



Cultivating Post-Traumatic Growth

Guest: Nathan Crane

Alex Howard: Welcome everyone to this session where I'm really happy to be talking with Nathan Crane. Firstly, Nathan, welcome and thank you for joining me.

Nathan Crane: Yeah. Thank you for having me, Alex, really happy to be here and be a part of this great event that you guys are doing.

Alex Howard: Thank you. So in this session, we're going to be talking about a few different themes. But one of the central pieces we're going to be exploring is post-traumatic growth and the potential for us to grow even through life's biggest traumas and challenges. And part of that, we'll also talk a little bit about cancer.

Nathan has recently produced a documentary film about cancer. And I think it's a good example, really, of sometimes the most traumatic thing one can go through in their lifetime can actually also be an opportunity for growth.

Just to give people a bit of Nathan's background, Nathan Crane is an award winning author, inspirational speaker, plant based athlete, event producer and 17 times award winning documentary filmmaker.

Nathan is the founder of the Panacea community, creator of the Global Cancer Symposium and director and producer of the documentary film Cancer, The Integrative Perspective. He's also the director of Strategic Relations at the Chi Center and is the assistant director of the PBS series Ageless Living.

In 2005, at only 18 years old, Nathan began his health, healing and spiritual journey, eventually overcoming a decade of brutal teenage addiction, house arrest, jail and challenging times of homelessness to become an international author, filmmaker and speaker dedicated to health, healing and conscious awakening. We're going to get into a bit of that story in a little bit.

Nathan has received numerous awards for his contributions to health healing, personal development, including the Outstanding Community Service Award from the California Senate for his work in education and empowerment with natural methods for healing cancer.

So, Nathan, I'd love to start a little bit with some of your story and how this all started for you. As people might have got a sense from the introduction, you had a bit of a colorful time in your teenage years. So say a bit about that, it sounds like that was probably quite a bit of

trauma there but also it was the catalyst for a very different life to what might have happened for you.

Nathan Crane: Yeah, absolutely. I grew up in a lower to medium middle class family in the suburbs in Belgrade slash Bozeman, Montana. Doesn't seem like a very difficult life for a kid and compared to what a lot of people go through.

We were pretty well off, in a lot of cases we had a house, we had food on the table, we had decent school to go to, friends and so forth. So in terms of needs, those kinds of physical survival type needs, they were always met. My parents did their best job to take care of us, to do what they could from their own experience to raise their children. They worked hard for both of them, worked full time jobs. Us kids, we went to school, I grew up with three brothers and myself, so that didn't seem so challenging.

What is underneath the surface of all of that which is so common in families today, is the emotional trauma, the social dysfunction, the dysfunction within the family unit itself and I have no blame for my parents or grandparents or anybody today. I mean, I've done all of my forgiveness work. I have become freed from all that blame and anger and resentment that I used to have growing up.

But my parents would fight all the time. They both had come from some heavy addiction in the family line. My own father has dealt with addiction most of his life as well as his trauma. I won't go into it because it's his own story, but such a brutal trauma that you would never want any human being to go through from your own parents, physical, mental, emotional, very abusive.

Thankfully, my own parents were never physically abusive. But the mental emotional toll often is much more challenging and can be, shouldn't say much more challenging, but certainly can be as much, if not more, degradation to the human psyche as physical abuse is. And it wasn't that they were mentally, emotionally abusive to us kids at all, it was just dysfunction in the family.

My parents fought all the time, they had their own stress every day, they got into massive financial debt. So the stress of financial debt, the stress of raising children, the stress divorce, they got divorced when I was very young. And then being separate and then having to deal with who gets the kids, and going to the attorney and dealing with all that, just added more and more and more and more stress. And that trickled down to us as kids. And for me at 9 years old, going through all of this, my tendency was to get outside and go experiment with things that would give me a sense of self-worth, the sense of value, a sense of just trying to feel good. Because at home, underneath all of that, there was massive emotional, distraught disconnect.

Certainly not a sense of feeling whole, happy, fulfilled inside myself. So I start experimenting with cigarettes and then eventually with alcohol and then eventually hard drugs. And so from the age of 9 to about 18 years old, I became very, very addicted to every hard drug that you can get your hands on, to drinking a half gallon of vodka a day, to waking up and taking drugs in the morning and drinking all day, all the way through the night and partying. And got into dealing drugs and got into homelessness.

My mom kicked me out of the house, she just couldn't deal with it anymore, I don't blame her for that. I did at the time. I felt totally abandoned, felt totally emotionally disconnected. I didn't feel connected in school in any way. I didn't feel supported and I certainly didn't have a sense of self-worth by any means. And so that just led one thing to another, to another, to another, one trauma after another.

Anybody who's ever gone through addiction, once a week you're going through some kind of traumatic event. Where nearly dying or a friend nearly dying from an overdose or being arrested and then breaking out of the back of a police car, and running and cutting myself open with a knife as I threw it at the police behind me, and jumping over a fence and then getting the dog sicked on me, and beaten my face into the ground, bloody in the rocks. Those kinds of traumatic events again and again and again.

Certainly there were self-inflicted, but at the time, I didn't know. I didn't know anything else. I grew up watching MTV and listening to gangster rap and listening to hardcore music. I thought that lifestyle, drugs, alcohol, the fame all of that was what I wanted. And that's kind of all I knew, because that's where I got the attention. That's where I got a sense of self-worth and things just continue to degrade worse and worse and worse.

Alex Howard: I think one of the challenges that often happens in some stories like your sharing is that one is self-medicating their emotions with drugs. And that is an attempt to deal with the trauma. But then the behavior that one uses to try and deal with it, as you just said, actually then creates more trauma. So you sort of end up in this cycle of almost self-abuse, in a sense, in the very mechanism that you're trying to use to deal with what's happening.

Nathan Crane: Absolutely. And my example may be extreme for some people and for others, they may have had even worse traumatic experiences. But certainly addiction shows up in all different ways, just like you said, self-medicating. If it's not hard drugs or alcohol or cigarettes, it could be sex, it could be addiction to food or sugar, it could be just addiction to being in a dramatic and often stressful relationship.

We don't look at relationships or drama as addiction. But I do, because I've seen it firsthand that if you grew up in that environment and then you find yourself in a relationship with someone rather than trying to find peace and harmony in that relationship. You're always trying to find ways to create drama, to create intensity, because that makes you feel alive, it gives you energy, it gives you vitality, even though it's incredibly stressful and often can be traumatizing. And so whether people have gone through intense traumatic experiences like being beaten by their parents or being raped as a child or molested or so forth, which was just unthinkable acts. Or it's that ongoing low grade stress, depression, anxiety that continues to happen month after month, year after year.

Whether one actually enters into a true PTSD type of diagnosis or they just have this subconscious programming of total complete selflessness feelings, no sense of, I should say worth-lessness.

Not having a sense of worth in yourself, which is what I was and I projected that through the opposite. I projected this huge ego and I had all these friends around me and I had all this

money. And I throw all these parties and I'd provoke fights with people that were twice my size just to prove that I was the baddest mother F'er around. So some people go internally and have really, they show insecurity immensely.

Or the opposite of that is to show this huge, massive ego, which is what I did. So, as you said, yes, those stressors can lead to lifestyle habits and actions, which then can lead to more trauma, more stress, more fear. And I really didn't think I was gonna make it past 18 years old. I was in and out of jail, I was going through massive addiction, multiple near-death experiences. I can't get into some of the details because it's pretty, it feels like a lifetime ago. And it's certainly very, very can be very traumatizing to some people to maybe even hear it how intense some of that was. But certainly it taught me a lot.

Alex Howard: Yeah. And what was the turning point? Because you were on a path to self-destruct that could have just continued to the point of sort of self-destruction?

How did you turn onto a different path? What was the catalyst for that?

Nathan Crane: I was really lucky. I was about 18 years old. I was living with my friend's family, the Davis family, Dennis Davis, Martina Davis, dear friends, wonderful people who I consider adopted parents, if you will.

They actually took me in and I was able to live with them for some time. And Martina is just this incredibly beautiful saint-like woman that just emanated love all the time and Dennis is a very wise kind of guru type of teacher. And just being around them, listening to them daily, being around Dennis and having him talk to me about energy, and frequencies, and vibration, and Buddhist teachings, and about Jesus, and about spirituality, and classical music for whatever reason at that age and what I was going through, I just soaked that up. I loved it, I always had this thirst for knowledge, especially when knowledge was something that I resonated with. In school the classes that I resonated with philosophy and English and writing, things that were creative to me, things that I was interested in, I excelled at. And then classes I had no interest in I just didn't partake at all and people thought I was lazy or whatever.

A lot of kids go through that challenge of not being able to focus on the things that bring them joy and passion. And I think, it's something we need to change in the school system and that's a different conversation. But being around them, listening, having these wonderful conversations and I'd sit, listen and ask questions, my friends would all leave and go and party, I'd stay another hour or two just sitting and asking questions and listening. Before then I'd go off and party and do all I do. But eventually, as I was sitting, I had this incredible vision and Dennis was talking one day and I had this vision, I haven't talked about this for years, and I was just sitting there.

My eyes were open, but the vision was clear as day. And I saw myself at some point in the future and I was standing on the stage in front of thousands of people. And I was up there and I just had this glow about me and I was living, I could tell I was living my purpose, I was serving others, I was teaching something.

Didn't know what, but it was just being in that space and that feeling of just, vitality and energy and fulfillment and purpose and the feeling was really that I was being of service to others and helping others. And this vision was just clear as day. And it wasn't too long after that my friend Gabe, who was their son, said, "hey, I need to get out of this life. I'm moving to California." And in that moment, I knew that's exactly what I needed to do. I said, "all right, wait for me, I'm going with you." And so we shortly after that, loaded up a suitcase, put in my car, we had a few bucks to our name. And we drove from Montana a thousand miles to Southern California and that's really where I started my life over.

Alex Howard: And it sounds like much of what you've been through in terms of the difficulties and the challenges. Was also a fuel and a drive within you to want to make things different? I often wonder about that, some people seem to have that, I'm gonna turn this negative into a positive, I'm going to use this as fuel. And others somehow don't, they don't find access to that.

I wonder what it was within you, which was sparked or triggered or inspired that you could do something with the pain in the negative that you've been through?

Nathan Crane: Well, I know for me I was so tired of feeling like crap all the time. I was so tired of the binges from the drug and alcohol use. I was so tired of that life that was so traumatic, so devastating, was so unfulfilling. And I knew there had to be something better, I knew I couldn't get any better at what I was doing there, it was only gonna get worse.

There was prison or death, those were really my options on that path. And intuitively, I knew that. I think intuitively we all know. Our decisions and our actions, the life that we're on intuitive, we know that we're either on a path that is bringing us health and happiness and joy and fulfillment, or we're on a path that is mundane and unexciting and unfulfilling. And for me, as exciting as that was, it was incredibly painful mentally, emotionally and physically.

My physical body was completely deteriorating, I was very unhealthy, I went to that extreme, basically as far as I could go. So I had nothing left to lose, really, to try something different. And what was really beautiful was on our drive down to California and really starting over. I mean, the next six months, I was 100 percent sober for the first time in years and I was more high, I felt more sensation, more joy, more happiness, even not having an income.

We were on the street playing guitar for 5 dollars a day, enough to buy bread and lettuce sandwiches. Gabe's uncle hooked this up with a bedroom that we got to share while we got jobs and we were on these little tiny beds in a corner of a little bedroom. And I had to wake up very early every morning and ride the bus between an hour to two hours to do my job. And I didn't get paid for the first month, and I was sleeping in the bathroom. I was taking showers in the sink in the morning, before the manager got there. And yet I was so fulfilled, I was so happy, because I was on a new path and I knew that I was on the right path at that time. I knew intuitively that that's exactly where I needed to be and what I needed to do, even though it was unknown, it was scary, it was different, I didn't have any friends, I didn't really know anybody.

Thankfully, Gabe was there with me, we were supporting each other in that. But I think that's something for all of us to learn from and certainly something has served me many times in my life is learning to listen to what I call our own inner wisdom. The wisdom inside of us that guides us, whether you call that spirit or intuition or God or whatever it is. But we all have had glimpses or many experiences with that voice, that guiding voice. When we listened to it, it says, "stop doing this, start doing this. Pick up that call. Go do that thing. Visit that person. Quit that job. Start that business." Whatever your heart is desiring to do, Joseph Campbell said it best, "follow your bliss." Whatever brings you bliss brings you joy brings you happiness, when we listen to that and follow it.

Life starts to open up so beautifully and magnificently for us. But we have to learn to listen and overcome the fear of, well, what if, what if. I didn't have any what ifs? Because what if was, if I don't do something else, my life is gonna be ended. So for me, it was what if there's something better? And that's the question we all can ask.

What if there is something better if I go and do this thing? Because the reality that I have continued to experience in my life again and again is that there always is something better, if that's our focus.

Alex Howard: But it takes a lot of courage, doesn't it, to follow that path. I mean, it sounds like initially for that first six months, there was a sense of relief and probably as you started to get clean and get sober, life would've started to feel more alive and more precious in its own way. But I'm sure there were times along that path where it was hard and there would have been temptation.

How did you navigate that? Because I often think that people can sometimes hear these sorts of stories and be, it was all terrible and then it changed, and it was all happily ever after. And often it's more bumpy and it's more challenging than that.

Nathan Crane: It was way more bumpy than that. The next few years were very challenging. Working up in a corporate job that was incredibly stressful. I was starting to learn about health, starting to exercise, starting to learn to take care of myself. But I was still eating unhealthy, I was drinking lots of Red Bull, lots of coffee and still smoking cigarettes. And then I found myself surrounded by people who were drinking and using drugs again, and I ended up going down that path again. I started partying at night. The job was 18 hours a day, 7 days a week. It was for almost a year and a half I did that, with no more than one or two days off.

Alex Howard: What was the job? What were you doing?

Nathan Crane: Yeah, it was selling cell phones in a mall. So it was for a T-Mobile distributor. Yeah, it was very fun and very challenging, but it was also very high pressure. We were forced to really do things that weren't of the highest integrity to hit the numbers that we had to hit. Otherwise, you get fired and it was 100 percent commission based.

So really to make a living, you really had to be very forceful. And for a while, I was fine with that, but again I found myself, all right, started drinking alcohol again and getting stressed out and not selling.

I went from a sales associate to an assistant manager to then promoted to a manager and then promoted to district manager. And then my fifth promotion to be a regional sales director, which was like a corporate six figure position at like 19 years old.

Yeah, I was making all this money, I was managing all these people, I was hiring, firing, I was training, and I had to be a top salesperson as well. And then all of a sudden, it was like I found myself using drugs a couple of times and I found my body deteriorating. And I just knew, I am done with this. I don't want to go down this path again, I know where that leads. So I turned down the promotion. I quit. I sat in confusion a little bit of depression for about maybe a week, drinking quite a bit of alcohol. And then I remembered a business card that a real estate investor, a young millionaire real estate person, gave me a long time ago. He said, "you're a great salesperson. Come and work on my team." And I got that offer from dozens and dozens of people over the time I worked there, but I only kept him. And again, that intuition picked up said, "hey, remember that card you have stuffed away in a drawer somewhere? Go call that guy." And I'm glad I did. I quit smoking cigars the next day. And one thing led to another again, I stopped drinking and everything.

But then now I'm hanging out with all these young multi-millionaire real estate tycoons just before the bubble, before the credit for the crash in 2008. Learning, real estate, learning, getting my license. But then we're going to the club every night and party and just spending so much money. And again, so it's like I kept finding myself in these situations. And the reason that now looking back, I understand the reason why. But what happened was I got more resilient to say no. I get more courage, as you said, to say no. I'd get more confidence that like no matter what, how much money these guys have, how cool they are, how much time we're partying and all these beautiful women we're hanging out with, and just dumping money left and right live in this beautiful house.

I had the courage to say no more of that and actually ended up a spiritual mentor at the time. Who thankfully, came into my life. Arturo Gaitan helped me to kind of transition out of that. And I ended up staying in this little black dark room at the end of this office building that had no sunlight and it's a crazy story for another time, but again, it was like freedom.

Okay, I went from having all this success, if you will, that wasn't even mine, it was just being showered on me. To literally have nothing, staying hidden in this dark corner of this office building with no sunlight in there. So you could imagine, it's twelve o'clock in the afternoon and there's no light coming in, and I'm sleeping on the floor in the corner, hidden behind bookshelves because you're not supposed to sleep in there. But feeling totally free, feeling totally like this is exactly what I should be doing at this time. Saying no to alcohol, saying no to drugs. So this was a few year period, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 in there where I was really starting to meditate.

I was really starting to study spiritual work. I was spending a lot of time with the spiritual mentor at that time and asking questions and listening. And he was guiding me, teaching me how to think for myself and to find answers within myself through meditation. And at the same time, I was getting really interested, much more interested in health and healing and exercise and nutrition, doing a lot of research, experimentation and cleansing my body, cleaning out my body. And what I realized was the more I did that, the less I would find

myself around people who were doing those things, who were drinking, who were partying, who were using drugs, who were filling that emotional void with substance.

I continued to progress beyond that and not need that because those emotional wounds were starting to get healed through that inner spiritual work that I was doing, as well as the cleaning of the body. We know that if you clean your body, you clean up your diet, you heal your digestive tract. You clean out the toxins, the alcohol, the animal products, and so forth and you start having more organic, more plant based, more nutritious diet actually helps you think better, actually helps your brain process better.

We have three brains in the body the scientists now know this, the stomach brain, the heart brain, as well as the brain in your head. And the more that these get synchronized together, they are called coherence, you can actually measure this by HRV, heart rate variability. And the more that you sync those three in alignment, which Qigong Masters have known this for thousands of years, now our scientists finally understand it and you start healing from the inside out.

Well, you're your decisions and your actions become so much more aligned with what you might call either your higher purpose and or just more in alignment with things that are truly fulfilling and wholesome. And I have say the next thing was meeting my wife, having our daughter and that was the next step that really helped me get to okay, now I'm a father I've got to be more responsible.

I want to be the best parent that I can be. I'm a husband, my wife doesn't want me drinking alcohol or partying or things like that, it's not something she's interested in. And so those compounded with all this work I was doing to eventually a point where just like I don't need it anymore, no desire for alcohol or cigarettes for drugs.

I actually started experiencing so much more euphoria and so much more fulfillment through meditations, through Qigong, through walking on the beach, through spending time in the forest, through sitting down having three hour meaningful conversations with people about health and healing and spirituality.

I was getting so much more inner nourishment and wholesome fulfillment from that than any substance. That void began getting filled with wholesome energy and those addictions finally, finally went away. So a long answer to your very short question, which was, was it a bumpy road after that big decision? It was an insanely bumpy road, very challenging and dealing again and again and again. But eventually I got to that point where it was just done with all of it.

Alex Howard: And it strikes me along that way, even though there were different twists and turns. There was that central intuition that you were able to come back to as an inner compass that would help you feel into what was the next right step and the next right move.

So this strikes me as well that you gradually changed your community and the people you were spending time with, and then you started to build a world that supported the Nathan that you wanted to be, as opposed to the person that you'd been pulled into in the past.

Nathan Crane: I think that's one of the often overlooked, but an essential part to our human growth. As you talk about post-traumatic growth, we surround ourselves with the people that we want to be like. Surrounding ourselves with positive people, with healthy people.

If I want to be sober, I need to surround myself with sober people. And that was a tough question for me, because as a child from basically 9 years old to 18, all that developmental period, I had experienced so much intoxication. That by the time, it was like, okay, I want to be sober. That was very scary for me because I didn't know what sober was like. I had not been sober and so long I didn't know what it was like, but I knew that's what I wanted. So having that in the back of my mind thinking, all right, I need to think what it's like to be sober.

What do sober people do? Where do they hang out? What do they do? And that kind of led me like, oh, stop smoking, start exercising. Like, okay, it's something sober people might do and start thinking the way that you want to be. And then, yes, surrounding yourself with people who are going to support you, people who are already doing what you want to do.

It's a common business practice, if you want to get better at business, you want to grow your business, well go to business classes, go to marketing classes, surround yourself with a business advisor. And same thing in health, the same thing in emotional healing. Surround yourself with people that are going to lift you up and bring you up to the next level and then you find yourself, able to support those around you.

Now, there is something I've learned along the way, too, that if your own level of let's call it energetic vibration, your own wholesome level, if you will, is not able to pull up the people around you, which is very, very, very challenging for 99 percent of us. Then you unfortunately and fortunately need to say goodbye to those people. And I've had to do that a few times in my life and it's been very challenging. Say goodbye to my best friends that I grew up with. But I knew intuitively that's exactly what I needed to do.

I needed to move beyond, what they were doing and I wasn't gonna be able to change them. I certainly didn't have the power within me to lift them up at the time I could barely lift myself up. So then start surrounding myself with more and more people who are doing exactly what I want to do and that's critical. Social support system or family support system or find a friend.

I actually started my first Summit like this in 2012 and I interviewed somewhere around 30 experts. And just starting to interview experts in health and healing and personal development and spirituality.

Started to go to a Buddhist monastery and sit and meditate with very wise monks and learn from Zen masters and chanting with Hari Krishna in San Diego, and starting to just surround myself with spiritual people, with positive people, with healthy people. And absolutely, you start getting raised up, your vibration raises up, your life raises up, and then, you can start to help raise up those around you, with the understanding that those people around you may never change. That's a reality we have to accept. And if you don't accept that, then you're going to have a tough time sticking around them.

Alex Howard: And that can be a painful thing for sure, sometimes.

Nathan Crane: Yeah.

Alex Howard: I know that part of the fruition of some of this inner journey was also your interest in producing, directing a documentary on cancer. Say a little about how that came about, what was the inspiration towards that?

Nathan Crane: Yeah. I started playing around with film when I was, I don't know, 11, 12 years old, skateboarding. Take my mom's old big handy cam with the big tapes and film my friends and I doing stupid stuff, and skateboarding and doing stunts and stuff like that. And over the years, I just continue to play with film and have had a fascination for it. And in 2005, I really started my whole new life, if you will. And by 2012 I thought I knew at least 7 plus years of research experimentation, a lot of interviews with experts and health and healing and so forth.

I thought I knew a lot until I sat down with my grampa, who had a cancer diagnosis. And he was dying from really the treatment of the cancer, from chemotherapy and radiation. And seeing him in so much pain, seeing him in so much agony and the pain, he couldn't even walk to the bathroom without tremendous pain, his hair falling out from the treatment, just watching him deteriorate.

I realized I knew nothing about cancer. I was afraid, just like everyone else is, I didn't know how to help him. I felt helpless and I just, I decided at that point, shortly after he passed away and that was 2013. And shortly after that, I just committed myself to everything I possibly could learn about cancer, every possible way I could learn to prevent and heal it and find the best of all modalities.

So I started producing online Summit's, in-person conferences, magazines, video series, and then I started a documentary as well. Interviewing all the top minds in neuroscience research, in the medical community, in integrative oncology community, in natural health and healing and people who've overcome cancer themselves using natural, holistic, integrative approaches.

So the documentary ended up becoming a 5 year project with some ups and downs, some twists and turns. At one point, I didn't think it was even going to get finished and then thank God I was able to actually finish it. And thank God it took that long because my life changed throughout that period and because of that, I rewrote, I re-scripted the entire film and how it turned out now, people seem to really love it.

It's just one its 17th award, which I'm super grateful for.

Alex Howard: Congratulations.

Nathan Crane: Yeah. Thank you it's in the film festival circuit. We're also screening it for free online, people can watch it. But I realized that cancer is something that we all face one way or another. We either have it ourselves or we know somebody who has it.

And now we're looking at nearly one out of two people getting a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime. That's almost 50 percent of people getting a cancer diagnosis, which is insane to think about because one hundred years ago at this point, zero five percent, point zero five percent to 50 percent. So something clearly has changed in the last hundred years, has led our cancer diagnosis to skyrocket. They're projecting cancer to increase by 57 percent, increase another 57 percent over the next two decades if we don't do something about it now. And the trillions and trillions of dollars that have been put into pharmaceuticals and the conventional medical community, is not doing a whole lot in terms of actually helping to prevent and reverse cancer.

There's very little education in preventing cancer. And then when you do have a cancer diagnosis, the common treatment, if you go to your oncologist is chemotherapy, radiation or surgery. In some cases, one or multiple of those might be necessary. But unfortunately, chemotherapy across the board, when you add it all up, across all cancer only has a 2.5 percent effective rate. So the question I began asking is, there's got to be a better way? 97.5 percent failure rate when it comes to treating cancer is not acceptable in my book. So there's got to be a better way.

So I started researching, interviewing, and asking questions. What are the real causes of cancer? Because once you know the causes, then you can make the shift to treat the causes, not the symptoms. And then you have a very higher chance of being able to reverse that cancer as well as prevent the cancer. So what are the causes? And causes are actually very clear, cancer is made in the body.

You don't catch it like some viral disease coming from outside in, your body actually makes cancer cells. And it's when your cells are too inundated with toxins for too long, the cells break down and become cancerous.

Well, that's not usually a problem if you are really taking good care of yourself because your immune system is designed to basically eliminate those cancer cells. Becomes a problem when our diet is insufficient, when we're under stress and anxiety and fear and the stress that comes from childhood trauma and so forth continuously, because that actually leads to disease, the biology of belief.

The science of epigenetics and so forth shows us that our beliefs can actually cause disease like cancer and can also help us heal diseases like cancer. Cancer is at least 95 to 99 percent lifestyle related. The cancer governmental agencies say themselves that only about 5 percent of cancer is hereditary, which means 95 percent is lifestyle related.

That's my translation of that and if we change our lifestyle to support the body, to be healing of itself, then we can increase our ability to prevent reverse cancer. Some of the other causes are the toxins in our food, toxins in our cosmetics.

What goes on our skin goes in our cells. That's something we have to remember. And also having a lack, isolation, feeling like you're isolated from the world, from people, from friends, not having good social connections, not having strong relationships.

Those lead to depression, depression can lead to chronic disease, increased inflammation eventually can lead to a cancer diagnosis as well as spiritual disconnect. So not having a sense of a higher purpose or connected to a higher power. So when you look at all the different causes, and we go into a lot more depth in the documentary. Not only into the causes but also the solutions, the things we can do every day to increase our ability to not only prevent and reverse cancer, but also just to live happier, more wholesome, healthier lives. It's incredible because what you learn about this in regards to cancer, it's actually applicable just to about every other disease on the planet.

It's very fascinating because I've sat and interviewed many doctors who work with patients who have anything from diabetes to chronic fatigue, to Alzheimer's and dementia and so forth. And the holistic approach to treating most chronic diseases, including cancer, is almost the same with some variation across the board.

You learn the causes, you eliminate the causes and replace it with the positive lifestyle changes that induce, that create healing in the body. You activate your parasympathetic nervous system, so forth, so that the healing response can be activated, the vagus nerve is turned on so you can create healing in the body. And a big part of that, which is what this event is all about, is mental, emotional healing.

If we don't take care of the mind, we don't take care of those traumas, we don't take care of the inner work first. Oftentimes a lot of the stuff we do with diet and so forth, only plays a small role until we really get to that inner emotional healing that's needed, to allow the body to get into a healing state and allow us to make better decisions for our health.

Alex Howard: One of the things that I'm sure has come from interviewing so many people around the world of cancer is, people that have been through that healing journey with cancer and managed to come through the other side just thinking, as we start to wrap things up a little bit and link you back to your story.

And this idea of post-traumatic growth that is as traumatic and as difficult is that the experience of cancer can be, it can also be an opportunity for change and transformation for people.

Nathan Crane: Yeah, you'll actually hear people in my films say that cancer was the greatest gift that they've ever been given. For a lot of people initially with a cancer diagnosis, that's very hard to fathom that's even possible. Because, imagine sitting in front of an oncologist and he's saying, "hey, I'm sorry, we've found out you have cancer, you have three months left to live. We need to treat this immediately if you want any chance of survival." And that moment alone creates trauma in most people.

That's a traumatic experience that literally leads people to depression, where they go home and lay in their bed for weeks at a time, totally traumatized. And then out of the fear, do whatever the doctor tells them to do for the treatment, because they're in so much fear and depression, anxiety about it, that actually that's making it worse. And it's totally understandable, it's almost unethical that our system allows a doctor to tell you, "you have this many months to live."

In the film, there's an expert that talks about the reason that is there's a medical doctor, actually, very world renowned integrative medical oncologist, who says, the reason they have to do that for insurance so they don't get sued and so, we go into more detail about that in the film. But unfortunately, it's a very traumatic experience for people. And, if you told people, hey, you could have three months to live, you could have 10 years to live, it all depends on how you treat this, how you handle it, how you take care of yourself.

I've interviewed and met people who were given the 3 month diagnosis and I'm talking to them 10 years later. And their life is so much better because of it, because they did not accept that prognosis. They said, "you know what? I'm not accepting this. I'm going to learn everything I can about why I got this and how I can actually heal it." And now I'm talking to them 10 years later and they're the happiest they could ever be. Why?

Because that cancer diagnosis actually taught them so much about themselves.

They started doing the deep emotional work and healing emotional trauma.

They started changing their diet and eating healthier.

They start spending more time on the things that actually are more meaningful to them, like spending more time with their children, when they were working 18 hours a day.

They stopped work in that job that was causing all the stress.

They started spending more time with their family, with their loved ones, doing the things they loved to do, go out and jump out of an airplane, and do their lifelong dream of parachuting, and go hiking and enjoy life.

And that's when a cancer diagnosis can actually become a blessing in your life. When you look for the silver lining, you look for, what are the deeper reasons why I got this? And most people, when you ask them, they have some sense of it, they have some sense, yeah, I've been under so much stress at my job for so long. I've been in this relationship that's abusive. I'm not taking care of my body. I don't exercise.

Like you really get to the depths with somebody and often they can lead themselves to understanding what led to that diagnosis. It takes at least in most cases, 7 years for a cancer to be forming through the body before it is often diagnosed, for it's recognizable in most people's circumstances. Sometimes it's been forming for 10 or 15 years.

So the reality is people need to know that they do have options, there are solutions. There is hope and there are a lot of people who have had a very startling and traumatic prognosis and they decided to, research, watch films like mine, read books from people who overcame cancer, people who are in my film like Chris Wark and in a number of others, Dr. Veronique Desaulniers, Dr. V. Quite a few people who have used natural, integrative, holistic solutions to preventing and reversing cancer. And in the path of doing that, you start to clean up your whole life. You start to heal your emotions. You start to live a life of deep meaning and purpose. And in that case, somebody's life could be extended 3 years, 5 years, 10 years.

They could still end up dying from cancer years later, but those years of their life have so much more quality, so much more fulfillment, so much more happiness, because they found this holistic, integrative way of living and understanding themselves. And then other times the cancer goes away completely and there are people who we've interviewed for the film where that's exactly the case.

Alex Howard: That's awesome. I'm mindful of time and I know people are going to want to check out the film. So, Nathan, how can people find out about the film and find out more about you and your work?

Nathan Crane: Yes, a couple ways, the film is called Cancer The Integrative Perspective. You can put [theintegrativeperspective](#). Also, my website is [nathancrane.com](#) and I have links to the film as well as a blog that I do and videos and so forth. Also on social media, you can find me as well.

Alex Howard: That's awesome. Nathan, thank you so much. And thank you for sharing so honestly and vulnerably of your story. I really appreciate it. I think it's been really powerful. Thank you.

Nathan Crane: Yeah, my pleasure, Alex. Thank you for doing this. Thank you for this amazing work you're doing and hosting this incredible event. I think it's so important that we continue to talk about these things and help each other in times of deep stress and need. So thank you. I appreciate it.

Alex Howard: Awesome. Thanks, Nathan.