



Conscious Life presents

Tools for Trauma Healing, Connection and Belonging

Guest: Donna Jackson Nakazawa

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[00:00:09] Meagen Gibson

Hello and welcome to this interview, I'm Meagen Gibson, your conference co-host.

Today I'm delighted to be speaking with Donna Jackson Nakazawa, an award winning science journalist, author of six books, and an internationally recognized speaker, whose work explores the intersection of neuroscience, immunology, and human emotion.

Her newest book, *Girls on the Brink, Helping Our Daughters Thrive In an Era of Increased Anxiety, Depression, and Social Media*, looks at today's growing female adolescent mental health crisis, examines how trauma affects the female brain and body in uniquely powerful ways, and offers new hope for helping girls flourish, even in the face of adversity.

She's also the creator and founder of the Trauma Healing program, Your Healing Narrative, wright-to-heal With Neural Re-Narrating, an online narrative writing course for educators, practitioners, and individuals. Thank you so much for joining me today Donna.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Happy to be back with you. Always a pleasure.

Meagen Gibson

I'm always thrilled to speak with you because I know you're going to give people a lot of tools and context, to help them understand what we're up against in today's society, and how it's impacting us, and our kids, and most devastatingly, impacting our girls.

You are always very busy, and since we last talked, I know you've been developing several new programs, which I want to give you a chance to talk about in a minute. But first, I'd love it if you could give us a brief background on you, and how you became to orient yourself toward the subject of trauma, and trauma healing.

[00:01:43] Donna Jackson Nakazawa

I'm a reporter and journalist first, and came by it honestly because I came from a newspaper family on my father's side, but my mother's side was all NIH scientists. So going between, bumping between, life in a newspaper office, and life in the warren, the dens of NIH, somehow fused a little bit.

My own childhood, like many of us, was no walk in the park. My father, the newspaper editor, had minor surgery, and died very unexpectedly when I was twelve. If you have ever had a major tragedy in your life as a child, you know that it has a ripple effect. It goes out across everything, economically, emotionally, socially, in terms of the larger family dynamics. We pulled through, but it was hairy.

Really hairy, for reasons that would be an entirely different conversation. That said, I have really many categories of adverse childhood experiences. And the first time I took that survey, in the middle of working on a writing project, writing one of my books, I've written seven books, my mind was blown. This is a long time ago, this is before ACEs were the thing, before trauma was the thing.

It was around 2011 when I got with Vincent Felitti, who is the father of this research, and really delved into what ACEs meant. And that led to another series of explorations, about how they shift our cellular health. And that led to explorations in *The Angel and the Assassin*, in *Childhood Disrupted*, about how they affect our mental health.

I like things on a cellular level, I like to really figure out. As my agent often says, you love a gnarly problem. Like how if A leads to B, how? So what I do is I run around and talk to the country's leading neuroscientists, and ask them lots, and lots, and lots of stupid questions. I do that because I feel like the lag time between what is in the lab, or my childhood, let's say, in the rabbit warrens of NIH and what's happening there, and the clinic, or our lived experience in the living room with our kids, with our partners, with our parents, with our friends.

That lag time has actually been shown to be about 20 years. I see it as my job to talk to all the people that maybe the average citizen can't call up and chat with. Ask them those annoying questions, go to enough of them that I can connect the dots between A,B,C,D,E,F and G, and then boom, that's a book.

And then that turns into an online course or program. Because, like I started with, I like to marry the science with the narrative, with the words of understanding, with the interpretations, and what can ultimately be actionable for you.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And you also do a really good job of discerning the why. Because so many academic papers, or studies, or things will come out, and people who are affected by, and will be impacted by that, don't get the why out of those academic papers, or studies, or data, or research. And you have this uncanny and amazing ability to say, this is why this is important.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Thank you.

[00:05:48] Meagen Gibson

I also want to say that, and this is meant as a compliment, you are the only audiobook author I've ever had to slow down instead of speed up.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

I don't narrate them myself because I'm too busy writing the next book, but I have heard that a bit. Or I hear from parents who are reading my newest book, *Girls on The Brink*, I went back and reread it, or I slowed down here, but then they show me their copies, and the flags, and the highlights, and the color-coding, and the post-it notes. I've had parents tell me they created posters on their kitchen cabinets, outlining certain things.

I want to say right up front that if you read my books, and I hope you do, I hope you will, or listen to them, from wherever you get your books. I'm not dumbing down for you, I'm just not, look, I meet a lot of people, I've interviewed thousands of people, I've keynoted hundreds, I don't think thousands, hundreds of conferences. And I meet a lot of people, and people are not dumb, people are so smart.

They want it explained to them in a way that needs the language that we have for understanding, and for creating story, and creating narrative. So I'm not TikToking it, I'm giving you what you need. Honestly, I'm no good at any of that, I'd like to be, but I'm not. Or maybe I wouldn't like to be. But that's the truth, and I have readers like you, and colleagues like you, where we can work together on these projects, who really do the deep dive. All that said, I don't want to scare people off, because it's not that hard.

Meagen Gibson

Me neither. It's all very applicable, relatable, and understandable. You don't have to have an advanced degree, or any degree at all, to understand it, or why it's important. But you do get into the weeds where you're like, I'm going to explain this, even though it might be beyond what you think. You don't have access to these questions, you can't ask them. But here is the data, here's why it's important, here's how you can understand it and apply it in your life. They're all fantastic.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

It's really funny because we do a lot of audience surveys at lectures and events, and it's always that deeper science that people take home. They may think they want to come and just hear ten things you can do, which I also do, but they always write about those deeper ahas. Because I believe firmly, and I hope you all believe that when we understand the deeper why, we actually get a sense of courage, fortitude, and reason. And it can help ground you standing in the kitchen, when a 14 year old has refused to take out the trash nine times. It can really help ground you in your interior responses and your exterior responses. And to me, that's a game changer.

Meagen Gibson

I'm so glad that you said that, because one of the things that I was thinking about is that when you apply, not just the application or the process by which to apply all the data, because you could

strip out all the data and science from your books and say, here's the top ten ways that you can relate to your kids without conflict. There are a lot of books about that, and those are also useful.

[00:09:29]

But I find that when you include the science, there's a disarming that happens for the parents, or caregivers, or people in charge of little people, or in relating to our adult people that act like little people sometimes. That you're disarmed and you're not as defensive because there's a giant machine working, which is the science of all the things that are out of our control that is working, that you're like, oh, this isn't about, I'm not a failure as a parent, or I'm not a failure as an adult, or I'm not a failure as the adult child of a parent. There's a lot working that I don't have control over.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Right, and that you don't have control over I would add... Until you understand it.

Meagen Gibson

Exactly.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Then whoa, do you have the ability to make some shifts?

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, because you can't change something that you don't have a conscious understanding of. And then once you do have the knowledge, like the saying goes, once you know better, you do better, right?

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

That's right.

Meagen Gibson

I want to get into the application, and you'll obviously insert all of the science, I have no doubt. But I know you have a new program called Growing Strong Girls. So why did you make the program and what's the purpose of the program?

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

When I'm coming out with a book, it is me talking to lots of girls, in this case, parents, pediatricians, researchers, neuroscientists. But there does come a point where you also want to offer something more actionable, so this is why it happens, if you want the behind the scenes stories for why we often will translate a book into a more practical online program.

You go around the country, you talk to lots of people, lots of parents, you do tons of webinars for many different types of organizations, and ultimately, you come away with this heart bursting with the amount of love there is out there for young people. This enormous wave of love always just

lands on me after I talk to pediatricians, talk to parents, talk to teachers, and that always leads me to go, okay, what can you do right now in your own home based on this science? So let's take some of the science out of it, not all of it, but let's truncate it a little bit, so that you can do this program in a weekend, and come away being a different person in your living room. So that's the goal.

[00:12:16]

It's to answer, I hope this doesn't sound too woo woo, but that call to love, really, and different things do it differently. So reading my books, I think, gives people a really strong foundation for the why of what we need to do, and what we need to do. But when I turn something into an online program, I've had about a year out there with people. I've learned more, I've done more research, and I've really heard, as a response to the book, what the hunger and the need is to fulfill that capacity that we all have inside of us as parents.

To be that person in the room with the lowest heart rate, if you know what I mean, to be able to allow our kids to mirror our evolved, regulated neurobiology. What does that look like? And so what I've done in this program, which is maybe 2 and a half - 3 hours, can be done in a couple of days, is just nail it.

In terms of, here's what you need to know, little nuggets of science, here's why it matters, here's what you're going to do now. In all of these different situations to try to bring back that sense of parent-child connection and attunement that research shows, science shows, has been lost and eroded by the current era in which our kids are growing up.

Parents are, really moms especially, and research shows this, are so much more likely to blame themselves, if they feel like their kids aren't talking to them, or their kids are struggling. And we know, obviously, CDC, 57% of girls report feeling regularly sad or hopeless. We know our girls are really struggling, I've written an awful lot about that, I followed those trends for quite a while now. If you want to know something really terrifying, that number was 33% in 2019, and it's risen to 57%. Two different studies, two different organizations, but it's terrifying.

We have very good evidence that the way that child has changed, plays a role in that, as do many other things. But when parents feel overwhelmed, or like I am not able to give my kid what they need in this moment, or something's going off here, this isn't right, I can't tell. 90% of parents say that they can't tell if their child is having normal ups and downs, or if they're really cremating down. And that's worrisome for us as parents.

When we have that little hair that goes up on the back of our head that says something doesn't feel right. And I don't know if I have the skills to attend to this in the way that I want to, and the way that I need to, to help my child through this passage. When we feel that way, we beat up on ourselves. If you don't, yay, that is also a goal of mine that we don't.

Which is why I write, I have online programs about breaking free from trauma, to get rid of that feedback loop that we have with ourselves when we feel we aren't doing things perfectly.

The goal here is for parents to be able to better notice when that sense of parent child connection or attunement isn't where they want it to be, and come to that with all the skills and presence that they need to help their child be better regulated when they are in distress.

[00:16:19] Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. You said a couple of things I want to go back to, which is the statistic of from 29% to 57% of hopelessness, I think you said it was right?

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

33% to 57% of girls report feeling persistently sad or hopeless.

Meagen Gibson

Obviously parenting is not 30% worse, we're not holding the bag for the entire 30% in decline of the health of mental, or the mental health of girls and kids. As you said, society has changed, the childhoods of our children have changed significantly. I saw something on social media just this morning about social media snapchat maps. So the app Snapchat can give girls, or anybody using it, a map of where all their other friends are. Which is increasing this feeling of being left out, and not accepted and not included, and having purpose, meaning, and belonging, which is not an accessory to childhood, is necessary to human connection.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Required ingredient, yeah.

Meagen Gibson

Connection is not... We think about connection, of course I'm connected to my kid. Connection is not optional in secure relationship is it?

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

No, we understand that that basic felt sense of safety is really what's wiring up the brain from day one. The brain is really primed across evolutionary history, and evolutionary time, to ask one question before all other questions. And it's not, is there food? It's, am I safe or not safe? That is the primary question the brain is asking 24/7.

Of course, that primary sense of safety comes through our earliest caregivers. And if the answer to that question is, I'm not safe, then over time that becomes really problematic, because when kids hit puberty, that begins to inform the way that the brain wires and fires up.

What we're seeing today with girls is a much greater and deeper sense of unsafety. And it's coming from social media, from the things that you mentioned, from the ways in which they're being expected to do more to perform, whether at school, or in extracurriculars. I remember a time when you would come home from school, and go lie in the grass with your friends and look up at the clouds, or hang around your neighborhood and figure out social relationships.

If people didn't like you, well, you went home, and maybe you told your mom or dad, and they helped you figure it out, and maybe the next day, the whole thing went away. Or if it didn't, you had a sense of belonging, whether it was being connected to your parents, or maybe it wasn't. But you had a sense that you were capable as you grew, to figure these things out.

[00:19:45]

But when you are 10, 11, 12, and you see that all your friends are at the mall without you, and they're all chatting about it, and there's a group chat in which someone makes a reference to you. And then they're all posting about a party that weekend, or you're actually criticized when you go on Instagram for what you're wearing, or your face, your hair, your body, which many girls are, and you receive these derisive comments from men and girls both. You don't get to explore your identity safely.

You begin to shape your identity around external evaluations. On top of it, you're being evaluated academically, you're being evaluated for how well you're doing in the chorus, or on the lacrosse team, or all of that.

So we've taken that journey of intrinsic self-discovery throughout what I call the in-between years 7 to 13, and we've literally trashed them. And we've replaced them with an aura and a world in which kids are bumping up, like bumper cars, against external evaluation that gives them an internal feeling of unworthiness.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, it's so hard. And not that this is necessarily your intention, but neither of my children have phones.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

I love it.

Meagen Gibson

I'm holding out as long as I can. I know every family is different, every family's needs are different. These are hard times for everybody to make the right decisions for their family. But my kids know that the phrase is, blame Donna. We all blame Donna.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

I hear that in my house sometimes, too. Although I did hear someone heading out to California to give some talk soon. And somebody told me that, you know, the only people whose kids don't have a phone. It's the guys in big tech out here.

Meagen Gibson

I saw somebody, the chair of TikTok or somebody, giving testimony and he was like, no, of course my kids don't have TikTok, and don't have phones, no, they're only 12. And I was like, yeah, see, like I said, I get it's difficult, we all need to stay connected to our kids, and keep them safe in our own ways.

Speaking of that, though, I know that every parent out there wants their kid to be tougher, and smarter, and emotionally attuned, and mature, but normally more than we ourselves, as the adults, have the capacity to be. So what do you tell parents when they're talking to you about their hopes

and desires for their kids, but also encouraging them to model what they see, and want to see reflected in their kids?

[00:22:42] Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Great question, the first thing I say is, of course you feel that way. The world is getting more competitive, everything is more upfront and in your face, and to be able to survive in this world as it is, we need to be competitive, move fast, break things, all of that stuff. And we want our kids to have opportunity, I know I do, I know you do. I want them to be able to go to college where they want, or win that award. That's all groovy, that's great.

But that's not really my job. My job is to help them be good people, to have strong relationships, because the amount of research we have on what makes you happy, and we won't be here when our kids are 80, well, maybe, but unlikely.

But when you listen to older people, when you look at the research on longevity and happiness, it's about relationships, it's about connectedness, it's about feeling that sense of belonging and mattering from day one. And it isn't achieved, success is not achieved, by people having high expectations of you.

I talk at a lot of schools, and while I'm talking, I have kids write me little post-it notes about things that they wish the adults and teachers in their lives knew. And at the end, they're anonymous, I read them back. There are teachers in tears, there are parents in tears. They're usually three separate groups, parents, teachers and kids, because kids aren't going to tell me anything with the adults in the room.

These break my heart, because what they write about, is that they want us to understand that in today's world they have resilience fatigue. They are tired of trying so hard all the time. Their schools are locked down for school shootings, the climate is going to H E double hockey sticks.

They are expected to be, at 12 or 14, the way we were expected to be in college. We've erased those in between years, and we've put everything on this on ramp and expected them, it's like expecting kids to have a driver's license at 9, mentally, mental driver's license at 9. And that really is a problem. I want to remind parents that, of course, our instinct is for them to be as prepared as possible, but that is not your job for that preparation to lead them to going to Harvard.

Your job is to help them with the preparation to be a good person and know what good, healthy relationships look like. What we call relational awareness. And that includes to yourself, first and foremost, because girls also tell me that they trash talk themselves all day long. They talk in the most horrific ways to themselves, about their performance, about their looks. I haven't met a girl in the past year who tells me she feels good about herself. Not one.

They also tell me they don't want to be on social media. They're on it because it's the new cafeteria. If you want to have friends, you have to sit at a table in the cafeteria. Well, social media is like those tables in the cafeteria. What table are you going to sit at? You can't not sit at any table because you're not going to know anything about what's going on in your social melieu.

So to be reminded that how you connect with your children, how they connect with others, and how they grow up to value their relational competency and awareness, to themselves and to others, and to the universe, to the world around us. That is the clinical definition of relational

awareness. But what we've done with the world we've created is we have usurped relational awareness.

[00:27:13]

Kids are responding to what's liked on social media. We have good evidence that the more likes, even very high health risk behaviors get on TikTok or Instagram, the more likely the areas of the brain that we refer to as be 'careful filters', the more likely those be careful filters go offline.

That is why the kid who sits at the dinner table is like, I would never do that, you don't even have to worry about it, that's stupid. Three weeks later did it. And you're trying to help them through the crisis. Because those 'be careful' filters get turned off when we do not have relational awareness, and a sense of how we relate to ourselves so that we can say, you know, I saw that my friend Sally sent those pics to Jim. But I wonder what made her do that? I wonder what that would feel like for her? I wonder how I can be a friend to her?

And I know that that would not be me, because I value and trust myself. So if you take that away, you're going to get this pervasive sense of loneliness, sadness, and hopelessness.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely, you said a lot of things that I want to come back to. Speaking about connection to self, and what I kept thinking as you were speaking, was your inner voice. And we know now, the adults that are my age, maybe even millennials, people above me, our inner voice was mainly cultivated in our family system.

I have actually personally done a ton of work in the last three years around my inner critic, because I didn't realize till I started doing these interviews, and seeing myself on camera, and talking to myself on camera, what a loud inner critic I had. I was like, whoa, what is that voice? And had to peel that part, be like, where did that come from? How can I change this around? But I have a fully developed...

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

So important, that's why I did my Breaking Free from Trauma online course for that, to free people of that.

Meagen Gibson

Most people, I don't think know that it's normal to have an inner critic, b, that it's not theirs, they didn't come by it, honestly we're not born, we don't come out of the womb with an inner critic. It's not an innate trait. It gets developed into us, and that you can reprogram it as you know. Actually, let me let you talk about it because I know that you have a whole program about that.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

I would say we begin in the womb, and we come out of the womb going not just, love me, love me, love me, but let me love, let me love, let me love. And when there has been a lot of adversity, there are interruptions in that system. Obviously, I'm sure many of your listeners already know about how

the nervous system and the brain are impacted by early trauma. I feel like we've been talking about that for a long time.

[00:30:41]

But in that ability to feel love, and also feel like we know how to love, those interruptions in the system that come from a disruption in early caregiving relationships can stay with us all of our lives.

And they look like just what you were talking about Meagen, that entire self-flagellation, rumination, judging self and others, that sense of reaction over things, that maybe aren't so big and overwhelming when you look at them three months later, but in the moment, those big reactions that might feel slightly out of context for what's really happening, you just can't see that profile.

Or underreacting, like shutting down your feelings, not speaking up, not standing up for yourself, all of those are trauma responses. But one of the biggest trauma responses that we have is that we distort our own story of who we are. And we can't get to the truth of it because of those disruptions in love me, and let me love.

In order to get back to the freedom of that thing which was our birthright, to love and beloved. To feel safe, really they're the same thing, safety, love, and beloved. To get back to that, we have to go back into the stories.

So what I did before the pandemic, I was teaching at different universities, teaching a program called Your Healing Narrative. And that became so popular during the pandemic, it's a writing-to-heal course. You take it online, or in workshops.

Obviously, over the pandemic there was a lot of need, and many requests for me to do it virtually, so I eventually turned it into an online program that anyone could do. You didn't have to be going to the Rutgers webinar or Andrew Wile's webinar. You could just do it, just go on and do it yourself.

And then over time, at the end of the pandemic, and we've had hundreds, hundreds of students, it's a true labor of love to put this together, based on neuroscience based writing prompts and mind-body techniques, that coupled together create a program that I call neural re-narrating. Why do I call it that? Because we are re-narrating that voice that you have inside. We are relearning it from the beginning.

That program, Your Healing Narrative, is so near and dear to my heart, especially because it took us through the pandemic, and I was able to do it with kids, I call them kids, but kids in medical schools, whose university would arrange for this as part of their training. Parents, people in prison, through the compassion...

All of those different things, and it began to change me on a cellular basis to see that these tools that I had acquired over 30 years, interviewing individuals and reporting on neuroscience, could be so powerful. I realized after the pandemic, people were saying, hey, life is so busy now, this is an 8 hour course, I did the first 4 hours, but now it's back to school, back to this, back to that.

One university asked me for a shorter version, so I created a two and a half hour version. I just took my very favorite moments through the whole thing and put them together, and made it very

affordable for people. So that's Breaking Free from Trauma, and it takes you maybe 2 hours to do it.

[00:34:54]

But I hear from people all the time that it is a road into the process that you said you yourself have been looking for. And now a publisher just came to me and asked me if they could turn that into a book. I'm working on that right now, but that's going to be a little while because books take a couple of years.

Meagen Gibson

People don't realize, do they? I'm so relieved to hear that because how can you expect, even if you don't know a single thing about the nervous system and being regulated, how could you possibly expect to be a place of safety and calm for a child who's experiencing all of this?

They're building their inner critic in adolescence. How can you expect to be a place of calm and security, if you yourself have your own story that you've built in your head that you're constantly battling against. You're not going to have enough resource. I'm just a huge advocate of parents starting with themselves.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

100%. We have one study out of Hopkins that says that adolescents are twelve times more likely to flourish. We never see a number like that in research, not ever, everything is like 1.4 times more likely or whatever. Twelve times. If they feel connected enough to a parent to talk to them about anything, no matter what the issue is, no matter how difficult.

Now I want to say, when I first heard that, I was like, wait, I messed up. There was this time I didn't find out about what happened to my daughter until later, my son.... I'm a terrible parent. And I have that talk, even to this day, with all the work that I've done, I still do that to myself. If I feel like in some way, I've hurt my child by not being more aware of my own actions and responses, oh, man, I will come down...

But I have the tools to step back and flip it. And you know what? It's not about our not having these feelings. I want to reassure people that it's okay to have these feelings. It's about having the tools to work on them, and rewrite that story, so that that revised story, that revised narrative of who you really are, is so accessible to you that in your darkest moments, in your most self-critical, self-hating, self-judging ruminations. You have a bridge in your brain that is natural and accessible, and to which you automatically tiptoe over and get to the other side.

I promise you that that is possible. I don't want people to think I will never, ever be hard on myself again. I'm just going to have this entirely different human experience. Well, that's not being human. We don't know at what moment around the communal fire, across evolutionary time, humans first sat there and worried about whether or not they were going to be liked enough to be included in hunting for tubers, or whether or not they were going to be ostracized, or get a good piece of meat from the fire, and whether or not they had to worry about being made fun of, or left out.

We don't know that moment, but we do know this, that as the brain grew over time, across evolutionary time, the human brain grew in those areas that are related to our rumination, to how

we puzzle out, create scenarios, re-work them in our minds, about ourselves and others. That's in an area of the brain called the default mode network, and I call it the self space. It's where we develop our sense of self, who we think we really are, what we deserve, what we don't deserve, what other people think of us.

[00:39:04]

That is part of our humanity. But you can, even with a history of adversity, and even with a history of great adversity, create that little tiny bridge in the brain. Decorate it with flowers, bring in the music, and walk yourself from that rumination, and self-judging, and self-critiquing, and overwhelm, and feeling of over-reactivity toward others, or feeling hurt, and walk over it very quickly. And those are the tools that I want people to have. I want everyone to have them. And that's what Breaking Free from Trauma.

Meagen Gibson

I'm so glad that you put that into context, and I actually had in my notes to please talk about, and you just said it, so I don't have to ask that now.

Because I think sometimes in the self-improvement world, the self-help world, even the trauma healing world, people have the expectation, not that we're ever saying it, but that they have to be perfect. That they're going to come out of this thing, they're going to read this book, and they're going to be perfect, and they're never going to make a mistake again, and they're never going to feel disconnected, or miss an opportunity to lean in.

Because we are all ourselves, we're still dealing with our own stresses, and overwhelm, and life that's coming at us, even in adulthood. So we will definitely miss it every once in a while, maybe even once a day. But we know what to say, what to do, and how to repair, and apologize when that happens.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

The more you practice these tools, the bigger your bridge gets, the sturdier the planks in your bridge, the more inviting it becomes to you. Once you really marinate in what it feels like to be able to have a different narrative about yourself, and turn toward yourself with kindness. The more those neural tracks build in the brain, and the more quickly you can walk across that bridge, and the more you revel in that feeling, oh, you know, this really feels a lot better. Everything just kind of let go, my heart rate went down.

These things are so powerful to the mind-body connection that some of the research I'm looking into right now for another book is so fascinating to me. But it turns out these messages that we send ourselves travel very quickly through our bodies in.... You warned people that I'm a science nerd, so it's okay.

Meagen Gibson

I did.

[00:41:38] Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Travel through our bodies in something called nanoparticles, through these other little things called extracellular vesicles. Sorry, folks, but that is not how I write about it, because I use analogy and story, and they go faster than our thoughts.

But there are many different places in the nervous system and immune system that are like doors with locks, and we can lock those doors along the way to stop that process, because, again, I think most listeners know by now that this is not good for your body or your brain. That the more you're caught up in that ruminative state, the more likely you are to go back to our topic today, unable to be present for yourself, or your kids, or your partners, or anyone.

But you are also more likely to rev up your body's inflammatory responses. This is why stress is so deeply associated with heart disease, autoimmune disease, heart attacks. There is this dose dependent relationship between the amount of time that we spend sending ourselves messages that rev up our own system for alert, and harm, and danger, and our mental and physical health. So there are good reasons to want to do this work for others and for ourselves.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. I am so excited for the next two books. What do I need to do to support quick writing?

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Well, I think that the... I don't know. I'm still trying to figure it out. I don't know. I can't write any faster.

Meagen Gibson

I'll just be patient Donna, don't feel pressured. I'm just going to work on my patience over here. It'll be fine.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Take *Breaking Free from Trauma and Growing Strong Girls*, take my two courses.

Meagen Gibson

I recommend that for everyone else as well. As well as *Childhood Disrupted*.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

The Angel and the Assassin, which is about trauma and mental health.

Meagen Gibson

Microglia, I was trying to think of the word microglia.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Yes. I mean, we could go on and on about.

[00:44:14] Meagen Gibson

Exactly.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Newly discovered immune system in the brain which responds to toxic thoughts, stressors and influences, in the same way your immune system in the body reacts, which is to go on overdrive. Unfortunately, in the brain, this leads to changes in mental health.

Meagen Gibson

Which actually do an interview on that, so check out the other trauma conferences if you're watching this. We have talked before about those books as well. But for people that want to know about you, your books, your courses, where can they find out more information about you?

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Donnajacksonnakazawa.com, you can see all of my online courses there. You can drop down on the books menu and go to any of my books are there for you to peruse. That's probably the best way. I'm on [Instagram @donnajacksonnakazawa](https://www.instagram.com/donnajacksonnakazawa), and I'm not on TikTok because...

Meagen Gibson

Congratulations.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Yes, because... Anyway there are good reasons that I'm not on TikTok, which I'm not even going to share.

Meagen Gibson

I just congratulate you for having boundaries and limitations, as should we all. Thank you so much for being with us today. I always love it.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

It goes by so quickly with you. I really appreciate you.