



Conscious Life presents

TRAUMA SUPER CONFERENCE

Trauma and chronic pain

Guest: Jana Danielson

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[00:00:10] Alex Howard

Welcome, everyone, to this interview where I'm super excited to be talking with Jana Danielson.

We're going to be talking about why movement is so important to support our healing process. We'll talk a little bit about Jana's own story healing from chronic pain. We'll then explore the importance of toning and releasing tension in our pelvic floor.

To give people a little bit of Jana's background, Jana Danielson is an award-winning wellness entrepreneur who, through her own experience with physical pain, turned her mess into a message which has now become her mission. She is an Amazon international best-selling author, founder of Lead Pilates and Lead Integrated Health Therapies and Metta District, her online wellness community.

Jana is the host of the Medicine of Mindset Summit, which I was pleased to be interviewed for, and a member of the Holistic Leadership Council. She's also the creator of the Cooch Ball, the world's first patented pelvic floor fitness tool for women. Jana has coached and consulted with tens of thousands of women from all over the world to help improve their quality of life, their confidence, and their impact in the world.

So Jana, firstly, welcome, and thank you so much for joining me.

Jana Danielson

Alex, thanks for having me here.

Alex Howard

So I'd love to start a little bit with some of your story, how you came to work with the body, and what was your real interest and your foundation in this?

Jana Danielson

Okay, well, you know how sometimes they say you make a plan and then God laughs? I think that's actually what happened to me because I am a farm girl from the Prairies in Canada, the first person in my family to go to university. So I went, I got my undergraduate degree in business, did my

master's degree in business, with the goal of, this is the mid 90s, so I was going to bust through the glass ceiling, be the first female CEO of fill in the blank corporation. And that's what my goal was.

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And I started having my own pain journey early in my late high school, early university, days. And over a two year period in my early twenties, and I went the medical route, I mean, that's how I was raised, that's how I grew up. If you weren't feeling good, you went to the doctor, you got medicine and you got better. And so that's what I did. And over a two year period, I ended up just getting passed like a baton in a relay race from specialist to doctor, new specialist, new test.

And I would cross my fingers and throw salt over my shoulder, do all the things that I would hope in that one instance or in that one doctor's report, there would be some answer as to why my pain, which was digestive in nature, there would be some sort of answer, some sort of diagnosis. And it never came. I was on eleven medications by the time I was 21 years old. And some medications further down the list were to counteract the side effects of the medications higher up on the list.

And one day I walked into my doctor's office just to figure out, what is the next step? And she told me that my medical team believed that the pain was in my head and I was seeking attention and I should have a nice life.

Alex Howard

Wow.

Jana Danielson

And it was a moment for me, because I actually thought that my lifeline to living a life that would be impactful, I wanted to be a mom, you know, I had my climb the corporate ladder goals, I was just newly engaged to my high school sweetheart, all of that seemed to feel like it didn't necessarily matter anymore because I couldn't even get out of bed in the morning. And so I had one of my dark nights of the soul experience over the next, about, six months.

And in the moment, I wouldn't have said I was depressed, but when I look back, that's absolutely... I became a shell of myself and, really, was leading a fake life. On the outside, I made sure everybody thought I looked happy and healthy and I was still doing things, I was still teaching fitness to pay for my tuition, all that kind of stuff. But inside I was literally suffocating. And the story goes that I was in the grocery store one day. And I still am a big fan of Madonna, the material girl, I just love everything about her, even the scandal.

Alex Howard

This will slightly date the interview, but she just announced her world tour this morning, I saw.

Jana Danielson

Okay, all right, well, thank you for telling me that.

[00:04:57] Alex Howard

Look for tickets!

Jana Danielson

I have to look for tickets. She was on the cover of a fitness magazine when I was in line at that grocery store, and it had the word pilates across it. So I bought the magazine and I went home and I read the article probably about ten or twelve times, because what I was reading and how my brain was processing it, did not make sense. I grew up in a world where fitness was sweat on the floor, heavy weights, you had to hurt the next day, that's how you knew your workout was worth it.

And here was this form of movement that looked like yoga, a little bit of Tai Chi, but it was all about the spine and the way it moved and diaphragmatic breathing and alignment. The article talked about these two parts of the nervous system, the sympathetic and parasympathetic, which I had no idea what that was. There wasn't even Google at that point. So I was intrigued.

And I went to my first class and I went right to the front center of the class because that's my personality. And in about 35 seconds, I wish that I had been in the back corner because I would have rolled up my mat and walked out. I could not do even a simple... Our instructor was cueing us to inhale deeply and get the air into our belly, feel the belly rise and lower, and my air would get to about the base of my throat, and it would go nowhere.

And I was looking in my peripheral vision, at the people around me, and they were breathing, and they were moving their spine, and they looked like they were just fluid, like water. And I was like the tin man from the wizard of Oz after a heavy rainstorm and could not move my body. And I was embarrassed, and I didn't know why. I didn't know what was happening. My instructor came up to me after the class, and she didn't say anything.

I burst out in tears. She put her arms around me, and she just said, come back on thursday. I came back on Thursday, and I came back every Tuesday and Thursday. And you know what? 16 weeks after my first class, I was off all of my medications, all of it. And I didn't understand what had happened in those four months. But I knew that there was something that I needed to learn about this form of movement and they say the rest of history.

I got my pilates certification. I started teaching out of our home just to friends and family, and I had decided to build my own business. I was doing human resource consulting, executive leadership development, and people started coming for their body pain, and it grew. It grew out of our basement. We opened a studio in 2010. We expanded into a 9000 square foot facility with pilates based movement as the movement therapy and an integrated health therapies clinic.

And we grew that business to a team of 60 clinicians, instructors, and administrators. And we actually just sold that business two weeks ago. And I never would have thought in a million years that I would have been able to impact, at this point, hundreds of thousands of people that have walked through our doors over the last 15 years the way I have. And so my pain was to bump me on the right path so that I could show up to do what I absolutely love.

And I had to go through it myself. And then if that wasn't enough, when our middle son was 14, he went through a pain journey that I was the captain of that team. And we got him through the fact

that doctors wanted to put him on antidepressants. And anyways, he's an amazing 19 year old college golf athlete. And then three years after that, my mom went through her own pain journey.

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And so I'm just so grateful that I was gifted what I was gifted in my early twenties because I think about my son's life and my mom's life... When my mom told me one day she was in such pain, neurological pain, she said to me, Jana, if I have to have another day on this earth like this, I'm done. I want out. And that was a huge cry for help for me. So, that's my story. That's how I show up. And I'm just really grateful for how all of these pieces of the puzzle have been laid for me.

Alex Howard

Yeah, it's a very inspiring story. I'm curious, what you shared around your attitude towards fitness up until you discovered Pilates, and I think particularly powerful given the fact you were teaching fitness up until that point, so it was more than just a hobby, it was a kind of lifestyle, I guess. I think that's a lot of people's attitude towards movement, that if I'm not burning lots of calories or I'm not lifting lots of weight, then what's the point in movement?

So I'd love you to say a bit more about the relationship between movement and physical and emotional healing.

Jana Danielson

So I want to just ground that answer into the fact that I believe that traditional fitness has taught us that our body is pieces. We have arms and we have legs, we have a core, we have a heart that we have to work. We have these pieces, almost like those potato head dolls that our kids had when they were little. You could put on different arms and different lips and different eyes.

But the reality is our body is a series of systems. We have a skeletal system, we have a muscular system, we have a Lymphatic system, which is our body's natural garbage disposal system. We have circulation, digestion, elimination. We have all these systems. And just like any other, your car, your stove, your television, when one thing gets wobbly or out of its center or not as effective or efficient, it's going to impact the whole.

And so that's where I like to draw my line in the sand. And when I work with my clients, I help them understand that when we take and put on this new set of lenses and look at the body as a series of systems and understand that like domino's, if one goes over, the rest is going to go, and so that's really an important component to our healing. Because as Joseph Pilates said, physical fitness is the first requisite of happiness.

So the man that invented the whole system of Pilates, that's one of my favorite quotes from him. Happiness is an outcome of being able to do the things we love to do. And when we have experienced pain, when we're living in pain, when we've experienced trauma, it's really hard sometimes to be happy. And we feel stuck, we can feel ashamed, we don't know where to turn for help.

And soon enough, our body, which then impacts our mind, which then impacts the energetics of our spiritual body, it all starts to become very wobbly and we start to self select out of things like

going for a walk, getting outside in sunshine, making sure we have a properly hydrated body. And so that's where I think the disconnect for a lot of people is.

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And if we could bridge that, the old paradigm saying, thank you, I'm going to leave you here. You're no longer serving. You guys, did you know that when you're sitting for an hour, 50% of the blood flow to your legs has decreased? Now, what does this mean? It means that if a boa constrictor snake was wrapping around our body, we would feel unable to move. We wouldn't have the freedom to move.

So what's the fix? We get up for two minutes, and these are the little seeds that I want to plant today, because, like you said, Alex, I think we've subscribed to I need an hour to sweat my butt off, and if I don't have it, I'm just not going to do it. We're talking minutes a day. Minutes a day to learn how to breathe properly, minutes a day to get out into the sun, to get some vitamin D into our body.

And that's the world that I would love more of us to be living in, is that it's those small little moments that create the momentum that we need to be able to live our most healthy life.

Alex Howard

Also, it strikes me that that interconnectedness between different systems is important because your symptoms were digestive symptoms, right? And so, or at least pain in the digestive system, and so it'd be easy to think the only resolution to that is something to do with food or dealing with supplements and so on. And yet, actually, it's a movement practice, which was the transformation.

Jana Danielson

You know what I learned going through my Pilates, and you know what, for some people, it doesn't have to be Pilates, it can be yoga, it can be Tai Chi, it can be any form of movement, but for me, understanding, when I couldn't breathe properly, the diaphragm, which is our main muscle of respiration, it sits in our ribcage like a dome, my diaphragm was not moving, and it's a huge muscle. It's like a jellyfish.

And because I was living in pain, like maybe some of, or so many of your audiences, we become protective of the body, especially the front of the body. And so because we live on a planet with gravity, and because we have a propensity to, like a DNA helix, roll forward and downward and get frozen there, then our fascial tissue is like, oh, this is where you want me to live. So everything becomes restricted and constricted. And so when I started to find my breath, literally and figuratively, I was able to open. I was able to open.

And the five spinal movements of Pilates, it's like a cookie recipe. So much of our nervous system is plugged into our spine, and once I started to align my spine, create movement, create healthy blood flow, oxygen rich, nutrient rich, so my 75 trillion plus cells were flourishing, and not in this perpetual state of survival, survival, survival, once I got past that and learned breathing, learned, like I said, proper hydration, just basic things, the cellular body was able to go from survive into heal. I couldn't start healing until I convinced all those cells that no, it's okay, it's okay. We have a plan and let's try this.

[00:15:44] Alex Howard

Yeah, it's like, one of the ways that I talk about it is, for the body to heal, it has to be in a healing state. And of course, one of the ways that we sustain the dysregulation is by those patterns that are held in our body. And so I think it's really important what you share around why movement helps to shift and unlock that.

I know that a particular area of focus in your work is working with the pelvic floor. And I'd love to hear you speak a bit about why that is so important to not just movement, but also then the transformation of movement to the wider body.

Jana Danielson

For sure. So we're going to do a little pelvic floor 101. So first of all, men and women have pelvic floors. I have been to so many educational seminars and webinars and there are some guys, and I've heard them say this, like, oh my gosh, I'm so glad I'm not a woman because I don't have to deal with that. I don't have a pelvic floor. And I'm like, you guys, you have a pelvic floor. So let's do a little bit of anatomy here.

Our core, so many of us believe it's just our six pack abdominals. But yet it's so much more than that. Our core is the cylinder around, between our shoulders and our hips. There's four sets of abdominal muscles. Yes, the six pack is the outermost layer, but then we've got these internal and external obliques that make a letter X. They tip us side to side and they twist us.

And deeper to that, we've got a set of muscles called the transverse abs that start in our low back and wrap to our front. And this is why everyone, when you have chronic or low grade back pain and you might go to see your doctor and they might prescribe you something, but they also might say you need to strengthen your core. And then you go and you're like, oh, your brain is like, oh, we got to do sit ups and we got to do planks. And that just perpetuates the back pain.

This muscle is really important because it starts at the back and wraps at the front. When you can understand how to access it through proper breathing, then you can start your healing process when it comes to that low grade chronic back pain. The diaphragm which I've mentioned sits at the top of the cylinder and the pelvic floor sits at the bottom of the cylinder. And it has an important job. It holds up organs in a man's body and in a woman's body.

It needs to relax when a woman is having a baby. It is a very sensual part of our body. It can also be a very traumatic part of our body. One of the places besides the head, neck and shoulders, where we carry stress, through the pelvis is another very common area where we carry stress and tension. And it depends on a lot of things. It depends how you were brought up.

Sometimes there are religious overtones about that part of our body. There could have been traumatic experiences. Just a lack of education also does us a disservice. And you know, one thing I learned, Alex, is that the main nerve that comes from the brain to the pelvic floor region into the genitals is called the pudendal nerve. And the Latin root of pudendal means ashamed.

Alex Howard

It does? Wow, okay. I didn't know that.

[00:18:53] Jana Danielson

I know. And when I first learned that I was like, what? So for those of you that subscribe and really are in the, I like to say that there's a witchy side to myself and I love that side of myself. And so if you think about that, that brings a lot of ancestral energy to that area for a man and a woman. So we can get a lot of unnecessary stress and tension. And I'm creating this little bowl because, really, it's like a cauldron. It's a bowl, and it's a group of muscles.

And it's also really connected to a muscle called the Psoas. And now the Psoas is a muscle, it's like two pillars in our body. It attaches on the inside of our long leg bone, it goes up to our pelvis and then attaches to the front of our spine. Now, when we are an embryo, the Psoas is, first of all, one of the first muscles to develop. And secondly, because we are in that forward rounded position growing in our mom's belly, the Psoas becomes a sponge for the emotion of our mom during that pregnancy.

And so we are then born with this imprint of that in the Psoas. And because the Psoas is so geographically close to the pelvic floor, there can be a lot of stress, anxiety, all these kinds of things, in that area and we don't even realize it. We don't even realize it. I've had moms work with me, with their kids who are 10, 11, 12, and they're still wetting the bed. They don't want to go to their best girlfriend's house for a sleepover because they're embarrassed that they might have an accident. And we've tried everything.

And so we start working with their pelvic floor. And you would think at ten years old, but you know what, high caliber athletes, no matter how old they are, there's a lot of stress and tension there. And I think for the general population, poor posture, the footwear that we choose to wear, the way we live our lives, maybe lying on the couch more than we should, it all plays into that.

And the sacral chakra is right there. There's that little energy vortex in that area. And so it has a very physical purpose. It has a very emotional purpose. And because of that emotional purpose, oh, man, we can become so disconnected from it, like we want to pretend it doesn't even exist. And it does. And it plays an important role in all these aspects of our lives.

Alex Howard

It feels like, also, one of the places in the body, like you were saying about the neck and the shoulders, that we're most likely to hold trauma, that if there's impacts, and particularly when there's a holding on, like a kind of contraction in the body there's, as you said, like a defensiveness and a holding on there.

What would be some of the symptoms of that? So someone's wondering, well, maybe that's happening in their body, what would be some of the clues to look for?

Jana Danielson

Yeah, so there are the classic symptoms that we hear about. So in a woman's body, it could be incontinence. So you cough or sneeze or laugh, and you pee a little bit. It could be pain during intercourse, or just general pelvic floor pain, because the pelvic floor can be too tight, or it can also have a lack of tone, right? So both are dysfunctional. So there's something called urge incontinence, where you don't have to go to the bathroom, and then you get home with bags of

groceries, and you put your hand on the handle of your door and you're running to the bathroom, undoing your pants. So there's those symptoms.

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In a man's body, a lot of pelvic floor issues can show themselves, let's say, after prostate cancer surgery. And what a lot of people don't realize is, in a man's body, 90% of erectile dysfunction is actually tension in the pelvic floor that creates like this rock wall in the body, and then literally, blood flow cannot get through to the penis. So what we've been told by Big Pharma is that, oh, just take this little pill, just take this little pill, and you'll be good.

And I just think of all the men that have been so traumatized by their body, they believe their body doesn't work. And really, it's a fitness/ movement issue. And what the other thing a lot of men don't realize is in that little pill is a high, high dose of nitric oxide. And so that's why for some men, they, you know, they take the pill, they get an erection. They can't get rid of it for hours and hours and hours.

But you know what, everyone? When we breathe diaphragmatically in through our nose and out through our mouth, we actually in our body create nitric oxide with that very calming, parasympathetic breathwork. And so those are some of the basic symptoms. Now, here are ones that you might not connect the dots. Constipation, cold tingly feet, low grade back pain, chronically tight hips. Those are also pelvic floor tension symptoms that we may not relate the two.

Alex Howard

It's super interesting, and I feel like it's one of those things where people may have been so normalized to their habits and their patterns that they don't realize there's tension until they start to put their attention on it and perhaps even start to work with them.

So I'm curious as to what are some of the ways, you mentioned, for example, breathing is one of the ways, what are some of the practices that people can use to either bring more tone or to bring sort of less tension to the area?

Jana Danielson

Yeah, breath really is number one. And here's why it's so important. Remember when we were building the core, that cylinder with the roof and the ceiling? So the diaphragm is the roof, and the pelvic floor is the ceiling. Those two muscles are like best friends, and one does what the other does. So if the diaphragm is not moving or working during breath, over time, the pelvic floor is going to be like, hmm, all right...

And here's the other thing about breathing, when you're not using your diaphragm, the body is so smart. It's like, oh, okay. The main muscle of respiration is on a perpetual holiday. We got to go to the secondary breathing muscles, which live in our neck, the scalenes and the sternocleidomastoids, called SCM for short, those two groups of muscles then get tapped on the shoulder. Like, hey, guys, we actually need you to breathe for us.

And here's what happens. These little muscles that are like little strips of beef jerky already have a job. That's to hold this bowling ball up on our head. And now we're saying we also need you to breathe. So for those of you listening who cannot wait until your next massage or your next

acupuncture appointment or your next chiropractor appointment because you have so much neck tension, you have headaches, you have TMJ issues, and you just can't wait for that appointment, and then 36 hours later, you're like, oh, my gosh, when's my next appointment?

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It's because you're actually not changing the functional pattern of what muscles you're using to breathe with. So until you start to learn to use your diaphragm, you're going to have that, like I said, that perpetual tension in the head, in the neck, in the shoulders. And so that's an offshoot. I mean, that can be a game changer right there for those of you that live with that every day.

So when we start to use our diaphragm, the pelvic floor kind of wakes up. It's like, oh. So once we understand it's a big inhale through the nose, filling our belly with air, the exhale has a bit of a sound. It's like ahh, where we're melting the belly button back toward the spine. That is probably one of the most impactful ways that you can actually start to wake up the pelvic floor. I explain it sometimes, like, when you breathe diaphragmatically, it's like CPR for your pelvic floor. You actually wake it up.

Now, some of the other things that are important to keep in mind are just our posture. So when we're standing, there's this magical weight distribution in our feet. Now, I'm not a structural engineer, but I do know that when something is big and solid, it's meant to bear weight. And when something is small, it's meant to be movement. In our feet, we have 26 bones. The big Calcaneus bone, it's a big, solid bone.

Then we have 25 other small, little odd shaped bones in our foot. And most of us live with about 80% of our weight forward in our toes, kind of like a ski jumper at the Olympics, right? That's how a lot of us stand. And so we're actually straining and traumatizing our feet because the moving bones are getting the message that they are holders. You're not movers anymore, but you're holders. And that big bone at the back, that Calcaneus is going like, wait, what about me?

So the optimal weight distribution to support the pelvic floor, and posture in general, is 60% of your weight back on those heel bones and 40% across the widest part of your foot. They're called the metatarsals, so not your toe pads. But if this was my foot, it's where the toes connect into the main part of the foot. Those two simple things, Alex, proper breathing and proper posture, I think sometimes we poo poo them because they seem too easy. Doesn't it have to be harder or more complex? And really, it doesn't.

Alex Howard

And then how important is movement practice as a third piece? So there's the breath and there's the posture. How important is some sort of, exercise isn't really quite the right word, but some sort of movement practice? And is Pilates your primary recommendation, or what are the other options that you see have real benefit here?

Jana Danielson

Yeah, of course, I am a champion for Pilates because it's what healed me. I just did my little movement practice this morning. So here's what I love about Pilates. It is an inside out form of movement. And if you're looking, we talked earlier, if you are looking to leave that old paradigm of

fitness and exercise in 2022, then this is a great place to start, because the first thing we do is we teach you how to move your spine properly.

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So I talked about that cookie recipe earlier. The spine moves five different ways. And if we moved our spine these five ways every day, and you guys, it takes like, less than five minutes to move the spine these five ways. Now, here's what those five ways are. The first one is called spinal flexion. Now, it's not that meme we see on Instagram where you have the ape, and then it kind of goes to the standing upright man, and then it has the guy at the desk that looks just like the shadow of the ape.

I don't mean forward flexion like that. What I mean by flexion is when you're sitting in your chair, or standing, if you were going to tuck your tailbone between your legs and take that lower part of your spine, I'm doing it right now as I'm explaining it, that's spinal flexion, okay? That's how we start to create healthy movement in those last vertebrae in the lumbar spine, which tend to get really impacted by posture and just poor movement. So, spinal flexion.

The opposite to that is spinal extension. So looking up and watching a flock of birds, okay, so many of us just lift our head, hang it off our spine, and we couldn't stay there for that long. But if you think about zipping up a jacket, and as you zip the jacket, your spine gets taller, and then you look at that flock of birds, that's very yummy for your spine. And it also opens up the heart area.

Our heart chakra can be very, again, protected or locked down and when we can open up, and that's why sometimes when I'm teaching Pilates and we're doing spinal extension work, I'll have people just silently, tears dripping down their face, because there is this emotional release as you start to move your body in ways that might feel a bit vulnerable, but yet in a very safe and loving environment.

Spinal rotation. We need to twist our spine, because when we twist our spine, we also are giving our visceral system, all of our organs, an internal massage. And they need that. They need to be roughed up a little bit. And then side bending, lateral bending, is the fourth spinal movement. And the fifth spinal movement, actually, we have to get on the floor. But if you lay flat on your back and you bent your knees and put your feet on the floor and just lifted your hips off the floor a little bit until your belly button was higher than your heart, it's called an inverted spine.

And this inverted spine, we get to play with gravity a little bit, and it works in an opposite way on your spine. So all that great spinal fluid and blood along the spinal column gets to be recirculated. That's why I love Pilates, because as Joseph Pilates said, you're only as young as your spine is flexible. So you can have a 30 year old body with a 70 year old spine, and that's the quality of life that body will have.

Or you can have a 70 year old body with a 30 year old spine, and that's the quality of life that body will enjoy. And so that's why for me, I know that, and don't get me wrong, you can leave a puddle of sweat on the floor in a Pilates Mat class once you really start to understand the pieces. But you can't write the PhD dissertation before you learn the alphabet. So what I've just explained to you is the alphabet. And then from there, you just build and build and build and build.

[00:33:03] Alex Howard

Also, what strikes me as you're talking is that, there is a connectedness and intelligence to the movement that's happening, as opposed to, I think what sometimes can happen is one's lifting weights in a gym or running or whatever, and there's almost a disconnect from the body that happens whilst they're doing it. And there's something about that attention and that presence that also feels important to this.

Jana Danielson

Well, I think you really highlight a key point, is that our body really is an amazing communicator. It is. We just often don't know. It's like getting an owner's manual in a different language. And you're like, I have no idea what I'm supposed to do here. I love to inspire people to learn, become a connoisseur of movement, become a connoisseur of your body so that you can hear it when it's whispering versus waiting until it's all out screaming, temper tantrum.

And then, not that it's ever too late, but jeez, you can sure figure things out when the whisper is what you're experiencing versus when that temper tantrum is going strong.

Alex Howard

Well, I guess, also, I was just thinking as you were talking, that part of this is also about one's relationship with their body. And one of the things, of course, that happens with trauma is when there's a lot of trauma held in the body or, like you were describing, when one is in chronic ongoing pain, one's relationship to one's body becomes one of frustration or annoyance or trying to do things to, or feeling let down by it.

And that sort of perpetuates that cycle. And it feels like part of what you're also speaking to is a process of reconnecting, not just in terms of attention, but also in that relationship with one's body.

Jana Danielson

Yeah, and that's exactly what it is. I can remember when my body was in so much pain and I didn't understand it. I didn't understand why. And like when I told my story at the beginning, I would have made a beeline out of that class if I was not in the front row. And I often wonder, where would I be right now if I left that class and didn't allow myself to truly fall back in love with my body?

And I mean, beyond the physicalness of it, when you really hone into the mindful movement that Pilates is. And when I do my movement practice, I actually do it with my eyes closed because it really allows me to feel the movement or to feel where maybe I'm a little bit stuck, or it allows me to hear, I don't even play music, I don't have my earbuds in, it's just me and quiet space.

So for me, it's actually part of my meditation practice, is this flowing movement, and over time, it's almost like getting reacquainted with an old friend. And that's the beautiful part of this, is that your body is there to serve you when you are ready. And sometimes we're just, you know, the brain might not be ready and the body is, or the brain might be ready and the body is not.

But when you can find something that can allow you to slowly... And that's what I say to my clients. In that Aesop's fable, *The Tortoise and the Hare*, we are not the hare. We are not off the start going as fast as we can. We go literally like the tortoise, one step at a time, because the finish line

is just symbolic. There really is no endpoint. It's not like, okay, my body is finally here. I'm managing my trauma. I am done. Now let's move on to the next chapter of our life.

[00:37:07]

It's this beautiful ebbing and flowing, and that's what I want your audience to really understand, is that it's a lifestyle, and some days are going to be beautifully flowy, and some days are going to be not. And when you can understand that, the relationship can get really yummy and juicy because it is what it is.

Alex Howard

And it's like, what I'm also hearing in what you're saying is that there's a certain amount of commitment to that process. And in your story, I think you said it was, in 16 weeks, you were off all medications, but you had to stay through the first session, then you had to go back again. And like you said about the teacher saying, come back on Thursday.

And there could have been a place in you that was like, that was way too scary, way too vulnerable, I'm never going back. And there's something about that as much as we're talking about a practice of connectedness and surrender, in a sense, it's also that recognition that one has to show up to themselves and be consistent with those practices that are so important.

Jana Danielson

I don't remember what day it was in my healing journey, but it was like there was a big neon sign flashing. And what I realized was that I had spent so much of my time and energy looking for healing outside of myself, someone else, that what Pilates gifted me was the realization that the healing was really within me. And it wasn't until I truly could connect with the essence of who I was and wasn't a victim, like, why, God? Why did I pull the short straw?

When I released all of that and realized that it was in me, showing up every day on my mat, and I'm not saying that, I love massage, I love Chiro, I love those paramedical... When we need counseling, we go to counseling or we do programs. Yes, 100%. And I think we often miss the keystone in the Roman arch, which is inside of us. And we know what happens in that Roman arch when you pull the keystone, everything crumbles.

So maybe today is the day. I always think when people are here at beautifully curated events like this, that they're not here by chance, they're here on purpose. And maybe this conversation today is what you've been waiting to hear. And wouldn't that be amazing if today you realize that I'm going to do the one thing, and the one thing might be going for a walk, or the one thing might be, I'm going to make sure that my 75 trillion cells have the hydration they need so that I can get more energy. Or maybe the one thing is just learning how to breathe diaphragmatically. And that's how it starts, with one thing.

Alex Howard

That's beautiful. It feels like a really good place to end. Jana, for people who want to find out more about you and your work. Where's the best place to go? And what's some of what they can find?

[00:40:25] Jana Danielson

So there's two pathways. The Metta District. So mettadistrict.com, and it's Metta with two T's. And let me say it, I want to just say this. I had Metta before Mark Zuckerberg had Meta. So it's mettadistrict.com, with two T's.

Alex Howard

He's probably got more expensive lawyers, though.

Jana Danielson

Yeah, exactly. So that is my online movement community. So I've got some free videos there. There's a three gift video series there, and one of the videos is twelve minutes on diaphragmatic breathing. So if you just take one inspired action out of this conversation, go and get that video because I really dissect the diaphragmatic breathing. So that's a great place from a movement perspective.

If you were intrigued by the piece of this conversation today, around the pelvic floor, head over to coochball.com or goochball.com and we speak to the guys, we speak to the ladies, and, yeah, those are the best places to see what I'm up to.

Alex Howard

Fantastic. Jana, I really appreciate your time and sharing so personally of your story today. Thank you so much.

Jana Danielson

It was a pleasure being here.