

## The Shocking Truth About Food Transcript

What's the most important part of your health? What do you think? Is it eating a balanced, mostly plant-based diet, balancing your hormones, daily exercise, getting enough sleep? What do you guys think? Taking your vitamins, seeing your doctor for regular checkups? These things might all seem like important, even critical factors to living a healthy life but what if I told you that caring for your body was the least important part of your health? What do you think?

I'm a physician so if you'd told me that five years ago, that would have been total sacrilege. I mean, I spent twelve years training because the body is supposed to be the foundation for everything in life. But what if I told you that the medical profession had it all backwards, if the body doesn't shape how we live our lives? What if the body is actually a mirror of how we live our lives? Think about it for a minute. Think about a time in your life where you weren't living the life you were supposed to be living. Maybe you were in the wrong relationship or you were in some hostile work environment doing what you thought you should do or you were creatively thwarted, you felt spiritually disconnected.

What if you started getting little inklings from the body, little physical symptoms? You know, the body's trying to tell you something and you ignore it because you're supposed to do what you're doing. Then, the body totally decompensates. Can you think about a time in your life where something like that has happened? Yeah, I see a lot of noddings.

Yeah, me too. Same thing happened to me. This is what the body does, the body is brilliant this way, the body speaks to us in whispers. If we ignore the whispers of the body, the body starts to yell. Millions of people in this country are ignoring the whispers of the body. We're suffering from an epidemic that modern medicine has no idea what to do with. People suffering from this epidemic are fatigued, they're anxious and depressed, they toss and turn at night, they've lost their libido. They suffer from a whole variety of aches and pains so they go to the doctor because something is wrong. The doctor runs a whole battery of tests and the tests all come back normal so the patient gets diagnosed as "well". Only the patient does not feel well so she goes to another doctor and she starts the whole process over again because something is clearly wrong. It is wrong. It's just not what she thinks.

I used to work in a really busy managed care practice. I was seeing forty patients a day. I would get so freaking frustrated with these patients. They come in and it was so obvious they were really suffering. I'd run the tests, everything would come back normal, I'd diagnose them well and they'd look at me like, "No, I'm not well, something's wrong." I felt so frustrated because I couldn't come up with a diagnosis. They just wanted, "Please doc, give me a pill." There was no pill. There's no pill to treat it. There's no lab test to diagnose this epidemic. There's no vaccine to prevent it, no surgery to cut it out. It wasn't until years later that I realized I was suffering from the same epidemic my patients were.

By the time I was thirty-three years old, I was your typical physician. I had succeeded in everything I ever wanted to achieve in my life, I thought. I had all the trappings of success, the ocean front house in San Diego, the vacation home, the boat, the big fat retirement account so



I could be happy one day in the future. I was twice divorced by that point. I had been diagnosed with high blood pressure. I was taking three medications that failed to control my blood pressure and I had just been diagnosed with precancerous cells of my cervix that needed surgery. Even more importantly, I was so disconnected from who I was, so totally disillusioned with my job, so completely spiritually tapped out that I didn't even know who I was any more.

I had covered myself up with a whole series of masks. I had the doctor mask, like when you put on the white coat, stand up on a pedestal, pretend you got it all together, you know it all. I'm also a professional artist so I had the artist mask where you've got to be, you know, dark and brooding, mysterious, starving, that wasn't me either.

Then I had gotten married a third time, you know, third time is a charm. Now, I've got this dutiful wife mask I've got to wear where I've got to get dinner on the table and make sure I've got the right sexy lingerie on. Then I got pregnant and all of sudden there's this huge mummy mask you're supposed to wear, right? You guys know the mummy mask. You're supposed to instantly inherit the gene that makes you capable of baking the perfect cupcake. That's where I was, wearing all those masks when my perfect storm hit.

At this point in my life, it was January 2006 and I gave birth to my daughter by C-section, my sixteen-year-old dog died, my healthy young brother wound up in full-blown liver failure from the antibiotic Zithromax and my beloved father passed away from a brain tumor, all in two weeks. I had just started to take a breath when my husband, who was the stay home daddy for my newborn, cut two fingers off his left hand with the table saw.

They say when your life falls apart, you either grow or you grow a tumor. Fortunately for me I decided to grow. There was something in me. SARK called it my "Inner Wise Self", which I call your inner pilot light. It said, "It's time to take the masks off. It's time to stop the madness. It's time to stop doing what you should and start doing what you feel."

In that moment, I knew I had to quit my job. Now, this was a huge deal, right? I spent twelve years training to be a doctor and hundreds of thousands of dollars and we had all the trappings, you know, the house, the mortgage, all the doctor stuff, right? My husband was not employed and I had a newborn. I also had to pay a malpractice tail to buy my freedom, a six-figure malpractice tail in case I ever got sued in the future. I decided to do it and God bless my husband, who said let's jump together. I quit my job and I had to sell my house and liquidate my retirement account and move to the country. I spent a few months painting and writing and licking my wounds.

It wasn't until about nine months later, everybody was like, "Nine months." I'm an OB/GYN. Nine months later I realized you can quit your job but you can't quit your calling. I had been called at a very young age, I was seven years old, to the service, the practice, the spiritual practice of medicine. That calling hadn't gone away. I had gotten so wounded by the system that I didn't even notice it anymore but it came back after I had rested and healed after a little while.



I knew I couldn't go back. I couldn't be seeing forty patients a day, seven and a half minutes with my patients. That wasn't why I went to medical school. It began this quest that turned into an almost five-year quest now to rediscover what I loved about medicine. That also meant I had to figure out what I hated about medicine. I started by blaming everybody. It was the ambulance chasing malpractice attorneys. It's big pharma. It's managed care medicine. It's the insurance company's fault.

Then I thought, "Oh no, it's the reductionist medical system. We're so, so sub-specialized, you know?" I'm an OB/GYN so I was seeing these patients that had pelvic problems but I knew that there was something bigger than the pelvis that was causing their issues but I hadn't been trained to really look at that. I thought that's the problem, like you go to your doctor, your pinky finger hurts and he says, "I'm sorry, I'm a thumb doctor."

Nobody's looking at the whole picture. I thought integrative medicine was the answer. I joined an integrative medicine practice and it was so much better. I got a whole hour with my patients. I really got to listen to my patients. We didn't accept managed care medical insurance so it was really so much better. Then, I still kept bumping up against something though because now, if you came in and you were depressed we were giving you herbs and amino acids instead of Prozac. If you had other physical symptoms, but it was still this allopathic model where the answer was outside of you and I had to give you something that you could take. I thought maybe that's not the problem. Maybe I need to look outside of that and find new tools for my healing toolbox.

I started working with all these complementary and alternative health care providers, whom I love, acupuncturists, naturopaths and nutritionists. I started treating my patients with needles in their energy meridians and raw foods and that was great but I kept bumping up against the same thing. Patients would get better from one symptom and if we didn't treat the root cause of why they had that physical symptom in first place, they just wound up getting a new symptom. At this point, I was both really frustrated and really curious. I started down this path of trying to figure out what really makes a body healthy and what really makes us sick. I dug into the medical literature and spent a year researching all of the randomized controlled clinical trials out there. I decided, "This is it. I'm going to figure it out. I'm going to find the answer." I spent hours in the library researching, reading, studying.

What I found blew my frigging mind, stuff nobody ever taught me in medical school. All the things we think of as health, all the things we think matter, they do. It matters that you exercise, it matters that you eat well, it matters that you see the doctor but nobody taught me that what really matters is healthy relationships, having a healthy professional life, expressing yourself creatively, being spiritually connected, having a healthy sex life, being healthy financially, living in a healthy environment, being mentally healthy and of course, all the things we traditionally associate with health, also matter, all the things that nurture the body. The data on this is unbelievable. Lots of it is not in the traditional journals that you read, that doctors read, a lot of it's in the psychological literature, the sociological literature.

If you look deep, this is in The New England Journal of Medicine. It's in The Journal of the American Medical Association. It's coming out of Harvard and Yale and Johns Hopkins. This is real data proving that these things are just as important, if not more. I have this patient, she's a



raw vegan, she runs marathons, she takes twenty supplements a day, she sleeps eight hours a night, she does everything her doctor tells her, she's got a chart this fat, and she's still got multiple health problems.

She had heard about my philosophy I had started practicing with my patients. I have an intake form that's about twenty pages long and it asks about all those things, relationships, work life, spiritual life, creative life, sex life, all of these things that make you whole. She came and she filled out her form and she said, "Doctor, what's my diagnosis?" I said, "Honey, your diagnosis is you're in a freaking abusive marriage. You hate your job. You feel creatively thwarted. You're spiritually disconnected and you haven't let go of that resentment you have against your father who molested you when you were a child. Your body is never going to get well until you heal that."

If taking care of the body isn't the most important part of being healthy, what is? It's caring for the mind, caring for the heart, caring for the soul and tapping into what I call your inner pilot light. Now, your pilot light is that part of you. That's that essence, that authentic, deep, true part of you, that spiritual, divine spark that always knows what's right for you. You're born with it, it goes with you when you die and it always knows the truth about you and your body.

It comes to you and whispers, "It's your intuition. It's that beautiful part of you that is your biggest fan, the part that writes you love letters." That is the biggest healer you can tap into, better than any medicine, better than any doctor. Based on everything that I learned, I developed a new wellness model. It was based not on the pie charts and pyramids that many of the wellness models I had studied were based on. I based it on the cairn.

Have you guys seen these things around San Francisco? These stacks of balanced stones, I love them, I've always loved them. I'm an artist so it appeals to me visually but I love the interdependence. Every stone is dependent on the other. You can't just pull one stone out without the whole thing crumbling and the stone that's most precarious is the one on top. That's the body. That's where I think of the body. The body is the stone on top. When any of the facets of what makes you whole get out of balance, the body is the first to start whispering and the foundation stone is your inner pilot light, that true essence of you, that vulnerable, transparent part of you. Based on that, I created this model that I call the whole health cairn. This is what my next book is about.

It's taking all of the facets of what makes you whole. It's about self-healing from the core. Once you recognize this, then you have all the tools you need to start your own healing journey. All of the facets of what makes you whole are surrounded by what I call the healing bubble. This is love and gratitude and pleasure. Science proves that all of those things are good for your health as well. They are the glue that hold everything together.

I challenge you. If you have any physical symptom, if you're suffering from the epidemic that plagues the developed world, I want you to ask yourself, "What's the real reason I'm sick or suffering? What's out of balance in my whole health cairn?" What's the real diagnosis and what can you do about it? How can you be more transparent? How can you open yourself up to more possibility? How can you be more honest with yourself about what you need and who you are?



If any of you were lucky enough to see Brene Brown's awesome TEDTalk about the power of vulnerability ... I see a lot of nodding heads, I love it. It's so fabulous but it talks about the science behind being true, being vulnerable, being transparent. It generates love and intimacy which increases oxytocin and endorphins and reduces harmful stress hormones like cortisol and adrenalin.

When we let our true self be seen, when we let our inner pilot light radiate, we heal from the inside out and it's more powerful than anything medicine can give you from the outside. I challenge you to write the prescription for yourself. No doctor can do this for you. We can give you drugs, we can give you surgery and sometimes you need that, that's the jump-start of the self-healing process but to heal to the core so that you don't develop new symptoms, so you don't need another surgery, you got to write your own prescription.

I ask you, "What is it that you need? What does your body need to get healthy? What is it that you need to change? What needs to be tweaked in your life?" If you knew that stripping off all of your masks and letting us see that beautiful light within you was the solution to your health problems, would you be willing to do it? I dare you. It just might make your body right for miracles. Thank you.