



## Vagus nerve stimulation to calm your nervous system

**Guest: Dr. Eva Detko**

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**Claire Sehinson - [00:00:15]**

So hello and welcome back to the Fatigue Super Conference, I'm Claire, the Head of Research at the Optimum Health Clinic, and today I'm welcoming Dr. Eva Detko to discuss the vagus nerve and fatigue.

Dr. Eva Detko is a natural healthcare practitioner, author and speaker. She studied natural medicine and the human mind for over 20 years. She successfully recovered from chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia and reversed Hashimoto's thyroiditis and now helps others recover their health.

Dr. Eva has an extensive knowledge and experience in the field of human physiology, biochemistry, nutritional sciences and bioenergetics.

She also uses a wide range of mind transforming modalities, including havening techniques, brain working and recursive therapy, psychoanalysis, hypnotherapy, mindfulness, NLP and applied psychoneuroimmunology.

So, Dr. Eva, welcome to the Fatigue Conference.

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Thank you Claire. Thank you. Lovely to be here again and contributing again. Thanks so much for inviting me.

**Claire Sehinson**

Absolutely. And I'm really excited for this conversation. The vagus nerve has come up so much in recent times in terms of healing and kind of the more complex cases.

For those that are new to the topic could you share with us what the vagus nerve is and how it might affect our healing?

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Yes, of course. I think you're quite right in saying that it's been more talked about in the recent, sort of particularly recent months. I did a whole summit on it, as you know last year. But yes, obviously we can't assume that everybody knows what we're talking about.

So, the vagus nerve, why it's such a big deal and why this nerve is so important when we're talking about healing from chronic fatigue. And may I add, pretty much every other condition, is because this cranial nerve, it's a term cranial nerve, and what it does, it's the longest nerve of the autonomic nervous system and it connects your brainstem to the rest of your body pretty much because it innervates most of your internal organs, in terms of your organs within your chest cavity and your abdominal cavity, with the exception of adrenal glands.

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But really, pretty much we have a connection going back and forth between the brain and your heart, your lungs, your pancreas, your liver, your gallbladder, your small intestine, two thirds of the large intestine, thymus, spleen, so immune organs. And all of that is supplied by the vagus nerve. So that's really quite a big deal because it's a nerve with a lot of different functions.

And because of that, this obviously means that if something with this nerve is not quite right, it's going to have a knock on effect on all of those different organs and glands.

So just a little bit more background on this. The vagus nerve, really what we're talking about here as I said, it's part of the autonomic nervous system. And it's really the rest, digest, detoxify, heal part of the nervous system, which we also know as parasympathetic nervous system response, although there's obviously more to the parasympathetic response than just rest and digest. So this vagus nerve has got two branches and one of the branches is the ventral vagus complex. And that's the rest, digest, detoxify and heal response. And then we have our dorsal vagus, the old vagus, and that's our freeze response.

And so, the way that this usually works in the body and in life, just to give an example, there is this hierarchy within the autonomic nervous system and the ventral vagus nerve, that's the bit that we're going to focus on stimulating and improving its function. This part of the vagus nerve is also called a social nervous system or social engagement system.

And really, when we are relaxed and feeling safe, which, by the way, is what we should, where we should be most of the time, which clearly isn't the case for most people. But that's where we are designed to function most of the time. And when we have this kind of feeling of, ahh everything is nice, everything is calm, you feel safe, you feel relaxed, that's when this part of your vagus nerve activates. And this is obviously the time when you're able to heal, when you are able to regenerate, when you are able to detoxify. This is why it's called rest, digest, detoxify and heal.

And really, it's the only activation, from the point of view of the autonomic nervous system, where we're going to heal. All those other times where we're in fight or flight or freeze response, there is no healing involved in that, because when you think about it from the point of view of evolution, those are survival states. And when you're in a state of survival, healing isn't priority. What's priority, when you're trying to survive, is either running away from the threat, fighting that threat or freezing. So that's the hypermetabolic state that many people actually find themselves in when they go through challenges such as chronic fatigue.

So just with this hierarchy, I'm talking about. So when we're relaxed and safe and everything is great, that is the part of the nervous system that activates. And so great, everything is working as it should. However, the moment we are not feeling safe for whatever reason, and this is important to realize that this is perceived, it's not to do with real threats, it's to do with perceived threats. So the moment something is not quite right, because maybe an email comes in and you feel a bit stressed out or you are meeting somebody and this somebody is irritating you in some way and you get activated or triggered or whatever other situation where you're not feeling basically relaxed and safe. You're going to activate, fight or flight.

Because what people tend to misunderstand about this whole thing is that you cannot be a little bit relaxed or a little bit safe. This is an on, off switch. So you either are completely relaxed 100 percent and 100 percent feeling safe or you're not. The moment you're feeling only a little bit relaxed it means you're not relaxed, and that means that fight and flight has been activated.

So when we, really talking about everyday life, just consider that most people don't even realize that they actually activate their fight or flight, most of the time during the waking hours. That's the issue with today's society that we're living in. I'm talking about the Western world, it's not maybe exactly the same in the far East when they're used to just meditating and oming all the time. But I'm talking about our Western society. Particularly with chaos 2020 and what's been going on recently.

**[00:08:12]**

And so, when you're thinking about just a, let's say a scenario, I like to give that scenario because it just makes people understand this a little bit better. So say that you're walking along, you're out for a walk and everything is nice, you're connecting with nature and you're just feeling good, you're feeling relaxed and your social engagement systems or the ventral vagus nerve is activated.

And then, let's say an animal comes towards you, let's say a dog, you're seeing this dog from a distance and you're thinking, OK, and your brain and your nervous system immediately tries to suss out whether this is safe or this may turn out to be some sort of a threat.

And so that's the job of, by the way, the ventral vagus to give you that idea of whether it's safe or not and gives you that assessment, whether you can stay relaxed or whether you need to switch to something else in terms of your response. And so, if this dog comes your way and you decide that, yeah, it's a friendly enough dog, you might end up stroking it and whatever, I do that all the time. And so then that's fine. And then you're obviously staying in this ventral vagus activation and everything is great.

However, if for whatever reason your brain, your nervous system decides that this animal might be a threat, then you've got two choices. This is what's going to kick in first, you're going to have the sympathetic activation kicking in first, which gives you two choices. You're either going to run away or you're going to fight this animal, this threat, if basically you decide that's a threat.

And so, if you've been successful fighting this animal or running away from this animal, then kind of case closed and you hopefully then return, you then go home, have a bit of a drink and relax again and you're back to this ventral vagus activation, which means again you enter into this relaxation response again.

However, should you not be successful in either running or fighting this threat, then the next thing that's going to happen is your system is going to go into this overdrive and you're going to go into freeze response. And this is basically a hypermetabolic response whereby the body will pretty much start shutting down and even, what you're going to have, you're going to have all sorts of chemicals being released because in case this dog is going to eat you your system is going to make it as painless for you as possible.

And obviously, that's just a, it's just a silly example, but that just shows the hierarchy of how this works. And in terms of freeze response, you know, people freeze when they give presentations at work, when they're in, say they give a performance on stage and somebody freezes and can't get the words out, that is an example of a freeze response.

Another example of freeze response is a woman giving birth in hospital. Where she's connected to all these machines, well, she's not going to fight the doctor, she's not going to run away. And if there's a lot of fear in the system, what's going to happen is she's going to go into freeze response. So that's very common.

And, of course, we're talking about chronic fatigue and those sort of issues associated with chronic fatigue they're often also, really what that means is that people who suffer from from these conditions, fatigue related conditions, often you find that they've actually spent many, many years in and out of freeze response, not necessarily fight or flight, but exactly freeze.

So really that's the overview. And like I said, because of all the organs and glands that the vagus nerve innervates, you're going to have this connection with inflammation because the vagus nerve, one of the key roles of the vagus nerve, is actually switching off chronic inflammation via the cholinergic anti inflammatory pathway.

So any issues to do with inflammation, you know, that your vagus is not working properly. If you have an autoimmune condition, you know your vagus nerve is not working properly. If you have fatigue related conditions, same thing. And other issues would be things like heart problems or blood

pressure problems, just even problems feeling relaxed. You know, some people just spent a lot of their time in those anxious activated states and they find it difficult to come down from that. So obviously, that means that the vagus function is not right.

Also, any glucose homeostasis issues, because obviously the connection with the pancreas. Also any digestive issues. A great number of SIBO cases, 70, 80 percent of SIBO cases are really due to poor vagal tone, which obviously affects the migrating motor complex. And obviously anything like leaky gut, any sort of inflammatory bowel issues, dysbiosis of any kind, that's also going to indicate that the vagus nerve needs to be addressed.

So there's lots of really different things going on here and even issues with detoxification. And a lot of people spent a lot of time and energy trying to detox their bodies for health reasons or for whatever reasons. And it's just sort of, when that process isn't working quite right, when it's not quite working the way that you expect it to work, given what effort you're putting in and all the supplements you're taking, then you need to be looking at your liver function and perhaps from the point of view of the vagus nerve as well.

Yeah, so that's basically, yeah, the rough overview. There's obviously a lot more to it, but I hope that that more or less explains.

### **Claire Sehinson - [00:14:27]**

Yeah, it really is connected to everything, it's a wandering nerve so it really expands to everything in the body.

I think you touched on a really important point in that we do have complex cases where, you know, we can show certain things on test results, we can show SIBO is positive, we can show certain elements of toxicity, and you can do all the right things, you can take anti-inflammatories, we can do all the right things, but for some reason, that person's body doesn't want to heal or isn't able to, and they end up throwing a lot of money and becoming really frustrated with the lack of progress. And I think, for you, is that a clear sign that they need some attention towards the vagus nerve?

### **Dr. Eva Detko**

Absolutely. Yeah. You know, Claire, that's exactly right. What I wanted to, to actually get to that, particularly when people going after the leaky gut issues, microbiome issues and whatever connects to that, because obviously that's going to have a huge impact on brain function and pretty much on inflammation and various other things.

And what you find when you actually get the vagus nerve dialed in and you rebalance the nervous system, because essentially what we're talking about here, if somebody spends most of their time in fight, flight or freeze, which, believe me, when I'm talking to the listeners, I can just say that that is the case for a lot of people these days. Where we are we supposed to, like I said, we're designed to be doing the opposite.

Now, when that's the case then really what we create is we create this nervous system imbalance whereby the sympathetic, or the freeze response, becomes activated so frequently that it activates gradually because it's the part of the nervous system. And you're thinking about training a muscle, you're thinking of training that nerve and it then activates more readily because it's been well trained to activate readily versus your ventral vagus that's not being used enough, so therefore it's almost like withers away and kind of it's not as strong. So the less you use it, the less readily it's going to activate. Right.

And so, then this imbalance originates. And when you're talking about people who put a lot of money into various, investing to different protocols, a lot of different supplements sometimes they're expensive supplements, you need to understand that when the vagus nerve is not functioning properly, it affects every part of the digestive system. So it's going to be not just to do with dysbiosis, leaky gut and inflammation, but it's also going to affect assimilation of whatever it is that you're taking.

So, what you find when you work with clients on rebalancing this, and I'm sure you've got the exact same experiences, that suddenly the supplements that were not quite working the way you would expect them to, suddenly you do this work on the rebalancing of the nervous system and dialing the vagus function in, and suddenly all this stuff starts working, right?

**Claire Sehinson - [00:17:43]**

Yeah, I totally agree with that.

**Dr. Eva Detko**

And then the person just takes like 10 steps forward, whereas before they were just really, they were putting this effort in, they were putting the money in and the time and everything else, and they were not just quite getting the results that they wanted. And then suddenly if you combine those strategies with doing vagus nerve work, suddenly you can accelerate somebody's healing, it just takes off, it just takes off. So that's why we need to be looking at this more and obviously encouraging people to really see this as an integral part of their recovery, whatever protocol it is that they're currently on.

**Claire Sehinson**

Yeah, exactly. And I mean, you see the problem with people taking everything and nothing having worked in spite of the evidence behind it and also the opposite, where people take small amounts of things and they react to absolutely everything or their diet becomes really restricted, really limited. I've got people that can only eat four to five different types of food because their nervous system just finds everything dangerous, if you like.

One thing that I learnt from you actually was 80 percent of the information transmitted by the vagus nerve actually is towards the brain or from the body sending information towards the brain. So I'm wondering if you can expand on how does that, how is that presented, I guess, in terms of functional gut problems and maybe reactivity to foods and supplements?

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Yeah, I know that that's a very good point. Exactly right. So the 80 percent is from the body to the brain. So when you're thinking about, but obviously it's a loop, right, it's a loop, so it does go back and forth and you can almost wind itself up. So once you end up on this downward spiral with this, the information will keep going back and forth and the feedback is going to be going back and forth. And what that's going to do is just going to wind this problem up further and further and further.

But from the point of view of the gut I mean, we know that the microbiome communicates with the brain via the vagus nerve. It's actually via the vagus nerve that this communication occurs. So with chronic fatigue issues, people often have obviously brain fog. And there's the connection right there for you because there's the studies on specific bacterial strains that show that that communication doesn't happen when the vagus nerve is cut. Obviously, that study is in animals, not people. Although, they used to to do vagus nerve cutting back in the day. Don't get me started on that idea.

**Claire Sehinson**

Well even with bariatric surgery and gastric bands you can get vagus nerve injuries, can't you? And that leads to a whole host of ongoing problems where the person's life is in a worse state than it was before having the gastric band added.

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Yes, absolutely. That just shows how Rockefeller medicine is just like focused on that one piece of whatever they're focused on. And they're really not taking into account the bigger picture at all. Right. So there's a time and place for Rockefeller medicine, but chronic illness is not one of those places.

And so, you know, we're talking about this gut communication, so this is very interesting, don't you think, that there was a study on, and now it's going to, I think rhamnosus was one of those bacteria strains and there was another one, there are specific studies that show that literally that communication does not occur or is very, very much impeded, and it practically completely seizes, when the vagus nerve is severed.

And obviously, I'm sure people realize that your microbiome has got a massive implication in terms of your brain function. And then your brain function, because obviously, if your brain is inflamed, which this could well be why, if it's inflamed then you're going to have brain fog and you're just generally going to feel rubbish and you're going to have those feelings of malaise where you don't really want to do anything.

So that's a very, very important connection. And yeah, and the pathway by which this happens is the vagus nerve.

### **Claire Sehinson - [00:22:21]**

Yeah, brilliant. And you sort of touched on also the physiological freeze that some people experience. And I think some symptoms people might present with are disassociation or depersonalization. Is this sort of, you've discussed the ventral vagus complex, is this the other branch of the more primitive form of the vagus nerve that gets activated?

### **Dr. Eva Detko**

Yes, that's the dorsal vagus complex that gets activated. And it's really, you know, a lot of it comes out of trauma, particularly, obviously, in the early years. I mean, any trauma at any point is something that needs to be healed. But really, when we're talking about those hypermetabolic states and those survival states that people find themselves in when they actually have chronic illness, really a lot of it comes from early exposure to stress and early trauma, because neurologically, how this works is that if you don't feel safe in your early years, and that doesn't, by the way, mean that you had neglect or abuse, I'm talking purely from the perspective of your younger self that for one reason or another, your needs were not being consistently met and you did not feel consistently safe in the environment you were in.

And I really want to stress that this is a perspective of a small child. This is not a perspective of an adult. We need to respect that. Again, this is a perceived thing, not an objective thing. So if a child is introduced to a puppy, the cutest puppy in the world, and Mommy thinks this is going to be great for the child, but child is frightened by this puppy, then that's going to traumatize the child. I don't care how cute the puppy is. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what you think from the point of view of your adult self, because it's the perspective of the child.

So when those sort of events take place, where a small child ends up in essentially fight or flight or even freeze, then that basically rewires the nervous system and you then become more susceptible to subsequent stress and subsequent trauma purely because, from the point of view of your nervous system and the brain, it basically says you survived this threat, whatever it is, and now we need to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

So if this fight or flight or even freeze worked and you survived, then, hey, let's wrap that up to make sure that even if there is anything remotely close enough in your environment that even remotely resembles that original situation, we're going to be very, very quick activating that survival state because it worked. It worked, it got you through it. It got you to survive.

But what that means is obviously it can ramp up and be totally over the top. And so the brain and nervous system ends up on red alert a lot of the time, and you think, why am I feeling so anxious all the time? But it may be that your brain has generalized that original situation and now a lot of things can be a trigger for you.

So as an example, I mean, this is obviously an example of a one-off trauma. When we're talking about

trauma, we're talking about this attachment developmental type traumas. We're talking about a repetitive trauma in terms of, for instance, abuse or bullying and things like that. But I'll just give, so it's obviously more complex in that way. But I'll just give an example of, if say you had an accident and say you were driving a blue car down the motorway and then, but somehow you survived. Now your brain may generalize this and now you're not just going to be necessarily freaking out when you're driving a blue car on the motorway, but you may be freaking out when you're even a passenger in a car that's driving on a motorway.

Or it may go further and you may be finding yourself being triggered when you see a blue car just randomly on the street. And you're not even going to be aware that that is a trigger that your brain's generalized. And it's just saying, you know what? Just in case, let's be on the safe side. Trigger, trigger, trigger, trigger, activate, fight, flight or freeze. And so, therefore, we're trying to ensure that you survive this because it reminds the brain and the nervous system of that original situation. So we need to understand that.

And the healing of this will involve doing nervous system rebalancing, but it's not just about gargling or humming, you cannot biohack this, OK. I don't like that word used in this context because a lot of people out there will offer different vagus nerve stimulation strategies. I'm not saying they are bad strategies. I'm just saying that if you have a complex chronic illness when you spent a lot of your life in those survival hypermetabolic states, or particularly, you know, like we were saying, with chronic fatigue it could be spending a lot of time in freeze response. Then gargling to stimulate your vagus nerve is just not going to be enough, OK. And I just I don't want to really set people up for disappointment with this, because there's, like I say, because there's more talk about the vagus nerve at the moment. And a lot of people are talking about biohacking it, you know, whatever. I personally just want to put it out there, it helps, I'm not saying it doesn't help, but it's not going to solve all your problems if you just do a bit of this, a bit of that, it needs to be a complex, holistic approach to this.

#### **Claire Sehinson - [00:29:07]**

What would you say? It's a good time to kind of move on to what the dos and don'ts of good vagal tone, because it is a complex neurological condition, I guess that needs to be kind of taken apart and really healed on many different layers. So what would you say are the dos and don'ts? And what the right stages of intervention?

#### **Dr. Eva Detko**

Yeah, it's a good question about the dos and the don'ts because it's absolutely just as much about what you don't do as it is about what you do.

So, with, just back tracking on the vagus nerve and the stress response, we absolutely need to acknowledge that the body will react to a stressor in the same way, regardless if the stressor is emotional, because obviously I'm focusing on trauma here. But if the stress is chemical, biological, mechanical or emotional your body will respond the same way.

So, we obviously do need to look at it in that respect but more broadly. However, what you find is that when it comes to dialing in things like diet or exercise or sorting out EMF exposure, it's something that can be done reasonably quickly in a lot of cases, I'm not saying in all cases, but for example, if you decide to take some steps to reduce EMF stress, for instance, you can do that reasonably quickly and then it's done.

And unfortunately, when it comes to emotional toxicity, as I collectively call it, all those, not just necessarily PTSD type traumas, but things like chronic anxieties, chronic fears, chronic guilt, chronic shame, poor self-worth, overwhelm, overthinking, overanalyzing, all of that is emotionally toxic. And when I say emotionally toxic, it's a stressor. It's a stressor. So, again, it causes, it contributes to this issue.

And so, as much as people, you know, once you say, OK, you know what, this is what I need to eat. This is what I need to avoid because it's currently causing my system to be activated, then that's fine.

They either do it or they don't do it, right. They've got, you know, once you figure that out, usually through whatever elimination diet testing, whatever you're going to do, then you either do it or you don't do it. It's a little bit different with all the emotional type stressors and mental, emotional, psycho energetic, actually, because there's also an energetic side to stressors, is because a lot of these people are just not aware of it, it's not on their radar or they desensitized to it or they just have no concept of it.

Somebody could have chronic anxiety for years. And after years of having it, they don't even recognize that they actually have chronic anxiety because it's something that they've got used to over the years, for instance. Not to mention things like poor self-worth or overanalyzing, you know, people think, oh, that's just the way I am. But if that's the way you are, it comes out of somewhere, it comes from somewhere in your past and your brain got wired this way. And it actually essentially is a contributing factor to this nervous system imbalance.

So I just wanted to say that first, because what I'm going to say next is with the don'ts it's really about not putting the garbage into the system and stressing the system. So that's going to obviously mean eating clean food, for instance, because chemicals in food will stress the system, right. So don't put the garbage in, is what I mean.

But also don't put the garbage in on the mental emotional level. And when you, for instance, watch the news every day, then I'm sorry to say media is all about mind control and I mean that. And you think it isn't and I can promise you it is. You get programmed and it's not good programming and it's not something that you necessarily need in your life. And if you already have chronic illness that you're dealing with, this is the first thing that I say don't, because that's going to absolutely plunge you into flight fight or freeze the moment you put the news on, because let's face it, how often is it positive? And it's disastrous, it's mind control. It is mind control. So let's call a spade a spade. It's exactly what it is.

#### **Claire Sehinson - [00:34:14]**

And I guess with COVID is rolling news. It's not anything, it's not new. It's just the same thing over and over triggering people. I think the same with social media, it can be quite toxic. And people are constantly re-traumatizing themselves from exposing, scrolling non-stop every 15 minutes in some scenarios. So, yeah, absolutely.

#### **Dr. Eva Detko**

Absolutely. Social media. How toxic is this? It's become, so it always was really, but now it's a super, super toxic environment. So if you really, really want recovery, if you really want your vagus nerve to start working properly, you need to absolutely either completely cut it off or minimize it. It's just absolute minimum. And you need to clean that up. You don't need any toxic people.

That's another thing you need to recognize toxic people in your life. You need to set better boundaries. You will never heal from anything if you're bombarded with toxicity from other people and you're allowing that into your life. So that's the sort of don'ts that I'm talking about.

And that I'm talking about this because there's no point beating about the bush or it's like it is what it is. We need to take the emotional garbage out and not put any more in, at least not put any more in. So that's the first thing. When we're doing detox on the physical level, what's the first thing that we say to our clients? Stop putting the rubbish in. Let's start with that. Don't put any more into the system. And so when you're talking about emotional detox, it has to be the same. So it's really as simple as that.

And then, of course, when it comes to all the things that you can do, there's a ton of different strategies. But please do look at this more holistically. So consider the different aspects of this. So, consider attachment adaptations, consider any other type of traumas, consider ancestral and intergenerational trauma. There's lots of different types of trauma that need to be considered because like I said, that's definitely ongoing stress on the nervous system.



We need to look at limiting beliefs. We need to, like I said, straighten up our relationships and either our relationships in your life that you know are not serving you and possibly making you sick. For sure you need to consider letting that go or at least setting strong enough boundaries so you're not getting further and further down into this hole because of it. It could quite easily be that someone is in a toxic relationship and they're trying to heal. You cannot basically heal in the same environment that made you sick. Somebody said that a long time ago, and that obviously remains true.

And so, all of those sort of things, I didn't mention limiting beliefs, sorting out your values, value conflicts when you have that, you know, like angel and devil thing on the shoulder, like push and pull constantly, at war with yourself over different things inside your head, that's absolutely 100 percent extremely stressful and toxic to the nervous system. And this is something that needs looking at and resolving.

Even things like meaning and purpose. Yeah, because if somebody doesn't have that, that's meaning purpose in studies, in research has being linked over and over and over again to health outcomes. And if somebody doesn't feel like their life has meaning, then obviously that's going to be a continuous stressor.

Because let's not forget something like a trauma that happens once, and obviously rewires the nervous system, that's one thing. But if we actually have a poor relationship with ourselves and we have poor self-image and we keep constantly beating ourselves up or having this ongoing negative self talk and negative criticism of ourselves and all of that going on, then again, that's part of the bit when I say don't put any more garbage in, because you constantly, every single day, you're reinforcing that, limiting negative beliefs that you may have about yourself and obviously you're just winding it up more and more and more.

So, there is some complexity to it. It's all like a beautiful puzzle, really. So you can start looking at the different pieces of your jigsaw puzzle and try and assemble it all together. But those elements all need to be looked at if we're talking about a holistic, nervous system repair and rebalance.

And obviously, there are different strategies and they will help you clearly. But don't think, like I said again, that you can gargle or do gag reflex and that's going to stimulate your vagus nerve and then it's going to solve all your health problems. It just really doesn't work that way.

### **Claire Sehinson - [00:39:29]**

You can't gargle your way out of this. You have to really address all of the underlying behavioral patterns and beliefs and all of that to, I guess, rewire your brain or retrain that side of your brain, which has been so underdeveloped all of this time.

So, I'm just quite curious because you mentioned things like ancestral trauma or really longstanding traumas. Is there hope for these patients when they do really holistically work on everything and work on their vagal tone? Have you seen results with them come through really severe, complex illness?

### **Dr. Eva Detko**

Oh, yeah, 100 percent. I was one of those cases. I'm both ME and fibromyalgia and also Hashimoto's. So, yeah, 100 percent. What happens, and I do want to stress this point that a lot of people consider going to therapy. They think talk therapy is going to solve this. Talk therapy is not going to solve this on its own, OK? It's got its time and place. But talk therapy is not going to solve this complete remodeling of the brain and the nervous system that we're talking about here. There needs to be some sort of strategy here, be it having techniques that I use, EFT, various other things, some are experiencing EMDR, whatever people use that actually, even hypnotherapy and NLP, that actually have the potential to remodel our neurology, because that's what needs to happen. You know, people are aware of neuroplasticity. We have so much potential for healing, not just physically, but neurologically as well.

So 100 percent. I have a lot of clients who are older in their 60s, even 70s, some people in their 80s,

and they're still observing this transformation because it's never too late to do this work. It's never too late to do this work.

And so, our bodies have, our systems, because it's body, mind, spirit, really one thing, it's got a huge amount of potential for healing and it's absolutely 100 percent possible with the right approach. I've got my program that is a 12 module program. Each of the 12 models have 5 lessons in it, so it kind of goes for 6 months. But the reason why I did that, I just had too many inquiries and I wanted to serve people in a meaningful way and be able to do that. And what I've done with this is actually exactly putting that jigsaw puzzle together.

Because the one thing why I'm saying this, why this is important that you put the pieces together in the right way is because a lot of people go to different therapists or different practitioners and they kind of pollinate, right. They do a bit of work here, a little bit of work, they kind of just jump around a little bit. Because it's not a criticism of judgment, it's just because they may not know what they currently need or they kind of resonate with something and they go after it. But that doesn't quite take them where they want it to go, so then they try something else. And there's a lot of that going on for people where they try different things, but it's not quite gelling, it's not quite coming together.

And sometimes they just go, well you know what? I've done all this therapy, it doesn't work, whatever. So, it does work if it's done right with the right approach, with the right tools. And what's really positive about this, what I strongly believe, is that people can do the majority of their own work. And oftentimes, I would say 80, 90 percent of it they can do themselves. We do have blind spots. We do sometimes need somebody else to point something out to us. Fine, whatever, we do.

But again, if the approach is correct and if the tools, and we have the right tools, we can do it with confidence, we can do it safely, we can do a lot of this work ourselves. And that is really my wish for everybody, is to step into the sovereignty from the point of view of health and healing, because people have been relying too much on other people to tell them what to do, and particularly in terms of Rockefeller doctors to take that pill, take, do this, do that. I think it's a mistake.

And a lot of people going forward, particularly in this next year or so, we'll find out how much of a mistake it is to put too much trust in your doctor, who usually has like 10 minutes to see you. It just doesn't make any sense. We need to take more responsibility for our own healing. And that definitely goes for our emotional healing, because really, you're the expert, nobody else is. What is right for you? I do also teach methods where you can energetically assess what it is that you need and when it comes from your higher self it is actually 100 percent correct.

So we need to learn to do this. More people need to learn to do this more. Take the healing and the health back into their own hands. And I suppose people watching events like this are already doing that. But I just encourage them to even go a step further with this and become your own expert when it comes to health and healing is so important.

### **Claire Sehinson - [00:45:16]**

I guess listening to the body and then also being responsible for the environment inside our bodies, because I think a lot of people new to long-COVID in particular, assuming perhaps it's just the virus that's caused the long illness, but actually it's the person's previous stressor and their health and psychological health, their physical health.

### **Dr. Eva Detko**

It's exactly what we're talking about here.

So it's my wish, my sincere wish for everybody to think about this from the point of view of, not just addressing whatever they may be going on, but also think about it. When you've done this work going forward, you will be so much more resilient. You will be bullet proof near enough.

And that is basically when nothing is going to faze you and that's basically what you want. So it's really important work. And I just wish that people engage with it.

## **Claire Sehinson - [00:46:12]**

Yeah, absolutely. And going into that resilience, what are your favorite practical strategies in terms of vagus nerve stimulation? What do you like to, what are your favorite tools to use in clinic?

### **Dr. Eva Detko**

My favorite, one of my favorites is havening techniques. I do love this modality. It actually stimulates the brain to change the brain. It basically influences the brain to alter its brain activity. And when the brain activity is altered to Delta, which is what this technique does, Delta waves are the same waves that you obviously experience during deep restorative sleep. So it's going to have that healing effect on the whole system and obviously definitely stimulates the vagus nerve. So it strengthens the function of the vagus nerve.

Being in nature is massive for me. It's massively grounding, it's massively restorative. So that's another one of my favorites and for sure it does stimulate the vagus nerve. I do a lot of breathing practices. The one thing that I wanted to say to people about the different approaches to vagus nerve, just remember that some of them will affect the vagus nerve directly.

So, for example, if you do deep, slow breathing, you're going to have that direct, stimulating effect on the vagus nerve. However, if you do something like the breath of fire or something like Wim Hof breathing, you're actually really temporarily putting your body in fight or flight so that you can then come down from that and then the body adapts.

So we've got those hormetic methods of stimulating, of strengthening vagus function and we've got those direct methods. The reason why this is important is because people who are actually chronically sick and not in a very good place right now, may not want to go for those hormetic type methods.

Like, for instance, Wim Hof breathing, this is quite intense. And I know people who, they just couldn't do it, it would actually cause them to have serious anxiety, panic attacks and stuff like that. So this is not for everybody. But obviously it's a fantastic technique. Once you get a little bit better, you self regulate a little bit better and then you can go towards those more advanced techniques. So that is what I need people to pay attention to.

When you go out there and people say, oh, this is a great vagus nerve stimulation technique or this is a great technique, you need to be thinking from the point of view of where you are, because it may be that at this point in time that method is not suitable for you for the reasons that I just said. I also, for me infrared saunas as well, is great, obviously you've got heat exposure, cold exposure, that's also hormesis.

So again, I know people who currently just are not able to tolerate that at all. So it may be a more advanced thing. But deep, slow breathing, gentle things like sound therapy may be good for some people. It's obviously very, very good for the nervous system because sound works amazingly on the nervous system. A bit of intermittent fasting. So you can combine those different things.

And then when you have those strategies, that are more physical strategies, maybe using essential oils, something like that, maybe you've got cold showers going on, maybe you've got fasting going on and all of that, social interaction, being in nature, you can just sort of combine it. And overall, that's going to have a really good impact as long as you remove some of those undesirable influences that I talked about earlier.

And the only other thing that I want to say about this is that obviously sleeping, things like that, obviously, if you have poor sleep and the circadian rhythms are not, you know that's not dialed in, you will obviously also put further stress on the system as well, which obviously will then weaken the vagus as well.

**Claire Sehinson - [00:50:36]**

Brilliant, I think there's so much there to pick and choose from. And I guess it makes sense because we have had people that react to saunas or react to intermittent fasting, something that is hormetic, that forces a bit of stress before it comes down. So perhaps those people can start with something more gentle, like breathing and essential oils. And then they can...

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Another thing that is really gentle, which I didn't mention, but it's really super gentle and it could be something that somebody embraces and be great for them is something like medical qigong. So that would be a really great one.

**Claire Sehinson**

Yeah, brilliant.

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Whatever method you choose, you need to resonate with a method. Like I said, just because somebody says it's great, it doesn't mean it's great for you right now at this time. And this also goes for meditation because people are told to meditate all the time. For some people, this may be not appropriate at this time. And this kind of entry level into meditation could be something like just taking deep, slow breaths, very natural, without forcing, just very, very kind of easy and natural. And that could then build you up to do some meditation.

Because just because meditation is a great practice and people say it's great for your vagus nerve, you may find that at this point in time it causes you to be more stressed than relaxed. And if you're doing any method that I mentioned or another one that you may find online, because there's loads that you can do for the vagus nerve, it needs to give you that feeling of, ahh, I feel really good doing this because if you're feeling, if you're sitting there trying to meditate and you're getting worked up about it, you're actually activating a fight or flight.

This is really important, people constantly overlook this. And so that will be just my final word for this for people to look out for that, it needs to resonate and it needs to make you feel good and relax and not stress.

**Claire Sehinson**

Thanks for pointing that out, because I do know people who, even things like EFT or mindfulness that can trigger, particularly if their tendency is to dissociate or they have body pains or they have fibromyalgia, something that is too intense for them to deal with, they don't always get on with the thing that everyone suggests is amazing and that makes them feel worse about themselves, like they're not doing it right.

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Exactly, it gives them that feeling of guilt, like they're doing something wrong and we don't want to promote that, because when you feel like you're doing something wrong, then again, that's a stressor. It's toxic emotionally. So obviously, yeah, exactly.

**Claire Sehinson**

Thank you. Okay, perfect Eva. So for people who want to find out more about you and your work, what's the best way for them to do that?

**Dr. Eva Detko**

So like I said, I'm not a fan of social media, so you're not really going to find me there, I'm actually doing the process of removing my accounts altogether. I don't do Facebook anymore or anything like that. And the best place is really my website, which is [dr-eva.com](http://dr-eva.com). And yeah, that's the best place to connect with me.

**Claire Sehinson**

Brilliant. Thank you so much Eva for this conversation.

**Dr. Eva Detko**

Thank you so much, Claire.