



THE

FATIGUE

SUPER

CONFERENCE

The power of intuition to support healing

Guest: Razi Berry

Alex: Welcome to the Fatigue Super Conference and I'm really excited for this interview. I'm talking with Razi Berry and we're going to be exploring the role of intuition, specifically in the context of people really learning to listen to their body and work in harmony and communication with their body. I think this is an absolutely crucial piece of the kind of jigsaw of fatigue and I'm looking forward to getting into this both from the point of view of the content of the teaching, but also because Razi's had her own story in terms of recovering from a journey with chronic fatigue.

Alex: Just to give Razi's kind of more formal background before I welcome her, Razi Berry is the founder and publisher of the journal Naturopathic Doctor News & Review, which has been in print since 2005 and the primary consumer-facing website of Naturopathic Medicine Natural Path. She is the host of the National Cancer Prevention Summit and the Heart Revolution: Heal, Empower and Follow Your Heart; and the ever popular 10-Week Sugar Free Summer Program.

Alex: From a near-death experience as a young child that healed her failing heart, to later overcoming infertility and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and fibromyalgia through naturopathic medicine, Razi has lived the mind/body healing paradigm. Her projects uniquely capture the tradition and philosophy of naturopathy, the healing power of nature, the vital life force in every living thing and the undeniable role that science and mind/body medicine have in creating health and overcoming disease.

Alex: Razi, thank you so much for joining me.

Razi: Hi there. It's great to be here. I definitely have had my go arounds with fatigue and I think that to explore this topic in deeper ways is really important and I'm so glad to be here.

Alex: Brilliant. Thank you so much. Let's maybe start there and just something that kind of jumped out to me in your bio, that's quite a significant

statement. "From a near-death experience as a young child that healed her failing heart." Maybe, let's start there. I know you had your own journey as a teenager in terms of with self-love and with an eating disorder that played a role. Maybe, let's start there and then I'd also like to come to the chronic fatigue piece before we kind of dive more into this concept of intuition.

Razi: Sure. Well, as you say, I was a young girl, 14 years old, and I was in the hospital dying of heart failure. The heart failure was a result of an eating disorder, I had anorexia nervosa. Probably the leading cause of death in an eating disorder is usually heart failure, because the heart muscle becomes so weak or atrophied that it can no longer do its work, really. Yeah, I had a phenomenal experience with that. I was in the hospital and there was really nothing that could be done to strengthen my heart and I was dying.

Razi: The priest was brought in, our family priest was brought in, to do last rites. If you are not familiar with what last rites is in the Catholic tradition, if you're born and you get baptized and when you're dying, it's sort of like the baptism of death. A few days after that happened, I had this transformative experience. My mom had come in with my siblings one at a time to see me and my little brother was four years old at the time. A doctor had come in as well. I heard him say to my mom, just kind of vaguely heard him say, "This is really a shame, she's doing it to herself."

Razi: I heard that and I felt just such a terrible feeling of shame, and it's because I really was doing that to myself. I was not nourishing and nurturing myself. I suddenly was watching this experience from above, from the top of the room, which somebody listening right now might be like, "Oh, okay, I'm done," but it was just my experience. I try not to label what it was. Then, I was looking down on my mom and my brother and the doctor, and I just felt so scared and so sad. I wanted to really escape that, the sadness.

Razi: Suddenly, I was in this light and the light was really a message that love is really all there is. There's so much more to that and I don't want to take time from this conference to go into those details, because what's really important is people often want to know what the details were of that experience. What did I see, smell, hear, taste and feel. When I came back into my body, I became so aware of the fact that I had been so dissociated from taking care of myself. So dissociated from listening to my body.

Razi: You can't do things like not eat or smoke cigarettes or you can't do things that are harmful to your body while you're fully embodied. The experience brought me... It was less of what the spiritual experience was and it was more of getting back into my body that made the difference and I healed. It was a spontaneous healing. My family didn't call it a near death

experience, they said, "God healed me," is what my family... People in our immediate circle of family, friends and doctors knew, but I didn't really talk about it for many, many years.

Razi: What it did for me is made me think, "If throughout my life the doctors had always healed me of whatever was wrong, this time they couldn't. What healed me? Where does healing really come from?" It just kind of planted this lifelong seed of studying and seeking the answers to that question. Or those questions, where does disease come from and where does healing come from?

Alex: I think it's also a fascinating exploration in terms of I know a lot of your work now is around love as medicine and the importance of self-love and self-care. Without going into a whole other story on this side, my sister also nearly died of anorexia nervosa. Ultimately, she did recover from it, but I spent a lot of my childhood around girls and some boys suffering from anorexia. It was kind of a big theme of the different treatment centers and places that we went to visit.

Alex: I think a lot of the media portrayal around anorexia is people wanting to be thin and wanting to be like kind of wafer thin kind of models, and maybe that's part of it, but it always... Even back then, it struck me that so much of it is actually really a form of self-hatred or self-punishment. It's not about trying to be an idealized self, it's about a way of processing one's own emotional life. It sounds like ultimately there was some insight moment around love and self-love that was transformative in its healing impact.

Razi: Absolutely, it was. Yeah. I'm sorry that you had that experience. I'm so glad that she recovered; many people don't. I think you're right. For me, self-love doesn't always mean do what feels good, pamper yourself. It's about getting real with what we need to do and take responsibility for how much our choices and decisions we make in every moment throughout the time we wake up to when we go to bed at night really make the difference with how we feel.

Alex: Yes, and that's something I know we'll come back to a little bit later in the conversation, but let's maybe then jump forward to, you were telling me before we started recording, about some of the factors that... We talk about pieces of a jigsaw and it's kind of different pieces that come together, which often will then create the experience of fatigue. You were talking about some of those different pieces that then led to you having struggles with your energy. Tell us a bit about that.

Razi: Yeah, so I was about 25 years old and I was working at the time selling new construction, new homes, and I just, one day, started feeling so

extremely tired that I could barely function. I was having a lot of pain in my body as well. Headaches, migraines, trouble sleeping, real sensitive to pain and feeling pain pretty much all the time. Went to several different doctors and at first they were like, "Oh, you probably just have the flu."

Razi: They tested that I had, at one point, had EBV, Epstein-Barr virus, and CMV, Cytomegalovirus, which are both implicated in, many cases, of chronic fatigue. They didn't really have any solutions to offer me and I can really empathize with people that are listening to this project or people who have patients that go through fatigue, because I remember being so overwhelmed with fatigue that I remember crawling to the bathroom. I remember being at home by myself and needing to go to the bathroom and literally just I got on the floor of my apartment and I crawled to the bathroom.

Razi: That is when I was so devastated, like these doctors aren't helping me, what am I going to do? They were prescribing medications for me to sleep at night, for me to stay awake during the day, for the pain, for the anxiety that I was feeling because of the pain and the anxiety I was feeling because nobody had an answer. It got to the point where I just didn't want to take all these medications. I was at a really famous clinic, the Mayo Clinic, and they said, because the lab results weren't showing anything that they...

Razi: They don't look at optimal, right? They look at normal. They were just like, "You need to take these medications." I said, "No." Then they wanted me to see a psychiatrist. Well, the psychiatrist evaluated me and said, "Look, there's nothing wrong with you psychologically and there's nothing wrong with you physically." At this point, it was just like, whoa. I had to take a leave of absence from my job. I could barely walk across my home and so I went back to the main physician, there is an internist that's kind of the case manager, and I said, "Okay, I give up. I will take the anti-inflammatories, but I won't take the other drugs, because I just need help with pain."

Razi: She said, "You know what? I'm not going to give you the anti-inflammatories, because the pain is not in your body, it's in your head." I just began to weep and then I said to her, "You know what? You're fired." It surprised me when I was like, "I don't accept that." That put me on this journey to finding my own healing and I do remember that experience as a young girl. I was like, "You know, healing happens. I'm going to heal again," and I went and found doctors, it was through Finding Naturopathic Medicine.

Razi: What we uncovered through that journey is that, also, in my job selling new construction, I was exposed to so many chemicals. The off-gassing of solvents, carpet, adhesives, glues, paint, spraying pesticides, so when potential clients came in they didn't find a bug in the model homes. Prior to

that, I had worked in the cosmetic industry, the fragrance industry, as a regional rep. I would go to all the department stores with samples. My car had bottles of cologne. My doctors, this was 20 years ago, and people weren't really talking about chronic fatigue in the way they are now or fibromyalgia in the way they are now.

Razi: It was just so brilliant to have doctors that would finally listen to me, that put me in charge. They asked me the questions and they listened to what I had to say. Then we began to do things like strengthen my immune system from my prior CMV and EBV. We detoxed from the many solvents and things that I had been exposed to and it was a long road. I want to say that, if you're suffering from fatigue right now, absolutely look at me. I feel great most all of the time, but health is not something that you arrive at. Like you get to the store and you're there.

Razi: There are times in my life when, if I don't sleep right, if I stay up too late working on a project, when my father passed away, when I went through my divorce, those were times that the fatigue and the pain did and do resurface. What's brilliant, again, is that I can always go back and listen to my body, trust my intuition. I've got the principles of naturopathy that I can always return to. It's really kind of humbling to know that we can't just get there and think everything is going to be fine. We have to constantly be doing the work.

Alex: I think it's a difference between being so unwell that you can't get up or you're struggling to go to the bathroom to living a very rich and full life and recognizing that your body is communicating with you; as opposed to that being something that's just shut down and ignored, which then results in a kind of much more severe state of fatigue. It's actually a feedback mechanism. I guess that kind of opens up this idea of maybe just say a bit about when you talk of intuition, what do you mean by that? Also, why is it so important?

Razi: Yes, so I publish Naturopathic Doctor News & Review, which is a case study format for doctors by naturopathic doctors. Next month marks our 15th year and so I have had such a beautiful education just by month after month, year after year reading cases about how people are treated with natural means and holistically. I've kind of saw this underlying pattern of people moving from really not paying attention, not listening to their bodies, to moving into that.

Razi: Also, that experience I had where I went from such a dissociative state that I was dying to this embodied state of really being aware of what my body feels like and all my senses are. I became kind of a student of intuition and what I've come to discover is that intuition is not what a lot of people say

that it is. It's not psychic phenomenon, it's not ESP; although, those things may exist, it's not what my focus is. What I think intuition is, and the science that I've been uncovering, is it is, what I call, a physio-conscious phenomenon that all people have.

Razi: It's our physiology. Candace Pert, who was the biologist, the cell biologist, pharmacologist, who discovered the opiate receptor. When she did that work, she came to the conclusion that your body is your subconscious mind. You really think and not just with your brain, but with your entire body. Every cell in our body has memory, it makes decisions and if you don't believe that, that's what we kind of try to do with vaccines; although, we get it wrong. You create a response so your cells remember that.

Razi: What intuition really is, is that we're taking in data from all of our senses, from the people and environment around us, but a lot of these are senses that we are not aware of. For instance, there is a sense called magnetoreception. Now, we're more familiar with that in animals. Animals, especially those that migrate to different locations for seasonal changes to find food or how animals can find water. They kind of can have a sense of finding water. Or if they eat other meat, there is a newly dead animal far away, they'll find a way to find it.

Razi: Animals have a cryptochrome, it's a protein in their eye, that senses magnetic fields. Now, the earth gives off magnetic fields, plants give off magnetic fields, the human body and animals, our heart gives off magnetic fields, our brain. Scientists believe that from flies to elephants, that animals have that sense and so it was discovered that humans also have a cryptochrome in their eye and have an ability to sense magnetic fields. That's one example of a sense that we have that, when we look at interoception, which is the scientific term for our body's ability to sense our internal state, sense our organs, sense our heart rate, sense ovulation, so many things.

Razi: We take these senses and these senses bring in all this data, it's modulated by our interoception with, what I call, the three hearts, which is your brain, the heart in your head; the heart in your chest; and the heart in your gut, which they're all endocrine organs, including your heart, and they all are organs also of thinking. They all have a cognition. Your enteric nervous system in your stomach can operate separately from your brain and so can your heart.

Razi: I've been just studying that and realizing that we've just become so divorced from that, because we don't pay attention to the senses, the way we live in our modern life, and that was just one example, the magnetosense. In our skin, we have light receptors and we used to think that those were also

only in our eye, because vision is light dependent. There is a researcher in Israel who is saying, "We can sense or see a lot more through our skin than we realize." You think of things like feeling that someone's watching you or someone's behind you.

Razi: There is a lot of senses beside sound. There is chemosensing, we can sense that person's pheromones, we can sense their immune system, we can sense their fertility, we can sense their magnetic field, we can sense changes in light. Intuition is something that we all have the ability to tap into. We just have become so reliant on other things that we just ignore it. When we continue to ignore those messages, we make bad decisions.

Razi: We know so much now about medicine. We know so much about the function of the body and the nervous system, the biome. We know that sugar causes inflammation and premature aging and pain; and, yet, we're really not getting better. We know so much and we are not getting better. Why? We aren't taking the information and listening to our bodies and making the changes that we need to make. That's why our intuition is our most powerful tool towards health.

Alex: I think, often, cases of fatigue, particularly, become more severe cases of fatigue when you look at people's case history leading up to that. Often, there have been a number of communications or kind of warning signs, let's say, from one's body that have either been heard and ignored, which may be a kind of, I guess, more of a piece around self-love and self-care; or, have not even been heard or been noticed in the first place. It strikes me that, in some ways, I'm sure it's not true in all cases, but in many cases, almost the reality of fatigue having become more deep-rooted in one's life is almost its own evidence that there is a lack of developed intuition, which has meant that those signs have been either not observed or have been ignored.

Razi: Yes. I agree with that so much, because I think about my two daughters. They might be in the other room and they're like, "Hey, mom," and I'm busy, I'm doing something, I don't really hear, I'm not focusing in on that. They're like, "Mom," and pretty soon they're like, "Mom!" Then they'll storm in there and they're like, "Mom." I think our bodies do the same thing to us. They're kind of like, "Hey, pay attention to me. Hello? Are you listening? Hey, you, in there." They just keep getting louder and louder, those messages.

Razi: Another thing with fatigue is that I feel like our society pushes fatigue so much towards how to give you more energy and less with, okay, when you were fatigued, your body is trying to reserve the energy. Often times, not always, but there is a time of needing to build yourself up. Of needing to

rest. I don't mean being sedentary, but I think we also live in a world where everything is so focused on detoxification, which is important.

Razi: In my case, it was very important, and not so much on the nourishment aspect. Not so much with a practitioner, but a person going through fatigue, one of the first things they'll do is detox or take caffeine or energy supplements, and they're really just whacking a mole.

Alex: Well, I think, often what happens is that the paradigm or in the way that someone's approached their life, which has played a factor in getting sick, is often the very approach they initially use to get well. If someone's got sick through pushing themselves, ignoring their body, they then almost actively look for treatment paths that involve, as you say, much more aggressive, much more kind of yang and kind of pushing kind of [policies 00:23:51], because that's what they know.

Alex: But, it's often the opposite of what's needed, which I guess brings me onto another question, which is that intuition or, put in other words, listening to one's body be that they're listening to their heart or listening to their gut, whatever it may be, seems to be significantly undervalued in society. I think it's undervalued in orthodox medicine, but also as a kind of cultural thing that's often seen as being weak or as being lazy. What are your thoughts on that?

Razi: It's really a shame, because some of the earliest physicians, like Paracelsus, said that, basically, a physician's intuition is really the most important tool. He's quoted as saying that in much different words, but there is a body of research in using our intuition in a medical practice. In fact, one study I'm thinking of is in a hospital in London, or a clinic in London, was this general practitioners, they were studying children with infections. What they did is they measured, when practitioners looked at the standards of care, so the standards of practice that they needed to go to determine if a child could be just given some prescription or sent home or needed to be hospitalized.

Razi: This was looking at 3,000 children. Basically, the practitioner would kind of listen to their gut feeling and follow the standards of care. There were six cases; now, a statistician would say six out of 3,000 isn't significant, and there could've been more that were missed, but the results said that six of those 3,000 children, where the clinician, the GP, felt like that they needed hospitalization, but according to their checklist, they sent them home. Six of those children were severely, severely sick and needed hospitalization.

Razi: Now, basically, that was six cases where the doctor didn't follow their intuition and you could argue that six of 3,000 is not significant, but

what if one of those six children were your child or my child? That's significant. There is more of a body of research on intuition in nursing practice, and nurses seem to be pushing more towards including and teaching intuition than doctors are. Yeah, I think all doctors use their intuition to a sense and we just don't talk about it, but it would be so wonderful if it was more recognized, because it's just reality.

Razi: We all have intuition, we all have these senses and these ideas and these instincts and these insights. To totally disregard those for a checklist on a computer screen, I think, is bordering on just ridiculous, if not criminal or malpractice. But, because it's so subjective, it's hard for the scientific medical community to wrap itself around. Let's be real, life is subjective, health is subjective, fatigue is subjective and when we focus just on what the research says, we're missing the mark, because, I say this all the time, life does not happen in a test tube or in a controlled environment.

Razi: Life is messy, life is dirty and life is subjective. I'm hoping that the work that I'm doing in a small way, and I'm writing a book about this, will help inspire people to listen to themselves, teach them ways to do that and inspire clinicians to pay attention, as well.

Alex: Why do you think that we have either lost our intuition or why we are not in touch with that? What are some of the factors you think that get in the way of that?

Razi: Well, we don't have to rely on our senses so much. Some of this is going to sound like a stretch, but we're in electric light all day long, right? So, we aren't getting the subtle messages from our environment. We're not really touching the earth's biofield anymore. We're shod, we're in shoes all day, we aren't touching the surface of the earth, we spend most of our time indoors, we mask our body's sense and the chemicals that we give off with soaps and scents. We do the same thing with our environment. We are largely sedentary.

Razi: We've just sort of not had to rely on it anymore and the lot of the technology and these comforts we have are really wonderful, but there is a cost to that. There's ways to plug back into nature, ways to increase functional connectivity between the brain and your heart and your gut and the rest of your body. There's ways eat that increase hippocampal neurogenesis, which is involved with learning and memory and helps you sort of mediate those moments of insight or intuition that you get.

Razi: There's strengthening your vagal tone, so those heart, brain and gut are all really able to speak to each other. There's optimizing lymphatic flow. That your lymph gives a lot of messages to your bloodstream as to what other

nutritive needs that you have or metabolic needs that you have by how much waste product is in there and then that speaks directly to your organs. Listen to how intuitive your body is. Your kidneys have olfactory receptors. Now, and olfactory receptor, we thought, was just in your nose, it is how we smell.

Razi: Like I'm saying, there's so much. Our body is sensing so many things, it's taking in everything and if we learn about what that can do, I think we'll take more care and pay more attention. Like, have you heard of the term *mittelschmerz*?

Alex:No.

Razi: *Mittelschmerz* is a term, it translates to middle pain and it's a medical term that doctors use when a woman can feel herself ovulate. It's kind of an old school example that we used to just say, "Well, sure, of course we can feel when our body..." Now, we have to use a fertility monitor, right? Or we're kind of even divorced from something so simple as knowing when we ovulate and how we have to count and fret and pay somebody and do a blood test and pee on a stick. It's like we're just complicating things so much. If you're really in tune, your ovaries are right here, they're not far away. You can feel it.

Alex:As we start to look at some of the ways that people can re-gain or if it's already they're, but strengthen intuition, what are some of the things that you've either personally found or as you're working with people to cultivate things that you find help to kind of reconnect and strengthen this?

Razi: Sure. One thing that I recommend doing every once in a while, a few times a year, is what I call a sensory fast. You removed, first, anything scented from your environment, because chemosensing your food, the people around you, your pets, your body senses these airborne chemicals that are given off and then your body makes decisions. "I need to stay away from that, I need more of this, I need to get closer to that," or it'll make different physiological changes.

Razi: One of the first things to do is to get rid of anything scented, even essential oils, because those are very concentrated. I'm not against essential oils, I love some, I have some right here, but really try to get back to really letting your olfactory sense do its job. Then, I also say try to eliminate electric light whenever possible. The light receptors in your whole body, not just your eyes can sort of take in the real information. A lot of what happens with these, it might sound strange, but if you take a computer and you give it wrong data all the time, it's going to be confused.

Razi: I also will try to eat food in its natural state and not add a lot of flavourings or spices, just for a time, just because the fact your kidneys have olfaction and the luminal lining of your gut actually has taste receptors. Why? They're not trying to taste if this tastes good, it tastes nutrients and that can help you make the right food choices for you. I tried to strip away all the things that adulterate our senses. That's the first thing I recommend.

Alex: How long would people do that for?

Razi: I think do it for two weeks and watch how you can kind of start to be able to listen into your own body a little bit more. Then, I kind of live largely that way. Not so much, I eat salt and pepper and whatever herbs, but yeah, I try to I don't drink anything with natural flavorings or gum with natural flavorings. I want the truth of what the environment is telling me, right? Another thing is start every day outside in the sunlight bare feet on the ground, if you can. I do that no matter what the weather, whether it's 35 degrees outside in the winter or 115 here in Phoenix in the summer.

Razi: The sunlight helps with the fourth phase of water, which I don't know if you know the work of Gerald Pollock, who kind of helped discover the fourth phase of water? That water has this hydrophilic state and it helps move blood flow and lymphatic flow. Then the biofield from the earth when you are barefoot, the two together kind of act as a battery. It's a way to really create more energy, because the hydrophilic nature of the water in your muscles, in your blood, and your lymph from the sun and the biofield from the earth really helps to keep your mitochondrial health and your blood flowing and all of your metabolic processes.

Razi: That's a wonderful way to just kind of... It's like a natural adaptogen and it really is kind of like a battery, so to speak. That's another way. Also, cross body exercises, like standing on one foot, reaching across, those simple movements, and there is more that I'm writing about in my book, can help kind of increase the functional connectivity to different areas. Creativity, so we've got movement which is important, but being moved has shown to increase interoceptive sensibility, meaning to really be better attuned to what the messages your body is saying to you.

Razi: To be inspired by music or art or poetry or architecture, purposely put yourself in situations where you can be moved, because that feeling is the physiological responses, right? We have what's called piloerection, when you have goosebumps for instance or you feel like a warmth in your heart and in your solar plexus. These are chemicals in your body that are mediating health and well-being. The reason why they make you feel good is because your body

is rewarding you for doing something that creates these healing chemicals. Those are just a few tips.

Alex: That's really interesting. Let's say someone is strengthening their intuition by getting more of that information feedback, but perhaps the issue is having the self-worth or the kind of self-love to actually act upon that. The information is there, but it's inconvenient to their sense of, but I need to achieve these things and my status and my love is linked to my achievement of this outcome and my body is telling me to stop and listen, but tough, sort of thing. What helps cultivate that self-love and that kind of valuing of one's self in the way that is important to then be able to act upon that information?

Razi: Yeah, that's such a good question and it can be so different for so many people. Let's take what the opposite of feeling self-love is, it's feeling ashamed, feeling sad, feeling scared, feeling anxious. If we look at all these feelings as a message our body is giving to us, our body can't actually talk to us and say, "Hey, **Razi**," with language. It does so through our feelings. When we're feeling sad or depressed or ashamed of something, if we look at it as our body is showing us, okay, we're doing something against or wrong to what will bring us health and joy.

Razi: It's a message just in the way like if you have a toddler and they scribble with crayon on the wall and you look at them like this, right? You don't have to do something drastic, you just get like this and then they'll stop, because that's the feedback they're getting. Well, that's what your body is doing to you when you have these feelings. If we look at the message there and say, "Okay, I feel ashamed, because I'm not taking care of my body the way I should, I don't look the way I want to look at that looks like health."

Razi: I'm not saying about perfection or some sort of societal unrealistic norm, but sometimes people feel ashamed when they're not on top of their eating and their fitness. That shame isn't something that we should just continue to feel bad about, we can just think ourselves. Like, okay, by feeling bad, you're showing me it's not the right thing to do. If I go ahead and I do something, like take a walk in the morning or go to that yoga class or eat the healthy meal, it shifts back to a positive feeling and that's how you know you're on the right track.

Alex: Are there particular kind of psychological tools or practices that you recommend people used to kind of either get themselves kind of more emotionally in touch or to kind of cultivate more of those positive things?

Razi: Yeah, there are so many fantastic tools. Journaling is definitely one of them and I think that it's really good to kind of ask yourself, when you have

a feeling like fear or despair or you just feel like you can't do it, to ask that part of you, what are you telling me? You can go to, I think it's important, your practitioner, your counselor, but really they're just a guide. That's why the word doctor comes from the word docere, it means to teach.

Razi: Really, only you know the answer, so I think that journaling and asking that part of you, okay, frustrated Razi, you have not been to the gym all week and you're feeling frustrated about it, what do you want from me, frustration? What are you trying to tell me, frustration? You'll get to the answer and then you feel empowered; at least, you no longer feel like you're not in control of the situation and that empowerment helps, I think, make that decision.

Razi: I also think that it's important to surround yourself with people that are really going to champion you. Sometimes, we have people that will really be by our side. When you're in a lot of pain, they'll be there that'll be, "Oh, I'm so sorry," and they'll kind of share in that misery, but sometimes when you start stepping out of that and maybe you're seeing practitioners that are more open to alternative and natural ways or maybe when you decide you don't want to take some of these medications and you want to do something more natural, sometimes your relationships are going to change and that will make people be afraid. Then, they aren't always as supportive.

Razi: I think it's important to prepare that that can happen. That happened to me. When I was down and out, I had friends who were just all over there to support me. When I started to get out of it, some of those fell away and it was sad. Then, I thought about this concept in gardening. It's self-pruning. Many fruit trees will self-prune. When it's really dense and some of the branches aren't getting enough sunlight, they will just fall away as a self-pruning way to get more sunlight.

Razi: I thought of that concept and I thought, "Okay, it's painful when these people fall away and they aren't supportive, but it's like those dead branches and I'm letting more sunlight in so I can heal." I think to prepare that, as you make changes and move towards health and getting your energy back and getting your vitality back, To really surround yourself with the people that are going to champion that for you, because it's epigenetic, right? The cell responds to the environment and we are just a bunch of cells.

Alex: Absolutely. I'm mindful of time. Just before we come to how can people find out more about you and your work, it strikes me, also, that another aspect we haven't touched on so much here is also courage. That it takes a lot of courage for one to start to really listen to their intuition and then to act on

their intuition; particularly, as you were just saying, in terms of if one's environment is not totally supportive of that change.

Alex: Not because the people around us don't love us, it's almost because they do love us and they're scared if we change, we're not going to be close to them in the same way. What do you see as the role of courage and what have you found in your life that supported cultivating courage?

Razi: Even in that situation, it's not easy, but it takes courage to say, "Hey, you mean so much to me and I'm really excited to be on this journey of getting off these pain meds, their stopping smoking or eating healthy." I just get this feeling that maybe you're not really on board. You mean so much to me that I want to talk to you about that. That's one way, I think, to really utilize courage. The other thing that's important about courage is that I thought to myself...

Razi: Like when I said to that doctor, "You're fired," that took a lot of courage, but I thought, "Nobody can live my..." This woman, these doctors, they just go on to the next person or they go home to their own lives. They're not living in my skin. I have to have the courage to understand that I am the only one that controls this outcome, I am the only one that can get me well.

Razi: I can go to the practitioners, I can go to the right clinics, but if I don't make this stand and follow better advice or do the recommendations, no one is going to do it for me. I think we need courage, because we are afraid what happens if we fail; but, what happens if you don't even try? Then, you just stay where you are.

Alex: That's a great point. Often, the pain of staying is worse than the pain of changing, we just don't realize it at the time. Razi, this has been, I think, a really important topic. Thank you so much for sharing of your experience so kind of authentically and openly. For people that want to find out more about you and your work, what's the best way to do that?

Razi: You can go to my website, naturalpath.net. If you go there, I have a free guide called *Is It Time to Fire Your Doctor?* You learn what to look for in a clinic or physician. If they're paying attention, if they're listening and it gives you some real courage and guidance. You can also find me on social media, Facebook and Instagram, @Raziberry. I have a podcast where, really, wherever you listen to podcasts, iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify, called *Love Is Medicine* and I would love for you to join me there.

Alex: Fantastic. Razi, thank you so much. I really appreciate you sharing of both your story and your wisdom. It's been great.

Razi: Thank you. I really enjoyed it.