



THE
FATIGUE
SUPER
CONFERENCE

Healing emotional toxicity

Guest: Dr. Eva Detko

Alex: Welcome to The Fatigue Super Conference and for this conversation I'm talking with Dr Eva Detko. Hi Eva, how are you doing?

Dr Detko: Hello, I'm absolutely great and thank you for having me.

Alex: Thank you so much for joining us. Just to give people some background Dr Eva has studied natural medicine and human minds for over 20 years as is often the case it was her own health struggles that put her on this path. Dr Eva successfully recovered from ME and reversed Hashimoto's Thyroiditis and is now very passionate about helping others recover their health. Dr Eva has an extensive expertise in the field of human physiology, biochemistry and nutritional sciences. She also uses a wide range of mind transforming modalities including Havening Techniques, Brain Working Recursive Therapy, Psychoanalysis, Mindfulness and Applied Psychoneurology.

She is the author of 'Emotional Route Causes of Chronic Illness' and I'm super happy that she is talking with us today.

Eva I would love to start if you don't mind with a bit about your own health challenges, what kind of inspired you to be a practitioner and has brought you to where you are now. So I know that you had your own experience with ME or put in another way a severe fatigue condition. Tell us a little bit about how that started and the impact that had on you?

Dr Detko: Yeah I think maybe not everybody will be familiar with the abbreviation ME but it is basically chronic fatigue and this was obviously a long time ago now but when that came round interestingly it hit me like a ton of bricks, even though looking back the signs were there. You know literally the writing was on the wall for a long time because I wasn't in a good place emotionally, I had loads of emotional challenges to do with my early traumas, amongst other things, but also being in a toxic relationship at the time and on top of that I was doing a lot of studying, working, I was holding down three jobs or something. And I decided at some point that the best way for me to

manage all the stress and all the emotional garbage that was floating around in my head 24/7 was to basically spend my every waking minute, that I wasn't already doing those other things, in the gym basically blasting the hell out of myself doing really intense exercise.

So I'm laughing though as it actually sounds completely ludicrous right, it sounds ludicrous that doing all these things for a really long time I still felt in my head that I could get away with it. That for some reason for some reason that I was able to sustain that way of living, which clearly is not sustainable, right. So then honestly thinking back I just think what was I thinking but you know we only know what we know at the time and we do the best we can with the resources and knowledge that we have.

What actually happened was that I got an infection and this is something that a lot of people listening to something that will be familiar. So it's not so much that the infection caused the problem, it was that the body was already so compromised, the nervous system was just under so much pressure that the infection basically pushed me over the edge but I had been floating over the edge for a very long time and then swine flu or some other flu came along, it was a flu virus, and it just completely knocked me out. I was not able to recover from it properly so after months and months and months of toing and froing, at the time I would still go to doctors which I don't do anymore, but I was basically told you may actually have chronic fatigue and at that point it was actually helpful in the sense that when you know what you're dealing with you're automatically a little but more empowered. I think it's quite terrible for people when they're not quite sure they're dealing with so it wasn't good news but at least I knew what I was dealing with at that point.

I then threw absolutely everything at it but the things that I started doing were things like reflexology, massage, I actually went and had hypnotherapy for the panic attacks that I had at the time. I also went and saw an acupuncturist and what was interesting was that all those people, even though those practitioners I was seeing they don't know each other they all told me the same thing and it was that you really need to slow down, and it's not just slow down to recover from the illness you really need to evaluate your life and how you live it. You need to deal with your emotional trauma and your emotionally baggage because otherwise you will never be able to heal. What was interesting was those people, like I said, didn't know each other, they were completely separate and yet they were telling me the same thing so obviously I decided to listen luckily and really when I started working through the emotionally particularly that was a big, big piece for me.

(23.23)

I already had a reasonably good diet at the time so it wasn't really the dietary changes didn't make that much of a difference to me but it was the emotionally piece. But when I listened and when I started applying, and I made a lot of changes obviously, I actually recovered quite quickly. So within a few months after that I was actually back to, because I competed in Ballroom and Latin competitively not as a professional but as an amateur, but that was important to me so obviously I had something to aim to go back to and within a few months after I realised what I needed to do and addressing things properly I was able to do things that I loved to do and actually recovered fully. I really have no lasting damage if you will, I run, I cycle, I do a lot of exercise, mentally challenging my life is because I always studied something new, there's always something to learn. So it is possible, this is my message to everybody, that no matter how bad you think your situation is right now there will be a lot of things that you will be able to do to get better and obviously this even will provide you with I'm sure loads and loads of ideas on the different things that can be done.

Alex: Yes and it's really interesting the way you were describing the time when you first started to get ill because often it's like loads on a boat, kind of as you were saying, that it wasn't really the virus whatever happened at the end, that was just kind of the tipping point. There was a build up of factors it sounds like some childhood events and trauma, some difficult life experiences, difficult relationship, and the kind of building up of things and then the fact that you were very driven by nature and a kind of achiever and pushing yourself. That's often quite a common picture right that people with fatigue related conditions that it's no one thing, that you have a kind of combined effect of lots of factors together.

Dr Detko: Yeah absolutely and I mentioned sustainability for a reason is because yes people who end up with this problem often times are people who are driven and like to occupy themselves with loads of things or people who maybe have emotional issues, such as control issues and they always try and control their environment and those are also prone to fatigue problems as we know. So this is again another message to everybody, just take a step back and look at what you're doing. Maybe whatever you've been doing for the last however many years it's just not been sustainable and your body is telling you that you just cannot do that anymore you need to give it a bit of a break because if you don't it will make you one way or the other.

Alex: Yes and one of the things I think can often be a kind of resistance in people when people start talking about the role of psychology and the mind and the emotions in health is that people's response will be but these are very real physical symptoms that I have and I remember when, I had ME/Chronic Fatigue as a teenager and I remember when I was first diagnosed that the

doctors practice in the UK where I was sent me to go and have counseling and I was like why am I going to go and see someone to talk about my emotions, the only reason I feel all of these emotions is because I can't do any of the things that I want to do.

It took a long time, it took a few years of real resistance to open up to this idea, but maybe say a little bit around why addressing emotional route causes is so important and why that doesn't mean that it's all in someone's mind and they're making it up? What the kind of mechanism by which emotions are impacting on someone's fatigue and health?

(27.26)

Dr Detko: Well this is the problem really in Western culture that we are so separatist when it comes to viewing health, you know the mind is the mind and the body is the body. Actually we are really starting to come round now to the idea that well actually it's one and the same that the interconnection is just so strong and of course in the Far East they have always practiced like that and have always known it. It takes this mindset shift, you're quite right it's a big mindset shift. For some reason I didn't have a lot of that resistance because I knew those people that were telling me look this is what you need to be doing, I knew actually deep inside that they were right and maybe I wasn't so happy about addressing it but I knew if I was going to get better I needed to do it.

But you're right it is a problem of just the mindset as a whole but even if people still haven't come round to this idea that we can have an emotional problem that will then manifest physically, even purely from a biological perspective I'm sure that most people will be familiar with the fact that our autonomic nervous system has got two branches and we've got the fight and flight and the sympathetic, right, and then we've got the digest, rest and heal response which is the parasympathetic. Now here's the thing, just in case you may not realise, you cannot be in both at the same time, only in one or the other and you switch between the two but of course what happens with people who have chronic symptoms, because that's kind of how they get there in the first place, is that they spend an awful lot of time during the day, and also when people don't sleep well also at night, in the sympathetic response.

Now because, we know it's in the name it's the digest and rest and heal response, so we know that for you to heal and for the body to heal you need to spend more time in the parasympathetic. Now the problem is of course that there are a lot of things in our life that can put us in fight and flight and people will say right OK a lot of stresses come from my environment, chemicals things like that. And that is true stress chemicals have stressors to the body. I had an accident six months ago where I broke my elbow in four

places and that was a trauma to the body and that was a massive stress to my body and I had to deal with that but ultimately we need to accept that most of the stress that we put on the nervous system and how we drive it to distraction a lot of the time is from emotional input. I kind of call it overall, like a term umbrella for it, emotional toxicity because there's going to be different things that obviously fall into that category. But ultimately that is the biggest contributor to sympathetic dominance, which is what I'm talking about when we're constantly over stimulating this fight and flight response, right.

Now people watching the summit and maybe they've read other things and they've seen other events, they will probably be thinking OK if I have fatigue, whether it's a little bit of fatigue or maybe chronic fatigue, maybe they've had fatigue for a very long time, they obviously would have heard already about things like detox, that you know they should eat clean, they should have a clean body in order to be more functional. They'll be thinking about mitochondrial function, they'll be thinking about OK the gut needs to work properly so healing the gut. Obviously if there's any kind of dysbiosis that's a problem, then we've got things like hormonal imbalances, we have food sensitivities or in fact sensitivities to all sort of other things as well and of course finally infections, which I said that was one of the things that obviously pushed me over the edge. It wasn't the cause it was just one of the triggers so of course we need to be able to fight those latent chronic infections that most people with chronic illness will have.

Now guess what? If you're constantly in fight or flight, which you may be sort of joining those dots by now, right, and you're not spending enough time in the rest, digest and heal response and the body can't heal, what's actually going to happen through the sympathetic dominance you're not going to be able to detoxify properly. You're going to definitely compromise your detoxification, you're going to compromise your gut and you could be doing absolutely everything nutritionally to heal your gut and still have leaky gut because you're stressed out and you have lots of emotional garbage going on. Then of course your hormones will be out of whack, your immune system will be out of whack because of this very strong connection that we have between the nervous system and the immune system and the endocrine system through the Hypothalamic Pituitary Adrenal Axis, the HPA Axis, that I'm sure people will have heard of.

Because of these strong relationships now suddenly you know if you have all those sensitivities and if you remove that component of emotional toxicity, which by the way I'm not talking about stressors that come and go like a job interview that you have a bit of stress and then you go down the pub and you get over it, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about these constant

negative emotions that you're flooded with, the anxieties, the fears and various other symptoms that we can talk about in a minute. When you have that sort of negative emotional input pretty much some people do have it 24/7, that is where the problem is. And when you calm this down and when you remove this then suddenly your whole body functions better, you can detox better, the gut functions better, the microbiome which is just so important to health, that can rebalance, the hormones rebalance and your immune system can actually fight the infections you need to get rid of in order to get well.

(33.47)

I'm giving this overview because I think it's important to have this general, really clear concept and idea on how these things come together and like I said it's about the chronic emotional toxicity, it's not stressors that come and go, and the problem with emotional toxicities is that people desensitize to it. I am sure Alex you will agree because you've obviously got background in this but when people have had anxieties and fears and different emotional trash basically floating around in their heads for a very long time, often times they get to the point where they don't even realise just how stressed they really are.

Alex: Yeah its almost, the analogy that comes to mind is it's almost like, it's not an experiment I would recommend people do, but there's an experiment where you take a frog and you put it in a glass of boiling water and it jumps straight out again because it recognizes the water's boiling. You put it in a glass of cold water and then you gradually boils the water and it stays there and it gets cooked because it doesn't notice the gradual change in temperature and think the same thing is true with stress. I've sat with patients where they're literally swinging in the chair, they can't keep their body still, there's so much anxiety that is bubbling up in their body and I will say to them on a scale of 0-10, 10 being stress and 0 being completely calm they'll say I think I'm a 3 or a 4 (laughs) and I feel stressed just looking at them.

So it's right people don't realise and I think what you've just outlined is a very helpful way of understanding some of these different mechanisms because I think, as you say, people can think well how can emotional toxicity actually have an impact on my physical health but as you've been describing there's lots of different interlinkages between what's happening in our nervous system and how we actually feel on a day to day basis.

Dr Detko: Yeah absolutely it is the frog experiment all over again but this is why I'm really glad we are having this conversation because, I don't know about you, but I'm yet to meet a person with chronic symptoms that wouldn't have some sort of emotional trash to clear. So for some people it will be a

bigger piece for some people it may be a smaller piece, but it's always a piece of the puzzle.

Alex: I think so and I think even if the stuff pre-dating is modest in significance I think often the trauma of suffering from a severe chronic illness, which there's all kinds of cultural understandings around, it's like should I rest, should I push myself, will I ever get better, how am I going to feel tomorrow, that just stress of living with fatigue symptoms of course can be enormous.

Dr Detko: That in itself is definitely part of the toxicity itself because it is chronic stress and it's a trauma actually. You know chronic illness really is a trauma and I remember when I got sick because I was so driven and I set the bar so high for myself everybody around me that I worked with and when I actually got sick initially they thought 'oh it's fine' they just kept overloading me with stuff because to them I set the bar. Not that I wanted to say you know it was this persons fault, or my fault or whatever, that doesn't help but the point I'm making is that it took quite a few weeks for me to actually say to people listen, and I was really quite firm as I felt so awful that some days I couldn't get out of bed in the morning and I would get out of bed for ten minutes and I had to go back to bed. You know I went through that period of time when it was really, really awful and I at some point almost had to scream at my boss and say no you just really don't get it but you must, you must get it. I am not well and I'm not coming tomorrow and I'm not doing those things because I just physically can't. (38.03)

But the point is a lot people will feel guilty for not still delivering at the same level that they were able to and that guilt is also toxic. So there's just so many different aspects of it that yeah it just goes on and on and like I say it's not something that people necessarily recognise. That hey if I feel those bad feelings all the time that's going to actually make my physically symptoms worse, because we still don't necessarily instinctively connect the two so like I said that's why this conversation is really important.

Alex: Yes and you gave the example of having stress in terms of our own pushing and driving and achieving and you also mentioned having toxicity from the outside, for example in ones boss, but maybe what are some of the other examples of emotionally toxicity that one could be experiencing? Either different areas of ones life or even different stages of ones life?

Dr Detko: Yeah actually that's the thing, it's a massive area and just encompasses so many things but of course we need to mention early childhood trauma. And sometimes it's trauma in utero, or birth trauma or trauma in the very first years of peoples lives. Again this may be something

that people are aware that they may have experienced or they may not be aware that they experienced.

So the study of, the Adverse Childhood Events study, study at Kaiser Permanente back in 1998 they looked at some of the big traumas at the time and things like divorce, obviously everybody thinks, people associate that with massive stress, stuff like that, abuse, things like that. But they didn't actually take into account all the different types of trauma and all the different types of emotionally issues and yet even with the limited view that they took at the time they linked emotional trauma to practically having every chronic illness going. Of course the chronic fatigue with four adverse childhood experiences is something like 6005 higher risk of developing it at some point, right.

So this was massive but of course like I said they didn't actually consider things like developmental trauma, the sort of bonding sort of issues that a lot of people do experience but of course when there's no bonding between the primary care giver and the child this is not necessarily something where people go 'oh yeah I definitely had that'. Maybe because it's about the things that we're missing and not the things that were present. When something is present, like where parents get divorced or somebody gets abused, that's more kind of prominent, that more kind of stands out more if you will.

But those sorts of developmental attachment issues they don't stand out so much for people so a lot of people do have unresolved development trauma and they don't even know about it. It's really, really key because developmental and attachment trauma really, really impacts core identity for people and then we're going to have issues such as people not feeling good enough, not feeling enough, not feeling worth of affection, not feeling deserving and that's just a slippery slope in terms of developing a chronic illness.

Then of course there's things like intergenerational trauma and you know there's just so many different things that can traumatise a human being. But you know obviously trauma is a huge part of emotional toxicity but we mustn't forget things such as, what I call, social engineering. People in the first sort of early years in particular when they just hear the same idea, which becomes their belief of course, over and over and over again. Well if that's not particularly helpful they're going to be maybe living their lives according to somebody else's values and beliefs that could not be necessarily serving them. And again they float through life not necessarily being aware of that.
(42.45)

Then of course people get stuck in toxic relationships so there's that additional toxic input and then there's everyday stress on top of that obviously. People still worry about their finances, and they worry about their

symptoms and being sick, not being able to fulfill the roles that they set themselves and it's about piling this stuff, you know one thing gets piled on top of the other, on top of the other and before you know it you just have this cocktail of negative emotions that so many people just struggle with. Chronic infections, we've got a thing such as generalised anxiety disorder now and years ago we didn't even have that as a term, which implies that people just live their lives in anxious states, which again goes back to being in that sympathetic dominance and that is just a matter of time before that starts manifesting physically. Either as fatigue or something else, autoimmunity, cancer, you name it.

Alex: Yes. I think absolutely and I think one of the things that also people will sometimes say as well, yeah I had really crap childhood but it was 30 years ago, it was 50 years ago, how can that be having an impact now. And beyond the fact that there's that trauma in the body which is having an impact, the thing that I always try to remind people is that the way that we relate to ourselves, the way we relate to our own emotions, the way that we relate to how much pressure we put on ourselves, how much we push ourselves, is driven by all the stuff that we've internalized. So if our parents were not particularly emotionally sensitive and caring towards us we're probably not very emotionally sensitive and caring towards ourselves because we've learnt to parent ourselves or to relate to ourselves in a way that's not very gentle or tender.

So there's a kind of imprinting that obviously happens from all of those experiences that we are living moment to moment and day to day in our life and of course that has a massive impact on perpetuating stress right?

Dr Detko: Absolutely and there is a school of psychotherapy, Transactional Analysis, that basically talks about how in the first few years of our lives we already based on the information that we receive from our environment, which of course lets not forget that in the first few years of our lives we are basically tiny and then there's people towering over us which means we give them more authority because they're bigger, never mind anything else. And because we are completely dependent on them and also we don't have great communication skills so when we get negative input, and I'm not saying that this is coming from psychopathic, sociopathic parents, no, no, no this is from parents who mean well. We're not even talking about anything sociopathic here, because it's very, very easy to even by telling a child off at the wrong time, to sort of make them feel so bad then suddenly they think I'm not OK. So they develop this concept, most children actually, maybe not everybody, but most children in the first few years will end up with this idea that somehow they're not OK and then of course they need to assess what their environment is like and sometimes they think 'oh I'm not OK but everybody is

OK' in which case they will go through life feeling like everybody is better than them and they are somehow inferior and so on and so on.

Then of course they could develop this idea that they're not OK and everybody else is not OK either and they can just withdrawer from social life altogether and think the whole world is against them. Do you see how that can definitely shape our ideas about ourselves and obviously the world around them so it's massive because in the first formative years of our lives we really take everything at face value because the brain hasn't developed to the point where we can rationalise things properly so what we see and how we respond emotionally to things, and it's always perceived. So a trauma is not necessarily, the same thing could happen to two children and it is their perception and interpretation of the event that is occurring that is going to determine whether they're going to be traumatised by it or not, right.

So we also must put that out there because people will think perhaps something traumatic happened to me but maybe I got over it, and perhaps you did, and then somebody else with the same event may really struggle for decades and decades afterwards. But also people will think well how can something so silly cause me this problem. For instance maybe you were chased by an angry dog, or even not an angry dog maybe a puppy looked at you the wrong way, and cause you so many gut feelings that you now really have a phobia of animals altogether. You know this can happen, the brain can work in that way. So it's not necessarily the event per say it's the perception and the interpretation of it.

(47.56)

Alex: Yes and what would you say are some of the signs of emotional toxicity? So for someone that's suffering from fatigue, and there's obviously many different manifestations of that, but for someone that's listening to this, obviously I guess one part of it is I guess they can recognise themselves in what you're saying and kind of go 'yep that sounds right, that sounds familiar' but are there any other ways that one could identify emotional toxicity as being factors within their fatigue?

Dr Detko: Yeah there are a lot of symptoms actually and some of it we have already mentioned. Anything in fact that makes you feel that you're not worthy, if your self esteem is really low, your confidence is lacking that's obviously one of the symptoms. Negative self talk is going to be another one and people may or may not be aware that they're giving themselves a lot of negative self talk but if that's sort of, if you put yourself down all the time that's definitely a symptom. I already mentioned not feeling deserving, because things like guilt and shame of course, because so many people these days are absolutely ridden with guilt and shame. It's not necessarily healthy guilt and

shame because there is such a thing as healthy guilt perhaps, sometime it's OK to feel guilty about something, but I'm talking about this constant how society makes people guilty for various things or shaming people for being this or not being that, that's the sort of thing I'm talking about.

Any anxieties or worries, people who project into the future and just expect the worst to happen, that sort of thing. People who live in the past also because the best thing is to be present in the moment as much as possible but actually in reality human being tend to be either stuck in the past or they're projecting too much into the future. Then any fears, so we've got fear of rejection, fear of criticism, fear of losing control, fear of failure, fear of illness and death as well, that can be present. When people feel defensive is another one, when you sort of tend to have maybe reactions that are not quite proportionate to the situation and people tell you that you're reactions are a bit disproportionate maybe sometimes, even though you don't recognise it yourself.

Feelings of jealousy or envy, things like that, obviously feeling angry, feeling frustrated. In fact according to Chinese medicine, for instance, anger is one of the most toxic emotions so definitely potentially chronic anger will definitely manifest physically sooner or later. Some people tend to be really overly analytical and overthinking everything and that's a sign that they have issues with control or loss of control, so obviously that's something to look out for. Generally feelings of overwhelm or just feeling negative, just feeling that the world is against you. Not being able to think clearly and actually one of the really big ones is feeling victimised. That's a really big one from you know my point of view, this chronic victimitis as I call it (laughs), which a lot of people do suffer from. You know again this is not about blaming it's not about shaming but when you recognise that you're a victim then perhaps if you identify that you need to look a little bit deeper because there are lots of ways where you can drag yourself out of that state and make yourself feel more empowered and actually live your life in a more fulfilling way because living your life as a victim is no fun.

And just generally when you question yourself all the time, when you're unsure of your own decisions and you're relying on other people to confirm things for you all the time because you don't have that trust in yourself. Or if you basically let people walk all over you then of course that's a big problem. In fact, well, it's anything that stops your mind from going quiet. So also I would say what is a symptoms of emotional toxicity is when people come to me and say 'oh god I wish I could meditate because I know it's good for me but I just can't do it I've got this monkey mind, I can't switch it off'. Yeah that's one of the issues here because if everything is calmer and you can make your mind go quiet then obviously you know that you're onto a winner here but

when you're really, really struggling to quieten your mind then that's usually an indicator of a lot of things just not being right.

Alex: Yes. Now I'm sure none of our viewers or listeners recognise or identify any of the things you just talked about (laughs) but if somebody does, which I imagine is probably everyone, what are some of the things that in your experience both as a kind of researcher and clinician, what are some of the things you've noticed are effective and helpful to start to work with emotional toxicity kind of more generally?
(53.48)

Dr Detko: You know as we know the first step to any change is awareness so having that self awareness is massive so this is why actually rather than just think oh we'll deal with the emotional toxicity, we're talking about the detailed things to look out for because now you can know think OK maybe I am actually identifying that I tick more of those boxes than I actually thought I would at the beginning of this interview, right. Well that's sort of step one because you know becoming a little bit more self aware and I love it when people go on this journey of self exploration and self awareness because it's so rewarding and what could actually help with this particular stage of the process is perhaps even some psychoanalysis, joining those dots together because often times when people have a lot of emotional trash they think that maybe they are a little bit crazy and there's something wrong with them and reality there's nothing wrong with you because I can tell you that there's always a reason why you're producing a certain behavioral pattern or why you're experiencing certain emotions, there's always a reason. You know that sort of root cause that we talked about earlier. Maybe it was a trauma, maybe it was just transference or somebody conditioned you to believe a certain thing.

So it helps for people to just go OK I can see where this is coming from, I've identified that this is the problem, I can see why I would have that problem. Now that immediately takes the stress off because you feel less crazy, right, do you know what I'm saying?

Alex: Totally, totally. I think normalizing it is really helpful, right, and I think that people's tendency is to think 'well if I have got this stuff going on I'm the only one and I must be crazy' and as you say to actually be able to recognise that this is happening, you're not alone and actually it's empowering because it then becomes a stepping stone to being able to do something about it and to actually be able to work with changing some of it.

Dr Detko: And the sad thing is, and Alex I'm sure you know this because you live in the UK and obviously I'm connected with the UK as well, there's so

many talks about how most of the population have some sort of mental health issue, which I think they're overdoing the diagnosis and labeling people too much personally. But it's still very taboo, it's still just this weird thing and if you have a mental health issue then you're this crazy person that still is very much how people perceive it. So it's really important that people don't feel crazy and they feel that there is obviously a reason and also that they can do something about it if they choose too.

And one of the things that can be helpful also at this stage of getting to know yourself a little bit better, because it's an awesome, awesome thing to do, is to perhaps do something like Enneagram or some other personality profiling exercise where you also recognise that some of your traits may just be natural for you and maybe some of the emotional conflict, because obviously I didn't actually mention this, but obviously the whole point is that if we have certain values and there are certain things that are important to us and we live in congruence and accordance with these values then usually we are good and it's great and life is wonderful. But most people don't, most people will have some sort of emotional conflict, the sort of natural tendency pulls them in one direction but yet they have some preconceived ideas, which obviously probably come from other people usually, that mean that they actually are not aligned with themselves and are not congruent and there's this emotional conflict, which of course is another source of emotional toxicity.

So knowing what you're natural traits are, maybe where you're unique, because with personality it's not that you are one thing or the other because there are different parts of the psyche and there's different models in psychology and psychotherapy where you can look at the different parts of your psyche and see maybe where some of the imbalances are and you can actually choose to bring yourself a bit more in balance. Do some parts therapy or something like that where you're working with different parts of your psyche, that's hugely helpful because when life happens, when you've gone through those exercises and something stressful happens, you don't just react like you used to but immediately go 'yeah I know where my reaction is coming from, I know that's my tendency to do X, Y, Z' and again that kind of diffuses some of the stress. So that's really, really great.

And of course that's just part of the process but if you really want to promote healing and optimal health if there are any early traumas, which most people will have something, then we need to heal those traumas, that's really important. So that would be, I would say sooner rather than later, but what I want people to know that healing trauma is very different today compared to what it was back in the 80's when you would expect to go to therapy three times a week years on end and I actually know people who've done something like that. Now that's no longer the case, I mean sometimes with literally a few

sessions you can resolve some complex things. I do that all the time because obviously it's all about the tools, the understanding of neuroscience is completely different these days. We don't know everything about the brain but we know so much more that it enables us to then be more targeted with the therapy. So I just want people to know that this can actually be a reasonably quick process, so that's another important thing.

(1.00.14)

Alex: There's some really helpful pieces there. So firstly getting that self awareness using I think the Enneagram is a fantastic tool, you know there's other tools people like as well, around identifying their patterns, dealing with those kind of internal conflicts, that absolutely makes sense, and then also starting to work with traumas and digesting those.

What else do you find is helpful, I know that one of the techniques you use if Havening and I think either now or in a little bit you were proposing you might do a little demonstration of that which I think would be great. But yeah, what are the other ways that you find are helpful to help people with digesting or processing their emotional toxicity/

Dr Detko: So some of the, and I'm quite happy to do a demo because it will be just a really wonderful tool that people can use on a daily basis not necessarily to resolve complex traumas because I do want to say that if you have complex traumas you can do some of your own work, I'm not saying you can't particularly if you have the tools, but you do also need somebody else's input to really navigate through those more complex paths of it if you will.

Just coming back for a moment to internal conflict, it's important that people do spend a little bit of time to work out what is important to them, so what are your values? Are you living your life in line with your own values or not, it's really important to work that out and also identify which beliefs that you may have. Say about health, I mean you can obviously do that exercise in relation to other areas of your life, but what are you currently believing about yourself in relation to health and healing? Because that could be that actually is what's stopping you from healing, there could be some issues there, some limiting beliefs, some secondary gain that you might uncover when working with that. So that's really important and we've obviously been talking a lot about emotionally but really we are talking about psycho energetic aspects of healing here.

So it's very, very important to healing that people are not isolated, isolation is a big, big problem. So this is something to look at and that could potentially be a source of emotionally toxicity that I didn't mention earlier. Definitely isolation is a big issue. And also not feeling connected and not feeling like

your life has meaning. I can't tell you how many people, I work with chronic illness all the time, and how many people are just not sure what their life is all about. You know what it means, what they're supposed to be doing with it. That's going to be an issue because if you don't have meaning, or if some people want to call it purpose, then it's almost, you know I have had clients just sitting there and asking me what's the point, what's the point of putting all this effort into getting better.

So this is more of a sort of existential sort of problem, but it's really, really key that people are really straight and clear on what it is that they're trying to achieve in their lives and what they're trying to do with their lives because that could be the difference between healing and not healing. And obviously the really, really, I left this for the end, but this is a massive piece and probably the most important piece, is to work on your self worth and your self acceptance because ultimately if say you had some traumas that eroded your identity then you will never heal fully unless you heal that core of yourself and accept fully who you are as a person. And yes if you want to make changes to that, great make changes to that, but ultimately on the whole you need that acceptance, without it you're going nowhere. Do you agree?

(1.04.16)

Alex: Absolutely. So much of what people invest energy doing in life is because they're trying to get away from or become the person that they kind of think that they should be until ultimately we come to a place of finding peace, accepting who we are, our whole life is an effort, right. It's like everything we do is about trying to win love or avoid rejection or to be seen as being kind or to try and help others to feel like we're a value in the world but everything becomes an effort until ultimately we find a place that we have a basic level I think of love and acceptance of who we are and then yes we may want to achieve things and give to others and do whatever else, but we're doing it from a much more sustainable healthy place.

Dr Detko: I can tell you when you cross over to that, because I know where I was when I was sick as I was telling you about earlier, I was in a really bad place and I was a complete emotional mess and part of that was that erosion of identity. When I heard that, it is perfectly possible to do, it's a process but it's perfectly possible to do, everything in my life changed, I can't even begin to describe, it's very difficult to put into words. But suddenly life is really worth living and life is wonderful and everything is an opportunity and not a threat. It just changes everything and life becomes a pleasure and it becomes easy rather than a chore because for s many people life is just hard work, right.

So you were asking about Havening Techniques. Yes it is one of my go to modalities and I am actually going to just say a few words about how this modality can be used because it is a modality that I work with when I work with complex trauma and it can be used in that way, which of course as I said if you have that issue then I really encourage you to get somebody's help on this at least initially. But it can also be used to manage your day-to-day fears and anxieties, but I want to stress that if you just manage your fears and anxieties without getting to the root cause then they're always probably going to be there. But nonetheless if you go into give a presentation and you are completely breaking out on a cold sweat and blushing and this and that and the other then of course it serves you to have some sort of tool to get on top of that so you can be successful.

So you can use that in that context but it also has the beauty of promoting positive ideas that we want to implant in our brain, so it sort of a lot of people would say so how do I work on my self acceptance and self worth and some of the things that people do are affirmations for instance, yeah. So you can use Havening in conjunction with affirmations and you can also do it in front of the mirror so you can get the mirror neuron involvement and I like efficiency see, so you can combine all of those things together and you have a really beautiful tool for doing some of this work on your own core identity and self acceptance and it's really, really wonderful.

If anybody wants to know the neuroscience behind this technique and just read a little bit more about how it works then go to havening.org and there's loads of research papers and things like that so you can read that. Basically all you need to know is that when you go through a traumatic event what tends to happen is obviously there's different conditions that need to be met for that trauma to register in the brain as a trauma. It sort of gets glued into place, if you will, with your neurology and what Havening does, it's a psycho-sensitive and by stimulating the receptors on the skin, which I will show you in a minute how to do, you send a signal directly into the limbic system in the brain and you can take that glue that holds the trauma together basically starts crumbling away. It's almost like you imagine the dry glue that starts crumbling away, right. So that's how to kind of visually see that, that's basically what happens.

So it's very, very simple but please do not underestimate how great it is just because it's simple. In fact it's very instinctive, a lot of people do some of this stuff instinctively not even knowing what they're doing and you will probably see that all the time now that I've shown you. So there's three sites. The first one is the face and what we're doing really is we're very gently stroking, like so, either from the top of the forehead or we can even do this, right. We're not applying a lot of pressure, it's not about the pressure, but we're obviously

keeping contact with the skin, it's just a nice soothing action and this is basically more or less the temp with which you want to do it, not too fast and not too slow. So that's site number one.

Then the other one goes from the top of the shoulder, the outside of the arm, all the way down to the elbow. It doesn't have to be bare skin but it does help if you don't have a lot of layers on because obviously you're reducing the input that way. But you can do it through a light layer of clothing that's fine.
(1.10.07)

Then the third one is the hands and all you're doing, can you see that, it's like washing the hands really, it's a sweeping in this way. And there is no sequence to this, so it's not like with EFT where you've got a sequence, you can just stroke your face or just rub your arms if that's what you'd prefer, you can mix them in whatever way you want. So for instance let's just say that you are about to give a presentation and you are really stressed out about it, getting a bit of stage fright or whatever, you can just spend a couple of minutes doing that and you will literally this will melt away. It will take that anxiety away.

When we're talking about affirmations again, so you can basically stand there in from of the mirror and obviously I can give you a ton of affirmations that you can do that are helpful for building self worth but ultimately what I always encourage people to do is to come up with their own because nothing registers in your brain like your own words and what you actually feel and connect with. When people come from a place where they're really feeling down on themselves, when they're really feeling jus generally crap about themselves, they don't feel worthy, they just feel they're not enough, then I would just encourage you to start nice and gentle and slow, so maybe not necessarily 'oh I absolutely love and adore myself' because you may not connect with that at first but you may actually say 'I'm OK' 'I'm fine as I am', things like that. As for healing you could say things such as 'I trust that my body knows how to heal and all I need to do is to do my best to provide it with the right conditions for healing'. So that is going to be mega helpful. So you could also boost your own healing by doing this. So not just with fears and anxieties but also in a positive way, which is why I think it's so great.

Alex: It's a very simple and immediate way of soothing and calming the system, right. So if there's a kind of sympathetic kind of arousal and we can feel that we're kind of on edge as a way of just soothing and settling and calming that, it's a very easy and simple thing to do and I think what's really neat about it is that because you've got three different options. If someone is in a public place, lets say, that they're waiting to go in for a job interview or something they can just do the hands and no one's really going to know what

they're doing. If someone's kind of at home along they can be more connective and more intimate let's say with themselves in terms of how they're doing it.

Dr Detko: Absolutely yes. I always say that exactly, ultimately you can just rub your hand and nobody is going to know any better and actually you will see people do that, even though they've not actually targeting anything in particular, they don't know anything, they don't know what they're doing but often times when people feel stressed they'll touch their face or they'll rub their heads together. Or if you see somebody consoling somebody else they will often rub their arm. So there's something in us that is already instinctive about it but what I didn't say and it's perhaps interesting to know, is that the biggest feature of this technique is that by stimulating the receptors on the skin you are actually changing the brainwave activity and you go all the way down to delta waves, which is the same brainwave activity as we get during deep sleep. So this is why it's so calming and why you can immediately switch yourself from the fight or flight to the rest and digest and heal responses for that reason because it's able to change your brainwave activity. That's the power of it.

Alex: That's very cool. I'm mindful of time but before we come to how people can find out more about you and your work just one final question, which is that for somebody that perhaps is feeling quite overwhelmed around, particularly in the section where you were talking about the different sources of emotional toxicity and they're going tick, tick, tick, and they're kind of suddenly going there's so much that needs to be worked through and it can sometimes I think feel like a mountain that's kind of too tall to climb.

What would you say to someone in that situation?
(1.14.50)

Dr Detko: So there's a couple of things that you can do and the first ones obvious. You can actually approach somebody who can help you make sense of it and who will just take that overwhelm away by saying OK this is this, this is that, and that is how we are going to organize it and then step by step you can see the progression and you can see where you're going with it. So that's the first one.

But say somebody wants to just perhaps get started on this on their own then just apply the same method that you would do to anything that overwhelms you and for me that would be to identify where you're worst area is and just focus on that one area. So for instance if you decide that maybe the worst bit for you is, I don't know, having a really bad belief about your healing, so you keep saying to yourself 'I can't do this, I can't do this, I can't do this' then perhaps the first step for you, and just focus on that and forget everything else

just focus on that, is to change that belief. And you know you can do that you know, you got that belief through repetition and you can change it through repetition. So decide what else you want to be believing instead about your healing and then practice that belief with Havening so that Belief goes in and settles into the brain and changes your neurology faster by implementing Havening at the same time.

Then you can say 'OK my next chunk is this' and just do one thing at a time because you're right it can get a little overwhelming sometimes.

Alex: Fantastic. I think this has been a really important interview, I think there's a number of amazing functional medicine doctors and experts here but I think this emotional toxicity piece is so crucial and I think you've done a great job of explaining it and breaking it down so thank you so much.

For people that want to find out more about you and your work how can they do that?

Dr Detko: So I'm not a great fan of social media I'll be frank about it but I do have my own community and the best way to connect is really to go actually to my website which is de-eva.com and everything you need to connect with me will be there.

Alex: Fantastic. Eva thank you so much for making the time, I really appreciate it. I think that's been incredibly useful so really appreciate you sharing your wisdom and experience.

Dr Detker: I really hope that this is adding value and it's just perhaps clarifying that piece for people because I really am telling you try and look into this sooner rather than later and when you do and when you've done this work your whole body will function completely differently and all those other things that you're doing on the nutritional side and all the other things that you're doing with supplements and everything else will just work that much better when you've offloaded your nervous system.

Alex: Fantastic, thank you so much.

Dr Detko: Thank you.