

MERYL: So let's talk about the work that you're doing now.

I love what how you've combined the art and the science and I do watch your Facebook posts and I feel like so much of what we're kind of moving into now in the 21st century and the personalized nutritional medicine, I mean, that's the work that I do is really personalized nutritional medicine because we have so much data.

We have nutritional genomics, we have epigenetics, we have all of the science. Right? And so yeah, we're leaving the people in the 20th century in the dust. Cause we have great data. But part of that is the energetic, right? **I love how you take the energy of food** because, in one of the podcasts that you did, you it's not about just antioxidants and vitamins A and C and E, right?

We know there's bioactives, right? We know in that, in the color that **the color. Is energy in our body and that actually resonates with different organs.**

Can you talk to that work that you're doing now? Because you know, it was so interesting. One of the things that you wrote about, I think it was like, I forgot what call.

I think it was green. It was like the throat chakra and the foods and the beautiful art that you had on that. So like I, I really would love to know more about that work now that you're doing too.

DEANNA: Sure. And I'll definitely unpack it. Let me ask you a question before I do that. So right now, what would you say is the color that you're most drawn to?

MERYL: Right now? Yellow.

DEANNA: Yellow. Okay. Yellow. All right. So keep that in mind. Yeah. I mean, I've been working with what I call **the food and spirit operating system** for a long time probably. Yeah, about a decade or more. So I have this, this system in which the colors connect to the endocrine gland, connect to foods, connect to lifestyle, connect to psychological themes, and connect to different parts of the body.

So I'll just run us through them quickly and you can ask questions as we go. And the way that I do this, and this is a system that I teach to practitioners as well, is it's a way to bring in psychology. To physiology, right? and to like have that conversation, the literal and the symbolic. So red, **red is all about the adrenal glands.**

It's safety fight or flight inflammation, immune system. And a coincides very nicely from a functional point of view with red-colored foods, which many times contain a lot of the. Nutrients that are needed to support the immune system or the inflammatory response. Things like vitamin C, polyphenols B vitamins a number of things.

But **red foods can also create an inflammatory response for some people**, like foods high in histamines or even things like red bell pepper or tomatoes. So there can be like that double edged side to. But red is an interesting color because it evokes reaction. There was a study, I think it was in scientific reports in which having greater inflammation resulted in greater impulsivity.

So somebody who's in red will ha will be very like, reactive and you know, red's a very passionate color. So there's a lot of beauty with red. However, it's also getting us to wake up to something and respond. So that's red.

Orange is a very playful color. I connect it to the ovaries and the testes and orange coincides from a plant perspective to carotinoids things like alpha keratin, beta keratin, beta kryp, xanthin.

There are like 700 carotinoids. And very interestingly, a number of these carotinoids. Localize into the ovary. And when, what we now see, well it, it's been emerging through the literature for some time, is that **they may play a role in ovulation**. And also may impact ovarian decline. Just the concentration of those carotinoids, they're also found in the head of the sperm in order to ensure perhaps better survival. And if you think about it, even in animals, and I write about this in my whole detox book, like every chapter's a color flamingos or guppies that exude more orange. It's like Hey, I'm looking for a mate. It's like, it's kind of a sexy color orange.

So **orange and reproductive health**.

Yellow, that's your color for today. **Yellow is the fire element. It is the digestive track, the stomach, the seed of rotting and ripening.** So when I think of yellow, I think of burning bright versus burning out. So bringing in things like **things to help detoxification, to help the liver, to remove stagnation, to keep moving things through.**

You think of bile, it's kind of a yellow green color, so acid forming foods or even alkalizing foods. Looking at lemon ginger. Pineapple, papaya, some orange, yellow come into that as well. Turmeric and then also prebiotic fibers like in banana or plantains, things of that nature, right?

Green is for the heart. I wore green today. I, I don't, it doesn't show up very well, but I'm wearing an emerald green, which is one of my favorite colors. I love green and not because I knew what green was. I just love green. I love trees. So green is the, And a lot of the **green foods actually contain nutrients that enable the heart to expand the vasculature, right.**

Folates and clotting factors and all the, the methylation co-factors that we may need. You know, even magnesium, right?

You were asking about **the thyroid, which is bluegreen. There aren't a lot of bluegreen foods**, right? So the way that I talk about bluegreen is green foods that grow in the blue ocean.

So bringing together the. with the water element. You know, this is a very, and if we look at sea plants, so **the plants that are growing in the ocean a lot of them do contain the minerals that we need for proper conversion of thyroid hormone**. And then this center is also one in which I think about how we eat.

It's not just what we eat, it's how through the mouth. So often I'll think about like the speed of eating and bring that into the dis, the mindfulness,

then **blue purple. Is the brain**. And so bloop, literally if you look at the, the research on blue, purple pigments like anthocyanins and pro anthocyanins, that coincide with features like learning memory and mood.

It's really fascinating to see that just **in general eating more fruits and vegetables is associated with greater sense of wellbeing, better mood, reduced risk of depressive symptoms**. Like there isn't just a reduced risk of chronic. aspect to fruits and vegetables and plant foods. There's also a mental health, emotional health aspect as well.

And then the last one I have is **lavender, but really it's white**. I, I just don't do white cuz it doesn't show up. Well, . And when we think of the crown, when we think of the abstinence factor of food, really looking at just like your patient was asking about **intermittent fasting, like clarity**.

Purification. And I do think that for as long as humans have been in existence, we've, felt the need to let go of something. Right. And typically we do that through food. , again, I grew up Catholic, so it was all about lent other religions and spiritual traditions have their own methods. It's almost like detoxification.

Yeah. It's just a medical way of. Like referring to ancient spiritual and religious traditions of where **we just did this intuitively in sync with nature in seasonal change**. So even though white I think of clearing the slate, but I also think of some white foods that might be helpful for detox and also letting go of white foods that might be toxic. Like my mom would say, the whiter the bread, the quicker you're dead. Right? , white flour, white salt. White sugar, right? No, a lot. And I think she took that from Adele Davis. I'm not sure. But I remember her saying that to us when I was growing up. so unhealthy and, and healthy forms of white for our particular being.

MERYL: I love that, that that was phenomenal. Thank you for going through all that. I'm sure everybody listening is gonna be like, mind blown. But you know, to that end where people say to me, well well, I'm going to eat one. Right? And like you said, it's not about the yes or the no or the you yes.

Eat this. No, eat that. **It really is the totality of how do we incorporate all of these plant foods** and foods Yeah. That, that do speak to ourselves. And I think that's so important because. , **we've lost the art of cooking**. And that's so sad. And people are just like, Ugh, I don't wanna be in the kitchen.

And to me, I love being in the kitchen. Like, that's my creative time. That's when I wind down. To me, food is love, you know? I cook for my family and goes, I love them and , you know? And that's the way I show loved. **But food also does really talk to our cells**. and it, and there is, and real food. And whole food, not the processed garbage.

And you know, and I think people have a hard time wrapping their heads around that because again, we want quick. Fast food, but

there's no nutrition in that and there's no, there's not gonna be any healing in

those foods. And the other part of that is, well, I'll just take a supplement and, and look, I believe in supplements, but **I always say supplements are supplemental to a good diet**.

So how do you, how do you talk to those people who are like, well, I don't really wanna take the time to eat. I don't love to cook. Any, words of wisdom? ,

DEANNA: I'll give you an actual case of somebody who came in and had that exact profile of she didn't like to be in her kitchen. She didn't like to cook.

I actually have a handful of people who have been like this, but I'll give you just one example. So this woman tells me she doesn't wanna make the time. She has no interest in it. She almost hates it. So I ask her to describe her kitchen to me, and she starts describing how it's boring, it's white, and you know, it's kind of sterile and clean.

And so then I ask her, what is your favorite color? And she says immediately and she kind of screws up and she said, Sage green. What would happen if you just made your kitchen, your sanctuary, you know? I know that you're stressed for time right now, but what if you made it like kind of a meditative space, like you painted your kitchen, maybe you put candles or little lights in your kitchen, you set up your windowsill and she, I could tell she was kind of processing it.

So then the next time I saw her was in three weeks and she came in and she was definitely in a different Headspace mindspace and just like she was resonating differently and I asked her, I'm like, so how are you? And she's like, well, I painted my kitchen sage green, and she was starting to cook. It was like she needed to have that inspiration.

She needed to make that kitchen her own. to know that that was a healing space for her. So I just love, like **if we don't like to be in the kitchen, why?** I would tick on my throat. We, we need to ask those questions. Do you need to get a drink? Go ahead,

MERYL: But, but I do, that's great advice, right? We're getting in there and saying, well, why don't you wanna be in the kitchen? And what is, we always say to people if they're coming at the table, they wanna lose weight. We're like, what is your why?

So maybe we say to them, well, why don't you wanna cook? I mean, I think, again, it's gone back to the lost art. What I always, when my children were growing up and even now like I always made them, not made them right, but **our family time, our connected time was dinner around the table regardless.**

And I have three kids and regardless of what activity was when, where most nights of the week. We would sit and have dinner and that's **I would cook, we would have conversation, and it connected us as a family.** And to this day my kids are grown, my girls still live with me. But you know, they look forward to the night.

They're like, are you cooking tonight? You know, and then we talk days, or when my son comes back into town, it's we're doing Friday night Shabbat dinner together, and we invite friends. and, and the cooking part of it, right? I think cooking brings us together in so many ways and, and I think part of our fast-paced culture and where we are is that.

We don't take the time to do that. And I love your idea of going back and saying, well, yeah, let's make this a place that feels good to you and let's bring this back. And I think a lot of people just didn't see their moms and dads doing it right. My generation, right. The, the moms and the dads were working all the time. It was the latchkey kid and all of a sudden it was that, oh, well there's a lot of processed food around. Let's just do that. And it was easy. And so they didn't learn to cook. And I think it is, **there's fear of going into the kitchen like, I'm not gonna do it right. I have to follow a recipe exactly.** You know?

DEANNA: That's so true. **I think what we need is more ritual.** We've lost the sense of ritual because our lives are in mayhem, right? We're just kind of flying by the seat of our pants. And **I think that the more that we can create a ritual around dinner.** So one of the things that I did, and I don't know if you know this, but some years ago **I created a card deck.**

It's called Nourish Your Whole Self. Yes, I do. And it's a deck of 56 cards, and I did it because of the need for rituals. So when people would sit down are they saying grace? Are they giving things what's the ritual around coming together? So when I made these cards, the intent was when you sit down for the meal, you pick one of these cards, it has a color.

and it has some kind of inspirational aspect about food. It's not about nutrition, it's really about nourishment in some way. and I think that those cards are, are nice because they're launchpads into fertile conversation at the dinner table. You know, things that are inspiring. I just even did it on

Oh. So I had people over for New Year's Eve for dinner, and what I did was I had all of the plates already set out when they came and underneath the plates I put one of those nourish your whole self cards.

And so then as we were coming to the table to eat, I said, just select where you'd like to sit and. Pick up your plate and look at the card underneath. And that was great because it got us going with having discussion and talking about our intention for the next year, what we saw. So I, I think having some of those rituals, whether it's a candle on the table, it's, I like the card deck.

I think it's, it's fun to just say how that card resonates for you. **We have to find our way back to ritual.**

MERYL: Oh, I, I so believe that. I so believe that. So what's your what are you looking at moving forward? I know we kind of have to wrap up. So like, what is, **what are you hopeful for in the world of Functional medicine, functional wellness**, like where do you see this trajectory going? Where do you hope it goes? ,

DEANNA: **I hope more wholism and embracing diversity, I, I sense a still a lot of polarity, a lot of division, and it's interesting to me because eating is an act of**

unification. It's where we all come together, just like you described with your family. It's a place where people put aside differences or there is **this sense of a bond as human beings**, all of us have to eat.

Even the people who are doing rigorous fasting, they're still eating at some point. So it's a, an act that unifies us. And how we eat is how we live and how we live is how we eat. I mean, it's really a focal point. It can be a spiritual practice, how we eat. So what I would hope is **more embracing of personalized aspects.** Diversity **my three principles for eating is well, I've got three. So color, creativity, and variety,** and the variety and diversity piece is, is really key, I believe. Because what we see is that **dietary diversity is protective on a number of fronts. It helps our gut microbiome, it helps our immune system. It's associated with better mental health markers.** So a, a number of different aspects. So I would hope that no matter how a person eats, that they're supported. by their community and to, to really encourage people **to find a way of eating, not just the what, but the when, the how, the why that suits that person and to empower them on their journey.**

So I, I think it's looking on all aspects and embracing the personalized approach.

MERYL: And that and so true. And you had I know you said right, you're doing this group work and that in the group, it really does allow people to help each other. which I think again comes back to right, creating that sense of community.

I know we're trying to do that too here. Working with an individual on their individual personalized approach, but then how do we also have them come together in all these ways? And I think that you just said it so beautifully, so that, you know. Amazing. Any other last thoughts you have besides that, that you wanna leave us with?

DEANNA: I would say to again, **look at color in one's life.** You know, color was one of the things that really helped me out of a lot of my, my symptoms. So painting with certain

colors, eating certain colorful foods, and so one of my mantras. **Colorful foods make for colorful moods**, so I've even put together a food and mood tracker.

So that people could observe their patterns with foods. Like what colors are they eating? Are they in a food rut? Are they eating a lot of red? But it's the same kind of red food. It's over and over. Right? Right. **So cultivating diversity. So I would say follow color, look, , every aspect of color is significant.**

The colors in your environment, the colors that you're wearing, the colors that you're eating I'm, I'm so intentional, even like when I get a car, like what color am I going to be driving around in, because that is significant. So I would say to explore the art of color alongside the science of eating and food.

MERYL: I think that, so well put. So I have a question then. What about people who are only wearing black and white ?

DEANNA: You know, black and white serve their purposes, right? **Black absorbs and white reflects** and Gosh, I've gone through periods of black or white clothing, navy, blue, beige, brown all of those.

What I would say is go with what you feel, because if you're feeling like and especially New York I always notice that in New York City, and I'm from Chicago, so I notice a lot of just wearing black just, it, it's an interesting color because black is a template for just whatever to come forth.

It's not. Whereas red is very reactive, orange is very playful and warming. Black can be anything at once. I feel it's just like white can, like it's more of a neutral tone. So there, there's this possibility there. So, yeah, I didn't talk about tan, brown, beige, or all the colors, but within every color you've got a spectrum.

And I put black in the same spectrum with blue and purple. Yeah. Because if you think about it like boysenberries, blackberries, they're so deeply hued that they appear black, and that's very that's a good thing. You want those. Compounds those pigments, right? So yes, I, I think that go with where you're, you're feeling your, your color, but try on different ones.

You know, I have my wardrobe and a rainbow, right? So like, when I walked in this morning, I'm like, okay, and I actually had a different color on and then I'm like, no, I'm feeling green for this podcast with her. So then I changed, I, I literally changed. Cause I'm like, I tap into you. I tap into like, What I'm gonna be doing and the color I want to evoke because we're seeing it, right?

Yeah. And even people that maybe colorblind or can't see color in the same way **I've been told that people feel color**. Color is powerful. It's physics. It's not just vision, it's physics. Right. It's right. **It's wavelength**. Yeah.

MERYL: And that's why I said it is, it, it's about the energy. I mean, **food emits the color and there's energy to that and there's a wavelength to that and there is healing in that**.

So, absolutely. So yeah, anybody who's wear, I mean, I love black and white. I do like white better. I like black and white too, but, butbut I, but I'm gonna encourage those people cause I know so many who stick with black and whites, to venture out a little bit and, and be a little be a little daring.

But What a great conversation. Thank you for all your sage advice, and your wisdom. This was really fabulous and yeah, I hope I get to see you again soon. I know, I think the last time I saw you was probably about a year ago at the conference that was down here in Florida, but

Will you be at i h s?

I'll be at i h s. I don't know if I'll be at ihs. I am going to the Xymogen one up in Orlando

in fair. Okay. Okay. We'll see. I may see. Yeah. So we'll be in touch.

Absolutely. And thank you for being on today. Really appreciate your time. So, so humbled to have you on and, and grateful. So thank. Oh, I feel the same.

DEANNA: Thank you so much, Meryl. Take care.

MERYL: You too. All right, everybody. This is your Rebel nutritionist signing off. Make it a great day.