



Episode 7: How Mindfulness Can Help to Resolve Fatigue

E Evan H. Hirsch, MD 00:00

Hello and welcome to the FIX YOUR FATIGUE podcast. Whether you can't get out of bed in the morning, your energy crashes throughout the day, or you're a biohacker looking to optimize your energy, productivity and focus. This podcast is for you. I am Dr. Evan Hirsch. And I will be your host on your journey to resolving fatigue and optimizing your energy. And we'll be interviewing some of the top leaders in the world on fatigue resolution. Welcome Hey there Dr. Evan Hirsch from FIX YOUR FATIGUE with another great interview today. Really excited that you're here with me. So today I'm going to be interviewing Stacey she'll Hirsch. She is a trauma informed certified mindfulness teacher, a personal development coach and integrative health practitioner and a healthy workplace consultant. Her work ranges from teaching the science and practice of everyday mindfulness to helping organizations become more compassionate through a trauma informed lens and approach that prioritizes practices to support better nervous system function for all employees. She holds two degrees and environmental studies, multiple coaching certifications, and is a norm complex trauma practitioner. Clients describe Stacey as, quote, a deeply rooted person and quote, with a quote, deep capacity for empathy, and an ability to cut through foggy thinking with remarkable insight and quote, Stacy is the creator of mindful living at work, an eight week mindfulness based skills program for the workplace, and the mindfulness based neuro somatic engagement program. Stacy is also the co founder of cultivate a writing and meditation retreat for women in beautiful Hood River, Oregon, she has also contributed to our program, teaching mindfulness, and I'm so excited that she's in she's also my wife, you know, so I'm a big fan. And she's taught me so much about mindfulness. And it's just been such a huge component for how she resolved her fatigue, and consequently, how I have evolved. So I'm really glad that she's here today. Stacey, thanks so much for being with us today. So let's talk today about about mindfulness and fatigue. So in the clients that you see with fatigue, practices you find to be most helpful.

S Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 02:26

As a mindfulness coach and facilitator. I think, you know, the first piece is just understanding what mindfulness is, and what we mean. And so there are a couple of definitions out there. One of the most popular is paying attention in a particular way, on purpose in the present moment,

and non judgmentally. And that's one of the definitions that comes from Jon Kabat Zinn. He's one of the first people who brought mindfulness to the, to the west, and it's the one you'll find in the scientific literature. And so I like to use that one just because it's, it's well known, and people it's very clear to. So again, it's paying attention in a particular way, on purpose in the present moment, non judgmentally. And then another definition that's been circulated, and I think is also good is simply noticing new things. And it really speaks to the piece of mindfulness that is about increasing our self awareness. And I think when people go through fatigue, there are so many opportunities for increasing self awareness, because you're, you're feeling away, you don't want you're feeling tired and fatigued. And you really want to feel better, and you're searching. And in that search, you're going to learn new things, you're gonna notice new things. And so, you know, it comes back to mindset. And I know you talk a lot about mindset, and what you do. And so I think the first practices, you know, getting really clear about what this journey is, being intentional about the journey, the health journey, and, and being reflective. And science has shown that, you know, mindfulness practice, like one of the reasons that we get benefits from it is because when we become more mindful, we also increase our ability to self regulate. And we increase our ability to self regulate, we increased our skillfulness and ability to reach for healthy behaviors and to reach for things that bring us joy, and bring us better health. And so I think the mindset of that's often not there when we get sick is that this is a journey. And there's things for me to learn here. And yeah, I might be miserable, or I might not be enjoying the journey. And there's a lot of things to notice. There. And, and so, you know, simply noticing new things is a part of that mindfulness practice. So I think that that's a piece of, you know, what we want to talk about with my clients is, what is this journey for you? What does it mean? Where do you Where are you getting stuck in it? Where is it feeling more like a burden than an exploration. And I get it, I had fatigue for three years. And I don't think I, there were many times where I was wishing it away, and not looking for the learning and the growth, because I was so miserable. So it's completely normal to do that. Where the other definition comes in is that piece that I think is most important for people struggling with illnesses. You're paying attention in a particular way on purpose in the present moment, non judgmentally. And so I think when we have illness, it's really hard to get away from that judgment piece. And a lot of times, that's self judgment. And that can become a vicious cycle. And I think it often gets in the way of our healing, and is probably a large component of autoimmunity, or at least the emotional piece of that. And so when you said your question was practices for people with fatigue, and I think, you know, for me, everything starts with mindfulness. And then we, we break that down. So what do I mean by mindfulness and that can, inside of mindfulness, the practices can vary. And so it could be, you know, working around intention and mindset, it can be working around reflection and increasing self awareness. I just met with a client this morning, where it was working on focus, and understanding the brain and neuroplasticity, and understanding how mindfulness can help us refocus our mind on things that bring us greater health and well being, and to really be self aware when old patterns and scripts are coming up, that we that are real and true, and that need to be worked with. But with that intention, and reflection, we can place our attention in another place. And by doing so, and doing that repeatedly, with repetitions, we change the brain. And so we have this great ability to change our brain, and to change where we focus. And then I guess the final piece is, mindfulness is really helpful with emotion regulation. And when you're on a journey, especially if it's a long healing journey, we go through so many emotions, and experience, you know, so many big emotions and hard emotions and difficult emotions. And mindfulness can really help with the emotion part of it. And so making sure that we're not just taking care of a physical body, but we're also nurturing and healing the emotional body. And so I'm not, there's lots of practices inside of that. But that kind of gives you an overview of how I start to identify practices that would be useful for someone with fatigue.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 08:11

Yeah, that's really helpful. And so in that vein, and looking at the non judgmental side, with gratitude be a good antidote to judgment.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 08:23

Absolutely, yeah, I mean, and focus. So if you look at the three domains, where science really feels mindfulness increases, our ability to self regulate is being able to focus our attention where we want it, increase our self awareness, and improve our ability to emotionally regulate, regulate our emotions. And so the ability to refocus on gratitude is enormously helpful and important when we're struggling with something chronic. And, and you start I mean, I know when I had fatigue, and part of why I think I went into fatigue was that I was at a time it was at a time in my life when so many things were not going the way I wanted. And I felt like such a failure. And I kept trying and kept failing. Or at least in my mind, I called it failure. I didn't have a really good relationship with failure. And so, so I became really good at looking for what was wrong, and what was falling apart and what wasn't working. And I had very little support or practice in looking at what was going well. And so now there's a lot of science on the practice of gratitude, the practice of savoring, and positive psychology is the practice of what's going well. And there's a lot of science on how that changes the brain structure, but it also changes helps us to regulate our emotions. And it's amazing you can if you look at what's happening in your life, you can always find evidence for what's wrong out and wrong. But you can also find evidence for what's going well. And so it's just what do you want to focus on? And what do you want to turn your attention to. And that doesn't mean that we sugarcoat everything, or just pretend it's going well, when things are difficult, we get the tools to handle it, we find the resilience, the skillfulness to handle that. But we have a practice of also looking at what's going, well, what's going right, what's working. And it can be really beneficial to help.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 10:34

Excellent. And so So how do we do a gratitude practice?

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 10:42

Well, there's lots of ways to do it. I teach it in, I teach an actual gratitude meditation. And so we might start with, and you can find things on YouTube and online. And I can post something to the website as well. But it might be where you start with a focus on breath or body or some kind of anchor that anchors your awareness. And then you, you know, move in, kind of small, like, what are the things that I feel grateful for? About my body? You know, like, when I, when I've done it in groups before, it might be that, you know, everything might not be working well. And I might have some health concerns or obstacles that I'm facing, but what are the things that are, you know, like, my, my, my arm picks up the fork to feed me, you know, I have strength enough to move my legs. So we all can find those things like my eyes work, I can hear. And so we can look really close? And like, what are the things here, and then we start to just look at those widening circles. And so what are the things I feel grateful for, with my family, and then we might go to close friends. And then we might go to, if we're working, we might go to a

workplace. Or we might go, the fact that these big trucks bring food to the grocery store, and I buy the fruit of the grocery store, or, you know, whatever it is for us, because we're all we have these unique circumstances. But whatever that is, we just widen that circle and look for the things we might not normally see. The fact that the garbage man comes by to pick up the garbage, you know, these these people that do these jobs that support us that we don't give things to or think to give thanks to. So you can do, that's just one way to practice. Another exercise I do is, and this can be particularly helpful for people with fatigue, it's, it's a savory practice. And it's really, and I think I talked about it on the in one of our recordings, but focusing on an event that something that went well in life or that you had this good experience with, and really feeling it with your whole body with all your senses and reliving it. And that can be really supportive to the nervous system. And then the last one I'll mention is one that I did with my daughter when she was mostly in like preschool, kindergarten, and I pick her up from school, and maybe there was things that were hard, you know, like someone so did this or did that. And on the ride home, I say, Okay, let's do it. Three things that went well. And so I helped her focus her attention on what went well. And not just the things that were hard. And we would talk about the things that were hard. But it was a way of balancing that with what she actually noticed that went well. And she could always name three or more things. And that's an easy thing you can do with family or friends or you can do at the dinner table to just practice focusing the mind on the bigger picture.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 13:51

I love that and that that savoring practice is really yummy. I remember when you talked about that, and just to kind of swim around and those emotions have something that has, you know, performance that went well, or some sort of success or whatever it is or just a hug, you know, that you really enjoyed.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 14:13

Person, it could be a connection with a pet, you know, for those of us that have pets, and we're pet lovers, and sometimes pets are a safer relationship. And so there could be a moment with your, you know, your animal of choice like your favorite pet. For me, I have a savoring one that I use a lot in my trainings that was this. Maybe I talked about it in the recording, but it was this big, beautiful red strawberry that was in my garden. And it was the perfect morning and I went out and I was weeding and kind of pulling back the leaves and I discovered the strawberry and I you know plucked it from the vine and it was the most beautiful color and then I put into my mouth and I started to eat it and it was it was beyond anything I've ever tasted before in my life, like I knew in that moment, this is what strawberries are supposed to taste like. And it kind of ruined it for strawberries. But for that moment, I was like, This is what a strawberry is. And you know, and now it's probably a little exaggerated, you know, the colors probably a little brighter. In my mind, the story's a little larger in the morning was a little dewier, and the birds were singing, but that feels good on my nervous system, you know that and I and that's a real memory and I grew that star strawberry in my yard. And then you know, the next step might be to write about it. Or if you're not much of a writer, share it, just share it verbally with someone you care about someone you that is close, you're close to, or, or share it out loud into like your voice recorder. Because it's, it's recalling it and then sharing, it has a even bigger effect. So you

can also write about it writing is an amazing tool, especially when, you know, we're not feeling well, it can be a great pathway to healing. And so there's, you know, there's lots of different ways to do these exercises. This is just a few examples.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 16:12

So it seems like it's a lot of that is about the senses is trying to examine or trying to have that good feeling be expressed or understood through all of the senses. And consequently, those all go back to the nervous system. That's the sense that I get is that correct?

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 16:35

Yeah. Yeah, I think one is just being able to have a somatic experience of an event, you know, where you where you feel what it feels like to feel good. You know, in your custom me, especially when we've had a chronic condition or chronic illness, fatigue, we know what it feels like to feel rotten. And we have a lot of experience with feeling rotten. And you know, I remember those mornings waking up, and, you know, my eyes would open, I'm like, do I feel good today are not so good. I feel a little bit better. Did that work? Did this work? You know, it's always kind of on edge trying to figure out, you know, how am I going to feel today and hoping for the best but sometimes being presented with, you know, the less than desirable feeling. And so I think when we spend time, going back into the savoring moments where we can embody what it feels like to feel good, and name it, you know, then we're really naming the ventral vagal you know, that healthy, nervous system experience when our body feel safe and supported and connected. And we're just creating a moment of that. And I think that's the beauty. And that's what I've really learned over the years since I've had fatigue is that I used to think those moments had to present themselves to me. And what I've learned through all my mindfulness work and my own healing is that I can create those moments that I'm powerful and empowered to create those moments, I'm and I'm not going to stand by and just wait for them to happen, that I have the ability at any moment, to reach for something yummy. And you know, even if I don't feel great, and that's when it's hardest, I will say because I still have moments where I don't feel 100%. But then I have that power. And I just didn't get that one I had fatigue, I thought I kind of was you know, there was a little bit of a victim like this is happening to me. And there's, there's truth, like some of this was happening to me, but I just what that did was undercut my power. And so that I can create a moment of savoring by focusing on something and it might be I have one moment in my life, and I just relive that over and over, it's not that we have to have all these big moments, we just have to connect with the ones we do have, whether it's one or 10 and connect with those. And so at any I love that I love that I can do that in any moment. And then I can shift my system and I can allow me especially if you know we're if we're if we have stressors in our life, you know, we have financial concerns or family stuff and and we're constantly being triggered or feeling triggered in moving into fight flight or if we're just living in that more immobilized and collapsed nervous system state, to, to reach for something that feels more empowering, that's putting us in our optimal Engagement Zone, to keep reaching for that and be committed to reach for that, I think is an amazing practice. And I want to acknowledge too that sometimes we can't just get there on our own and that's why groups like this really help connecting with someone like a coach connecting with you and you know, I just think we often need to be reminded of this. We need to be supported. We need to be a I'm held, and until we can kind of get a feel for it and do it on our own.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 20:08

Thank you for listening to today's podcast. If you're ready to stop missing important events and opportunities, have robust energy and be excited about life again, please go to [fix your fatigue.com](https://www.fixyourfatigue.com). And sign up for a free strategy session with me, or register for a power packed webinar showcasing my unique process that's helped 1000s of people resolve their fatigue, you can take control and fix your fatigue, I promise. The tools are waiting for you at [fix your fatigue.com](https://www.fixyourfatigue.com). I love that. And so I've heard of neuroplasticity for the brain. But essentially, we're talking about neuroplasticity for the nervous system, it seems like the more time that you spend in a yummy place, the more healing probably happens for the nervous system.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 21:01

I don't know if there's, um, it's a good question. I don't know if there's science on that. I mean, I will say it makes sense to me that that that would be how it works. I don't know what the science says. For neuroplasticity, it's the more repetitions the more we do something, you know that that changes the brain, it changes the structure and function of the brain, for the nervous system. You know, the nervous system is designed to keep us safe, and to protect us. And so, you know, I think that it's that balance between how much time are we spending in our optimal Engagement Zone, versus in our fight flight or collapse, and what about our life circumstances, either actual circumstances that like a lack of financial support, or, you know, just relational pieces, that, that really send us into fight flight or collapse, or our perception, because sometimes it's our perception, and it could be some, you know, this is where the developmental pieces come in, where, depending on our family structure, and how we've kind of adapted over the years, we might have certain things like, challenges with boundaries, or expressing our needs or feeling in connection with our body or with others. And so we might have these deeper developmental pieces that we need to, to work on. And, but that could color our perceptions of any given issue. And so we might be more likely to go into fight flight or freeze. And so you know, working with someone who specializes in complex trauma or toxic stress, or just a good, you know, therapist or coach can help people spend more time in that optimal zone, and to recognize those triggers that send you out of it, so that you can be empowered to come back into it. So what we're really talking about are practices that bring us back into our optimal Engagement Zone, whether we have fatigue or not, and so that your question at the beginning was, you know, optimal practices for or best practices for people with fatigue, but this is what I recommend for anyone. We're because we're all that's what I love about the nervous system work is that's the common denominator, we're all human, we all have this nervous system. It's all it protects us, it's there to protect us and keep us safe. And so we're all dealing with this just at different levels. And some of us had more complex upbringings, where there maybe was more stress and trauma and adaptations that we have to do. So we might have more of that. But basically, the work is the same. And the practices are the same. And they're all about greater resilience, greater wellbeing, greater health. And so I don't know if that answered your question or not, but

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 23:59

yeah, absolutely. And it seems like it correlates with some of the research around visualizations where the, you know, the brain, the brain doesn't know the difference between reality and imagination. and that the same parts of the brain light up when you are imagining. and so

essentially, you are, you're imagining those same experiences, again, you're having a somatic experience. And consequently, those, the those things are firing, and then your body's getting that memory and the more that you can remind your body of that experience, the more that you can affect a more permanent change.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 24:39

The Healthy experience remind you experience, right? Yeah, yeah, there's this. There was a study they did on athletes and they had there were two groups of athletes both kind of at that intermediate level. And one group they asked them to practice free throws, and the other group that They asked them to visualize doing free throws. And they brought it back together to shoot free throws, and they performed about equally or improved about the same amount. And it was just shows that power of visualization. And that you just have to visualize going through the motion. And so that's what a physical motion, you know, the physical, like visualizing the muscle in the arm lifting. But I asked my clients to do the same thing. So, you know, visualize what you want that conversation to look like, visualize, like you've had conversations before, you know what it's like, if that one doesn't go well? Or if one doesn't go well, and you, you know, through our processing and interaction, we've talked about what are the elements of a good conversation or good outcome. And so asking clients to then visualize it, and walking through it, and having them practice, I feel like it does the same thing. And so yeah, visualization, sometimes, to some people might seem a little woowoo. But there is science on it. And so when I'm talking about it, I'm asking people to visualize all the things they say. And we actually will go through the process of like, what keeps you in your optimal zone, whether you're sick or not, what keeps you in your optimal zone, and then visualizing how to recreate that in your life more often. And then, and then recognizing what gets in the way of being there? What are those blocks, barriers, obstacles, and now visualize yourself working with those successfully working with that, recognizing, acknowledging it, including it because we all have and we don't, like we spend so much time pushing the bad stuff away. But we all have blocks and obstacles, things that get in our way, just to clewd it like let's, let's not make it wrong, let's just acknowledge that it's real, it's there. And so how do you want to include that in in the process? And then how are you going to work with that, so that it isn't really a block or so that you can dissolve that and still move towards what you're wanting? And so keeping that intention there?

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 27:06

Nice. So it's, it seems like you're, you're on this, you're when when, when you're in the zone, so to speak, you're driving this car, and it's smooth driving, and then you kind of veer over to the side, and you get that really loud sound on the on the shoulder, right? You're talking? And then you're kind of you're off. And it's just about course correcting. It's just about okay, how do I how do I just keep bringing it back? For that, that smoother sailing?

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 27:39

Absolutely. And you might like sometimes when I, when I'm actually driving, and I do hit that, you know, I often think an inexperienced driver might that might scare him, and they might like go off the road. But that's what sometimes happens, right? We hit one of our triggers, or we hit

an obstacle, and we go off the road, because we don't know what to do with it, we haven't prepared. And there's there's science to on the brain and how the brain is really efficient. But it struggles with feeling like there's too much information in the environment sometimes. So why not preload the brain for the giving it the answers to the test, basically. And so if this comes up, this is what I'd like to do. But oftentimes, we just don't even want to talk about the barriers, or we're ashamed to talk about our triggers. And so we don't even spend time there. And then when they come up, we're caught off guard. And so this is just a way of kind of giving your nervous system the answers to the test. When this comes up, this one we try. Now sometimes the brain will get totally hijacked. And it's hard. And so we might go through several rounds of this because we can be hijacked. And so then there's, you know, there's a way there's ways to work with with that. And sometimes it's somatic, dealing with it kind of at a visceral level or deeper level, so that when we feel that we're less likely to get hijacked. And that's mindfulness works at that level too, because it really, mindfulness can help. There's research that shows it can help shrink the amygdala, which is the fight flight, fear area, shrink the amygdala and strengthen the connection with the prefrontal cortex, which is where we make decisions. And so when we practice, we're, we're actually able to, you know, change that relationship and change the way we react.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 29:33

So is that through meditation? Or what other examples of mindfulness Do you like to use that are like, that are good take homes, that people can start implementing in their lives for like, I don't know, 510 15 minutes a day or something?

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 29:49

Yeah, the one I really like. Well, basically, it's there's a couple of ways to practice and one is let me step back So you can, you can practice through a dedicated practice where you decide I'm five to 10 minutes a day, I'm going to practice mindfulness. And this is what I'm going to do. And we can talk about what are the options there. Or you can just integrate it into your life. And so I'm not going to set aside any time. But when I'm eating, I'm gonna do it mindfully. And when I'm doing the dishes, I'm gonna do it mindfully. And when I'm in conversation, I'm going to do it mindfully. And the other, the other piece of it is, then I'm either going to do it with a focus awareness where I pick an anchor, and I focus my attention on the anchor, and the anchor could be your breath, your body, but it doesn't have to be it can be anything that feels safe and comfortable. So it could be food, or it could be conversation, I'm going to focus on the person who's speaking to me, I'm going to use their words as an anchor. And if my mind drifts away, I'm going to bring it back. So you know, for breath, if I'm going to just focus on the feeling of my breath on my upper lip for body, I'm going to focus on the sensations in my body. And for eating, I'm going to focus on each bite. And that's the anchor of my awareness, I'm just going to notice that it's completely natural. But when I focus on this, it's going to my mind is going to focus and then it's going to drift away, and I'm going to focus on bringing it back. And so we're building those networks, each of those networks in the brain, focus, mind wanders, I bring it back. So that's a focused awareness practice. And the other way to practice is that I just noticed, like, Oh, now I feel happy. Now I feel sad. Oh, I'm thinking, and just noticing I'm not getting hooked by anything. It's kind of like the clouds passing through the sky, or the change of weather, that I can go through a lot of different emotions during the day. And my job is just to notice them without getting attached, either to the happy ones, or, you know, having an

aversion to the negative ones. So there's no clinging to anything. And there's no you know, pulling the good stuff in, it's just noticing. And so it really depends on you know, how you want to practice. Some if food feels like it's safe for people, I think it's a great place because we eat every day. I know people, you know, with fatigue, and chronic conditions can struggle with food, and it might not be the best place to start. But I always advocate for people moving towards that, because eating is such a big part of what we do every day. And mindful eating can shift digestion and, you know, shift our relationship with food. And I've seen people experiencing mindfulness, for the first time through mindful eating. And then just like having all of these new discoveries and this heightened self awareness, it's like, oh, if I just paid attention, if I just put the technology down, or if I didn't need them for the TV, I'm noticing all these new things. And it's so I seen it just really opened people up to mindfulness. So that's, that's a way of practicing.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 33:08

What if your fatigue was not beyond your control? What if you could literally fix your fatigue? Thank you for listening to my podcast, where I bring you top health experts and leaders from around the world to discuss the hurdles and solutions to fatigue, and the 33 different things that can cause it. If you're ready to have robust energy and be excited about life again, please go to [fix your fatigue.com](http://fixyourfatigue.com) and sign up for a free strategy session with me or register for a power pack training webinar. You can take control and fix your fatigue. I promise solutions and support are waiting for you at fix your fatigue.com.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 33:54

And you can do longer, like you said you started with meditation, you said yeah, you can do longer meditations. But it doesn't have to be that and I think for a long time the because monks meditated for, you know, hours and hours a day, we all thought, you know, you have to be a monk and have a monk like practice. And it's gonna help you know, that's the more you practice, the more you're going to change your brain. But what I love now is that people are finding success with 30 seconds. And I I teach the psychotherapist out of the Bay Area has this method called the three by three method. And it's 30 seconds, basically. And so many of us are leading a course right now. And so many people tried it and loved it and felt like they could do it multiple times throughout their day. And it was really shifting how they related to the stressors that were in their environment, and helping them to realign and refocus. So my point is that there are lots of different things that people can do. And some can be lengthier and more of a dedicated practice and sometimes it can be as easy as just learning well One practice that you can do in 30 seconds to just start looking at where you might want to move next, what might be helpful.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 35:09

So with these practices, it sounds like, as you mentioned previously, that you felt more empowered to create your own experience. So for people who feel like they're suffering, emotionally, not just physically but emotionally in their lives, do you believe that through utilizing these practices that they can come out of that suffering? Spend less time and suffering?

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 35:35

I do. I don't, I don't think it's always easy. But I do believe that and and I don't always, you know, I don't believe it's just one thing that people do, I think it's always the combination of things that people do. But I know that I can rearrange the furniture in my living room and feel different, like more empowered or lighter, like I can have a shift. And so I, I say that as an example, because I think that there's always things we can do. And it's about how we pay attention to what we're doing, and the outcomes of what we're doing. You know, and I think when we're suffering emotionally, it depends with, you know, what if it's anxiety, depression, heaviness, that it makes it harder sometimes to try new things. So I want to acknowledge that because I've been there. And I really don't want to make everything sound simple and easy. Because depending on what space you're in, it can feel really overwhelming. But that's, again, where I think the practice there is having good support, you know, whether you're whether it's a friend, or it's often a combination, it's like, Do you have a friend like one person that you are in connection with? Do you have a therapist? Do you have a coach? Do you have, you know, someone who understands your physical health, and so what, what are those support systems, whether you're, it's people, you pay for people that are just in your life. And so if you're having an emotional, like, if you're working with your emotions, and they're a little bit heavier, it's harder than you don't need to do it alone. You need to have people that can reflect who you are back to you. Because you can't always see it. Right.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 37:23

And it sounds like it's, it's about playing the long game, I know that that's what the experience has been for me where, you know, you just start one day, and you start with a daily practice, and you do your best to do it every single day. And then you very subtly, you start to see more and more transformations over time. You know, and I talk about in the course on on my daily practice of gratitude, visioning. And then empowering beliefs, you know, looking at the limiting beliefs, and then creating what those empowering beliefs will be, and just repeating those every single day, once a day, you know, as many times as you need to, to try to get back to what we talked about that you know, that car on the road with, with smooth sailing. But that how, how amazing this is that, you know, the emotions are such a huge part of fatigue, and how amazing it is that you actually have control over it, that you can do these practices, and that you can decrease the amount of time that you're spending and suffering every single day, every single week. And that, in turn, is going to have an effect on your energy, how you feel and what your future looks like. Absolutely, yeah, it's very, it's very exciting, and I hadn't heard, you're just having this conversation with you I hadn't, I hadn't realized, you know, with all of the research and everything that's kind of coming together, how much empowerment, there really is, and the people that really need to realize that they can step into this, and it's not going to take a lot of work for them. And that they can, I mean, it might a lot of it might be challenging, but that you just have to keep coming back to that. And you have to have that, that practice that happens on a regular basis. And that's going to make a big difference in their lives.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 39:04

Well, and I think intention and mindset, you know, I don't work as much with goals, although I will if clients want to, if they want goals and accountability, I'll do that. But I work a lot with intention. Because intention, you can have a goal to lose 20 pounds, and you can have an

intention. Because intention, you can have a goal to lose 20 pounds, and you can have an intention to lose 20 pounds. And the goal means that you want to lose or you can have I guess you can have a goal to eat better and lose 20 pounds, you have an intention to eat better. And you know, with the intention, you might not lose 20 pounds, but if you're eating better, and your intention is to eat better, you might just be healthier, and you didn't need to lose the 20 pounds or you'll get there someday. And the goal is very much about my goal is 20 pounds and there's no wiggle room. There's not you know, it's 20 pounds. That's the goal, but the intention can be much bigger. And so working with people around intention and I think when you're when you have a chronic illness or you have fatigue, What's What's your intention, because oftentimes Mysterious illnesses are hard to pin down, and we're trying new things. And let's try this LDI. Let's try the supplement that didn't work. Let's try this. And it can get really frustrating. And if our goal is to get better, and it's very narrow and rigid, we're not going to, it's going to make us feel worse. But if our intention is to try new things, to stay curious, to be kind to ourselves, you know, it's a mindset that this is how I'm going to go through this, I don't want to be here, I don't, it's much more fun to be healthy than it is to be sick. I don't want to be here. And this is where I'm at. So there's the mindfulness piece around acceptance, this is where I'm at. And so if this is where I'm at which it is, we've established that, then how do I want to go through it? Who do I want to be as I go through this? And, and you know, what I was acutely aware of when I went through fatigue is I didn't want to waste my life, I was in my 30s. And I felt I was way too young to have a chronic illness. But I didn't want to waste my days, I didn't want to waste my life. I didn't want any day to be a waste, you know. And so it came with this huge amount of acceptance every day. And when I got to the end of being sick, and I felt like I was really healing, I looked back and I was like, what was it and it was this radical acceptance of the journey. And I had to, I had to get back to that every single day. Because I didn't want to accept that's where I was. But in the end, I feel like that's what really helped me because every day I accepted that this is where I was at. And then I had to decide, what's my intention? What am I going to do to move forward? How am I going to interface with this? And how I'm gonna, how am I going to interface with it in a way where I don't feel at the end of the day, that I've wasted a day of my life, because I felt like my life was precious, and I wanted to enjoy it. And maybe I wasn't enjoying it in the way I felt like I would if I was healthy. But my attitude and my beliefs had a lot to do with how my day was shaped. And so I think, you know, coming back to intention, and mindset, when you can get your head around those two pieces, and you can really start to determine what practices do I want to do? What direction do I want to take? What support do I need? And then those are the things that kind of leave you in that optimal Engagement Zone, and help you to make the progress that you want.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 42:27

And one of the things that I've learned is that, you know, the the brain has a goal achieving machine, and that it's going to search for answers to whatever questions you're asking. And so you better ask good questions. And so you're up, you're asking good questions like, you know, where am I going to get the support? And, and what is my next step? There's a lot more empowering than why did this happen to me? Because why did this happen? To me? If the brain is looking for the answers to that it's going to make up a whole bunch of stuff? That is not necessarily going to be supportive for you.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 43:03

Yeah, and in my world, I think to the why question is often more child consciousness. And so it's it's the younger part of ourselves that maybe has some unresolved pieces and is asking

its, it's the younger part of ourselves that maybe has some unresolved pieces and is asking, you know, why, why, why, instead of what can I do? How can I shift? And that's more of the adult consciousness. And so I, when I'm working with clients, I often listen for that. Why? And I know it well, because I've had it, you know, I've asked my why is this happening to me? And but I've learned that when I just feel into those two different questions, I often know like, oh, the why is this child that's in protest? Versus and so it's a younger part of myself that asked that question. Whereas what and how is the part that's more empowered, and more of the adult consciousness and the part that's has a mindset of curiosity, of self kindness, of gratitude? All you know, so it's really going to move me forward? It's going to even if it's a baby step, it's gonna move me more in the direction than the why question.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 44:18

Excellent. So we have just a couple of so yeah, we have just a couple minutes here. So in conclusion, what do you feel like are either some summaries of today or some takeaways for people who have fatigue that could be most supportive? If there were, I guess, one thing that we talked about today or that we didn't that would be most supportive for folks who have fatigue? What do you think that would be?

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 44:45

I think there's something what's coming up right now is just this piece around. How do I want to move through this? I don't you know, sometimes we don't know how long the fatigue is going to last. We don't know what lies ahead. Given that, how do I want to move through it? How do I want to show up? Who do I want to be? You know, using some reflective questions to get clear, and then placing that where you can see it. So when when you have a setback, or when things are hard that you really reflect on. Okay, how do I want to show up? This isn't what I thought it was gonna be. This didn't work the way I wanted to be. I'm feeling really heavy today. How do I want to show up? Who do I want to be? And then from that get really specific, what does that mean? So if you say, how do I want to show up? You know, I want to show up with maybe optimism or curiosity, you know, name something? And then and then describe what what does that look like? What are the behaviors of curiosity? How, if I'm going to show up curious and stay curious how to what does that look like? What's the specifics of that? Everyone's life is so different, it's hard to you know, name, the exact behaviors for anyone, we have to kind of do that for ourselves. But I think getting clear about that is a starting point. And then I think the second piece that I would say is get, you know, get clear about what are the supportive pieces you have in your life? When things are really difficult or tough, where do I turn and discern whether or not it's like a something positive, or truly supportive, or if it's a crutch, or if it's kind of a bad habit? You know, because sometimes we can use things in a way that feel supportive, like food can feel supportive, but if we're, if it's sugar, it might not be helping our health. So it's like really clear, what's supportive. And so just having a list of things when, when I'm having a bad day, when things are hard, what will I reach for that's gonna lift me up, empower me support me or remind me of who I want to be on this journey. So those two things a little bit, just to start, you know, I think there's lots of other things, but to start.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 47:10

Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Stacey. I know you said you only had 15 minutes, but we

we went probably 40 minutes or so.

S

Stacy S. Hirsch, MES 47:19

Pretty chatty.

E

Evan H. Hirsch, MD 47:21

No, this was wonderful. I appreciate you sharing your knowledge. Yeah, awesome. So great. So we're gonna conclude for today. And we'll do this all again in a couple of weeks. Don't forget to ask your questions and questions that fix your fatigue.org and, and we'll see you all next time. I hope you learned something on today's podcast. If you did, please share it with your friends and family and leave us a five star review on iTunes. It's really helpful for getting this information out to more fatigue people who desperately need it. Sharing all the experts I know and love, and the powerful tips I have on fatigue is one of my absolute favorite things to do. If you'd like more information, please sign up for my newsletter, where I share all important facts and information about fatigue from the foods and supplements to the programs and products that I use personally and recommend to others so that they can live their best lives. Just go to [fix your fatigue.com](http://fixyourfatigue.com) forward slash newsletter to sign up and I will send you this great information. Thanks for being part of my community. Just a reminder, this podcast is for educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for professional care by a doctor or other qualified medical professional. It is provided with the understanding that it does not constitute medical or other professional advice or services. If you're looking for help with your fatigue, you can visit my website and work with us at [fix your fatigue.com](http://fixyourfatigue.com) And remember, it's important that you have someone in your corner who is a credentialed healthcare professional to help you make changes. This is very important especially when it comes to your home. Thanks for listening, and have an amazing day.