too hard yet. **Once they start changing those habits and realizing that the food they're eating is nourishing them. It almost becomes this opposite effect.** Like, oh, I don't wanna go out somewhere where I know the food's gonna make me feel bad. And I think you are like, cuz you cook all the time.

Yeah. So I'm sure that that's kind of what you're feeling as well. Right. I mean, in terms of right.

AMANDA: Well, and it's funny because I when you, I first started changing my lifestyle. Yeah. I got a lot of pushback, but guess what? All of those people now are kind of asking me, they come back asking questions like, oh, well, what supplement are you taking for this?

Or right. You know, what can I have this recipe? Yeah. Right. You know, so I think that, and, and I think that a movement is kind of happening right now. Mm-hmm and I think that's really exciting. It's not, it's unfortunate because it's happening at a time where people really are seeking alternative ways of living and lifestyle and all of that.

MERYL: I think the thing is, is people think it's work. People think it's hard work to do this. Yeah. And I, I, they're sick of me here, you know me saying, oh, well, it's not really so hard.

So maybe they wanna hear that from you.

AMANDA: it's not that hard. In fact, like I look forward to it, throw on some music, make a yummy meal. Like it tastes so much better when it comes from your kitchen. And honestly, like I have this philosophy that like, you just, you should still be able to eat the food that you love. you just want it to love you back. Right.

MERYL: I love that. and,

AMANDA: and It, it tastes better. Like, it looks healthy. Like it, the colors look better. Like everything about picking out your food, cooking it and eating it and enjoying it with your family. Like, I don't know. I don't see it as work at all.

Right. Like I see it as like, it's an experience. It's an

MERYL: experience. Yeah. I mean, and that's what, so I do wanna get into this topic about, because you and I we're at such opposite ends of the spectrum now in terms of my kids are older. Yeah. I've done that thing. Been there, done that. And you know, I've, I, I feel like I can give you some support in that area because I've been there done that and my kids are on the other end of this and it's been fascinating and fabulous.

Yeah. To see where they have come from and where they are. And then being able to help you and say, yeah, yeah, keep going, keep going, keep going. Right. Because like you said, the, the movement, this integrative alternative, whatever healthier movement yeah. Is certainly gaining more momentum now more than even, it was 20 years ago.

Right. When I first got into it, I. My friends, my, the kid, my kids, friends teased them all the time. You know, my kids have the healthiest lunch box and it was like, oh mom, we don't we don't want this. And I got, they got made fun of, and I'm like, no. And look, and I wasn't even to the extreme, I really wasn't, I mean, I'm sure my kids at that point thought I was, but I really wasn't because I also recognized that I didn't want them to totally rebel. Right. Uh on that level. So what is the challenge? Like you said little James is like, I want this and I want that. And, and, but it sounds like, I mean, kudos to you you stand your ground in a way that I think is really supportive for him, but, and of course supportive for, for the what you're trying to accomplish, but, but talk about how you have overcome that. And I think this is gonna actually be, so I, I

think this is gonna be the second part yeah. Of our of our discussion. So here's what we'll do any last thoughts for what we were just talking about, because we'll wrap that up.

Okay. And then we're gonna kind of intro this segue you know, the whole healthy kids thing. Um,

AMANDA: I guess I would just say that like **trust your own body's ability to heal** and you know, you can't, it's so easy to get discouraged in conventional medicine, when you are talking to a doctor about your body and what you're experiencing and.

They're not able to give you the answers that you're for. Right. They're giving you a pill. That's just masking just the banding. Yeah. Whatever's going on at the root of things and **know that there are alternatives out there and that there is a way to reclaim your health and your life.**

And that, like, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I think that's the biggest takeaway that I, I

MERYL: Yeah. You know, that's, it came to my home, great that there's options and people need to know their options. Exactly. And they need to know that there's a practitioner out there with a different toolbox.

Totally. yeah. So this has been great. I think again, the more our listeners can hear. The journeys of, of not just the people that work here the clients and all of that kind of thing. The, the more empowering it becomes like, yeah, I can do this and it's not this insurmountable task in front of them.

So exactly. Thank you for sharing your story. we look forward to more to, to watching the journey, continue to unfold for you because, uh, you have really been an amazing addition here. Thank you. The clients love you. We all love you. Thank you. And you are inspiring and not only that actually brings us really yummy treats, so so you'll keep around.

Yeah, yeah. Just a little longer, which is a great baker. So with that being said, everyone, this is your Rebel Nutritionist signing off, make it a great day