

Mareya: When you say no to the thing that you love so much over and over again, it creeps up on you in your dreams. And is there room for 10%? It's kind of human for us to indulge every once in a while. And if it means indulging a little bit, I think in the grand scheme of things it's not going to kill us.

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio. A state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio, with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is that penguins can only taste two of the five food tastes that we like to think we have, even though we really actually have seven if you count carbon dioxide and umami. And maybe eight if you count fat, which is another taste we have that's just fat. Kind of interesting. But these poor penguins, no wonder they eat all those weird fish, because they only have two.

Dave: And those, most vertebrates like us, taste all these five things. Most birds get four, but they can't taste sweet. And a little while ago, scientists at the University of Michigan found that penguins just have sour and salty. And genetic analysis, which is so cool, because now we can do this stuff. This was invisible to humans for all of history, until the last five years. But anyway, genetic analysis figured out that the common ancestor of penguins lost them too, for some reason, and here's the reason.

Dave: It's because of cold. And a few other things that penguins do is also caused by cold exposure. We think that between 60 and 23 million years ago, as those weird looking birds evolved, they split into five different species at a time when there were periods of dramatic climate cooling in Antarctica. And turns out that bitter and umami receptors just don't work in low temperatures. So penguins said, "Why would I go to the biological work, the mitochondrial effort, of building these things? I don't need to." So they quit doing it, which is awesome. And that's probably also, too, why they swallow their food whole and their tongues have these spike-like things called papillae, which let them grip their prey. Anyhow, you ever wonder why you have a sharp spiked tongue that can only taste bitter and salty? It's probably because you're a penguin.

Dave: But if not, the fact that we can dissect it in that level of detail is just a tiny example of the huge universe of knowledge that's just been unlocked by our genetics, our understanding of the world around us is evolving every day. And I get excited by cool stuff like this because no one even knew that penguins had those limitations, much less why. But now we know, and that's one more little drop in the huge bucket of human knowledge that's expanding exponentially, and that should make all of us happy.

Dave: Now, today's guest is neither a penguin nor someone who I believe is planning to live to 180, although I might ask her that later. She is a TV chef, a holistic nutritionist, and an inventor with 25 years of experience in the food industry who just wrote a book called Eat Like You Give A Fork: The Real Dish on Eating to Thrive. I'm talking about none either than Mareya Ibrahim. Mareya, welcome to the show.

Mareya: Thank you, Dave. It's so great to be here.

Dave: I wanted to have you on today to talk about this notion of eating clean.

Mareya: Oh.

Dave: And, I mean, I'm certainly considered to be one of those people there, but the definition of clean is so different for different people. Why did we need a book about eating clean?

Mareya: Yeah. You know, and it's kind of one of those things that's defined so differently by different people. And for me, the bottom line is we're eating as nature intended. We're eating as close to the source of food, and avoiding food that's highly processed and adulterated. It doesn't necessarily mean ruling out whole food groups, per se. I think some people's explanations might be that drastic. But for me it's really more about eating food in an identifiable form. Lots of fresh produce. Proteins that are raised the way they should be. Eating the foods that nature has created for them. And avoiding foods that come highly processed from a plant. It doesn't mean that you can't have packaged foods, because I think that packaged foods have a place, and I think that foods that are in a form that allow us to eat on the go and snack, et cetera, and have the variety that we love, are completely viable. It's just, can you identify the ingredients that are in that package? And I think that really, to me, is the nascence of what eating clean means.

Dave: Isn't that a little bit simplistic? I can identify that, that was whole wheat, and it had a whole bunch of gluten in it, which is inflammatory. But I could identify it. In fact, hey, it was even organic. And, oh, there's some seaweed in it, which is a source of carrageenan, which pokes holes in your gut, and things like that. 99% of plants will kill you if you eat them. People who don't believe me, go out into the forest and just eat a bunch of the plants you see, and then call me from the hospital, right? So, really? Is that the definition of clean? You know what it is? Or, you know what it does to you as well?

Mareya: I think of course you need to know what it does to you. But I will also say that the way foods are brought to us vary so significantly. I'll give you an example. I studied abroad, I lived in Italy for about a year. And I never, ever had any issues with eating wheat there. I never had issues with eating pasta. It never gave me gut problems. But here, I had a whole plethora of problems from eating wheat and actually had to go completely gluten free. So to me, it's a little bit about where you are and what that origin of that product is. But at the same time it's about quantity and combination. So, am I saying just eat plants and only eat plants? No. I think there's definitely an important combination of macronutrients that we need every day. We need our essential amino acids. We need all of those things. So it's not off the deep end on one side or the other. I think it's really about balance, but being conscientious of what you're putting in your body to feed it to the core. And it's not calorie counting. So I think that, to me, is another thing where people get into this mindset of, eating clean means really restricting your calories and making sure that you're only eating this type of vegetable or this type of protein. And it doesn't necessarily have to be that at all.

Dave: You can definitely get orthorexia and be really restrictive, and one of the things about your book that's actually really cool is you're not that overall restrictive about it. In fact you tell people, look, 90/10. Just eat, 90% of the time do this, and you can probably get

away with 10% of the time. But it seems even for you, gluten, you're not really 90/10 on gluten, are you?

Mareya: No, and I'll tell you again. For me, it's not that I'm eating it all the time. And gluten is a wheat protein that some people have a real problem with, and some people don't. I'm not saying eat pasta every day, I'm saying if 10% of the time you're eating, if you're eating very conscientiously, you're eating a lot of, a variety of plants, you're eating all the colors of the rainbow, you're getting your lean proteins in, even sometimes getting the not so lean proteins in.

Dave: Are fatty proteins better?

Mareya: You're getting a good amount of fat in. You're doing all of those things 10% of the time, if I want a plate of pasta, I'm going to eat the freaking pasta. I don't want a pasta substitute. I just really feel strongly about this because I feel what ends up happening is when you tell people, "Don't eat this thing," but they love it, there is a boomerang effect that happens. They end up going back to it. In all my coaching, I find this over and over again. They'll follow the path, and they'll leave it out completely, but then there's that breaking point and it's like the point of no return.

Mareya: And so my, I guess it's a psychological mindset, in a lot of ways. When you say no to the thing that you love so much over and over again, it creeps up on you in your dreams. And is there room for 10%? It's kind of human for us to indulge every once in a while, and if it means indulging a little bit, I think in the grand scheme of things, it's not going to kill us.

Dave: So it's sort of an eat clean-ish perspective. Because it's not always there. I mean, I'm with you to some extent. I'll tell you that most people who really eliminate gluten that I know of, if they do, especially in the US, decide that, "Oh, I'm going to go eat the pasta," they're probably not going to like themselves as much for the next couple days. They might not, "Oh, I got a pimple," or, "I was cranky," or, "I was more tired," or, "My sleep quality went down." They're subtle effects for some people. Other people it's, doubled over gut-wrenching problems, in which case, well, you've got some issues.

Mareya: Sure.

Dave: But, I did recently go to Europe and, I don't want my kids to be afraid of gluten or anything like that. So I'm like, "Hey, we're going to go eat a croissant," and I did it because it was in Europe and the wheat there really does make you feel different. It doesn't have glyphosate on it. And it's a different species, and they have different species of yeasts that are more relaxed than angry American yeast. So I said, "All right, I'm going to take the hit, I'll take some charcoal too." And my 10 year old's like, "What? You're going to eat gluten?" And I'm like, "Yeah, you are too. Give it a shot." So the kids ate them. And funny enough, my daughter said, "I feel fine." And she did. And my son the next morning was like, "Actually, my stomach doesn't really like this very much. I just don't want any more. It was good, but not that good." And it's one of those things where, okay, if a cheat day decimates you, maybe you shouldn't eat that. But if it's not

bad for you but it's not good for you either, that feels like that's more of a clean eating strategy than just, if the stuff you love the most that causes you the most harm.

Mareya: I agree with you. I mean, and I'm 100% on board with the whole yeast piece. I think we use a lot of very aggressive, fast-rising yeasts that cause a lot of gut issues here in the US that you don't find in other places. And oftentimes it is not just the gluten but everything else that gets added into that processed product. But here's the thing. You went ahead and you tried it, right? And you gave your kids permission to try it. So it was kind of like it took away the mystique. I hope I don't get in trouble for saying this, but at home, I allow my kids to have a little wine with dinner. They're not of age to drink.

Dave: You lived in Italy for a year, so legally you're allowed to do that.

Mareya: I mean, my parents did it growing up. You know? And so I took away the mystique of drinking for them. It's not like I need to go out and get hammered. It's, all right, I have it at home and I can have a sip, and I could take it or leave it. So the same thing happens with food. You give yourself some permission, some leeway. Because the minute you tell an adult no, it backfires. And they backfire on themselves. So it's grace. And if you try the gluten and it wreaks havoc on you and you feel like you're hungover the next day practically, or bent over, you're not going to have it anymore. But that's because you made that decision rather than somebody telling you, "Here's a plan, and I'm telling you not to have this, this, and this."

Dave: It's really interesting, if people go for a little while and eat not a lot of different stuff, so you sort of get rid of most or all of the reactions. I mean, that's part of what you talk about in your book, certainly the [inaudible 00:12:27] diet has a two week period. At the end of that, you might realize, wow, some of these foods do way more than I thought they did. But they may not do that to someone else next to you. So anytime I see one of these things that's, "Never eat this again," for everyone, you know that it's probably a little bit simplistic.

Dave: Case in point, potatoes. Huge number of people handle properly cooked potatoes pretty well. If you're nightshade intolerant, genetically, the way I am and one of my kids is, my son was, "Daddy, can you rub my neck? It really hurts." And it was hurting all the time, and he had these weird knots, the same knots I used to have. And so we asked the school, and they were putting potatoes in the soup they were giving him, even though he's not supposed to be eating nightshades. And we reverse troubleshot it. But for about six weeks he was in a meaningful amount of pain. And to this day he's like, "You know what? I'm not eating something with potatoes in it because I really don't like when my neck hurts." And it's one of those things where my daughter's like, "Pass the potato, I like that stuff." And she doesn't have that gene.

Mareya: Sure.

Dave: So even for him, hey, these are on the suspect foods. But for you to know what your clean is, it's going to be a little bit different. But what I think you and I and a lot of people agree on, if you can't even identify what it is on the package, it's got an

impossible label with an invented molecule and a bunch of other chemicals to make potatoes taste like something they're not, you could do the same thing with hydrogenated fat, sugar, and corn syrup and whatever else and you can make a frankenfood that way. How do you coach people to know how or where to draw the line?

Mareya: You know, I really start in the kitchen by teaching them about food and about taste. And experiencing the essence of a flavor in the pure sense of a food. I went to culinary school, and I found that it was really hard for me, because I felt like everything was sort of buried in a sauce or a fat, or something else. But when I would go to the farmer's market and I would taste a Brussels sprout, just raw. Or I would taste a carrot, a beautiful purple carrot, that's what sang to me. And so my style of cooking is really pretty simplistic. I'm not really all about a lot of heavy sauces and flavorings and things like that. I like to really embrace the product. And so where I start with people is a taste bud reset.

Mareya: You were talking about the penguins and their taste buds. Well, we come with a set of taste buds, and we don't really exercise them very much. Especially here in the US. I think most people would, if you stick out your tongue, right on the tip of your tongue is your sweet and your salty taste buds. Well, how about exploring the sour and the umami and the bitter, and then allowing that to lead you to what you end up craving? And I am firmly of the belief when you start to eat food without all of the stuff added on, you explore a different side of what you love. And I was a carbaholic for a long time, self-admitted. If it was round and brown, I was eating it. Bagels, cookies, English muffins, you name it. And I had to wean myself off of that.

Mareya: But to in doing so find a different palate for myself. And it's true. You can crave broccoli and Brussels sprouts over brownies. And people laugh when I say that. But it's essential. And not a lot of people are really focusing on that right now. They're telling you, "Okay, these are the foods that you should be eating, and these are the foods that are healthy." But if you're looking at somebody that was raised on tater tots and hot dogs and Spaghetti-Os, there is a reprocessing of the data, a recoding, if you will, of the software, and that's what happens with that taste bud reset in the beginning of the book.

Dave: It's actually a really powerful practice. And I appreciated the way you called it out in the book. All of the things I know about neuroscience, I started 40 Years of Zen, so I know a thing or two about neuroscience. We do brain training and clinical grade EEG scans and all that kind of stuff, in the context of upgrading humans. And we really are advanced pattern matching systems. And we're driven at a core to eat everything so we don't starve. And I went through a phase as I was losing 100 pounds that I lost, there was a time, my early, mid-twenties, where I'd say, okay, I'm going to go get my triple tall extra hot latte at the green logo coffee people. And I really loved the effect of the caffeine. But of course I was crashing later. But every time I'd go there I'd look at that pastry case. I'm like, man, those scones. And they would call to me. And I learned, okay, I'm not going to do that. But after about maybe three years of that, I got to the point where I'd look at the scones, but the little part inside of you that says, "Oh, food?" It was gone. So my pattern matching system no longer saw those as something that I eat, so the cravings went away.

Dave: And then, I haven't eaten fast food in a very long time because I universally feel like crap afterwards. So I've passed a McDonald's or Taco Bell or whatever, and I don't see it anymore. And so people say, "Oh, I'm at the office next to the Taco Bell." I'm like, "Where's the Taco Bell?" "Dave, you've been driving past that every day for five years. How could you not know where Taco Bell is?" I'm like, "I don't know. I didn't know where the notary public was because I never wanted to get anything notarized. It was not relevant to my life."

Mareya: 100%.

Dave: That's the power of that first strategy that you have there about retraining your taste buds. Is there a specific trick that you would offer for people listening? The easiest or fastest way to not have those cravings?

Mareya: Yeah. Well, at first, it starts with what you're taking out. And certainly taking out sugar in all forms. And in that taste bud reset we're taking out everything from beans to grains to dairy to any sort of added sugar, whether it be organic coconut sugar. It doesn't matter. Any kind of sugar, any kind of stevia, any kind of sweetener in general. And then we're focusing on what we're adding. So we're adding in the bitter flavors, we're adding in leafy greens. I'm giving people an all you can eat buffet, basically, of vegetables that are kind of approved, if you will, for that reset. Everything from asparagus to broccoli to Brussels sprouts. Pretty much all the non-starchy vegetables. And also introducing people to seaweed. You mentioned seaweed. Seaweed in its truest. I think the meaning of seaweed and what it can bring to the table is so powerful, and it helps to give you that array of amino acids, which is that umami flavor profile that we want people to recognize and focus on.

Mareya: I do encourage people to try tomatoes. I recognize that it's a nightshade vegetable, so if it doesn't cause an inflammatory reaction, and that's something that you're good with, sun dried tomatoes are wonderful. And usually if people do have a reaction, cooking them helps. So doing a sun dried or doing a cooked tomato sauce can help you get around that. And then ...

Dave: Don't tomatoes have sugar in them, though, too?

Mareya: Yeah, but it's to help bolster that umami profile. So I'm cutting out other processed sugars and sugar in other forms, because the tomato itself has so much of that concentrated umami flavor in it. And it can be a great resource, or product, for people that don't eat meat. Because certainly in that reset I'm not limiting you to not eating meat, for example. You can have chicken, you can have turkey, you can have fish, you can have bison, beef, anything that has eaten properly. Now I encourage people to do that. Economically I know it's hard sometimes to get that grass finished beef, but if you can do it, I encourage it.

Dave: If you order it online, it's not more expensive than you're likely spending at a local grocery store. It's six bucks a pound. And you don't need to eat a pound of it already,

you're talking a couple ounces. So if you have a freezer, it's economical. If you don't have a freezer, it's going to be work.

Mareya: Yeah. Yeah. And I agree with you, there's so many resources now to be able to get it. But mushrooms also are another really great umami food that a non-meat eater can have. Because this process is important for everybody. I'm really ... it's funny, every time there's a documentary that comes out that there's a new restrictive kind of diet or approach being explored, I get a million questions. And this ...

Dave: So are you talking about that Game Changers mockumentary?

Mareya: Yeah, exactly.

Dave: I just read a big analysis of that thing. Seriously, bad science. Actually, no science. "Oh look, your blood is cloudy because it's transporting energy." Oh, great. Anyway, sorry. I'll get off my soapbox there. But in case you didn't want to mention it, yeah.

Mareya: You know ... You can cut data however you want to prove a point, is the truth. And so what I really wanted to create was sort of a non-label approach, and that's why it is a little bit more, I guess, flexible, you could say. But flexible with a purpose. Because I do encourage people to eat more of a vegan approach and do an intermittent approach at least a couple days a week. I do want them to be conscientious of the proteins that they're getting. I do want them to eat more fat. Fat is not a four letter word. I know you know that all too well. But it's even getting people to understand that in our day and age is surprising to me, because there's so much great data that shows what fat can do for you. So it's non-agnostic, if you will, in its approach, whether you are a vegan because you've chosen to be that way or you are a hardcore meat eater, there's something for everybody.

Dave: There is. And it might surprise people who haven't read any of my books. The Bulletproof Diet was, to my knowledge, the first book that was advocating a one day a week protein fast. Where even if you're eating vegetables, you eat low protein vegetables. You get less than 15 grams of protein a day to turn on autophagy. You can just fast for 24 hours. Or if you wanted to eat, you eat fat and you eat some plants, but not a lot of protein. And magically when you do that your body will do something different. So there's nothing wrong with skipping meat for a couple days in the week. If you skip animal fats altogether, you're probably not going to like where your cell membranes end up. And that's why a lot of people, including me when I was a very well-educated raw vegan, why it ends up with fractured teeth and autoimmune issues. So you can choose to be vegan, but you'll come back, most likely, to being an omnivore if you like to feel good. That's been my experience from just the millions of people who follow my work and share their experiences. There's some recovery that happens.

Mareya: And I, a lot of my recipes, they'll interchange cooking with ghee versus cooking with coconut oil.

Dave: Right.

Mareya: I mean, at the end of the day, I think what's really important is that we focus on the quality of the food that we're getting and that we eat with intention. Because here's what happens. You were talking about going by a Taco Bell and not even seeing it. It literally leaves your conscious mind. It's because you have done something now that gives you joy and pleasure. There's nothing worse than having digestive issues. I mean, it affects everything. It affects your ability to just be a normal human being every day. I mean, I went through 10 years, pretty much, of a serious brain fog from depriving myself of the nutrients that I needed to function as a normal human being. And consequently my memory from that time of my life, it's gone. I really don't remember a lot of things from that time period. And it's excruciating for me to even say that, but having gone through it, what it's taught me is what feels good for me, it's not what other people dictate.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: It's what absolutely is a personal thing. And why would I put myself out there again in that place that was like a desert, and feel horrible, when I feel awesome? And shoot, I turned 50 this year, and I don't think I've ever felt more vibrant and well balanced in my approach. And I think that flexibility but still focusing on a core system that works, where you're exercising your metabolism, you're flexing your taste buds, you're exploring a variety of different macronutrients and having fun with food. I want to bring people back into the kitchen and have that honest interaction with the product with what grows from the ground, with what comes from the earth, and enjoy the art of putting a meal together. It's so satisfying. And it just, when you want to go out to eat and grab something fast, you're cheating yourself. It's not even like you're giving yourself a treat. You're cheating yourself of an amazing experience.

Dave: What were you doing for that 10 years that gave you the brain fog?

Mareya: What do you think?

Dave: Were you a vegan?

Mareya: I was largely vegan, mostly vegetarian, and eating way too many carbs.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: Way, way too many processed carbs. I mean, that was my time when I was telling you, if it was round and brown, I was eating it.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: And you know, part of that was an eating disorder. It was really hard for me to admit it, and hard for me to deal with it, but I had a lot of dysmorphia. I suffered from anorexia and bulimia. And it came from a place of being from a family where sitting down at the table was not just about a meal. Sitting at the table was eating as much food as you could possibly stomach. And I come from a family of immigrants. I think that there is,

intrinsic in the immigrant mentality, and I hope I don't get bashed for this, but this is just my opinion, is this starvation mentality where if you don't eat as much as you can, then something is going to happen to you and you might not find food tomorrow.

Dave: Are you kidding? If someone bashes you for that, it's because they're dumb. I'll just be really straightforward. Here's the thing. We know that if your grandparents or great grandparents went through a famine, that your odds of getting type 2 diabetes go up. So there's a provable epigenetic effect of that. And even my grandmother, who's 97 now, a former nuclear engineer, and I still remember, when I was a kid she would make these disgusting Slim Fast from the '80s kind of things. And then, so she'd drink that, and then she'd put water in there to rinse out the cup and then drink that water to make sure she got every calorie. Because she went through the Great Depression. And because when she was a child, she did not have enough food on some days. And we learn that at a cellular level. It's not a conscious thing. And of course we pass that down to our kids. It's one of the reason that eat everything is wired into our biology. Because I guarantee you, every life form alive went through a period where its ancestors, I don't care if you're a bacteria, a tree, or a mouse or a human. At some point your ancestors, some of them starved to death. And the ones who survived learned that you must eat everything. So it's not, it's just how life works.

Mareya: It is.

Dave: So you can't bash someone for talking about that. It's just real.

Mareya: Yeah. And you know, I don't, certainly, my parents and my family, we come from Middle Eastern roots. And so eating is very much also about a gathering and bringing people to the table and being hospitable, and the idea that you want to give people as much food and as much nourishment as you possibly can so you feel gracious. And so I really had to unlearn that. I had to unlearn this whole idea that food was about, or eating too much or eating a lot in one sitting was about honoring my mom because she made this meal for me. It's not that. It's honoring myself and honoring how I feel, so that I can function. And from that 10 year fog came a lot of just reconciling of pain. And I think a lot of eating disorders for people, obviously it stems from pain and it stems from dealing with a trauma. But we have so many modified, I believe, so much of that with our diets that we're embracing these days, is a modified form of that orthorexia.

Mareya: So, what do we do? Do we put everything back on the table and allow people to eat whatever they want and just give them no boundaries? I think there's something in the middle, and that's really what I tried to create with this book, is giving you boundaries and giving you strategies to be able to retrain your taste buds and focus on the right nutrients and know how to meal prep and know how to get yourself ready for the week because that's so important for our lifestyles. But at the same time, give you a little bit of flexibility so that you don't swing like a pendulum from one side to the other. Because that's not healthy either.

Dave: I went through many years, when I was heavy, where I would just be like, if I don't eat right now, I'm going to have to kill someone and eat them. You just get this profound hunger. And one of the things that became really powerful for me eventually, after I did

a lot of the Bulletproof Diet work and the development of that book, was just to learn to be comfortable intermittent fasting, or just not going a day without eating. So then if I'm in a situation and there's nothing that I would identify as food, I can say, "You know what? I'm just not going to eat. I'll just have a glass of water. I'm not going to lose my energy. My brain's going to keep working. I'm not going to get hangry and hypoglybitchy," which are words that would have described me very accurately.

Mareya: [inaudible 00:32:05]

Dave: But, so it came down to this freedom from feeling like I was going to die if I didn't eat something, so I could choose not to eat junk food that I knew was not what I wanted. But also the ability to say, "You know what? This isn't junk food. It's not what I really, it's not the perfect food, but it's within tolerances for me to feel pretty good. So I'm going to do it, and I'm not going to feel a twinge of guilt or shame," or any of that kind of stuff. And I think you're dialing in on that in the way you write your book, how do you get that mindset, that's, you're not going to eat the bowl of heroin crunch. If that's something that you know, if I eat that I'm going to crave it every day for two weeks.

Mareya: Yeah.

Dave: Maybe that just isn't on my thing. But you're not going to be like, "Oh, there's nothing else to eat, so I just did that because otherwise I was going to die." [crosstalk 00:32:51]

Mareya: Right.

Dave: So there's, it's a very hard thing to explain to people, though, who've never experienced that freedom from feeling like you're going to die if you don't eat right now.

Mareya: I think that once you get into a place where you know what feels good for you and you practice it over and over again, what you find is that you don't have to reinvent the wheel all the time. Obviously naturally our body craves more food at times because we're more active. And it craves less food at other times. But if you were to just take somebody that is just starting down this path, and you gave them a set of tools and you said, "These are the tools that you need just to be successful right out the gate, so you don't sabotage yourself," I think there's a really common denominator here. Hydration is so essential. We often disguise hunger as, it's actually thirst. And so making sure you're drinking enough clear liquids every day. That's a common denominator.

Mareya: Making sure you're eating, if you're going to eat vegetables, choose greens. Greens give us the most nutrients and bite for our calorie buck. Again, it's not about counting calories, but if you're just going to take the best things to retrain your palate and nourish you, it's greens as far as the vegetable category goes.

Dave: When you say nourish, when I hear the word nourish I always feel like you should have some sense of satiety. But when I was a raw vegan, man, I had these one gallon bowls. And I would finely chop my salad and I would eat my greens like a professional. And I can tell you, there was no nourishing going on in there. It was just constant hunger, an

hour after eating. Like god, I need another bowl of these damn greens. It feels like if you're going to nourish, you better put some kind of fat on top of those.

Mareya: 100%. And I think that that's where people trip up. So you can't get it from one category. You have to combine your categories. You have to have that good fat. You have to have those vegetables. You need to have those amino acids. I mean, at the end of the day, those essential amino acids are what fuel us and allow us to regulate our hormones and flex our metabolisms and build muscle and all of the things that we need to be functioning human beings. And you can get that array of amino acids, it doesn't have to just come from a protein source. It can come from other things too, and you can combine things to get there as well. And that's what I teach in the book. It's not just one thing.

Mareya: During my foggy phase, I was very much of that place before I really became a student of nutrition. Was okay, I'll sit down and eat a salad. Isn't that the best thing that I could possibly eat? But there would be lettuce on it, and there would be cucumber, and tomato, and maybe an olive. You know? And that's not enough. That's not going to give you that balance. And the sure sign for most people is after you eat that meal, do you feel hungry an hour later? Do you feel hungry 30 minutes later? And if that's the case, you've got to realize that we're all in different phases of our lives. You, Dave, need different nutrients than I do, as a female. We have different activity levels. Your brain is much bigger than mine, I know that. So you need way more fat than I do.

Dave: It's probably less efficient, though, so on average we're ...

Mareya: I mean, but, you know. You understand what I'm saying.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: So when I think about the common denominators, from there we layer on the good quality amino acid sources, which are essential. And we need them every day, because our body doesn't produce them. We need to make sure that we're getting enough sleep. My goodness. Not even talking about food, but sleeping well so that we can regulate our hormones and lower cortisol and actually keep it all together. So even beyond food and hydration, our lifestyle, how we manage stress, how we breathe. I became a student of yoga about 13 years ago. And it was a life changer, you know? I was suffering from really high blood pressure. It runs in my family, it's hereditary on my mom's side. But I was like, I'll be damned if this gets to me. I'm an active person, I eat well, I preach this lifestyle. Something's going to give.

Mareya: And when I started doing yoga, everything changed for me because of my breathing practice was conscientious. So it's one spoke in the wheel, but it's an important spoke.

Dave: There's one spoke in the wheel that I feel like might give you a flat tire, or at least love handles. You talk about super grains. What is a super grain?

Mareya: I knew you were going to say something. I knew you were going to say something. I was like, oh, Dave's going to say something about this.

Dave: I'm not going to pick on you. I'm curious. I'm here to learn, right? [crosstalk 00:38:14]

Mareya: No, no, but it's a good question. So ancient grains, I'm going to kind of lean on my heritage a little bit. Ancient grains coming from the time of the pharaohs, where they were eating kamut and faro and spelt and these grains that ...

Dave: The Pharaohs weren't eating those, the slaves were eating those. Right?

Mareya: The time of the pharaohs.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: So, yes. The time of the pharaohs. But the Pharaohs did eat beans, for sure.

Dave: Right. But they saved the grains for the people that they were sacrificing and using as labor.

Mareya: Okay. I mean, you know. Here's the deal.

Dave: Just saying.

Mareya: Here's the deal though. At the end of the day, I still believe there's a place for them. Because they are a great source of fiber, they do have essential minerals.

Dave: They're delicious.

Mareya: [crosstalk 00:39:05] for those people who are restrictive in their diets where they're cutting out whole categories for whatever reason, it can be a source of nutrition for them. Now, here's my caveat. My caveat is, in what quantity? Okay. We're not talking about eating two cups a day. We're talking about allowing yourself to have up to half a cup, a serving. And I think that this is one of the most important things when we talk about calories, is restricting certain things like a grain. It's not eating it with abandon. And that's where, I think that's really one of the only things in the book that I talk about restriction in terms of serving size. Otherwise, I don't really focus on serving sizes or calories at all.

Dave: Yeah. Calories are just an outmoded concept, and there's still a group of people out there who just go, "But it's conservation of energy, it has to be that way." And the single best argument I've ever found for that mindset is, explain why, in animal ranching for profit where they actually measure all this stuff, they have found a estrogenic mold toxin that they put in the ear of the animal that increases feed efficiency by 30%. Which means on the same number of calories, the cows gained 30% more weight than they did otherwise. If that is possible, then this whole garbage conservation of energy thing doesn't, it clearly isn't working. If that can exist, there's something else besides calories.

And so I think it's time for our consciousness as a species to understand that, no, you didn't get fat because you ate too many calories. You might have eaten too many calories, and it might have contributed, but it wasn't the cause. There was something else.

Mareya: Right.

Dave: But that's, let's go back to grains. So, I mean, Dr. Gundry and I have written a lot about how, because plants can't run away, they don't want us to eat them or their babies, so they grow spikes and they grow these chemicals that are poison for different kinds of animals, just to prevent overpredation. And that there are lectins in whole grains. And I found that pretty much I don't care if it's wheat or some other grain, the vast majority of grains tend to cause problems whether they're short or long term, for most people, with some caveats. If you are, of your heritage, or it turns out it's a part of northern Italy has the highest degree of ability to digest wheat. However, something like 70% of kids in a study that I read about when I was doing the Bulletproof Diet, in Italy, had problems with gluten based on some, I think it was blood panels, or something. They had antibodies to wheat. So we're going through this recent ability as a species to digest this stuff. But also, food preparation matters.

Mareya: Yes.

Dave: Was it deep fried in margarine? That's probably a little bit different than if you soaked it and fermented it and sprouted it or pressure cooked it.

Mareya: That's what I was just about to say.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: I mean, a lot of that is just really how you prepare it. There are obviously a lot of gluten free grains, too. So if gluten is a problem, amaranth and millet, black rice, things like that. But you're dead right on that, the preparation can make all the difference. The sprouting process can help to really diminish the content of the lectins. Cooking it in a certain way, soaking it, so all of these things can make a huge impact in your ability to digest and process.

Dave: What's the best way to cook a grain, if you're going to eat it?

Mareya: I really love sprouted grains, and they're becoming a lot more available now. You can buy a sprouted quinoa at Trader Joe's in a bag. And then allowing it to, first of all, rinsing it well. So, rinsing it is very important. Making sure that you're rinsing your grains several times, three to four times with water, and then allowing it to soak. I like to soak it for at least an hour before I cook it, you can even soak it overnight. So all of those things do help. But again, that goes back to being a very personal thing. If that bothers you, and the digestion of it is a problem, then those are all ways that you can help to diminish the effects of that.

Mareya: For me personally, I will have, I'll cook black rice and that black rice will be in a portion that is the smallest portion in comparison to the other things that are in that bowl. And so when I wrote my recipes for the book, I wrote it from that perspective. I wrote it from, okay, if this is going to help with satiety, this is going to help you feel fuller longer and it's going to give you some fiber and some substance, and especially for those people that are restrictive, then that becomes a component of the rest. It doesn't really exist on its own. And you'll find that the recipes that I have always pair it with a good amount of fat.

Dave: I think that makes a really big difference, the fat's going to make you feel full. And so when people have a hard time with satiety, or they're saying, "I had to have a snack two hours after my last meal," I'm like, well, you did it wrong. Either you didn't eat enough, you didn't eat enough fat, or you ate something that irritated your system so your demand for glucose went up to deal with the inflammation. So you got to figure out, what did you do wrong to cause you to need to eat when you should still be digesting your last meal? And there's something going on in there. It could be, oh, I just lifted heavy and ran a half marathon. Well, okay, that's why. But for most of us, that's probably not what's going on there. It's that there was a composition or a quantity error in our thing. And you do explain that well in the book. I was a little surprised to hear super grains. Well, you have to limit them. Are they super, or ... I think of them as kind of high risk, but maybe okay for you grains. What makes them so super? I mean, fiber? You get fiber in all kinds of vegetables. There's not really a hard time getting fiber.

Mareya: Well, I'll give you an example. So, black rice. Black rice contains anthocyanins, and you don't, you find those anthocyanins, that super class of antioxidants, in foods that are of that color. So, is there a merit from having a black rice as part of your diet? Sure, there can be.

Dave: Yeah. In fact it's one of the better grains, from that perspective. Yeah.

Mareya: Yeah, absolutely. So there are qualities of several grains that I mentioned. And all of the ones that I focus on in the book are gluten free. So gluten doesn't come into the fray in that category, it's really about being able to get a class of, and yes, you can get fiber from all kinds of different things. But why not? If it doesn't hurt, there is merit in getting that fiber and those minerals from a product that's inexpensive, that can supplement a well-rounded approach to eating.

Dave: Well, I mean, yeah. If it doesn't cause harm, there's nothing like a nice piece of toasty bread made from some kind of grain. I think it might cause harm for more people than not, but is that prepared right? And for certain people it's okay, right? And so I appreciate you calling that out, as well, where I would encourage everyone, go grain free for a little while, see how you do, and then add in one of the grains and see, did I grow a food baby? If so, it's probably worth noting.

Mareya: [crosstalk 00:47:01]

Dave: If you didn't get a food baby and you slept really well and you felt great, then, fantastic. That's probably compatible. So it's that experiment.

Mareya: Well, you just brought something up that I think is really important, is we just launched a program called Eat To Thrive. And it is a guided program that helps people navigate through the book in a little bit more detail. And in every section, I encourage people to write down how they feel. It's not just for the sake of busywork or homework. It's you really don't realize what triggers until you start notating it. I personally, TMI, maybe, but I have a really hard time with eating a lot of cruciferous vegetables. I mean, it just does not sit well with me.

Dave: You're not alone. A lot of people have a hard time. In fact the Viome test, Naveen's been on the show several times, he's a good friend. Full disclosure, I'm an investor advisor in the company. But they'll actually tell you, "Oh, you have a hard time digesting cruciferous vegetables." And if you're pounding the broccoli and cabbage every day because they're good for you and you're one of the people who don't have the bacteria that can handle that, you're probably not going to want to be the person to be in the car with after lunch. That's just how it works.

Mareya: Absolutely. Absolutely. [crosstalk 00:48:23]

Dave: And it's okay. It's okay to not eat those, if that's you, right?

Mareya: Totally. And you decide, okay, well maybe I can have them this way, or maybe I can't really have them. I mean, it's okay, there are a million other choices. It doesn't mean that you throw all of the vegetables out. But you find the ones that fit you and your needs and your digestion. And at the same time, you're making sure your gut health is in order. A big emphasis of this book is getting your gut health in order, because none of this all matters unless your digestion is working properly. So being able to give people something that they can sip on every day, like our vitality tonic. We have a real vitality tonic that's made with raw apple cider vinegar, ginger, cinnamon, and I encourage people to sip on something like that with their meals instead of drinking something cold, which can really slow down your digestion. So all of those little fun tips and tricks that I give throughout the book, and then in the program I ask people, as you're going through this, write down how you feel. Because if it's not sitting well, then try this, or try that. Vary it up. Try this at a different time of the day, for example. So that's where the personalization comes, and I think it's, if that doesn't come across, it's so critical. Because there is not one size fits all. I can't eat a lot of broccoli. It's a bummer, but [crosstalk 00:49:59].

Dave: That doesn't make you a bad person. It just means you know what works for you.

Mareya: My family will not be happy with me, and that's what I've discovered.

Dave: The idea of writing down how you feel after you eat is so important. One of the things that really helped me wake up to this is that, this is going back a ways. I really was focused on losing this 100 pounds of fat, and I'd find ways to lose 20 pounds, gain 30.

Lose 30, gain 40. The yo-yo thing happens. But I started in my notebooks at work, if I was really having a hard time paying attention in a meeting, I just couldn't concentrate. I felt like, why do I feel hungover? I'd just make a little notation in the margin. Oh. And then you go back. What did I eat?

Dave: And you realize, oh, there's a problem. So one of my favorite foods at the time was this local shop made gyro sandwiches that were just so addictively good. And, talk about umami, they had this great ranch dressing, which is just chock full of MSG. News flash, MSG for a lot of people trashes your brain function. And it certainly does for me. I eat that stuff, and it's like I'm useless. I just want to eat a lot of sugar and my brain doesn't work. So I was doing that at lunch, and on those days, the 2:00 thing, I don't care how much coffee I had. It was just, this heavy fog would settle in. But by noting that, oh, on those days I'd do it and it was remarkable. I ordered it without the sauce, and my brain worked. Who would have thought?

Mareya: Oh yeah. Yeah. I mean, that cognizance of little things. And, talk about, you figured out there was MSG in that dressing. Most people ...

Dave: Well if it's ranch dressing, the recipe for ranch dressing is MSG. You cannot make a ranch dressing, even the organic ranch dressing you get, they put hydrolyzed organic spice extracts. News flash, that's organic MSG.

Mareya: I have a great recipe for it in my book, by the way.

Dave: Oh sweet. Does it actually have that ranch flavor?

Mareya: It's got the best ranch flavor ever, so.

Dave: What do you use for the flavoring? Is it nutritional yeast, or ...?

Mareya: You have to look at the recipe in the book.

Dave: Well, come on, give us, what's the secret ingredient there? People are going to get the book just for that anyway.

Mareya: I mean, it's a blend. I think that it's the blend of the spices.

Dave: Okay.

Mareya: Maybe it's not exactly like the ranch that you get in a bottle. But it's pretty darn good.

Dave: I believe it. Salad dressings are such an art.

Mareya: So, you've got the onion powder. You've got the garlic. And I think all of that combined with this, I do use yogurt in that one, but it's a probiotic rich yogurt.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: And that really does make a difference.

Dave: Yeah, that's going to make it taste good. And for people who don't handle cow yogurt very well, even grass fed, sheep yogurt is oftentimes really compatible, the proteins in it work well.

Mareya: Yes, yes. Goat's milk, too. So I think you pinpointed that, and I think that's where we all owe it to ourselves to, I call it the language of labelese. Really kind of understanding what is in a label when you read it, because oftentimes it does look like a foreign language, and then you go out to eat, and then you really have no idea what they're putting in it. So starting there and understanding what the additives are out there. And I almost had to go to the hospital from an MSG attack at a restaurant that told me that there was no MSG in there. So if you're highly sensitive, really incumbent on you to do the homework and ask the questions.

Dave: One of the things that I discovered in my journey, and one of the things that really informs what I do at the Bulletproof Café in Santa Monica, is that if you look at a restaurant supply catalog, there are spice mixes that are 74% MSG by weight. And they are not required to be labeled as MSG. If they're 75% MSG, they're required. So the cheap spice companies will make a spice flavoring that's got a little bit of paprika for color or some garlic powder, and a ton of MSG, and it's not labeled that way. And so the restaurant owner who doesn't understand the idea that how food makes you feel is more important than how it tastes, but you have to hit both, but they'll actually look you straight in the eye and they'll say, "There's no MSG in here," because they looked at the label and it said no MSG.

Dave: But you still get the MSG hangover. That's why. And just understanding, maybe I don't know what's in there, but every time I eat that one thing at that one restaurant, especially the sauces, those are the ones that usually have it. And being familiar with some of what happens in restaurants, I was pretty strict in setting the standards for what I do in mine. And in your book, it's the same way. You know what's in the sauce because it's actually all food that's in the sauce. So I like it, that you pay attention there. But you do something else that I haven't talked about on the show ever before. I wanted to ask you about. You actually manufacture a fruit and veggie wash. What is up with that? Why should people pay attention to using a wash versus just cold water or something?

Mareya: Yeah. Oh, boy. I get so frustrated with every time there's an outbreak, too, I just want to scream. But so I created a line of products called Eat Cleaner, with my father. He's an environmental scientist. And he got bladder and prostate cancer and was told to avoid raw food in general, anything that was uncooked. Especially raw produce. Leafy greens in particular, because they are the number one cause of foodborne illness. Most people think that it's chicken or beef or eggs, and that's, they're not even in the top five.

Dave: I'm going to have to disagree with you about leafy greens being the top source of foodborne illness. It's industrial feedlot animals whose crap is sprayed on the greens that's the source of those bacteria.

Mareya: Oh no, sure. Sure. Yeah. This is the part that just slays me, that drives me crazy, is that we have not gotten to a point where we have a true kill step in the processing of our produce. And so when you buy a bagged head of lettuce that's been cut up, do you know your risk is actually higher of getting that harmful pathogenic bacteria than it is buying just a head of lettuce and washing it yourself?

Dave: Oh, hugely higher.

Mareya: Hugely high. So when my dad got cancer and his favorite food is salad, we were like, there's got to be a better way. And he, in his master's work, had created a system for chelating pesticide residue from fresh produce, and chelating is just a fancy word for lifting, something that's not water, something that's non water soluble. So we looked at his research, we looked at some of the food issues that were going on with these pathogens, why they were getting stuck in the crevices of produce and other foods. And just rinsing with water would not lift them. And we also noticed that there was a huge food waste problem growing, especially with fresh produce, so looking at all of those things, we created Eat Cleaner.

Mareya: And here's the truth. If I just rinse, I take a head of broccoli, or I take an apple and I stick it under the sink, the water's just going to splash over it. It's not going to do anything. Bacteria likes to hide in crevices and in the tissue of the produce. So rinsing with water, which, by the way, is not a cleanser, it doesn't clean anything, is really not going to cut it. And by the way, most of our produce is waxed, so if you're buying any sort of stone fruit, plums, apricots, peaches, it's all been waxed. Even lettuces are getting waxed now because our food is traveling all over the world, it's coming from 1500 miles away, on average, they need it to last longer. So this film of wax that's getting applied also, by the way, if you have a dairy allergy, you need to be aware that there are dairy allergens in some of the waxes that are being used.

Mareya: So all of that to say, the additives, the waxes, the pesticides, the bacteria, if you're just splashing it under the sink with water, guess what? It's not doing anything. And we wanted to make produce healthier, we wanted to be able to take a lot of that risk away. Mitigating your risk is key when it comes to processing anything that's raw, so Eat Cleaner is lab proven to reduce that impact by over 99.9%. And it's been done over and over and over again, including institutions like universities that have proven its validity. But get people to try and use it is another story. And I don't know what it is, Dave. It's one of those things where we have this complacency, so much with our food. And we just assume that when it's coming to us, it's safe and it's ready to eat. And if produce is supposed to be a big part of our every day and we're eating a lot more raw produce, shouldn't we think about how it's been handled and processed a little bit more?

Dave: About maybe three, four years ago, I had a salad in Phoenix. And the next day, man, I'm like, okay, this is not the same as street grade MCT oil, as opposed to the good brain octane that I make.

Mareya: Yeah.

Dave: I had just, 10 times a day, sprint to the bathroom and hope you make it. And I went to three different GI doctors, and I started having weird, bizarre dreams. I mean, I was really uncomfortable. And no one could figure out what it was. They looked at these samples, and it was like a four month problem, from a damn salad. And eventually I went to New York City, at the referral from a friend, to an 80 plus year old expert in tropical diseases. He says, "Ah, let's figure out what this is. Let me get out my microscope." And he looked at it. His name was Dr. Cahill. And he said, "Oh, here you go. You've got these two parasites, including this one that if you weren't healthy would punch through your gut lining and move into your brain. And you've got giardia. And that's probably been there for a long time." And funny, the stool samples didn't pick any of that up.

Dave: Okay, this is from, this is four months of feeling like crap and having a brain that didn't work as well while growing a company, from lettuce. And what he said was, "Look, when people just first come to the US, the worst job in a kitchen is, you have to be there at 3:00 AM, and you slice up the vegetables for the day. So oftentimes people who might have been in the country for a month, and they may be carrying parasites from the country. Oftentimes they're from tropical countries," this is his area of expertise, and he said, "And it's an unconscious, unaware. No one's doing anything on purpose here, but all it takes is one little mistake and you were just unfortunate, you got some of that."

Dave: If that had been, the lettuce had been washed, no restaurants wash it, they just hose it down if you're lucky, with water.

Mareya: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Dave: But that was really unfortunate. But for me, I'm grateful that he said, "Here's the pharmaceutical that's going to fix it," and three days after I took that pharmaceutical, yay, go pharma, I was fine again. And all the natural herbal everything, and I know a lot, nothing touched it.

Mareya: Nothing worked.

Dave: That's why washing your produce or, this is going to sound crazy, just cooking your vegetables will solve the problem, but no one likes a stir fried salad. It's just not the same.

Mareya: Yeah, I mean, you know, all you have to do, and I'm so sorry that that happened to you. It's so frustrating, because you want to do the right thing, so of course you're going to choose something that you perceive to be a healthier choice. But the truth is, we have all of these handling questions, we have [inaudible 01:02:01] questions, we have runoff from [inaudible 01:02:06] that are running into our farms questions. We have no kill step, we have processing facilities that are processing just gobs, I mean literally tons and tons and tons of produce through. And, this is, somebody's going to get mad at me for saying this, but I'm just going to tell you because I know. Through a flume that has really, all it has basically is chlorine in a very small amount, and just the massive amount

of produce that's going through there, there's just no way that it can come out clean on the other end.

Mareya: So I think it's a big missed opportunity. I've dedicated the last 10 years to Eat Cleaner and bringing awareness to this subject. It's not a sexy one. But until you get sick, until you're in a position like you, or somebody that gets kidney failure because they've had a romaine lettuce salad, or they end up in the emergency room because the kale that they got in their juice at their local juice bar was contaminated with listeria or E. coli or salmonella or any one of those. I mean, until that happens, I don't think it really hits people. You know?

Dave: When they sequence the genes of the bacteria that's making people sick from salad, it's always from cattle who are fed lots of antibiotics and got an antibiotic resistant bacteria that then contaminates the water that then contaminates the soil that then gets into the lettuce. Or it can come from people, but it's always the species that went through that problem in our food chain, which is why I just tell everyone, don't eat industrially raised meat. Be a vegan instead of eating that, and very soon we'll stop making that stuff because no one will touch it. But it's also affecting your salad.

Dave: And there's a cost saving tip that I just love to offer people. Decide to buy a whole head of lettuce and wash it properly, and you'll save so much money that, oh, in a month or two, you can afford to buy a \$90 chef's knife. A really nice one that stays sharp forever. And there's something incredibly satisfying as a chef, and yeah, I've also written a cookbook, and my way of expressing art is either writing books or in the kitchen. I'll tell you, having a really good knife and a good cutting board and cutting stuff, it actually feels good to go through a head of lettuce.

Mareya: Oh, yeah.

Dave: And if you're somebody that just bought a bag to save five minutes, you actually increased your cost, reduced your likelihood of being healthy, you didn't get food that was as fresh, and if you're going to have the head of lettuce, you can then use an appropriate wash, like the one you make on it. So now you've got a salad that tastes better, it felt good to make it, and you can rinse your nice \$90 knife off and it'll be in its own little shrine in your kitchen when you realize how good a good knife feels in your hands.

Mareya: 100%. I mean, that goes back to the whole psyche of preparing your own food and having a connection with it. I mean, I know, have you tried our products? You've tried our products, right?

Dave: Yeah, I've tried the vegetable wash. Yeah.

Mareya: Eat Cleaner, yeah. When you see the difference in how your food tastes and looks after you've washed it, and what is left in the bowl, it's amazing. I mean, I often will do, if I do a demonstration and then I wash it and you see all of this horrible residue, nasty stuff in there. And I'll pour it into a cup and I'll say to people, "Would you like to take a sip?"

And they look at me like I'm crazy, and I'm like, well, you basically just ate it. You know? What's the difference between sipping it?

Dave: Yeah. It's true. I have to say, I do get to cheat because when I'm at home, we grow all of our own vegetables in a garden that has nothing bad in it. So I'll pick a piece of lettuce right off the plant and I'll eat it, and I got nothing going on in there except whatever bacteria were supposed to be there. But that is, unless you're a backyard gardener and you know where your soil came from, you probably don't want to do that.

Mareya: Yeah. I mean, you know, and that's great. You still want to wash it, though, and I'll tell you why. Because sometimes you will get rodents that do their business.

Dave: Snails and birds.

Mareya: Sometimes you'll get, yeah, birds and all of that. So I still encourage people who are gardening to still wash it properly. You know, at the end of the day, it's again mitigating your risk. But I couldn't agree with you more. There's nothing more satisfying and more delicious than growing your own. Best possible scenario. Growing your own, washing it, preparing it, and then eating it with the people you love, to me is like the perfect union of all, of all.

Dave: Yeah. That does make your food taste better. Well, Mareya, I've got one more question for you in our interview today. And given that you've learned so much about how to eat in a way that works for your body, and you're very health conscious and all, how long do you think you can live? What's your upper limit with what you know today?

Mareya: My son made a comment to me the other day, because I turned 50 this year and I'm getting married next year.

Dave: Congratulations.

Mareya: Thank you. And he said to me, "You're just entering into the second half of life. You're going to live to be at least 100." And I said, "100? What about 110, 120?"

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: Like, oh. He goes, "Can you live that long?" And I was like, "Sure, people live that long." And then we were talking about blue zones and stuff. And, you know, I will say, I would love to at least be 100 in a healthy state.

Dave: Oh yeah.

Mareya: Where my mind is functioning. Would it be great to live to 120 if I could get to see my great great grandchildren but I still have my wherewithal, you know? Still have my bodily functions? Of course. But not if that's compromised.

Dave: So then, you've got to tell your son, no, it's not the second half of your life. For me, I'm about three years younger than you. I just celebrated my 26% birthday.

Mareya: I love it. Yes. That's what I'm going to start saying.

Dave: Yeah. Bump that number up a little bit, because if that's your goal, you'll unconsciously do some things to make it more likely to happen, and even if you don't hit your goal, you'll probably have a highly functioning brain and body for a lot longer than if you don't do anything. So your book and taking care of your produce and just taking care of your body, all those are part of the things that are going to get you there. At least I believe so. So thank you for writing it.

Mareya: Thank you. And I really, if I can just give a little shout out.

Dave: Sure.

Mareya: To my grandfather. My grandfather lived to be 93 years old, and he, until maybe four months before he passed away, I was living with him in Egypt and we were walking to the market about half a mile away, and he was carrying, and I'll never forget this image, two huge watermelons. One in each hand, coming back from the market. And I was like, [Arabic 01:09:23] means grandfather in Arabic, let me carry one of the watermelons for you. That's too heavy. And he said, "No. This is my exercise, and I need one in each hand to keep me balanced." And I will never forget just the vibrant light that he was and how he ate, he knew so much about nutrition. He's the one that really introduced the whole concept to me. And keeping fit, keeping his brain exercised, and he was just the model to me of what a balanced life looked like. And that is all I could hope for.

Dave: We can learn a lot from our elders, and one of the secret strategies behind why I wrote Super Human was that I would like there to be more elders around who have brains that work and have lots of energy so that I can learn from them so that I'll make less mistakes. Because I'm tired of making mistakes, so I want to learn from people 20, 40, 50 years older than me who can say, "You young whippersnapper, you've got to do this different." Because maybe they're right.

Mareya: I love that. Yeah. He would tell stories like they happened yesterday.

Dave: Yeah.

Mareya: He would talk to me about meeting my grandmother, and in profuse detail. The scent she was wearing, the color of the ribbons in her hair. What they drank that day. The temperature of the air. I mean, it's like the detail and the beauty of it just takes me to another place. But I agree with you, we need more elders around that can influence the next generation in a positive way.

Dave: Well, you and I are working on developing our wisdom so we can be those elders some day. You share yours not just in your book, but you also have a Facebook Live show

called The Real Dish, which has become real popular. But the best place to find you and find all of your stuff is eatcleaner.com, if I have that right.

Mareya: Yep, that's it. Eatcleaner.com. We have all of our products and programs and the book, and a podcast also for people to listen to called Recipes For Your Best Life. And just the wisdom, for whatever it's worth, of being in this food world for a very, very long time, trialing it, guinea pigging it, testing it on other people, and at the end of the day, it is about bringing people together. I always say, #sharingiscaring. But the more we can share good food and this kind of wisdom, like what you've put into this world, and I've always been a huge fan of yours, so thank you for that.

Dave: Thanks, Mareya. I appreciate you coming on the show. Keep sharing your work with the world, and I think people are finally just waking up to the fact that if you do some things better in your food, you'll be nicer to other people and it's a long standing multi decade mission, but eventually we're going to make the big food companies behave themselves so they'll stop selling us crap.

Mareya: Yeah.

Dave: Have a wonderful, wonderful day. Keep doing what you do.

Mareya: Thank you, Dave.