

MERYL: Welcome everybody to the Rebel Nutritionist podcast. This is Merrill Brandwein. I am your host and I am so excited that we are finally transitioning into video. Love my new setup. It is awesome. It will continue to, we're going to continue to tweak it, but. Excited to be finally on a video platform.

So today what I'm going to do is take a moment to reintroduce myself to those of you who have been following us for so long. Thank you to all of our followers and supporters. It's been amazing. You having along the ride and the journey. And to those of you who don't know me too. Allow you to, or allow me to introduce myself to you. So I'm going to talk a little bit about who I am, what my story is, how did I even get here?

And the work that I love to do for the people on the clients who I serve. — So. My journey started probably about 20 some odd 21, 22 years ago. And I think it's pretty poignant that this week Valentine's day is when I celebrate what I call my cure day, because it really has been my cancer journey that had. Has propelled me to this work that I do and on this amazing journey in that I get to experience in my life. And. — Really what happened was I was in the field of nutrition since I can remember.

I remember first wanting to become a nutritionist or a dietician because I just wanted to be. Like my aunt, who I loved and adored who was my hero. And she was going to be a dietician. So she was going to be a dietician. I wanted to be like her. And I didn't even know what a dietician was. I can tell you that was my first recollection in like fourth grade.

Um, but fast forward, I ended up going to school for nutrition. I actually wanted to go to school for medicine. And my story, I should say, probably started back then because I was told a story. That I wasn't smart enough to go to medical school or at least that was what I believed from what I was told.

And I allowed that to. Really. Affect decisions in my life moving forward. And so part of this work that I'm going to talk about knowing. — What our beliefs are and how, how that those things shape, how we move through life. But basically I went to school for nutrition, for dietetics, graduated with that kind of degree, worked in what I would call in the box.

Nutrition, dietetics worked in a hospital and private practice. And then, uh, got married, started having children stopped working to take care of my babies. And then. After about six weeks after my third child was born, Ashley. I discovered that I had a lump on my neck. Wasn't sure what it was PS to make a long story short. **I ended up with a diagnosis of Hodgkin's lymphoma.** And so yes, it cancer and it sent my world spinning because as I mentioned, **I was diagnosed six weeks after my third child was born.** And so needless to say, put my life in a tailspin. Did not know what was going to happen. I remember even asking my doctor at one point, like, am I going to survive?

Am I going to live? And her response was something like, well, your odds are pretty good, but it certainly, she didn't really. That didn't really make me feel too confident in what she was saying.

But as I moved through the journey, **I ended up going through chemo. I ended up having radiation. I did have surgery. And that process was grueling.**

I don't need to tell anyone who has ever been. Uh, through chemotherapy, what that journey is like. I did lose all of my hair, uh, and I was really unable to take care of my three children in the way that I wanted to as a mother.

And what happened was, is after my, treatment was over. I went back to the doctor. And like I said, Valentine's day is my, what I would call cure day because I started treatment in November. And finalized it on Valentine's day, but. **I was cured. Technically cured. But I was not feeling well. I was really debilitated, physically.**

I mean, mentally, you know, the brain fog sets in, but I was really. Unable to function the way I really A, the way I was before, prior to getting sick and B how I wanted to function in my family. And so. At that time, my mother-in-law who I used to actually tease all the time, because she would say, oh, I do all this alternative work.

And I go down to Mexico and come with me and I'm like, yeah, this is voodoo. I'm not doing this. And I finally said to her, Okay. I'm waving the white flag. I don't feel well, take me to wherever you want me to go so that I can feel better and function like the human that I want to function. She took me down to Mexico to Tijuana.

Oh yes. Beautiful Tijuana. And I walked into the clinic and I remember in the morning, I think we got there in the evening. In the morning, a woman came in with a bag of coffee.

So a woman walked in with a bag of coffee. And I'm like, that's a really funny way to serve coffee. And then I soon realized that she was going to give me a coffee enema. I was going the other way. And not drinking the coffee.

And so for seven days I had coffee enemas. I had whole real food, nothing processed, no sugar. Uh, no meat. It was actually a vegan diet. And I left at the end. Well, I shouldn't say I left by the, so I would follow around these doctors, these amazing oncologist. Who were doing this work there because most of the people who were there were actually being treated for. Ongoing cancer.

There were a few of us there who were there for rejuvenative purposes, but most of the people were pretty sick. And these oncologists. I just remember sitting with them. And picking their brains. Like, what is this? I have, no, I never learned about any of this. What are you doing? I need to know.

And so I would sit with them and they would educate me and they would talk to me about the, the kinds of treatments I was getting hyperbaric oxygen before it was the thing to do. We were doing acupuncture. We were doing all kinds of other therapies, live cell injection therapies. I mean, again, Uh, you name it? I feel like they were doing it. And they were way ahead of their time. I was getting, um, IVs and so restorative IVs. And so it was really pretty eye opening. And then I came back.

They had given me. Uh, what they called **an autologous dendritic cell vaccine. It was a vaccine with my own immune system to help support my system.** And so came home with all of this amazing information and then a week would go by and I started feeling better and then it was two weeks and I started feeling even better.

And so that kept happening. I just started getting better and better and I'm like, wow, this is pretty. Incredible. What is this? **Why do I not know about any of this? How come we were never taught this in school? And how do I get more of it? And it was really from that moment that I decided to throw myself into this work.**

And it was very early on. Remember, this is like 20 years ago, functional medicine was not really a thing and where it was just starting to be a thing. I remember one of Jeff Bland's earliest conventions and it was not that many people that I'm going to myself. Wow. Was this going to take off lo and behold, you know, look what happened has happened 20 years later. but I just remember thinking about that.

And so, I started as I started feeling better, I started taking more control over my health and realizing that it wasn't just about diet and exercise and this linear equation that we were taught that there was more to it. And I started throwing myself into every course that I could and learning everything that I could and started realizing it.

Wasn't just about the physical. **We had to look under the hood and there had to be more to it, like I said, than just diet and exercise, because that's sort of what the mentality was.** You know, this was the, uh, nineties. That right. We're coming from the mentality of the eighties into the nineties of. Here it's this linear equation.

And so started to realize health and wellness came from a much deeper place. And as I started to do that, I started realizing that where I lived, I lived behind a golf course in New Jersey that it was toxic. That even being in the cold, it just shook me to my bones. And so I made the decision and my whole family was in New Jersey. **Made the decision to come down to Florida because I needed sun.**

I needed light. Like that's what my body was calling. And I did that and was definitely the best decision. I think I have made, even though I missed my family terribly. Uh, because for my health, for my health and my own wellbeing.

And then I started to, so my kids were still pretty young, but I started to do this work organically and I started to really. Delve into it in my own practice, **created a practice, literally worked out of the, uh, extra bedroom or the garage of my home. And. Just continued to take every course that I could learn in every way possible that it could and really understand what is this thing that we talk about that is functional medicine,** because it wasn't, it was a whole new world.

It wasn't just about, here's a diagnosis and take a medication it's about literally. Digging into what's happening inside of the body. **I started going back to look at nutritional biochemistry, because I wasn't taught that in school. Like we were taught about the human body and of course, Nutrition and biochemistry, but really not deep dive, nutritional biochemistry.**

And so as I continued to evolve, my practice evolved. And now as technology continues to evolve, I continue to do so as a practitioner. And what I have been able to do is learn about DNA and genomics, which is a little bit different than genetics, but really understanding what does our own DNA tell us about our bodies, our blueprint.

That is the blueprint for how we function. And why are we not using that in the medical community, man, I can tell you why and that's going to be for another podcast. Not for today, but. **Really, we should be looking at our own DNA and how we work, because that again is the blueprint for everything.**

And so then I began to do more of that. **And then I took a course on immunity and have been looking at the immune system and continue to evolve in the world of gut health. And now as we start to really understand. — Energy and quantum healing and longevity. It is now another step into understanding how the body works.**

But regardless of the technology, we really have to remember. And regardless of all of the insight into longevity, we have to remember that. It all starts at a foundation that **if the foundation of our health. And our wellbeing is not solid, then it doesn't matter how much technology we have.** It doesn't matter.

The advances in longevity research, if we are not looking. And I always say it's five pillars. Maybe we should add six, but **we have to look at our nutrition and we have to look at our movement. Exercise activity. Right? We have to look at sleep and stress. And our mental, emotional relationship. And to add a sixth, we have to look at our environment. If those things. Are not at the core at the foundation balanced, then it doesn't matter how much technology we have.**

And it doesn't matter all these gimmicky, if you will. Longevity practices that we can look at. We have to make sure that that foundation. Is solid. And why don't we tend to our foundation because it's work. — I always say, look, I love the work that I do.

And I have been my own experiment for the last 25 years. But it is work. You have to decide, are you willing to commit to your own health and wellbeing and put in the work? And so. Like I said, if we're, if we're not focusing on the foundation, because we're busy. Focusing on others. We're busy. Focusing on our businesses were busy focusing on all of these outside things. — Then what's left for the inside.

I've often said to people you want to take control over your health. As if you were starting a business, right? You start a business. You put your all into it, you put your energy into it. You want to raise children. Who are well adjusted, you know? Um, And they contribute to humanity like that doesn't just happen.

It takes work, so tending to our own foundation, tending to our health and wellbeing. Takes work. It won't ever just happen. I often say we start with a gas tank that's full and as we move through life, it goes down just because that's what happens. And if we don't take the time to refill that tank, we get to empty.

And then we're all like, wait a minute. How did I get there? And so. And becomes overwhelming for people. Because we're bombarded every time. And just think about the social media. Think about the information. The information overload that comes into us. Um, especially in regards to our health, I hear it all day long people like, oh, well, should I take this?

Or should I take that? And, you know, I just look at them. I'm like, okay, well, **these are all gimmicks. And these are all fads. Fads. And if you don't look inward and we don't really look at that foundation, like I said, then it really, it really won't matter.** And so there's a huge part of me that really wishes.

We could slow this all down that. As great as technology is like, slow it back, **slow it down to a time where. I don't know that we took the time to cook healthy nourishing foods, where we took the time to sit with our families and enjoy a meal and didn't run from place to place.** And. And I think we're so over-scheduled I see it all the time. In my practice with these young kids who are — so unhealthy because they're so over-scheduled like, wouldn't it be great to just take that time?

Spend time with our families and connect with our families. **I do think that the demise of the family dinner has played a role in our mental health, in our emotional health.** There is no question about that. And so we spend the time eating processed foods, crappy foods that don't nourish our bodies. I just. We need to be nourishing our bodies.

One of the other areas that I think. — Has come to light more and more. We keep hearing about mindset. **We keep hearing about the mind-body connection. And I think this is an area that we really need to start to delve deeper into to dig deeper into.** I know I have been doing not only my own work on it, but in the work that I'm doing with my clients, because. Mindset and how we think literally affects our own biology.

And so, um, It's the area of quantum. Biology. I did **an amazing podcast with Dr. Catherine Clinton, that we talked about quantum biology, that how we think. Creates energy in our bodies and that energy literally turns. And drives a lot of the cellular processes in our body,** and I know can sound woo and it can sound kind of out there, but the more that I've studied it, the more I practice it on myself.

And I always say, I'm my own best n of one I'm my own best experiment. The more I see it come to light. I mean, there was a time when you would talk about mindset and, Meditation. And I was back when I was first diagnosed and someone had tried to introduce me to it and I'm like, oh, this is so woo.

And life has come full circle because I know that mindset is where our stories about ourselves. Start right. **We focus on the things that we do because of the beliefs about ourselves and what a story that we were told when we were very young and we evolve. Into that based on that story, based on those beliefs, and if we really want to change our lives and we really want to change our health, a lot of that is getting out of that mindset that we deserve to be healthy, that we deserve to take care of ourselves.**

Like we made to feel like, I deserve, I need to be healthy. But do you take the time? To do that. And do you take the time? to focus on yourself? And I think that's so important.

So as I continue to evolve, I will continue to help heal others. I hope to continue to inspire you to be the best version of yourself, to help you realize your own value and your worth. And that there is no better proof than taking care of your body. Is your given right? And that. — If you don't take care of your body, nobody else is going to, and you are given this one body in this lifetime. And I really want to inspire you to take the best care of it that you possibly can.

So there's a little bit more about me. And I hope that inspires you to listen to more of our episodes, reach out with things that you want to hear. We will continue to have amazing guests on as we continue to elevate this podcast. And I look forward to continuing to serve you the community humanity. In the best way possible. This is your Rebel Nutritionist signing off. Make it a great day, everybody.