

Nutrition Upgrade: How To Be Food Flexible and Wild – Teri Cochrane & Mareya Ibrahim – #951

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to the Human Upgrade with Dave Asprey, formerly Bulletproof Radio.

Dave:

Today's guest, Teri Cochrane, she is an integrative practitioner and she has a methodology called the Cochrane Method, which looks at biochemistry, nutrition, genetic tendencies, herbs and counseling to figure out custom things that work when other people don't. And she's written a book called *The Wildatarian Diet: Living As Nature Intended*. So we're going to talk today about how what you eat turns your genes on or off. We're talking about epigenetics and nutrigenomics and how things that you might have heard me refer to earlier, wild caught, wild fed proteins lead to better health, starting at your molecules, starting at your cells and moving on up. We're also going to go deep on some of the cool biochemical reactions you don't know about in your body. Teri, welcome to the show.

Teri Cochrane:

Oh, Dave, it's so great to be with you and your audience.

Dave:

What happens? What made you learn about this?

Teri:

Well, the trajectory to a great discovery sometimes starts with a limiting belief system when someone tells you that your child will never be normal, will not grow past five foot four, and will live with brain seizures most of his life. And when you hear that kind of information flood into your ears and then into your nervous system, it's quite a shock, of course. I made the determination that he would not be one of those statistics, that I would be that mother that was going to try to figure it out.

Dave:

Mareya Ibrahim. Mareya, welcome to the show.

Mareya Ibrahim:

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

Dave:

Why did we need a book about eating clean?

Mareya:

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:

So how's your son? What happened?

Teri:

Well, the boy that couldn't, they said he would not be normal and they were right. He became superhuman. What we found was when we uncovered his underlying root causes, he became a gold medalist at the Junior Olympics in karate, a national champion. He was the valediction speaker at his school. He was on a full academic ride at University of Virginia.

Dave:

We can call you a proud mom, so [inaudible 00:03:58].

Teri:

Oh, just a little bit.

Dave:

High five, mom.

Teri:

Thank you.

Dave:

Now, it turns out that what you were feeding your son was a major variable here. How'd you figure that out?

Teri:

Absolutely. I became this rabid researcher. I'm a risk manager. I was a risk manager, as you mentioned, for multiple billions of dollars of assets. And I soon became a risk manager for his health. And this was before... Google wasn't even around. The internet was just starting, almost 20 years ago. And so I went to libraries and I interviewed parents. I interviewed anyone I could get a hold of. But the one tipping point, and we hit that tipping point with a mountain of books on my kitchen table, it was food allergies and allergy connection with food.

And I realized that the standard American diet that I was feeding my son, although it was organic, I was feeding him peanuts every day. I'll talk about the, I call a peanut the devil on steroids, major aflatoxin, which is a mycotoxin on steroids. We were feeding him wheat, which has glyphosates, as we now know, which are so deleterious because of the Roundup that's sprayed on the wheat crops. We were feeding him a lot of citrus and orange juice, which is sugar, which feeds the streptococcus and the candida that was so living in his body, because he was given a regular dose of 60 milligrams of prednisone for a three year old. So-

Dave:

That's a heavy duty dose for an adult.

Teri:

It is. He was like Spider-Man. We had to pull him off the walls. He was so really jacked up.

Dave:

And it's, especially 20 years ago, if you told someone, "What I eat, changes how I feel," they would tell you were stupid and paranoid.

Mareya:

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. 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 hung over 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:

How do you coach people to know how or where to draw the line?

Mareya:

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. So where I start with people is a taste bud reset. 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. 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 this stuff added on, you explore a different side of what you love.

Teri:

And Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, and then many books beyond that, said that we were a bunch of walking corn sticks. And I take that one step further. I say we're a bunch of walking mold sticks, because corn effectively translates to mold. And then as you talked about the glyphosate, the glyphosate deleterious on so many levels, because one of the other things that it has done to us is that it has inhibited our body's ability to produce the gut bacteria, which breaks down oxalates, which has a tie-in to mycotoxins. Therefore, exacerbating our situation with all things mold and myotoxic.

Dave:

Can you define what amyloids are for people? And then I want you to talk about your system view of mycotoxin stress, amyloids, and just inflammatory foods. But first, what is amyloid?

Teri:

Amyloid is a misfolded protein. Actually, we have amyloids in our body. And when our body is in balance, it becomes part of our homeostatic mechanism, meaning we those amyloids in check are part of our eating aware inflammatory responses. However, we have now hit a tipping point on a misfolded protein structure coming from our food supply. And the biggest offender of that is, according to studies out of Cambridge and Japan, chicken. I have now deemed chicken, the dirty bird. Chicken in its tissue, because of its crowding conditions, carries the highest amyloid count. And Dave, I will tell you, we are so, in my practice with all the clinical outcomes, we had a Type 1 diabetic. We were able to reduce his insulin by almost 90% and rid his, of his osteomyelitis within four weeks. He had one meal of chicken and his blood sugar increased by 200 points for four days.

But also, turkey and pork, they carry these truncated protein structures. What's so interesting about these amyloids is that they're now being linked to contributing to autoimmune disease, to Type 1 diabetes, to kidney disease, to Alzheimer's, to Parkinson's. And the dirty little secret is that we now know that the mycotoxins and the biofilm that they produce feed the amyloids. Well, why are amyloids so deleterious? It's because the viruses in our body use the amyloids to protect their protein coating. I'm calling it the ping pong effect. Biofilm for the microtoxins make amyloids. And guess what? Amyloids feed biofilm. And then the viruses hide inside the biofilm.

Mareya:

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. 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've 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.

Dave:

How do you be plant-based without making nutrient depleted soil, Teri?

Teri:

That's a really good question, Dave. Well, one of the things we can do is getting back to our smaller gardens, going back to community gardens, going back to those-

Dave:

Hold on. Don't you have to put animal poop in the soil, in your community garden?

Teri:

Well, you know what's really interesting, Dave, is I visited Polyface Farms and the work of Joel Salatin. I went to his Lunatics Tour.

Dave:

He's been on the show, a while back.

Teri:

Fantastic. He took a decimated piece of property and created a utopian society for little happy animals. And he did it with their poop.

Dave:

Yeah. And so I don't think we can support a plant-based diet. I think it's actually environmentally harmful. And there's those people that are saying, "Oh, I'm just going to eat plants." We're almost out of the nitrogen we mine to feed you at those plants. The only way we can get that is by rotating our crops and having animals come through between the crops and crap on the ground.

Teri:

That's a really brilliant statement. And what I do know, and what I believe, it's not been proven yet, is this methane that they're saying from the hooved animals, well, how is it now that we're producing so much methane when they have been on the planet for millennia? My theory is they're eating indigestible food. When we can't digest our food, what do we do? We produce methane. Feed them what they were intended to eat and the methane concentrations will go down. They're meant to be herbivores. And corn is not considered to be healthy for them on any level.

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. Making sure you're eating, if you're going to eat vegetables, choose greens. Greens give us the most nutrient dense 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, its greens, as far as the vegetable category goes.

Teri:

You know what was really interesting? They did a study with mice, is that you fed them amyloids. The mice became super inflamed. And then they died. You stopped feeding the amyloids to the mice and the amyloids were gone in their little bodies. And so there's so much nutritional beauty in how we can resolve chronic conditions in our country if we focus on the food. It's the alpha and the omega. I say, if you can do everything else right and get the food wrong, you're still not going to get it right.

Dave:

So the things that cause amyloids, one of them is mycotoxins, because these, even at parts per billion level of mold toxins, cause tissues in humans and animals to become inflamed, which causes amyloid production, okay? And what hasn't been clear until, you've really been the guiding voice on this, you're saying, "Now, these amyloids are there. What are they doing besides just keeping your tissues from being flexible? Oh, they're making the viral load worse."

Teri:

Indeed. Indeed. We have done so much great work, Dave, on identifying these reactivation of viruses. When people have been diagnosed with end stage cancer, or infertility, or MS, or Hashimoto's, and you look at their viral load, you make them wild. You stop feeding the amyloid structures. You lower their mycotoxin proportions in their body. You feed them the right fats, depending on their genetic blueprint, to see how much fat they can assimilate. And these situations resolve over, and over, and over again. The body is highly intelligent and wants to be in balance.

Mareya:

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 thing, too. And you can combine things to get there as well. 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 are all in different phases of our lives.

You, Dave, need different nutrients than I do, as a female. We have different activity levels. 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, we're 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 life changer. 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." 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:

Well, what do you eat if you don't have access at some restaurant to grass-fed meat? What are your choices?

Teri:

That's a really good question. So I gravitate towards lamb. I really like lamb. In the restaurants, you can find some lamb. Love it. Lamb, the conjugated linoleic acid, my brain food, baby. I love that stuff.

Dave:

I just go outside and take a bite of the lambs [inaudible 00:19:27].

Teri:

Lamb sushi!

Dave:

Lamb on the cob, I like to call it.

Teri:

Lamb on the cob. If you have what I call the least worst options, right? So chicken, I will never put on my plate anymore. I know too much about it. I haven't had it in two years. Not one stick of chicken.

Dave:

I haven't had it in 10 years. I don't eat that crap.

Teri:

I love it. I got to put you in my next book.

Dave:

Well, you can feel a difference. Seriously, if you go on a chicken-free diet for a while and then just go pound some chicken and feel what... Just look at your love handles the next morning. It's very obvious.

Teri:

Very obvious. So what I usually try to do is I'll try to go with fish. Fish tends to be generally safer. I won't do black beans, but if you have a lentil soup, even though it's a little bit got mycotoxin. So as I look at what the hierarchy of needs is that food constituent, lentils will also afford me some B12, which is really important for my methylation genes. And it'll also give me some good iron. And it's got a lot of good fibers. So sometimes we make the least worst choices.

Dave:

Got it. So you'll eat lentils at a restaurant if you have to, but they're not your first choice.

Teri:

They're not my first choice. Usually, it's going to be fish or lamb.

Dave:

If you go to a restaurant that's a decent restaurant, you can usually find a piece of fish.

Teri:

Yes, absolutely.

Dave:

Now, here's the hard question. Will you eat a piece of farmed salmon?

Teri:

Wow. Okay. It depends on how hungry I am.

Dave:

Good answer. I'm the same way.

Teri:

I will eat it if I'm really starving and I've been in a conference for several days and I'm still going to get something. And what it's going to do, what really kicks my patookus? Oxalates, chicken amyloids and sulfur. Those three are my non-negotiables.

Mareya:

Well, you just brought something up that I think is really important. 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 busy work 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.

Dave:

Right. 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.

Dave:

You talk about something that's super out there. And you talk about the relationship between your words and your food.

Teri:

Oh, yes.

Dave:

Walk me through that.

Teri:

Okay. Well, we're beginning to see that the emerging science of vibrational everything, we vibrate at certain frequencies. Every thought we think, every word that leaves our mouth has a vibrational frequency. If we have, and this is studies out of University of Pennsylvania and other universities that are showing, and of course, the work of Dispenza, Joe Dispenza, who's become an international phenomenon, is that when we entertain thoughts of, "I don't want to eat this food. I'm going to eat this

and it's going to make me fat. Why the heck do I have to cook this meal? I didn't want to cook this meal," you were imparting a low vibration into the thinking, which then carries an energetic frequency, which will then potentially lower the nutrient vibrancy of that food.

And also when we are mad, upset, the pituitary can't signal for the stomach to make hydrochloric acid. So guess what? We're not going to digest our food that well. And so there's multiple effects that are happening on the body, biochemically and energetically. And so we say your words and your thoughts have a direct impact on the bioavailability of the foods that you are eating. And words can be, in a way, poison to us. And thoughts can be poison as well.

Mareya:

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.

If I can just give a little shout out 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, "Gidu," gidu 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 looks like. And that is all I could hope for.

Dave:

Coming up on the end of our interview, Teri, and your book is called Wildatarian Diet. Your website is TeriCochrane.com, T-E-R-I C-O-C-H-R-A-N-E.com. And thanks for walking us through that very important understanding of how mold in our food and in our environment creates bacterial biofilms. It creates amyloids, that creates viral load, that creates an inflammation that starts the cycle again. No one has ever elucidated that on the show. And it's important, so thank you.

Teri:

Thank you. My great pleasure. You're welcome. Great to see you.

Mareya:

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 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 have to thank you for that.

Dave:

Thanks, Mareya. I appreciate you coming on the show. Keep sharing your work with the world and have a wonderful, wonderful day. Keep doing what you do.