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** * * Intro Music * * **

Welcome to Supplementing Health, a podcast presented by Advanced Orthomolecular Research. We are all about applying evidenced-based and effective dietary lifestyle and natural health product strategies for your optimal health. In each episode, we will feature very engaging clinicians and experts from the world of functional and naturopathic medicine to help achieve our mission to empower people to lead their best lives naturally.

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[1:32] *Cassy Price*: Welcome back to Supplementing Health. I'm your host, Cassy Price, and today I'm joined by Dr. Meghan Walker. Dr. Walker is a naturopathic doctor, speaker, entrepreneur, and mother. Welcome, Meghan. Thanks so much for joining me.

[1:44] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: I'm so excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

[1:46] *Cassy Price*: Today, we're going to be discussing the physiology of purpose. Would you mind elaborating on what that is for our listeners?

[1:54] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: Yeah, for sure. I have been a naturopathic doctor for over the last 12 years, and over the course of my career, I started to hone in and work, in particular, with an entrepreneurial population. What I started to notice as I made that transition, and I had a variety of different types of individuals in my practice, is that there were intangible characteristics around people who came in with similar conditions in terms of how they were actually able to become well.

[2:26] What I mean by that is, I may have two people who came in with an autoimmune condition and its similar physiological status. Yet, one person could move down this trajectory and achieve health, and another person became stagnant, despite compliance and doing all the things that we had asked them to do.

[2:40] I started to see this enough that I went, “What is actually going on behind the scenes? What is this intangible piece that is enabling some people to get healthier or achieve health faster than others?” It was by happenstance in my own practice in working with entrepreneurs, who happen to be, by population, focused and mission-driven individuals. Not to say, others aren’t. It’s just there was a lot on the line for this particular population, and I was like, “Why are they getting better?”

[3:11] As I started to unravel what they were doing, and I started to ask them about “What are your drivers and motivations for becoming well?” What I would consistently hear from them was, “I didn’t have time to be sick. I have this mission in this world.” Or “I have this thing I want to do.” I started to ask all of my patients a common question when they started to work with me, which is, “Do you identify as having a sense of purpose in your life, and if you do, what is it?”

[3:40] What we started to notice in our data, and we did this for over 2,500 patients. What we started to notice in our data is that those who identified as having a sense of purpose in their life consistently got well faster. They had less recurring visits with us, they had a strong overall immune status, and it was a notable and remarkable difference within our practice population.

[4:04] What I started to realize was the most important question I would ask people as a predictive value of their ability to get well, independent of outlier situations was, “Do you have a sense of purpose in your life?” Then, once we started to look at this piece, and we’re like, we have this missing link to why there’s so much chronic disease that is not getting better for people. I went, “What does the literature have to say about this? We can’t be the only people who have observed this.”

[4:32] When we went back to the literature and started to have a look at it, what we found was other researchers, and other clinicians were finding the exact same things in practice. For example, when a patient population managing dementia identified as having a sense of purpose, we saw a decreased acceleration of the dementia state in those patients.

[4:54] When we worked with cardiovascular patients, not in our practice but in the literature, what we found was that there’s a decrease recurrence of cardiovascular events when people were able to find and identify a sense of purpose in their life. We saw the same thing with autoimmune conditions; we saw the same thing with neurological and neurologically degenerative conditions; we saw the same thing with cancer recovery. It was this universal piece that, as we started to look at these intangible elements of health, that having a sense of purpose has a direct link in terms of preventing illness in the first place and expediting our recovery on the backside.

[5:31] *Cassy Price*: Speaking about the literature, I believe you’re aware of Dr. Bruce Lipton’s notion that our beliefs influence our biology. Correct?

[5:40] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: Absolutely.

[5:42] *Cassy Price*: Would you provide some background on what that means, and how listeners can grow their mindset to better support their health?

[5:50] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: Yeah, for sure. The work of Dr. Bruce Lipton is absolutely fascinating. In a nutshell, he talks about this notion of the biology of belief. The thing about belief systems and ideas is that these things – and experiences in life – you and I could both have an experience, and how you interpret it and how I interpret it shifts the moment that experience really enters our state of consciousness.

[6:21] This isn't some woo idea. This is, you have an experience, and I have an experience, and our past history, our previous exposures, our neurological pathways will predict how our brain is going to perceive those events. For me, it might be like, "Whoa. This might be a really dangerous experience." For you, it might be like, "This is a really exciting and invigorating experience."

[6:47] So, all of these things are happening to us on a daily basis. What happens is, events happen, and it interfaces with our own physiology. In some cases, the structured anatomy of our body. In some cases, this is hormonal, or this is neurological. What's so fascinating about this – and as I'm sharing this example, you can start to see, experiences that you have had in your life, normal pathways that you have laid down because of their ongoing use in your life is totally going to dictate what happens physiologically as a result of an experience or an intangible event, or even conversation.

[7:26] We literally create a physiological cascade in our body in response to meaning and external events, and those don't just have to be tangible physical events. So we're starting to understand more and more that our belief systems, that our mindsets, that the flexibility of those mindsets actually lend themselves to anatomical changes and physiological changes within our systems.

[7:56] There has always been a reluctance to this idea because it was so hard to collect evidence around these pieces. As our capacities sort of look under that microscope, as it were, with these pieces of health is accelerated and further elucidated. We're now actually realizing, "Wow! Physiological changes happen in the body in response to our belief systems and in response to our mindset.

[8:22] I personally think that this is a good thing because what it does is it gives each of us an increased layer of control over our own health and over our own health outcomes. I think ultimately, that's what so many people are looking for.

[8:36] *Cassy Price*: Absolutely. I think we all are scared of feeling powerless, and that's one of the things that makes it probably most challenging when you get a difficult diagnosis is that you feel like there's less control in the situation that you can have. So, something like this really does help to pivot that perspective.

[8:57] With that, mental health could really impact your perspective on everyday events because it colours the lens and how you see the world. What are some of the ways that you can support your mental health to encourage a more positive outlook or perspective on these health challenges?

[9:15] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: Look, it's going to completely depend on where someone is at from a starting point. I will share across the board that as we have more and more open conversations, and we have less stigmatization around mental health support, what it means is that people are much more open to seeking it.

[9:35] Another observation I had within my practice and my patients is, I was like, "What do these really amazing, well-evolved, resilient patients have in common?" They come into my office, and I'm like, "They have their act together." They're going to do what I say. They're not, *yeah, butting* everything that is going on. They have challenges, but they're moving through it with a sense of grace. "What's the deal." I happen to live in this privileged position where I could ask people those questions. It's hard to ask that at a dinner table or a dinner party.

[10:04] The thing that I realized is that those patients who were most resilient physiologically and mentally had usually invested the most amount of time and energy in their own self-worth, whether that was with a coach or whether that was with a psychotherapist. They were like, "Listen. I am worth doing this work on," and we all have things that we need to reconcile.

[10:27] For some people, it might be that there is a physiological imbalance that is perpetuating a challenge with respect to their mental health. Maybe it's anxiety. Maybe it's depression. Amazing. Seek the support that you need in order to move toward resolution with that. For other people, there may have been trauma in their childhood. For other people, we all have something. We all have stuff we can work through. It's part of the growth as humans. We have more things we need to work through as a common ground for humans than these perfect Instagram lives.

[11:02] The very first thing I would say to everybody is, find someone who will meet you where you're at, but work on yourself. Work on finding resolution integration of past experiences. Once you've moved through trauma or you have stabilized a set of depression, or you have stabilized anxiety, now you get to start to work on these things in another round, similar to if you're sick, let's get you stable, and now we can do the fun biohacking stuff.

[11:29] Once we get you stabilized with respect to your mental health, once we have increased your capacity to access resilience, now we get to work in this whole different realm where we get to spend time working on mindset, and the power of mindset, and the power of mindset as a tool to be able to not only pull us to a higher state of health, but to a higher state of living.

[11:53] The number one indicator of where we're going to be able to go in our lives and what we're going to be able to achieve is not our education, it's our mindset; it's our belief in our

ability to access those next pieces. But you absolutely need to create a sense of stability in your life before you're going to be able to go there.

[12:10] *Cassy Price*: If someone isn't quite sure if they've found their passion or their purpose in life, how can they go about testing to see if they have or where they should go from there to identify what it is?

[12:24] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: I love that basically, you just asked us, "How does someone find their life purpose?" It's a really big question, and it's not like here are the three steps to finding your purpose in life. So, I want to manage everyone's expectations as we walk into this piece.

[12:44] When I look at purpose for people, and what I have found as a commonality is that purpose is a confluence of what you are really good at doing inherently. It is a natural skill set that you take for granted. Maybe it is public speaking; maybe it is your artistry; maybe it is baking; maybe it is teaching. I don't know what it is, but usually, when we have these inherent skills, they're those things that we take for granted in our own toolboxes.

[13:13] But purpose is not just a talent in and of itself because there are a lot of people with talent who have no interest in pursuing that. Andre Agassi is a great example of that. He's an incredible tennis player. He's like, "I hated tennis." It's not just what you are good at, but it's this confluence of what you are really great at.

[13:32] When we take that skill set, and we are also able to look at it through a lens of contribution, how can we take what you are good at and repackage it so that it has influence and impact on other people? It also needs to overlap with a love of that activity. Again, Andre Agassi, super great that you were able to make a career out of tennis. I doubt it was actually his purpose because he didn't love doing it.

[13:58] There's a fourth piece to purpose, and I call it the Optional Quadrant of Purpose. This optional quadrant is where our capacity for contribution, our inherent skill set, this thing we love to do is also something that has a sufficient value in the marketplace that we're able to monetize it.

[14:17] One of the things that I do on the other side of my work is I work with entrepreneurs to help them build out careers and build out businesses that are in alignment with their purpose. How do we find a way to take your purpose and actually turn it into something that is scalable on a different level?

[14:33] Generally, when I work with people around these pieces, we have to start to break down these elements. We have to break down what are you really good at? I find that with women, in particular, it's hard to have that conversation. We don't like to talk about what we're actually inherently really good at.

[14:46] The very first startup is to create space in your life to be able to look at your piece. It's about carving out the time to have this self-reflection to do that, and it sounds like maybe such a simple step, but it's actually the number one impediment to people doing this is, "I don't have the time. I have a big job, and I have a family, and I have a dog, and I've got all these things. I don't have the frivolity or the luxury of looking into my life purpose." Like, "Thanks, Meghan. I'll do that when I retire."

[15:14] To me, that's the saddest piece, which is, you can't wait until you are moved through the most productive phase of your life to turn around and start to examine what your purpose could be. It absolutely is a privilege and a luxury to look at this, but it starts with creating space and time, and maybe for some people, it starts with permission in their life to start to examine this piece.

[15:37] Where I would start with people is understanding and inventorying those things that you're really good at. If you're not great at identifying those yourself, start with a close circle of family or friends and ask them for their perspective. "What is something that I'm actually really good at that I wouldn't even necessarily recognize within myself." I would start by serving the people around you.

[15:57] *Cassy Price*: You work with a lot of entrepreneurs, which, of course, inherently means they're very busy, high-demand people. They're often Type As because they have so much on their to-do list, which leads to a lot of burnout, additional stress, etc. So, self-care is super important.

[16:16] What you were saying there about carving out the time to start to analyze yourself and your own passions and your own skillset, makes me think that self-worth also plays a big part in it. Would that also affect your overall health journey, the same way that self-care does?

[16:32] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: 100%. I love that you said this because I don't actually think you can access self-care until you've acknowledged self-worth. It is a foundational and fundamental piece. When we acknowledge our self-worth, what it does is, it opens up this whole plethora of how we engage in that self-care piece.

[16:51] Self-care is not necessarily sitting in a bubble bath with a glass of wine. Self-care is really, again, doing the work to understand what you uniquely need around not just restoring yourself, but actually moving you to that place of highest potential.

[17:08] I'll give you an example. For a long time, what I would do even in my own business – this is so ironic, but I'm just going, to be honest. I was building a health business, but I was building it at the expense of my own health. I was like, "Oh, I'll fit in just one more group of patients. I'll open one more day," because there were so many different pressures."

[17:26] Then, I had to stop and be like, "Meghan, for you, it's not even about being worthy for your patients; it's actually your own self-worth and your own recovery. You deserve and need to

have boundaries around your recovery time.” So, I started to do that. What I realized is that when I stopped and went, “No. I’m actually worth creating the recovery time, and I can’t put a price on that.” I found what I was able to achieve in clinic and achieve in my business accelerated.

[17:52] The more time I spent doing that one, acknowledging my own worth, but too, taking action on that with respect to my own self-care, I realized self-care comes packaged in a variety of different ways. One of the things that I have written down in my own planner, I’ve written down on my own vision board, my kids know; we talk about it openly.

[18:11] The number one thing I can do in my own business as we have continued to grow is, make room for exercise. I’m a better parent when I make room to exercise. I’m more creative with my work that I do in my business. This is an element of self-care and self-worth acknowledgement that is now invaluable to me personally in living my purpose but also existing in my highest state of potential.

[18:38] So I love that you said that because if you don’t think you’re worthy of health, then don’t bother investing in it, and you’re certainly not going to move into a state of purpose. If you don’t think you’re worthy and you’re dealing with challenges around worthiness, you are not moving into work where you are looking at your purpose.

[18:57] It’s such a great point because it is the foundational, number one imperative that needs to be in place in order for you to address your health personally. Look at how many people get worried that their dog is overweight, while they’re simultaneously eating food that discredits their own personal health. They’re like, their dog is more worthy than they are. I have a new puppy and believe me, they’re part of the family. But you’ve got to acknowledge your own piece, and you’ve got to acknowledge your own worthiness first. It’s such a big one. I’m so glad you brought it up, Cassy.

[19:26] *Cassy Price*: Yeah. I think it’s always easier to see those around you rather than yourself. It’s challenging to look inside. Often, I think, because we’re scared of what we’re going to find and what we don’t want to see. But you had mentioned about having these conversations with your children even. As kids, we inherently dream big. We want to be an astronaut or firefighter or whatever it might be. Maybe it’s even a dinosaur.

[19:56] Yet, as we grow up, the pressures of adulthood begin to squander those visions. What are some of the steps that listeners can take to help grow their children, or as their children grow, help them to continue to explore their purpose, rather than squander it so that it’s not as much of a challenge once they hit their career?

[20:19] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: I’m going to tell everyone to rewind and go back to listening to the last segment around self-worth. Not really, but actually. Here’s the thing: you could take all the steps and have all the intentions for your kids in the world, but if you weren’t willing to walk the talk, then what you do is you discredit everything you’ve just said.

[20:41] If you tell your kids that smoking is bad, but then you're sneaking out the back of the house, and you're having a cigarette at night, and they're watching you do it, or they eventually figure it out, then you just gave permission to them to do that same behaviour. So, if you want your kids to live a life of purpose on purpose, it starts with you dedicating space for this to happen for yourself.

[21:00] And it's okay if you don't feel worthy, and it's okay if you have no idea where to start, but that's the first conversation to have with them is being open with them about that piece. "You know what? Mommy is really tired because there are so many things she has to manage. So, you know what she's going to do? She's going to take time to go and exercise on Saturday morning. Do you want to come on that walk with me?" Or, "Mommy is working on something right now related to X, Y, or Z. Do you want me to tell you about what it is? Would you like to help me out?"

[21:32] So even within our own family, one, I will tell my kids when I'm tired, or I'm overworked, or I'm feeling stressed, or I'm feeling pressure because I want them to know that it's totally okay to be human. But then, I walk through that with them in their own version of language and on their own terms because I want them to have the skills to be able to debrief around these pieces themselves. I want them to know that we all hit a wall. I want them to realize that there's more to being 35 to 40 than driving your kids to 85 activities every week. That it's okay for us to have our own feelings, our own activities, our own vocation, or our own jobs, or our own companies.

[22:12] One of the ways that this tangibly manifests in our family in addition to discussions is that both my husband and I are entrepreneurs, and we talk to our kids about having a family business. We say, "Listen. There are days where mommy and daddy have to work, and maybe we have to work on the weekend. But, 1) let me tell you what that's about, and 2) I'm going to give you responsibilities within our family business.

[22:34] So, each of my kids – I have three girls – have different things that they do to help me out within my business. I pay them to do that, and they're little, so it's just the action of that piece. But the bigger piece is that they get to take some ownership and responsibility. They realize that we are all in this together.

[22:54] I think one of the biggest pieces of this is 1) acknowledging your own vulnerability to kids, acknowledging where you're at, and saying, "Mommy's had a hard day, and she's going to have a cookie, and that's okay. There should be no shame about that. It's not being bad, and mommy's having a cookie. Mommy's having a cookie. She feels like having a cookie, and tomorrow I'm going to get up, and I'm going to exercise and balance this out, and this is how this works. We can't have a cookie all the time, but it's okay for us."

[23:19] I think kids understand that. They understand us being open, and I think they really appreciate us being human. That's where I encourage most people to start – not to put adulthood behind a façade, not to put adulthood behind closed doors, but to reframe it in a way

that kids understand, but acknowledge for them the truth of where you are at and provide to them a roadmap of the tools that you are using to maneuver and manage those situations on your own.

[23:50] *Cassy Price*: Wonderfully said. I completely agree, and I think it applies, not even just to those little things like emotion or eating habits, etc., but I think you nailed it on the head when you were talking about bad habits – things like that as well. At least in my experience growing up, my parents never made any of that sort of stuff taboo per se. They discussed it; they acknowledged when they had their own vices that were unhealthy, but they were unhealthy, and that they shouldn't do them. I think, for me, that was a really positive thing that kept me from going into trying that sort of stuff myself when I hit early adulthood.

[24:31] On the flip side, I saw some friends who led a very sheltered childhood that went off the deep end when they got the chance. So, I think it also helps them to start to regulate their own moral compass early on for a whole gamut of things that helps them to better understand their own perspective that way.

[24:51] I wanted to turn the lens in on you a little bit and understand how you found your passion for helping people to a) reach their own health, and b) grow their own businesses.

[25:07] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: Yeah. Thank you for asking. It's a journey, for sure, and so like so many people in naturopathic medicine or functional medicine or whatever the vocation that you are in, I had my own experience with a naturopathic doctor when I was young. Wow, I was so struck by the line of questioning and the intelligence of the questioning.

[25:28] So it wasn't how we felt for the last 72 hours, and what have you taken, and what have you done? It was "Tell me, Meghan, how has your body always and historically responded to stress. I want to get a sense of what that pattern looks like." I have no idea what this naturopathic doctor did for me after that. I don't even know what happened in the conversation because I was so struck by the intelligence of the questioning. We came at the problem through the back door.

[25:52] I've always been interested in how do we treat the root cause of the problem? As my career in naturopathic medicine evolved, what I really realized was some of my fundamental trust and belief is that when people have their health, they can change the world. When I work with a CEO who suddenly is able to access their energy again, they're able to go back into work, and it penetrates all the work that they do – or a leader of an NGO or a mom or a teacher. It didn't matter what it was. The people were off living their own purpose and highest potential when we gave them access to a mindset and a set of health tools where they were fully optimized.

[26:28] Because I wanted to continue to pursue that idea, I kept being like, "How do I scale this? How do I reach more people? How do I help more people work within that state of highest

potential? What I quickly realized is that it isn't by me seeing more people in my practice necessarily, it's me helping other practitioners amplify their impact.

[26:52] I didn't realize this – right back to this purpose piece. I had my own business since I was 17. I have had one job in my life, and I was fired from it. I'm an entrepreneur by heart. It was so easy for me to envision the strategy to build and grow my own business, and I started to teach it to other practitioners. They would call me up, and I was like, "Oh, we could have a program here, and we have a platform, and then we can – Oh! Oh, my goodness! I think I should be spending my time working on that practitioner side."

[27:20] It was really around, first, having clarity around what my mission is. And my mission hasn't changed. It is how many people can we give access to in terms of upstream, root-caused medicine, so they can go off and do their work in the world. Not because they're on medicines that hide their symptoms, but because we truly gave them back their health. How do we amplify that?

[27:40] So every step I've taken in my career was this balance between clarity on what my mission was all about and clarity around the skill set that I could bring to the table in order to make that happen. I will warn everybody. Once you figure those two pieces out, once you figure out what you're good at, and you figure out what your mission is, you are not going to have the same job for the rest of your life because you're going to be in a constant state of growth.

[28:07] You're going to be in a constant state of new opportunity, and you're going to be in a perpetual state of wanting to build that mission in a bigger way. It makes for a really exciting life, but one you fully control. So, if I want to slow it down now, I can slow it down. If I want to speed it up, I can speed it up, and I think that's one of the most exciting things about where I'm sitting now.

[28:30] *Cassy Price*: To help listeners start on that path, do you have any tools, books, or even podcasts that you recommend that people can start listening to so they can broaden their mindset and help them start to do that internal analysis?

[28:47] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: Yeah. I will share with your team so that you can share with your listeners. We have a really cool initial training around finding your purpose. Part of that starts with how do we create that space for worthiness and physical space within our schedule and our time management in order to start to make all of this happen? It's a training that we have around something called the [Entrepology Time System](#), which is where we're starting to craft our time, so we're focused on purpose, not an endless to-do list.

[29:22] I will absolutely share that with your listeners. It's pretty awesome and tactical for people and accessible. Listen. This is something I love to talk about; I love to jam this out; I love to look at and explore all of these different concepts, the concept and confluence of health and mindset and business, and I do that every week on my own podcast, which is called [The Entrepology Podcast](#).

[29:48] *Cassy Price*: Fantastic. This has been an amazing conversation. I think it's really thought-provoking and gets the wheels turning on what kind of steps you can take for yourself to really explore if you're where you want to be and how to get where you do want to be. I really appreciate you joining me today to discuss it. If our listeners want to work with you to discover their own passion or if they're growing their own practice, how could they get a hold of you?

[30:16] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: The best place to find me in and all the antics I'm up to on a daily basis is probably just come hang out with me on Instagram, and we can link you up in a variety of different ways there. My handle is [@drmeghanwalker](#) (Meghan, with an h), and I'm there almost every day, and I would love to connect with people through that forum.

[30:36] *Cassy Price*: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Meghan. I really appreciate you joining us.

[30:41] *Dr. Meghan Walker*: My pleasure. Thanks for having me.

** * * Outro Music * * **

Thank you for listening to Supplementing Health. For more information about our guests, past shows, and future topics, please visit [AOR.ca/podcasts](#) or [AOR.us/podcasts](#). Do you have a topic you want us to cover? We invite you to engage with us on social media to request a future topic or email us at marketing@aur.ca. We hope you tune in again next week to learn more about supplementing your health.

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