

THE MISSING LINK



Jackie Zofkie

Nathan Crane:

Hello, everybody, welcome. I'm Nathan Crane, director of the Health and Healing Club, and the host of the Conquering Cancer series. I'm excited you're joining us today for this really inspiring interview with Jackie Zofkie. Jackie received a stage three invasive breast cancer diagnosis in 2014, went through an incredible healing journey, and has since become an integrative nutrition health coach and a holistic cancer coach, helping others who are going through a cancer diagnosis and cancer journey. We're going to dive in today into her own healing story, what protocols she followed, what changes she made in her life, what she did to help heal from cancer, the challenges, the struggles, and the successes.

We want to know all of it, Jackie. Thank you for joining us. Thank you for being here to share your story. I appreciate you saying yes to this.

Jackie Zofkie:

Thank you so much. I really appreciate and feel honored and humbled at the same time for being here.

Nathan Crane:

So let's go back to 2014. You were diagnosed. What was that experience like for you? Walk us through that, if you would. You went into the oncologist's office, how did they diagnose it? Was it a routine checkup? Were you having symptoms? Can you take us through that, if you don't mind?

Jackie Zofkie:

Sure. Well, for over the years, for probably about a decade, I had been going for mammograms because of the age and a lot of the things that people were recommending. And I had a lot of lumps and bumps, and they would go away. They seemed to be in line with my cycle and they would go away. And then this one was a little bit different because this one seemed to make some changes visually as well as it was tangible. And so I had decided I would go for a

THE MISSING LINK

thermogram. So I went and I got a thermogram, and the thermogram results showed a lot of vascular activity right to the area of where I had that physical lump.

So we decided, the doctor and I, to go and get an ultrasound. And the ultrasound told me that it was benign, it was nothing. Well, then my doctor went away for about three weeks and she was consulting with her colleagues and came back and said, "It's not nothing. We need to get this checked." So she suggested I go back for a mammogram. So I did. So I got the mammogram and they told me I was fine. And I argued in my little white and pink gown, and I really wanted to walk out that door, but I knew that there was something because I had seen those images.

So I went ahead and the tech heard what I had to say, went back and the radiologist did another couple of slides, came back and they told me I was fine. And I was muttering all the way out of the door. About three or four hours later, they called me back and they said, "The radiologist decided to talk with his colleague and they decided to send you for an MRI just to be sure, nothing suspicious."

Nathan Crane:

That's a lot of testing, a lot of scans in a very short amount of time.

Jackie Zofkie:

Yes.

Nathan Crane:

That had to be pretty scary too.

Jackie Zofkie:

Yes. Essentially, it was like from October when I had the thermogram, the end of October is when I got the results. Beginning of November was the ultrasound, right before Thanksgiving was the mammogram, and then the beginning of the month of December was when they had suggested I go for an MRI. So there was just a lot of ups and downs, a lot of ups and downs for sure, and my emotional and mental state at the same time. The MRI results came back and I went to go pick up the results, because my doctor's office somehow didn't get them, and I picked them up. And of course I'm a bottom line person, so I was like, "Blah, blah," first couple of pages, "Give me the bottom line."

And sure enough, in all caps, it said, "Highly suspicious of malignancy." There it is. So from that, I left the city of where I am and I went to Columbus, Ohio, and I sought doctors there, and they went ahead and they reviewed everything and they said, "Let's do a biopsy." December 19th is when I got that call that no one wants to get from their doctor stating that it was invasive lobular carcinoma.

THE MISSING LINK

Nathan Crane:

And what'd you do from there? Had you already been steeped into a more natural lifestyle? Was this brand new for you in terms of discovering what you wanted to do to help shift your life, your diet, all these things? What were the next steps for you? But what was your mindset from that point as well?

Jackie Zofkie:

Well, I had already been on a pretty intensive healing journey probably about two or three years before that. I went ahead and decided to be a vegan, so I had eliminated the dairies and the meats and just was really intense on a plant-based diet, and also increasing exercise.

Nathan Crane:

What led you to that—

Jackie Zofkie:

Actually, it was through a prayer. I wanted to go and I went through the Daniel Fast and when I had been finished with that three-week process, I decided I liked how I felt and I decided to go ahead and create that into a more of a lifestyle in hopes of staying well.

Nathan Crane:

Were you struggling with your health at that point and that led you to that? Were you feeling other health challenges you were dealing with before then as well, or no?

Jackie Zofkie:

Not really. There was a time probably maybe 10 years before that, that I was going through a very traumatic life change at that point, and so a lot of levels were a little bit off. But then once I got healed from that experience, then it seemed to be okay. And so this was just one of those things where I felt like I was just fine-tuning what I thought was already a good, healthy point, which I've learned was not necessarily the case. Because I felt fine, and that was the thing. I felt fine, I looked fine, my lab work every year was fine. It was just really something that I was glad that I was doing the monthly checks and then decided to go ahead and get the thermogram for sure.

Because I say, and I know some people have found mammogram has been helpful for them, but for me, I say that thermogram actually saved my life because mammograms and ultrasounds failed me because they passed me.

Nathan Crane:

Well, that is powerful because mammograms actually can spread cancer, we know that. Thermography though is super safe. If you have a lump and then you do thermography and you see that it's highly inflamed, it's highly suspicious, it's got a lot of vascular activity there, it's very

THE MISSING LINK

likely that it is cancerous. It's very likely the angiogenesis has occurred, and which is why you're seeing all that vascular activity in that place of the lump. You can almost use thermography and say, "Well, look, if this is this level of scans showing this level of vascular activity, it's pretty, pretty likely that you should be doing something right now about it. Especially the things you can do that have low to no side effects that are diet and lifestyle changes."

And we know cancer can take years to show up in the body, and actually, it can be forming for five, seven, 10, 12 years in the background before it actually becomes diagnosed or actually turns into a tumor that you can measure, that you can feel. This process is happening in most people's life for years. This is really well understood in the scientific community. And so it's interesting that you were already changing your diet for a couple years up to that point, exercising more, getting healthier. So then you got the positive result. They said, "Yes, it is cancerous." Then what'd you do from there?

Jackie Zofkie:

Well, that was a shock, I have to admit. Because even though I knew it based on what I had seen, what the thermography results were, nobody still wants to believe it. And so I became very assertive. In fact, I had come to my family and I said, very frankly, "Look, here's the thing, you guys are all going to be dealing with things." Because at that point, I had a son in high school and I had two that were in college, and I have stepchildren as well. And I said, "Look it, here's the deal. You guys are going to need to deal with this, but I don't want to see anyone crying. I'm sure you're going to cry, I'm sure you're going to have these moments and I will help you find your support network, but I can't deal with that. I'm going to need you to be like a warrior with me."

And I didn't want to look at it as a war because I don't like when I hear people say, "Oh, they lost their battle with cancer." That's setting someone up for such defeat on so many different levels, but I want to be a warrior. There's something very powerful about that. And so that's basically what I said. And I surrounded myself with all kinds of people who were going to be willing to support me in that fashion.

Nathan Crane:

So smart.

Jackie Zofkie:

I had several of my friends that were like, "Okay, I know it's December and January and February, but we're going to walk." And we bundled up. We couldn't even see each other. We had to yell, even though we were next to each other because we couldn't hear over our hats and gloves, but it was one of those things where I was so grateful for them because they really helped me and provided that support that I needed. And of course now, everything that I've

THE MISSING LINK

learned about breast cancer and just the lack of support that oftentimes women feel or the lack of connection that leads to that diagnosis, I realized just what I really needed.

And I think that was the thing for me, was finding out what was the root cause. Where did this come from? It wasn't something that really ran in my family. I had like two cousins and an aunt that had cancer, no one else in my family had cancer. So just recognizing those things, like what you said, Nathan, as far as like the thermography. Had I had thermography years before, they may have been able to see some of that inflammation and been able to give me some of those tools that could have reversed or delayed it even further. So those are some of the things that I guess I did.

And then I just started on this war path where I was like, "Okay, what do I need to do?" And of course it's very overwhelming when you get that diagnosis, especially right before Christmas. There's a lot of fear, there's a lot of angst, there's a lot of anger for me because I was frustrated because of the changes I had been making. Yet at the same time, I was like, "All right, I know that there's going to be some good that's going to come out of this. I don't know what and I can't see it right now." But like I say to people, getting that gift of cancer was one of the best gifts I got because I learned how to finally live by almost dying.

And it is like pretty powerful to have that, and I'm grateful for that. If you would've asked me this in 2014, 2015, that would never have been my response.

Nathan Crane:

I can imagine. It takes time. There's a grieving process, there's an acceptance process. We just had an incredible interview with Kute Blackson, who's a part of this series. I encourage people to go listen to. That is so powerful. And he talks about basically radical acceptance, it's going beyond acceptance into surrender. When his mother was diagnosed and he wanted her to do everything natural and change her diet and lifestyle and all these things that he knew would help her, and she didn't want to do any of it. And he was so frustrated, and it was so challenging for him, and they were butting heads.

And here she is dying, told she has a very short time left to live. Here he is trying to help her survive, and she doesn't want to do any of that. And so he got to a point where he grieved through that, totally accepted, and even surrendered to his mother's wishes. And he said that last year with her was the best year of his life. Because of that surrender, he got into just deep love, deep, profound love for his mother and spent so much quality time with her, and he says it was the best thing that ever happened. And she did pass away. She went through conventional treatment, she did chemotherapy, and she didn't survive it. Which was very sad to hear.

But getting to that place of just total... She completely surrendered to the fact that she was going to die and she accepted it, and she was in total peace about it, she wasn't afraid of it. She's like,

THE MISSING LINK

"I know my soul's going to live on, whatever life it goes into and to the next, I really believe that and I totally am at peace." And so once he got at peace as well, then they just had the most beautiful experiences. Oh my gosh, his story is so heart touching, so heartwarming. And as you're saying, if you're just recently diagnosed, you're not going to feel that way.

I've gone through a lot of health challenges in my own life, you have a health challenge going on. In that moment, it's really hard to go, "All right, this is a gift." But it's later on. If you can stay open minded though, is where I found in my own health challenges over the years of like, "Okay, why is this here? What's causing this? What am I to learn from this?" Even if I don't find peace with it just yet or fully appreciate it or love it or find that gift in it just yet I believe that I will. And so, what's going to help me find that gift in it? Well, what's it here for? What's it to teach me? How can I learn from this? How can I improve? What's causing it?

What did you discover in yourself that you feel caused your breast cancer?

Jackie Zofkie:

Sure. Actually, that's the one thing that I had worked with Dr. Silverstein, who is my holistic cancer coach. And she had asked me, "Why did you get sick?" I was like, "Oh, I don't know." At first I didn't, and then as I worked with her, she reminded me that cancer comes to deliver a message to the recipient and it's up to the recipient to determine what that is and to choose to heed that message or not. And when she said that to me, I spent obviously a lot of time reflecting, like, "Where did this come from? Why do I have it?" And the bottom line for me was I realized that there were a lot of toxic emotions that I was clinging to and hanging onto and feeling sad and bitter and unable to fully release those, and it paid a price.

And that's why one of the things that I work with people is just about that incredible amount of emphasis on relationships and the healthy connections that we can have in those emotions and how stress and the thoughts that we keep... That's why I tell people, it's amazing how the thoughts can keep you well or encourage illness. And we get to choose those thoughts. Sometimes I have to say out loud, "Okay, not today. We're not going to have that thought today," because they'll sneak in. Let's face it, there are going to be challenges that we're all going to face. And when it's a health challenge, even through that process, I had to tell myself like, "No, we're not going there. Nope. We're not going to go there because we can't, that's not going to serve us well. And we have to find a way to like deal with it."

Someone once told me that it takes 90 seconds for the human to feel an emotion fully, to allow the body the chance to experience that without judgment, without wondering where this came from or blame, but to allow the body that time. And then the body feels supported, it feels comforted. And then it doesn't have to keep it. The body keeps the score as they say, and if you're just compiling all of these things, it becomes a toxic load. And ultimately for me, it wound up in a tumor.

THE MISSING LINK

Nathan Crane:

Yeah. It's such a common story. So many women that I've interviewed, even with breast cancer, and I ask, they say, "Well, I was stressed out. I was pushing myself too hard. I wasn't taking care of myself enough, and I know that's what led to the cancer, certainly contributed to it." And scientifically, we also know that's true. We know that an imbalance in hormone production in the body in men and women through stress, through fear, anger, anxiety, even these low grade resentments or subconscious belief systems or trauma that happened to us when we were younger, these things store in the body energetically, but they store in the body physiologically at a cellular level that literally can break down the DNA and lead to cancer.

So that's why, when you say it's a gift, you say, "What's the message in it? What's this here to teach me?" It is a lesson, it is a gift, it is an opportunity. And we can find those answers. It doesn't always mean we're going to completely heal from it, but it could bring us to a deeper sense of deep appreciation and love and happiness and at least peace in our lives. Which I think all of us are looking for at some level, in addition to being healthy and vital and feeling good. After your prognosis, they recommend surgery, chemo, radiation. Did you do conventional therapy? What did you do if so?

Jackie Zofkie:

Sure. I did like a hybrid, I guess you'd call it, because I did decide to agree to a bilateral mastectomy. And they did do a full axillary dissections, which means they removed lymph nodes underneath one of my arms, because it was the left side that was affected and they removed 47. There were nine lymph nodes that were affected of the 47 that they removed. And then I did one dose of chemo, and I honestly didn't want to, my heart of hearts was telling me that wasn't really an avenue meant for me, but I did for one reason or another. Literally, it was about 10 days after, I was in a hospital bed and I was not doing well at all—

Nathan Crane:

On one dose?

Jackie Zofkie:

One dose. Just one dose. And it was the red devil [Doxorubicin (Adriamycin)], is what they called it. And literally, within minutes of it going up through my hand and my arm, my arm began to turn red and itch, and I was asking what was going on there. And they're like, "Oh, that's normal. That's fine. That happens sometimes." And in my mind, I'm like, "I think my body's rejecting this right now. I think I'm having another reaction." And I believe that was the case because the levels that were supposed to go up went down and vice versa. And so my body was essentially going, "What is going on? This woman has done nothing but treat us well and now she just infused us with this?"

THE MISSING LINK

So while I was in that hospital bed, it was just me and God. And it was a moment for me where I really heard, it was almost audible, "One and done." "What do you mean one and done?" And then I just went through prayer and meditation on that and thought through. I was like, "Yeah you know what? I'm not doing this anymore. I am going to fully pursue working with Dr. Susan and just see what other modalities might be out there to provide me with the healing." Because like I believe that when the diagnosis comes, you have to pick a fear. Either you fear the disease or you fear the treatment.

And for me, I already had the diagnosis, so I was like, "Well, I know what that's like. And this, this is not good." This was too scary for me. And it was beyond my realm of comfortableness. That was something that I couldn't surrender to, but I could surrender to the disease and work on healing from that, because if my body could make it, it could also heal it. So I went with that mindset that I was going to heal and I was going to do whatever I needed to do to find people to help me on that journey.

And I switched oncologists, and now the oncologist that I work with said that she would've never recommended it in the first place. I'm like, "I lost my hair for nothing?" But it's okay. It's okay because it really got me to the point that now I am able to speak to people and understand what it's like to lose your breasts and your hair within a very short period of time. My daughter helped me get a Facebook. So I've got a Jackie's Journey out there, and I was able to express a lot of the emotions. I said goodbye the day before the mastectomy. I thanked my breasts in gratitude for the service that they provided for helping me nurse my children and take care of myself that way.

But I also said, "Look, you're also getting evicted because you're trying to kill me and I'm not interested in that." And so it was through gratitude and it was through all of those processes and being able to release, like what you talked about, is just having that surrender of that radical acceptance, like, "Okay, here's where I am. This is what happened, but we're going to move forward and we're going to go in this direction." And so then I also said, "No, thank you," to the radiation. I met with three radiation oncologists, just because I asked a lot of questions and I said, "Can I keep eating what I'm eating?" And they said, "Yes."

And then the more I told them, what I ate, they're like, "Oh no, not so many berries, not so much this." And I was like, "Okay."

Nathan Crane:

Those are the things that can actually help you heal, and those are the things they tell you not to eat. It's counterintuitive when you understand when you're actually eating something, science says, "This is what your body needs." But they say, "You can't eat that because what we're doing is destroying your immune system and you could get an infection from..." They're afraid of a bacterial infection from a little bit of bacteria on a blueberry. And yet that's what our body

THE MISSING LINK

needs to survive. But you're okay eating packaged, processed, highly sugar chemicalized food. That's okay because it doesn't have bacteria on it. It just blows my mind, but that's the way it goes.

Jackie Zofkie:

I think that's why I went to three of them because I thought, "This can't be."

Nathan Crane:

They recommended chemotherapy and radiation because your margins weren't clear? Did they say they metastasized? What were the reason for the ongoing treatments? Was it just like to be safe or they said you absolutely needed it?

Jackie Zofkie:

I asked those questions and what they basically told me was, well it was stage three invasive lobular because the main tumor was 5.8 centimeters, which was pretty large. And then they were two other ones. One was off the side of it, which is the same invasive lobular, the other one was non-invasive ductal. And they did believe that they got clear margins because they did remove all of the breast tissue and those lymph nodes. However, they said, "Well, you just never know there might be a microscopic cell that gets left. And do you trust your surgeon?"

And I said, "Well, if I didn't trust you, you wouldn't have had the scalpel." I don't think they knew what to do with me really, but that oncologist ended up hugging me on a last visit that I had with him and he has released me, so I don't have to see him anymore. But it is one of those things too where I was like, "Okay, and why this radiation? And tell me why you want me to do 35. That just seemed like excessive." And they basically said it was this little rubric matrix or whatever. And I was like, "Yeah, but this is me, I'm not just one of those people just because of this diagnosis. I'm very unique and individual and my body obviously freaked out over chemotherapy. Help me understand how it's not going to have that same response with radiation."

And I couldn't get comfortable with what their answers were and it just didn't resonate with inside my spirit, and I just really felt like the Holy Spirit just said, "Don't do it." So I said, "No, thank you." And then they also wanted me to be on a pharmaceutical of which I said, "Well, let's talk to me about that. Tell me why." And they said, "Well, of course, because of it being hormonal driven that this would really help" And I said, "Well, there's also things that I know from my functional medicine doctor like resveratrol and cruciferous vegetables that I eat a lot of and a lot of other things." And the fact that I did do that chemotherapy that threw me into menopause, I don't have those same hormones going through my body, so I'm good."

My oncologist is kind enough to not argue with me and she still continues to see me, but she knows that I'm not interested. And so she's usually asking me questions about what it is that I

THE MISSING LINK

do between visits. And so I only see her annually now. And I just feel that there are options out there and you don't necessarily have to follow the standard protocol. There are a lot of questions that you can ask and if you're not comfortable with it, then find someone who can help you get that comfort. And so that's what I did.

Nathan Crane:

I love that. I think it's such an important message because far too often, we just hand over our power to the person with the degree and the letters behind their name because we really want to trust in them and believe that they know everything. And unfortunately, they don't. Because goodhearted and intelligent as many of them are, most of them have never been taught nutrition. Six hours, eight hours is the most in medical school that they learn about nutrition. And it's about things like scurvy. Most of these things that we've already cured and healed 50 years ago, 100 years ago. They don't learn about nutrition for cancer or autoimmune disease or diabetes.

They don't learn about these whole holistic lifestyle changes that are incredibly effective. So they just don't know what they don't know. And so the fact that you were strong enough and brave enough to ask these questions and ask more questions, ask more questions, that's what I think everybody can be empowered to do, really, because when you get to the deeper questions, you'll often find answers that you don't like. And when you find answers you don't like, now you can ask more questions to find answers that you do like, like, "What's the success rate if I take this chemotherapy and radiation? What do the statistics show?"

"Well, actually you got a 20% chance to live past five years." "Okay, that's not very high." Or, "What about my recurrence rate if I do this? You start asking these kinds of questions you discover, "Wow, there's a lot of things here that don't sound very good, and maybe I could take some different approaches to it." And so you now are primarily focused on not only just your health and wellbeing and helping others through these challenging times, but also preventing recurrence. So what are the biggest changes you made in your own life after this diagnosis that you think have been the most impactful to you and to your health?"

Jackie Zofkie:

Mindset, for sure. Definitely making sure that that's a daily thing that I have to, like I said, speaking out loud, "Nope, not going there." I also believe that things just like hydration, I think that is one of the things that I thought that I drank a lot enough or a lot of water before or enough, but I didn't. Like right now, I've got something here, I've got something here. I always have beverages available. And I think that is one of the things that takes me a few minutes to get them all together in the morning, but then I'm good for the rest of the day.

I think just exploring different things like acupuncture, and Qigong, and Reiki and just some even activities, just like a personal trainer or Zumba, just all of those things, just making it fun to

THE MISSING LINK

do the things that I need to do. So doing it with a friend, like getting a friend to go walking or just whatever it is. And just some of those things that I probably wouldn't have before, because I would've felt like, 'No, I just need to do it with myself,' and just been a little bit more rigid in those things. But now it's just being more present and how can I make this more fun for the life that I do have? Does that answer your question?

Nathan Crane:

Absolutely. And I think it's important. When I talk to people about exercise, we know we need to move the body every day, we know we need to exercise, we know that it's essential for health and wellbeing and feeling good and helping activate our immune system flush our lymphatic system, help the body eliminate cancer cells, but are you moving every day? And if not, why not? Often because people don't like the chore of it or they don't like the uncomfortability of it. What I teach people is find something you enjoy doing and try new things. You won't know if you enjoy it until you try it.

I've been learning tennis. I never thought in the world I'd ever play tennis, never even thought about it, but my daughter started playing and I thought, "You know what, I'm going to try this because maybe it's something we can do together as a family." Well, later today, my son, my six-year-old son, my 11-year-old daughter, my wife and I, we're going to go play tennis together, out in the sunshine, moving our bodies. And it's fun, I enjoy it. I do CrossFit, weightlifting, these kinds of things because I enjoy it. I know it's good for the body.

I'll get on my bike and take the dog for a run. So that's moving, cycling, running, swimming, jogging, walking, just walking in nature, hiking, tennis, anything you can do to move the body every day that you enjoy, that you look forward to, that can bring you a sense of happiness, that's a secret to sustainability and a routine, a health routine. And then the more you do something that's good for you, the better you feel, and so the more you look forward to that. I wake up every morning, have big glass of fresh green vegetable juice, and I take some supplements, amino acids and different things with that.

And I take that because, one, I know the benefits of it for long term health and wellbeing. But two, I feel great. I feel great, I have great energy, digestion is amazing. I didn't always have that. I used to feel like crap, bad digestion, crash every single afternoon at 2:30, low energy, kidney, adrenal issues, all these kinds of things. So I know what it's like to be fatigued and tired and chronically ill and throwing up from digestive issues and all that. And on the other side of that, I know how it's like to be vibrant and healthy and feel strong and all these things.

And so it's one of the reasons I continue to do the things I do. And so find things that you enjoy and do more of them. Do more of the things that you know are to be healthy that can help you to really thrive. And then three, pay attention to how you feel over time. Not overnight, because when you change things sometimes at first and maybe you can talk to this, it's not always easy,

THE MISSING LINK

it's not always pleasant. You might have side effects, you might have detox effects, these kinds of things. But long term, pay attention to how you feel, more often than not, you're going to feel a lot better.

Jackie Zofkie:

Absolutely. I think that was one of the things that when I was doing the exercises, post-surgery, I didn't like it. It was painful, but I knew that if I was ever going to be able to have the sensation in that side of my arm again, I was going to need to do these things. So I turned on the theme from "Rocky" and I listened to that, because music is very important for me. And that's what I tell people. Is it art? Is it music? Is it dance? Whatever it is, find a modality that can help you express yourself through that. And so I would turn music on.

And that's the other thing too, just adding a 10-minute activity a day really helps to do something for you. And so I plan it the night before and then I go ahead and I put it in my calendar and I make sure that I do it. And if something comes up, then I make sure that I still get it in within that 24-hour period. And so that was something that was important too. And I didn't like to do that because I was always taking care of everybody else, and it was like, "Oh, 10 minutes." And that seemed like 10 years, but it was like, "No, it's really important."

And now, I look forward to it, like what you said, and it was awkward and it was uncomfortable, and sometimes it was painful because I was like, "Oh, I have these other things to do." But it was like, "No, our healing and even prevention right now is so important." And so I think that was one of the things that I treasure, I treasure that time. And I just encourage the people who wouldn't be able to find something because just because it's simple, doesn't mean it's easy, but it's so essential.

Nathan Crane:

Have you still been on a plant-based or vegan diet, and what changes have you seen for yourself since you've been on that now? Well, what, a couple years before 2014, so since 2012, maybe?

Jackie Zofkie:

12. Correct. What I have changed is I've tweaked, I've removed the gluten and now I've removed some other things, like I don't do corn except every now and then I'll have a corn tortilla chip if I'm out with friends, but I'm talking like a couple of times a year. And then I've also tweaked and watched and tried to have more plant protein rather than some of the starches just because I know that the starch is a sugar and cancer just loves that. And so I try to do whatever I need to do by filling it up with the green leafy vegetables or broccoli, especially, garlic, just all of those things that will try to not only reduce inflammation, but also make this vessel inhospitable to cancer.

THE MISSING LINK

Nathan Crane:

And how do you feel and have you done testing, nutritional testing? Have you done blood testing, deficiency testing, and other cancer scans? One, how do you feel? And then two, what did the tests say now?

Jackie Zofkie:

Yeah. I feel better. I guess I didn't realize I didn't feel good before, I guess, in some ways.

Nathan Crane:

On that point, I want you to finish that, but I want to bring this up because you're saying something so important. People today have gotten so used to feeling bad that they think it's normal and they don't know what feeling good is like. And I was one of those people, so I know it, I'm not judging, I've lived it, where you feel bad for so long it becomes normalized. And you just think that's the way things are until all of a sudden, you change all these things in your life and then you feel amazing all the time or 90 plus percent of the time. And then you think back and go, "Oh my gosh, I felt horrible for so long and had no idea."

And so if you don't wake up energized and ready to start the day, if you don't have tons of energy and feel great in the afternoon when most people are crashing. If you don't feel excited to do things, and move your body, and exercise, and have energy after you eat, and have a clear mind. And if you have digestive issues all the time and things like that, if you are not experiencing this other level of health and vitality at any age, 80-year-olds, 90-year-olds, and they feel this way, I'm telling you, I have friends, 70s, 80s, 90s, who take great care of themselves and feel amazing all the time. Strong, vital, healthy, full of energy.

If you don't feel that way, then there's something going on internally, mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, environmentally that has normalized for you not feeling great, which means there's potential and opportunity for you to feel great. So please share a little bit more about that, because it's so important.

Jackie Zofkie:

Yes. And I think that was me, I would have some aches and pains and I would brush it off because everybody in their later 40s felt like that. Well, I'm in my mid-50s now and I feel better than I did when I was 47, 48. And I think a lot of it is because I did reduce some of those inflammatory foods. And I have had tests that showed... I feel like probably one of the biggest things is that for two years I had to go without chickpeas, that means hummus. And so that was really hard for me, but it was one of those things where just trying to clean things up because believe it or not, that one dose of chemotherapy totally changed everything.

Nathan Crane:

Microbiome, everything.

THE MISSING LINK

Jackie Zofkie:

Yes.

Nathan Crane:

Chemotherapy can cause leaky gut. Can cause these proteins enter into your bloodstream, make you have autoimmune disease or allergic reactions to foods that normally you wouldn't. Yeah, absolutely.

Jackie Zofkie:

That's actually what I have been facing. And so I've been trying to work on doing that. Even some of the good foods, like some oats and some other things that I was doing in lieu of anything that's gluten or what have you, have had to remove. Watermelon was one of the ones I was like, "What?" Just all of those things. But I do a lot of the testing in between. I was telling my oncologist, "I'm very busy between the time you see me and the time you see me again," because I work with a lot of different healers, then they do the different testing, whether it's urine, or saliva, or stool, or blood, and we just work through all of those things. Even energetic muscle testing.

And we have now worked on a lot of that detoxification, and I used to have a lot of throat clearing and I always thought that was normal. Well, I did now working through a liver detox because of course chemotherapy hits the liver pretty hard and that's where we process so many things, and I don't have to clear my throat anymore and it's very pleasant. And so some of those things are little, but like you said, we just grow so desensitized to them or think that society tells us, "Oh, well you're a certain age that you're supposed to not feel well or you're supposed to feel sluggish or have that mid-afternoon slump."

I don't experience that, especially now. I've never done caffeine since I was pregnant with my daughter and she's going to be 28. And so for many years I've been naturally caffeinated, but also at the same time I'd still experience some of those lulls, and I don't anymore. So to answer your question as far as I feel, and yes, those are some of the tests that I've experienced. And even the use of, we now have an infrared sauna in the basement. And so working on doing that has really helped on so many different levels too, just to make sure to sweat.

And I didn't like to sweat before, but now I love the fact that I sweat because I know that that means that toxins are being removed from my body and my body's able to flush them out. Whereas before, I don't think I could sweat as much because I think there was some blockages and it was sluggish.

Nathan Crane:

And you didn't like it, so you're probably re resisting it too. It's so funny when we actually learn about more about our body and our physiology and our biological mechanisms that it's like, "Oh,

THE MISSING LINK

the thing I used to not like it, it's like now I really appreciate it because I know it's doing what it's supposed to do." Elevated heart rate. If you have high blood pressure, for example, high blood pressure is not the enemy. You don't go after the high blood pressure, that's what our doctors do, but you wouldn't want to go after high blood pressure, your blood pressure increases because your arteries are clogged.

So your body's trying to compensate to get more blood moving through so you don't die. So you don't go and try to lower the blood pressure, you go and try to clean up the arteries. It's just like, "Oh, common sense things that unfortunately our doctors, they're not trained in a lot of that because they're trained in pharmacology, drugs, band-aids to cover the symptoms, not the root cause." And it's unfortunate. But a lot of this stuff we're talking about is getting to the root cause. And so now, 2014, you went through all that. You didn't do chemotherapy radiation, you changed diet, lifestyle, mentally, emotional, really focused on more positive mindset, not letting those doubts and negative thoughts creep in.

I love how you say, "Nope, not going there, not today." If I ever have like a thought that comes in anymore that's negative or whatever, I actually visualize it just going up to the sky and like bursting into 1,000 stars. And it's gone. That's how I have dealt with those, it's like, "Oh, Nope. No." And then I change it to something positive. It's not denying it and hiding it and locking it away, it's like, "No, I don't want a negative thought. I want a positive one." So switching it. We have that power in our mind and we know the power of the mind even scientifically is unbelievably powerful for helping either create disease in the body or help our bodies heal from disease.

So, and have you had any scans recently? Have you seen the cancer come back at all or you're cancer free?

Jackie Zofkie:

I am no evidence of disease. Thank you, kindly.

Nathan Crane:

Congratulations. Wonderful. Congratulations. That's beautiful.

Jackie Zofkie:

Thank you.

Nathan Crane:

As we wrap up here, one, if people want reach out to you, touch base with you, ask questions, anything like that, I know you offer coaching as well, where's the best place for them to get in touch with you? And then two, any final thoughts, words of inspiration you have for anybody watching this right now?

THE MISSING LINK

Jackie Zofkie:

Well, first of all, if anybody want to us to get in touch with me, Best 4 U Health Coach. So it's Best, B-E-S-T and then the number 4, the letter U, and the healthcoach@gmail is a great place for them to reach out to me. And I named it that because I can't tell somebody what to do, but I can ask enough questions to help them figure out what is best for them. And I like the fact that it's for you because they're basically going to be going to school and learning about more about themselves. So it's like a university on themselves. So there's that.

And then probably just a couple things, I guess, it's just like you were saying, we have to look at things like a plot twist. Sometimes I'll even yell that, "Plot twist," because we get into these scenarios or these circumstances and we want life to be a certain way. And sometimes we're a little bit resentful that like, "Wait, life isn't supposed to be like this." And I think many of us could probably say that in the last 18 to 20 months. But if we look at it of the standpoint of it's a plot twist, so, what are we going to do? So as a character in this life that we're living, how can we best portray and still win the Academy Award for doing it well?

Well, we have to embrace that and just go with it and then find others who can be a supportive cast, find an understudy who can be there to be our cheerleader or a coach who can be there to just give it to us straight and get back in there, and not just sit on the bench. And so do some of those things. So I think that's probably, it is just to know too, that cancer is just a word, it's not a sentence and it doesn't have to mean a life sentence. But it can create a sentence that can create new life for you. And so finding ways to create a new life and a new norm and embracing that is probably one of the best gifts that you can get, whether you're trying to prevent or you're being called to the journey with cancer.

Nathan Crane:

Beautiful. So powerful. Well, Jackie, thank you so much for taking the time, for sharing your story, for inspiring others. I really appreciate it. Appreciate your words of wisdom, your character, your positive energy. It really shows through. So thank you for being here.

Jackie Zofkie:

Well, thank you. I appreciate it. Thanks, Nathan.

Nathan Crane:

Absolutely. Yep. And thank you all for tuning. We'll talk to you next time. Take care.

[END OF INTERVIEW]