

Narrator 00:00

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Jill de Jong

Life Done Better. This podcast is produced for all the unicorns who strive to create a life on their own terms, don't take life too seriously, and are on a mission to make a positive impact in this world. In this show, we're getting real about daily struggles and obstacles and how to best navigate through difficult times and challenges in life. So you can make better decisions for yourself and feel healthy, confident and aligned. Feel less alone and more connected. We're in this together. From my heart to yours.

00:47

Welcome to Life Done Better. I'm your host Jill de Jong and I invited my dear friend Liana Werner-Gray on the show because I've learned a lot from her and I know you will too. Liana is a nutritionist and three time bestselling author of the Earth Diet, *Cancer Free with Food*, and a *10 Minute Recipes*. Liana overcame many health issues including a tumor, chronic fatigue, digestive issues and weight loss with nutrition and believes that food is medicine. You may have seen Liana on Dr. CV, Dr. Oz, NBC, ABC and many other shows. Liana was born and raised in Australia, and is based in New York. But today she's calling in from Florida, where she's working on her latest book, *Anxiety Free with Food*. Welcome, Liana.

Liana Werner-Gray 01:37

Oh, thank you so much, Jill. I'm so excited to be here.

Jill de Jong 01:41

We met about eight years ago, at a workshop. You noticed me and you were like going right for it like hey, hi, my name is Liana. And you know, like you had such a wonderful presence about you. And you were so like, light and, and easy to talk to. And it really made me feel special and make me feel like wow, she really you know, it wasn't because you were standing next to me. You really walked up to me. I want to be your friend. I'm like, hey, you're cool.

Liana Werner-Gray 02:11

Yeah, so I was like, in my mind, I was like, oh, yeah, cool. I want to go talk to her. I want to be friends with her. So yeah, I just went I was like, hi,

Jill de Jong 02:20

Obviously we're on audio right now. But I hope that we can record this on a video and that everyone can see how beautiful Liana is and how much her skin is glowing. She looks so healthy. But it wasn't always so. Liana had to go through this huge learning curve. And let's talk about that first. Like I want to like understand how you've come from dealing with all these health issues to where you are today.

Liana Werner-Gray 02:43

Yes. So I was one of those people who had to hit rock bottom before my life really took a turn for the positive. And so I was 21 when I ended up with a golf ball sized tumor in my neck in my lymphatic system. And I was in hospital, had a biopsy, I had early stages of cancer. And I was very addicted to junk foods and at 21 sitting in hospital, I just remember thinking, oh my gosh, what have I done to myself. And I knew I had done it to myself because my diet was so bad. And I had an upbringing in Outback Australia with very indigenous rich lifestyle. And so they taught me that the healthiest way for us to eat was to go out to our own backyard, and eat foods that come straight from the earth straight from the plant or the bush because that would provide us with nutrition. And not only that, but spirit like aliveness, it would provide us with like a life force. And so when I moved away from the Outback, I started to indulge in junk food and became so obsessed became addicted with sugar. I knew it was so far removed from nature, this food that I was eating, but I couldn't stop myself from eating it. The impulse was stronger and the addiction was stronger than I was. So when I was in hospital, even though I was diagnosed with this golf ball sized tumor, to me, the biggest problem was what was causing it and that was being addicted to eating junk foods and just sabotaging and destroying my body. And so that was my turning point. And that's when things started to unravel. And I really started to dive into, okay, I need to go in and do like the inner work and do the deep work and heal this once and for all. And so that's what I did. And that's what started my whole health path and my whole health journey.

Jill de Jong 04:31

It's truly an incredible journey. And especially because you have this knowledge most things from nature, like eat it fresh, and then in moving away from that and then coming back to it. You're like okay, I actually do know how to take care of myself. And now I have no excuse anymore. This is life threatening.

Liana Werner-Gray 04:48

Exactly. Now, you know, my body's not forgiving me from that. So now I have to and so I started to think of okay, well how can I incorporate what the indigenous people taught me the Aboriginal people taught me and this modern world we live in. So how can I bring nature into that? Because I thought, you know, I crave cookie dough and gummy bears and chocolate and burgers and fries and tacos, like how could I still eat all those foods, but in a way that's not going to destroy my body. So how can I eat them so it still tastes good, but it's can be healthy at the same time. And so that's when I started making recipes every time I had a craving. So I would make cookie dough out of almond flour and honey with some cacao nibs and some vanilla and sea salt and it was just delicious. And that fulfilled all my cravings so that I didn't crave the stuff that was destroying my health.

Jill de Jong 05:37

So you were replacing the ingredients that were not so good for better, more wholesome natural ingredients. And it would taste as good, better, like worse, like, what do you think?

Liana Werner-Gray 05:49

Yeah, so, to me, it tasted better. And I was surprised because I thought, wow, I'm just going to eat this whole ball of cookie dough. Because this is from me eating like a whole packet of bad cookies. And I thought I'm getting nutrition from this I'm getting protein and magnesium and antioxidants from all the

nuts and the honey. Whereas from the other cookies, I was just destroying my body with the wheat, you know, with gluten, with dairy with refined white sugar, all the chemical ingredients. So it was a major upgrade. And now since I've become a nutritionist, I've discovered that there's actually a term for this. It's called replacement therapy. So I didn't know that it was a thing. Yeah, so replacement therapy. And this works for most people who have addictions, I would say 95% of people replacement therapy is the only thing that works because if someone is addicted to something, especially a type of food, it's very unlikely if you say okay, you can never eat sugar again or you can never have cookies again.

Jill de Jong 06:51

So replacing it makes total sense. But with a better version.

Liana Werner-Gray 06:55

Yes. And then then you don't miss the bad thing.

Jill de Jong 06:58

So the tumor eventually completely disappeared?

Liana Werner-Gray 07:01

It did in three months, it completely drained out of my system, it was gone.

Jill de Jong 07:05

So the body naturally resolved it. So you didn't have to get surgery. No, no chemo, nothing.

Liana Werner-Gray 07:11

Exactly, yeah, I knew that if I just gotten surgery and cut it out that I wasn't addressing the root cause and that I still would have been addicted to bad foods and gotten eaten bad foods. And I do believe that if we do just cut something out of our body without addressing the root cause the deep cause that it'll pop up somewhere else.

Jill de Jong 07:28

So Liana, do you do you work with a lot of people that are dealing with early stage cancer or more deep into the journey and talk a little bit about how you help. I mean, it's, it's it's a tough one. So for some people to understand that they could heal themselves in a way that they never thought they could. And what do you say?

Liana Werner-Gray 07:47

Diet obviously has a role in our health. And there's actually a lot of science to back that up. When we eat something, it changes the chemistry in our body, in our cells, and also our blood and our brain chemistry as well. So I think that people need to be more educated and more empowered, that they, their health actually is in their hands, definitely. And then of course as there's a supernatural healing that can come as well from the Universe or from God. And then some people choose to go the medical route. And I also believe in that for some people. So when someone comes to me with cancer, I say, okay, well, what do you feel intuitively is the best move for you? Do you want to go completely natural? Do you want to mix you know, chemo and diet together? Or do you want to do surgery and diet

together? So I believe in giving people that empowerment, and they can be working with a doctor. But regardless of whatever cancer it is, there must be a nutritional healing aspect to it. So if even if you're getting chemo, you still have to eat healthy as well and address that, then your chances of healing cancer are even more, even higher. And eating a good diet helps to boost the immune system so they have a better chance of that.

Liana Werner-Gray 08:58

Wow, it's so valuable to hear you talk about this because so many people deal with cancer nowadays, it feels like everyone knows at least one or two people in their neighborhood, in their family, in their you know, group of friends that have it or are dealing with it. In your *Cancer Free with Food* book, you share all the foods that can help prevent and also heal your body. Can you give us the, let's say, top three things that we should be eating to prevent ourselves from cancer cells growing.

Liana Werner-Gray 09:30

So the book, like you said, isn't just for people with cancer, it's to prevent cancer. And so science does point in the direction that if we keep our body in a certain environment, it can be cancer free, meaning cancer can't grow in a cancer free environment. So the three things to keep it cancer free is the first one is to drink liquid chlorophyll every day. So chlorophyll is a compound as you know, Jill, in dark leafy greens. So that's in kale, broccoli, spinach, so we get chlorophyll when we eat dark leafy greens, but it's more potent if we drink it in a smoothie or juice or water. So I always recommend people have one green drink every single day, whether that's the smoothie, the juice, or the liquid chlorophyll. Liquid chlorophyll is a supplement. So it's an extract from the dark leafy greens, that's the easiest way to do it that it costs like \$15 for a bottle that will last you over a month. So and it takes 10 seconds, I actually

Jill de Jong 10:26

I actually get the mint version of it, it's really green. Do not drop it on your clothes or will stain it's very concentrated, but that's how you know like it's really powerful stuff.

Liana Werner-Gray 10:37

Number two is turmeric. So turmeric is so popular and it's well known to be anti inflammatory and it is great for most body types. So you can take turmeric in supplement form as well if you don't like the taste or you don't want to get you know yellow fingernails if you're creating with it.

Jill de Jong 10:56

Another thing that stains Yep.

Liana Werner-Gray 10:58

Yeah, it does stain, yeah.

Jill de Jong 10:59

I've been juicing a lot of turmeric here in Maui, they have fresh turmeric.

Liana Werner-Gray 11:03

I always say fresh is best if you get it in its more whole form. So if you're getting turmeric root and for those of you listening who have never seen a turmeric root, it looks like ginger, it looks like a little baby cousin. If you cut it open, it's bright orange. So you can juice that put it in smoothies, you can also boil it, make it a tea.

Jill de Jong 11:18

The number three, what would that be?

Liana Werner-Gray 11:21

So number three is, well, I have a top 10 list in the book. But for the sake of this podcast, let's go with cacao powder.

Jill de Jong 11:30

Oh, yay.

Liana Werner-Gray 11:32

Cacao powder made the top list because it's so high in magnesium. And that magnesium helps to relax the body. And they've also shown a lot of studies of people who don't have enough magnesium who are magnesium deficient, have more depression, anxiety, more stress in the body. And when we have more stress in the body, we have more oxidative stress in the body and that makes the body very acidic. And that's the environment that cancer breathes in. So I also eat chocolate every single day from pure cacao. But that's the key it should be pure cacao with mixed with other honey or coconut sugar like a safe sugar that the body can digest.

Jill de Jong 12:08

So what other like sugars or sweeteners can we use that is most safe.

Liana Werner-Gray 12:13

So honey is very safe, and it has a lot of nutrients, especially if you can get local honey it will help boost the immune system. You can also do maple syrup, you could do monkfruit, you could do stevia or coconut sugar.

Jill de Jong 12:26

All good options. I love it. Let's take a quick break. And we'll be right back.

[Ad Break] 12:38

Jill de Jong 13:40

We're back. All the things you're doing for charity and to help firefighters and you go to food shows you could live. I mean, the list goes on. So obviously there's other people involved and you have, you know, teams of people that you work with. But the drive is unbelievable. You're unstoppable. And it's a beautiful thing to witness. And I think it's also very inspiring, because I know a lot of the listeners would want to know how do you really continue the course as you do and stay positive and, and get to achieve the goals the things that you have in mind that are important to you?

Liana Werner-Gray 14:19

Yeah, well, thank you for that acknowledgement. And I guess you know, I just realized life is so short, and I don't want to have any regrets. I don't want to wake up one day, you know, and I'm 40, 50, 60 and think oh man, I had so many you know gifts from God. I really do believe that God gives us all different gifts and we it's up to us whether we use them or not. So I don't want to waste any of that. And yeah, I just I cannot stand the feeling of regret. It's the worst feeling of oh, I should have done that. Or I knew I should have emailed that person or connected with this person and I didn't. So I learned that early on and yeah, so I just go after it each day and work as hard as I can. And yeah, I mean, obviously, it doesn't always work out. So there's also a lot of rejection with this. And I think that's what people try and avoid when they're going after their dreams. So I wake up in the morning now, and my focus is different. So I'm focusing on okay, who is my, who are the people I'm helping today. And, you know, every single day, and as we're sitting here and talking, there's someone who doesn't have hair right now, because they have cancer, and they're getting chemo and they wish they would have just a tiny bit of hair, you know, so I never forget that I always remember that. And so that gets me up in the morning and wants me to be fully energized and go out there and help those people who want to be helped and want to learn about food as medicine, and want to feel some peace with what they're going through as well. And I'm also just grateful for for life as well, you know, grateful to have hair, I'm grateful to have hands and feet. And so I think that putting that into our practice, like that doesn't just come, you know, gratitude doesn't just come happiness doesn't just come, I think we have to work at it. And it has to be a choice.

Jill de Jong 16:04

To be dedicated and to a bigger purpose also, for me, personally makes a huge difference and how I'm motivated because if I'm just doing things for me, I'm less motivated than if I'm actually thinking outside of myself, where I'm like, who am I helping today? Who can I lift up, if you connect to that bigger purpose, then you just naturally start doing things again, and reaching out, it's almost like a pull, right? Instead of a push, you're getting a pull, if you're connecting to a higher purpose in your life. And that is of being of service for me, as a model, I was always thinking about my next job, and you know, paying my bills, going from modeling into becoming a health coach, a personal trainer, and doing all the things I'm doing now, has really made me way more fulfilled. I wake up feeling like I am in charge of my life, I am my own boss, I feel like I am helping so many others by being myself. Because as a model I wasn't able to speak, right, they were just like, do this do that, you know, you're not asked for input. And in this position, I'm asked to share my thoughts and to share my knowledge and my expertise in the areas that I'm excited about. And I think it's not always easy to know what your purpose is. But sometimes something needs to happen in order to find it. Right? Because if you didn't have the tumor, would you do what you would do today?

Liana Werner-Gray 17:34

Exactly, I probably wouldn't. It really was the biggest blessing that I've had in my life. And that's, you know, that's what's really great about a bad situation is we can turn it into a positive at the end of the day.

Jill de Jong 17:47

Yeah, it really, you know, it can be a gift in disguise, right? It really can be. So moving on to your new book, which is so timely, *Anxiety Free with Food*. A lot of people are dealing with anxiety more than ever right now. What have you discovered while doing all the research on this book? And what stood out most to you?

Liana Werner-Gray 18:12

Wow. Yes. So this is actually been my favorite subject yet with studying food and mental health. So what I found out was that there's a lot of support that shows that food really does affect our mental health. So a lot of science studies. And what I found fascinating was it there was some studies that showed that certain foods are more effective than antidepressant drugs and anti-anxiety drugs, which is remarkable, because usually, there's never a study that shows that food is more powerful than a pharmaceutical drug.

Jill de Jong 18:45

My eyes are going like what, are you serious?

Liana Werner-Gray 18:47

Yeah, that's what I thought, when I read study after study, I was like, wow, okay. And so that was interesting. And also, it showed that certain foods have less side effects than these pharmaceutical drugs as well. So if someone does have severe depression or anxiety, then they're working with a doctor or a psychiatrist, and they want to take medication initially, just to help them, they can implement a nutrition plan right away. And then as soon as they get their brain chemistry, right, they can go off the meds, or some people don't even want to take medication at all, which is understandable.

Jill de Jong 19:19

Does depend on how long the depression has been in their lives?

Liana Werner-Gray 19:23

If someone has severe mental health issues, and if they're suicidal, and you know, then that's when you should go, you know, the medical route. But if someone yeah, has early stages of depression, anxiety, or even mild, we can change our brain chemistry just within a few days with certain foods and certain herbs and flowers. It's remarkable. And I also found a study that showed people who have anxiety also have a different gut microbiome. So anxiety causes different gut microbiome, which means gut health and then having certain gut health like if you eat certain foods, bad foods, that cause a bad gut health, that creates a brain chemistry that creates anxiety, depression, so they go hand in hand. So I found that was interesting. So if we clean up our gut, Detox our gut, we're going to experience less anxiety. And then also, less anxiety creates a healthier gut. And so it just gets better and better.

Jill de Jong 20:18

Everything is connected. So the gut is also called the second brain of the body, right?

Liana Werner-Gray 20:23

Yes, it really is.

Jill de Jong 20:25

And so like, what foods would be beneficial to eat. And I know this is all going to be in your book. But just to kind of reveal a couple of things that, you know, we can already start doing now. Because your book is only coming out in December, right?

Liana Werner-Gray 20:38

Yes, so excited. Yes, we start one is magnesium. So study showed that people who are deficient in magnesium do have more stress, more anxiety, more depression. So eating foods that have magnesium like dark leafy greens, the chlorophyll again, and chocolate also has a lot of magnesium. And then also aminos, proteins and Omega fats. So those are the main elements to keep the brain chemistry really healthy, and nervous system really healthy so that it doesn't have chronic anxiety. So some stress and some anxieties natural and normal, especially if you're going to do public speaking or, you know, a podcast, like having some nerves is quite natural. But if we have chronic nerves and anxiousness all day, that's when it's not. So amino acids and proteins are found in animal products, you know, chicken, wild fish, grass feed beef, eggs, but for vegans, they can supplement it with B vitamins, and the Omega fats is in avocado, olive oil, coconut oil, chia seed, and hemp seed. So, when I was experiencing anxiety, I went to a psychiatrist. And you know, the typical treatment is okay, here's some drugs. And I thought, well, hang on, I don't want to just take that because I feel like that's gonna affect my brain chemistry even more. So I went to a doctor to get a blood test. And I wanted to see if I was deficient in any nutrients. And so, sure enough, I was deficient in omega fatty acids. So I started to take fish oil supplements and eat more wild fish and eat more good fats, avocado, olive oil, coconut oil, hemp seeds, chia seeds, and make a smoothie with all the good fats. And sure enough, very quickly, I noticed a huge difference in my mood, less depression, less anxiety. And so I'm so convinced that the brain chemistry can change so quickly with some foods. It's remarkable.

Jill de Jong 22:32

Yeah, and especially if you really experienced that firsthand, it's one thing to know it, it's one thing to read about it. It's one thing to teach it, but then when you experience it firsthand, you're like, okay, this is real. So when did that happen? Like, when did you do this test?

Liana Werner-Gray 22:47

It was right after I actually got my first book deal when I was 25, was when I started to get anxiety and depression. And so that's when I started to dive into it, I always wanted to write about mental health and depression, anxiety, you know, addiction. So it's just been a long time coming, I guess, *the Earth Diet* had to come first. And then the Cancer Free, you know, in the quick 10 minutes, and it was just so timely to do now do the mental health.

Jill de Jong 23:10

There was that that sequence of building up to to that moment where you can share this, and also your readers have gone on the journey with you, they started here. And now they can, you know, continue to learn because there's always more to learn.

Liana Werner-Gray 23:22

It's true. Yeah, there's always more to learn. And I've been doing this now 11 years, and I've learned so much about the science of it. And you know the details of it. But it always comes back to the basic principles of *the Earth Diet* is like, we all need to go back to nature and just eat foods that come straight from the earth as much as possible. And a solution to all of our health problems. And the environment is if we can all grow our own food as much as possible, you know, in our own backyard, that that's the dream, that would be ideal. And so we get the most nutrients from that it's the most fulfilling, and we can conquer that. And all of our impulses are designed to eat foods that are processed and not good for us. We'll definitely be in much better shape. So it does all go back to that. And that's why when people come whether they have cancer or mental health issues, or thyroid of psoriasis, it's always like, okay, well, the diet plan I'm going to put you on or the nutritional plan it's going to be natural, it's going to be whole foods, but now we want to make it bio-individual. So we want to find out what foods work for you. Because mushrooms are healing but they can also be poison for some people. Same as tomatoes and potatoes. You know, it's not all the same foods, even though the natural are good for every single person. So it's finding those ones that come straight from nature that are good for you, so that you'll just live your healthiest, happiest life forever.

Jill de Jong 24:45

Yes. Oh, that's, yeah, and it's so refreshing to hear because there's not one diet for all. We all have to like check in with our bodies.

Liana Werner-Gray 24:52

So I do believe everyone's chemistry is different. So and there's different blood types for a reason. You know, there's how many billion humans on the planet now. And there's only three different blood types, which is fascinating. And there's different categories in those blood types. But there's A and then B, and then there's O, right? And then you've got AB, and you've got O Negative, O Positive and all that. But there's three different blood types. So that's interesting. So we all have, we have different blood, and that blood is a different chemistry. And so our body reacts to foods in a different way. And so I don't think dairy is good for every single person, no matter how healthy they are, even they could be a very healthy person, if dairy is it just doesn't match the chemistry, I think that no matter how healthy they are or clean their gut, they may not have a reaction to it. But it may just kind of throw off or does not feel right. So I do think genetics has a role to play and chemistry definitely.

Jill de Jong 25:49

Science changes too, right? You find a research that says the opposite of the research you've read, like a year ago, and be like really? Like things constantly seem to to change, to move, or our knowledge expands. And it's just fascinating to me. But I do do think that we should not get too confused or overwhelmed by all these researches, and then really just go back to our own lab, and that's our body, right, everything we put in is going to have an effect on how we feel. That's why

Liana Werner-Gray 26:18

That's why I always go back to the earth diet, because it is overwhelming. And you know, there's new things all the time. But one thing that doesn't change, one thing that stays constant and consistent is we could say God, or we could say nature, it's like there's certain foods that grow naturally. And they've just been here. And so we know that those foods were designed for us to eat. And so it's basically

eating, you know, from the Garden of Eden, okay, which ones work for you? Which ones are the best for you?

Jill de Jong 26:47

Eat more of that. Yeah, exactly eat more of what works for you. But then there's also this, you know, the thoughts or actions that really make a difference day to day, like we talked on the phone earlier. And we were both saying that we needed to play more. So how are you going to implement more playing to your life?

Liana Werner-Gray 27:07

Yeah, yes, that's a good one. So well, I've first mentally had to accept and choose that of like, okay, this is what I'm going to do now. Because my life for the last, you know, decade has been work, work, work on a mission. And I'm still, you know, committed to that mission of helping people with their health, but I want to call in more balance, and more play more harmony and more space to do nothing. And I think that I will get so caught up in that we always have to be doing something. And so I had to mentally unwind that of like, okay, now I'm just gonna sit here and I have no agenda. I'm not going to do anything, I don't have to think about anything, specifically. And at first, it was weird. And now, you know, now I know the importance of that, and having that space and having that break and that freedom. And that's also more stepping into a feminine type energy as well and not being so masculine all the time. And like, going and doing action, it's kind of sitting and just receiving and just feeling the love and just receiving what's coming, you know, from the entire universe and just taking it all in.

Jill de Jong 28:08

Totally and and really enjoy, like who you are, where you are, who you're with, like enjoying the present moment. And so if we're, you know, when we're talking about receiving, what would you invite in? What would you like to receive in the next six months so that you can look back January 2021? You like, Oh, my goodness, that was an awesome year?

Liana Werner-Gray 28:30

Wow, good question. So the first thing that came to mind, and I think what's on the forefront is I've always loved city life, but I would love to transition to be in nature. So I would love to be living in Florida now on the beach very close to the beach. So I would like to call in that and just have you know, create a beautiful home. And I'm usually traveling every single week. And so I'd love to just be able to stay still for a little bit. Although I am missing all the food shows, of course and the health shows there's so much.

Jill de Jong 29:01

I know that's so it's so your thing. And the enthusiasm is unreal. Like how much excitement you have. I mean, it's really, really fun to watch. And I so want to thank you for being on the show today. And taking this time to share all your knowledge and radiance. I always learn new things when I talk to you and I hope the listeners feel the same way.

Liana Werner-Gray 29:22

Thanks for having me on, Jill.

Jill de Jong 29:24

Thank you liana. That was great. Hey, it's Jill. The one thing we cannot buy more of is time. Time is precious. And I am so grateful that you chose to spend time listening to my podcast. There's a lot more I'd like to share with you. So don't forget to subscribe to Life Done Better on your favorite podcast app and stay in touch. If you have a question or a topic you want to hear discussed on the show shoot me a message on Twitter @_LifeDoneBetter. We all deal with a lot in our lives and it's freeing to talk about it openly. From my heart to yours. Thanks for listening.

Narrator 30:25

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