

Ep #85: Brain, Belly, and Bowels with Mona Warner



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hatelty

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

With this episode we are going to talk about something that most people in our culture do not talk about, and that would be poop. That's right, you heard it, poop. Or rather when pooping doesn't happen. Yep, constipation. I'm going to share my own stories around dealing with mild constipation. Just that bloated, uncomfortable sort of feeling, that I had for most of my life until I discovered Ayurveda.

I tried all sorts of things to support me and the constipation until I started to recognize the constipation not just as a symptom, as a problem to solve, but as a symptom that was a sign. And through my work with Ayurveda I have come out the other side to really understand the relationship between my brain, my belly, and my bowels. Let's begin it with Mona.

Susi: All right, here we are. We have Mona Warner back. And again, as I mentioned, Mona is our Ayurveda trainer inside of the certification program and she has been teaching inside of Healing and Revealing Human Potential. And as I giggled in the intro we are talking about nothing other than poop today.

And it is a giggle fest, right? You talk about poop and you giggle. I even remember my kids being really super excited to show me how big their poop was. And it hasn't even been my kids, I've been at other people's houses pre-pandemic and their kids say, "Susi, Susi, come and look at my poop." So there's some humor around poop.

But in all seriousness, as I'm giggling, it's an important topic and it's a very revealing topic. And I remember, and this is how it all started off, is I remember how I started to first really pay attention, before I met you, and just started to kind of really tune into what my guts were doing.

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And I would say that for a long time I had a tendency towards constipation and I did all the things. Played around with fiber, didn't really work. Played around with fluid, it kind of worked. And then I can't even remember all the things, but just basically did lots of the stuff that you hear about around constipation.

And then I remember kind of tuning into something after I first met you and you had run through a few cycles with our certification programs and digestive resets and all that other stuff. And I'm not sure if you said it or if it was just something that just arose for me, but I realized that my inner body often slowed down when my outer body, meaning myself like the person that I know, was going too fast.

Although I wouldn't have said that I was going too fast. It was just a relationship that I started to see of like, huh, interesting. My bowels are going really slowly right now. In fact they're stopping, and I'm not. Hmm, I don't really feel like I'm going too fast. But what if I started to consider that this symptom is trying to get my attention and suggesting that I might be going too fast?

So then what happened is I started to then look at when I started to see the patterns of this, right? That interesting that even though I didn't think I was going fast, there was a pattern of what I was consuming and how I was consuming in those times where I was seemingly going fast although I didn't think I was going fast.

But then as time went on and I kept noticing the pattern it was, yeah, actually there's a bit more rush going on. There's a little less break going on. There's a little more breath holding going on. There's a little bit more one thing after another thing, after another thing, after another thing. The pace ever so slightly was just a little more nuanced, bump, bump, bump, bump, as opposed to ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum. And the inner world was letting me know that.

So it really started to open up my eyes to okay, I don't really like being told by my guts that I'm going too quickly, but maybe there's something to be

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heard. And then what's arisen out of that, I mean I don't even know how many years ago. How long have we known each other, Mona? Like inside of Ayurveda?

Mona: A while.

Susi: We've known each other a long time.

Mona: I'd say inside of Ayurveda, what are we, seven years?

Susi: Yeah, and then before that longer. But the idea is over that period of time I've now started to pick up on the subtler signs of pace and tempo in relationship to seasons, and seasons change. And I don't want to all the sudden make people kind of go, "Oh my God, this is a huge thing." But it's been over a period of time.

And why I wanted to bring out this episode was because I just had this amazing aha, which is really a no brainer, it's sort of a duh moment. When I realized I was just like masticating in my head, but I didn't even know I was doing it. It wasn't quite drama but it was a whole bunch of like [whirring sound] just kind of happening, and then something just opened up. The cork popped on it, and then so did my bowels.

So it was just really fascinating to notice this relationship between the way my brain was functioning and then what was going on in a holding sense. Now all the people who are listening to my podcast know how my brain and my bowels work. But I really wanted to open this door because, oh goodness me, because there's so much relationship between brain and bowels.

I mean, you put it a little bit more politely, brain, belly, and bum. And I just share my story to say, hey, I know there's others of you out there like this, so let's chat. So where do you want to start with that Mona? Because there's a lot in there. And let's see where this goes.

Mona: Yeah, I think there is a lot in there. There's a lot of layers to it and a lot of ways that we can approach it and look at it. And I still feel and think

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that for some people, things like making sure you're consuming enough fiber and making sure you're drinking enough fluids is 100% part of the regular poop-tacular puzzle, right?

And so in Ayurveda, it's so funny because this came up this weekend, where we have a teacher who's teaching us right now in my Ayurveda school who's from India. And so she sees mostly Indian patients at an Ayurvedic Hospital in India. And for them constipation is not going every day. But in North America if you go once every five days you're not technically really quite considered constipated yet, almost just kind of sort of.

And so Ayurveda has this very different idea around constipation, non-constipation. And I think it's important to share that the reason why we're obsessed with poop in Ayurveda is because it tells us how the digestion is going. So it gives us an overall sense of the whole system and how the whole system is integrating together. And this is that whole brain, belly, bum thing. It's anything that can throw off the digestion, can throw off the bowels.

And so we already know. if we just sort of think back on anything we've heard about the nervous system, sympathetic, parasympathetic, and how our thoughts and our emotions can without a doubt affect the nervous system. And then this changes how we digest and how we digest affects how we poop.

And so in a way it's actually really straightforward. How are my guts doing? How is my mind affecting my guts? Because if my guts are affected, my poop is one of the ways that it's affected. And it's interesting, because for some people, it will be urine. And for other people it will be menses. And so poop is a thing for sure, but it's really about the elimination of all those waste products from the system.

Susi: So hold on, I just want to interrupt there because this is a really important thing. Everything we're talking about here, other than like the specifics around digestion, people could actually like put a – back in the old

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days, old school like those vellum overhead papers, what are those things called? Oh boy. But you know what I mean, we could take the information from here and put it on top of for urine and put it on top of menses.

Mona: That's right.

Susi: It's the same system, there will be slightly different ingredients because each system is a different system. But the general principles are the same.

Mona: Yes.

Susi: Yeah, okay.

Mona: And so some people, when their heart mind gets affected it changes their menses. And some people when the heart mind gets affected, it affects their ability to urinate fully and completely and satisfactorily. And then for other people when the heart mind becomes affected then they can't poop.

Now, poop is the most obvious one. And it's the one that I think in our culture we talk the least amount. So in a way, it's kind of the most fun. Although really, depending on sort of your group of people that you spend time with, you might also never talk about peeing, or menstruating for the ladies in the group. For any men in the group you should not be menstruating, that is the whole thing, right? Like that is the whole thing, so common sense rules still apply.

But yeah, all of those channels of elimination are giving us indications of how the whole system is working. Whether it's guts, whether it's breathing, whether it's thoughts, emotions, feelings, all of that is so interconnected. Because it's interesting, people like to draw this line between the mind and the body. And they like to say, "Oh, all the body stuff is here and all the mind and spirit stuff is there. And I'm spiritual, so I ignore my body." This is a very common thing that we see modern day.

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And the reality is in Ayurveda when we talk about pairs of opposites, so are you hot? Are you cold? Are you heavy? Are you light? Are you oily? Are you dry? We talk about these pairs of opposites. And really, body and mind are simply they're on the same continuum, it's all just you. But they're opposite ends of the spectrum where one is more obvious and one is more subtle.

And yet they are still so deeply interconnected and intertwined. You can't separate it. Your mind without a body, what is happening? And your body without a mind, what is happening?

Susi: So I think it's interesting because I used to say that our body is a barometer of our mind. And I still say that, except I usually just now say the body is a barometer or your body is a barometer. Because we can tune in so much to what is going on based on what's going on to our body.

And if I bring us back to the digestion piece of it, what I think is so interesting is we all know how to eat. And maybe that's a far flung statement, there's a lot of information out there on how to eat. There's a lot of choices and a lot of systems for how to eat that you can go and explore and see what works and what doesn't work.

I know with Stu, when he was really figuring out his psoriasis we tried a whole bunch of different types of elimination types of diets to sort him out. And I was noticing when I was doing those different ones raised my constipation level, different ones dropped the constipation level. I was already well managed, but then it was like I could feel the heightening and I could feel the stimulus of the actual system of food intake or elimination.

So there is that element there that there's a variety of food systems out there that you can kind of explore. And then when you begin to tie it with brain, it becomes really a brain function and nervous system. It becomes really interesting, because we can do all of the right things, whatever someone is saying is the right things, but it actually not be the thing that's actually supportive to the system.

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And that's something that I really noticed. And so for me, there is an element of fluid intake, there is an element of what I do with vegetables, there is an element of how I work with fruit. But it's not really that important all in all for me.

What it comes down to for me is how I'm managing in my brain. And then even when I'm noticing how I'm managing in my brain, because if I'm getting constipated I can now notice, even if I don't know I'm quite constipated. Because mine's not like this real bunged up constipation, it's just sort of this tight, dry kind of things have slowed down sort of feel.

And then I can feel how my brain is kind of in this weird dry sort of state. So I can start to see the play between the two of them. Which becomes really interesting because now it's not so much what does someone out there tell me is right to do? Even what Mona says, and I love the things you say, but ultimately what Mona says is what Mona says. And I can take that as an input or not. I can experiment with it and say, all right, how is this being supportive to my system?

And what I might actually realize is it's Yoga Nidra that I need, it has nothing to do with food. It has nothing to do with having a conversation with someone. It has nothing to do with getting my thoughts out on paper. It's going for a run, it's going for a ride, it's a number of different stimuli. It's recognizing kind of the phase I'm in in that particular week, or that particular month, or that particular season.

So we could go really broad on this, I think, to help people who might be sort of new to the concept. Let's start there, who are new to this idea of well, what do I do? I'm eating well enough and I'm still having an issue, whatever that issue is.

So if we keep it top level, high level, then where would you suggest they go next? If we're kind of combining between brain, belly, bum, they're eating well, or they think they're eating well. So we'll just assume that they're eating well, where would they go next to explore this?

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Mona: Yeah, so from the Ayurvedic perspective, the first thing we do is actually we look at the capacity of the digestive fire. So it's not even, like you were saying, it's not always about what it is you choose to eat, but it's really about are you able to digest what you consume?

And this includes your experiences. This includes your emotions. This includes the whole of your life, right? Are you able to digest what you consume? And the whole thing with brain, belly, and bum is that the same fire that stokes your biological digestion is also that which stokes the fire of your mind.

And so from an Ayurvedic perspective, the channels of the mind superimpose all the biological channels, Which is why you can close your eyes and wiggle your right baby toe without even having to look at it because your mind travels through all those channels.

And so I think it's really about figuring out if you're actually digesting what you're consuming, digesting your life, digesting your experiences. And then I also believe that the other piece is we could in a way categorize it where we could say what's happening on the physical? And then we could say what's happening in the emotional? And then what's happening in the mental?

So we could look at it more through the koshas. Through the sheaths of being as opposed to any other way. I think that's a good map. And so we could be looking at our level of nourishment on a physical level, on an energetic level, on an emotional level, on a physical level, or on a mental level, on a spiritual level.

And we could be seeing in which of those areas is the clog? Where's the constipation? Is the constipation on an emotional level where I'm not feeling prepared to feel this emotion? It's creating an inner tension, which is causing my emotional or my mental channels to constrict.

Well, guess what? Those are the same channels as your physical channels. And so if you're constricting emotionally, you're constricting

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physically. If you're constricting mentally, "I don't want to hear about that. I hate it."

Today with me I was like, "Bookkeeping, bank reconciliation, oh no." And I was like, "Great. Now I'm going to have a hard time pooping because my mind's all tied up in knots." But then I reconciled my bank accounts. And I was like, "Oh, this is lovely." Right? So I unbound my mind and it unbinds my body. So we could think of it in all those ways.

Susi: So let's back up a little bit, you were talking about through the sheaths, like you can get bunged up in each of those levels. For somebody who's kind of new at pondering this, what are three statements or questions that someone could get curious about at each level that would start a conversation where they can kind of go, "Ooh, this is the layer the need to start at."

Mona: Mm-hmm, so physical level, I would say are you experiencing physical constipation? Because then we know there's likely an overlap in the physical level. Am I able to digest the food that I consume without nausea, gas, bloating, farting, pain, indigestion, et cetera? And does my body feel okay?

If we have a physical indigestion, we're not only going to feel it in our stomach, there is a point where we're going to start to feel heavy, or we're going to start to just feel off or achy or weird in our bodies, right? We know when we don't feel like us. And so when you don't feel like you in your physical body, something's up, explore that sheath.

Energetically, so if we're talking about the body of prana, how's my breath? What's my breath doing? Do I have a good flow in my breath? Just my regular breathing, not doing yoga pranayama, I'm just breathing as I walk around in my life. Am I breathing as I walk around in my life? Does it feel constricted? Does it feel shallow?

Does it feel – I was going to say asymmetrical, but I meant uneven. Am I exhaling way more than I'm inhaling? What's happening with my breathing

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and as a result, my energy levels? Do I have enough energy to get me through the day? And if I'm sort of a little wobbly on any of those statements, then I might look at the energy body, what's happening with the prana.

On an emotional level, am I able to feel what arises without becoming hyper reactive? Whether those feelings are feelings of joy and bliss, or whether those feelings are feelings of grief, and sadness, and anger and frustration or any of the other, I want to say millions, but it's probably more like thousands of emotions that we can feel.

So if we're feeling more of a constriction in the realm of feeling, like not feeling the sensations of the body, but feeling the emotional energies as they arise, then we're going to want to explore the emotional layer.

And then for the mental layer, for the mind, can I think clearly? Can I follow a thought? Can I sit in meditation? Because that's what meditation is, it's training the mind to flow, a stream of consciousness pointed in one chosen direction. Am I able to do that? And if I am, great. And if I'm not, then perhaps I want to start to explore the mental level of things. What's happening in my mental digestion?

And not to be surprised when there's a layering on to the physical body and the physical outputs. That's what's really cool about being human, is we have all these layers, and yet this physical body of ours, this five elemental structure, it's like the car our soul drives around in for this lifetime. It lets us know when something is amiss on any level, which is so great.

It leads to what you were saying, Susi, about the body being a barometer. So the body lets us know when something's amiss on any of those other layers or levels as well. And this is why it's so fascinating that it could be a completely nonfood intervention, right? Or a nonphysical intervention. Yoga Nidra, as you were saying, actually works on almost all the levels because of the nature of that practice.

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Meditation mantra tends to work on many, many levels. Whereas food works mostly on the physical level and then we notice that it has an impact as the body gains stability, balance, resilience. We notice it in our emotions, we notice it in our mind. But some of those more subtle practices that work more the mind and the emotions tend to wash through the physical body even more quickly, actually.

Susi: So what becomes really interesting, I think, is I harken back to when I first started in this process. And for me constipation was not this big deal, it was more that I was a little bit uncomfortable. But also I didn't realize the nuanced significance of it.

Because again, it wasn't something that really got my attention because it's not like a real digestive disease, or condition, or illness where you can be in bed for a little while. It was just sometimes some bloating, sometimes some gas, just generally blah, right? But nothing big. It wasn't until I started to see the patterns between it, between the tempo that I started to realize I was moving probably at a bit of a quicker pace than my system wanted me to.

But then I started to recognize as I continued to follow the pattern, how it related to my own creativity, my own ability to output, and my productivity, my distraction level. And then my overall, I don't want to use the word contentment, but I would say equanimity would probably be a better word. There was just a greater levelness as I tuned more and more and more into it.

So I think that's what I find really quite fascinating about it, is that something that was really not a big problem but I started to get interested in revealed itself to me as time has gone along. And so for someone who's sort of curious of the symptom that is presenting itself, even if it's something that's relatively minor, like I have had, the symptom is a sign.

And even if the symptom is not so minor, even if the symptom is quite strong, it's a sign, it's a problem to solve. It's also a sign of something to pay attention to. And we can open the door to what is happening here

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around the same time these things are occurring, like digestive flares, or increase of bloating, or we can list those things off.

Then from there, as you start to settle out the symptom by intervening the ways you might know how, that then begins to open the doors to the other sheaths. That's when you begin to really see this relationship, and you can start really at any of the sheaths, which can then impact the sheaths, the other ones. And you start to see this pattern in how overall this can be like a whole realization and recovery and healing process for any condition, really.

Mona: It's amazing what a little bit of extra awareness does. And really, that's what happens when our body, or our heart, or our mind, our bum, or our tummy, it doesn't matter where. When something's talking to us, it's an opportunity for us to increase our self-awareness. And through that self-awareness to actually increase our compassion for one another and each other.

Pretty much everyone has suffered from constipation at some point. And so this allows us a shared experience if we're willing to engage with it. And if we're willing to explore it further, everything reveals so much right? Enlightenment is around every corner, we simply need to be willing to open our eyes, and open our hearts, and open the door and see what is there and what is in front of us. And so it may seem weird to connect constipation to enlightenment, right? However, why not?

Susi: Mm-hmm. One thing I do want to just touch on briefly because we're going to be speaking about this inside of Healing and Revealing next month and I want to give people listening an opportunity to just hear a little bit about what you think here. Because we're talking about this relationship, and we've been using constipation because that's what I brought to the podcast. And there's also a really interesting correlation I've seen in my own state of mind.

Now I'm not someone who has experienced depression, I'm not someone who's experienced a capital A anxiety. I certainly have had anxious

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moments, but that is definitely not the same thing. However, there is a link between digestion and the experiences of depression, and experiences of anxiety.

Do you want to briefly chat a little bit about how those relate and kind of give a quick idea or quick win of someone who's experiencing these that might open the door of this relationship?

Mona: So I don't know if it's going to be a quick win, but I can definitely share in some of the relationship. Which is now we start to sort of go into some of the deeper Ayurvedic levels, which is the doshas, or the organizing energies of the body, and their relationship to the mind and the doshas of the mind.

So we have these different layers within Ayurveda where we recognize the physical body's elemental composition and different elements rule, regulate, and govern different functions. And the air element regulates the nervous system, regulates the eliminatory system. So this is menses, urination, defecation. So peeing, pooping, menstruating, all of those are ruled by the air element. And the air element is so similar in quality to the mind. It's very mobile, it's light, it can go anywhere.

And when we look at the mind and the qualities of the mind, we've kind of got like the gas pedal and then we've got the brakes, right? And equanimity, as Susi put it, is in the middle. And so when the air element becomes obstructed, so does the flow of the mind.

And this is where we can get stuck either with our foot on the gas, which would be a lot like anxiety, panic attacks, attention deficit disorder, et cetera, et cetera. Or we might get stuck with our foot on the brakes, which will feel a lot more like depression, and heaviness, lethargy, foggy brain, all those things.

And so where we lose flow in the body, it literally obstructs the channels of the mind, which means we get stuck in a pattern in our mind. So then the question becomes, if you get stuck with a foot on the gas, or stuck with a

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foot on the brake, if you get stuck with a channel in your body, something's not flowing, what are the different things that we can do?

And actually, one of the most beautiful things we can do is sort of all of our common element is yoga practice. Whether it's some breath work, or some movement, and movement might be in the form of yoga asana, it might be in the form of yoga therapy, it might be go for a walk outside.

And so we can use movement, we can use breathing, we can use stillness and contemplation. Any of those tools that we already have in our toolbox, we can use those tools to create a shift or a change in that obstruction to help things move or start to flow.

And it might not be a big move, it might not be from the brakes onto the gas. It might be just a little bit of letting off the brake, or just a little bit of letting off the gas with this additional opportunity for shift and change. So I'd say a lot of the most powerful tools are ones that are already in all of our toolboxes: yoga, movement, breath work, and contemplation or meditation practices.

Susi: And how would this relate to digestion then? In terms of where someone can utilize the idea of awareness to support them in seeing patterns between what's going on within their brain and what's going on within their bellies?

Mona: One of the reasons why people feel better doing yoga practices, whether it's movement, or breath work, or meditation, is because it directly effects the digestion. All of these tools directly affect the digestion. And they also directly affect our self-awareness. All of these things affect our self-awareness.

And so a lot of people will take up a yoga practice and then they'll start to change how they sleep. And they'll start to change how they eat, and they'll start to change a bunch of different things without anyone even telling them anything about it.

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They will just automatically be like, “Huh, I think I want to try this now.” Or, “Huh, I think I want to do this now, or that now.” Which is so amazing. It just goes to show it works, right? Whether people signed up for self-awareness or not, if you're doing yoga you're getting some of it, which is really great.

And so it really comes to I'm a big fan of the scientific method, so I like to apply a stimulus and then notice the effect. And I might do it a couple times to make sure I know what's happening. And then if the effect works for me, I keep it. And if it doesn't, I try something else.

And so I would make the same suggestion, if you notice a difference in the direction that is working for you, then keep noticing exactly what it is you're doing that's giving you the effect you want. Much like if something's not working for you, notice. Notice what it is you're doing. And it's just a matter of paying attention and following the patterns.

And this is what I think they actually mean when they say follow your bliss. To start to learn about and follow the patterns and the stimuli or the different things you can do for yourself that help you to feel stronger and more resilient, and help you to poop better. Which is going to help you to sleep better, because there's a huge connection between constipation and insomnia as well.

All these different things, and then the sleep pattern feeds into the mind pattern. And so if we're not sleeping well, we're more likely to have an episode of anxiety or an episode of depression versus if we're sleeping well, and digesting well, and our body feels well nourished. So I think it really is about paying attention.

And you could even keep a little journal or a diary where you say, today, I'm going to see what happens if I drink more water. Today, I'm going to see what happens if I drink warm water instead of cold water. Today, I'm going to see what happens if I go to bed a little earlier. Today, I'm going to see what happens if I do one less thing. So if instead of having 17 things I need to check off the list today, I have 16. Then what happens?

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And you can check in with your mind. And you can check in with your breath. And you can check in with your tummy. And you can check in with your whole eliminatory lower pelvic area and see what comes of it. Because that's the whole thing with these teachings, is there's guidelines in place, but really, the guidelines are just helping to point us in a direction. But then everybody has to sort of be in it and explore to see what actually works for them.

Susi: So what I'm really getting from this, and I love all of our conversations because they really do go in many different directions and at many levels we can take them. What I think is important to note here is this is not the medical model. And the medical model is one where there is a problem and let's fix it.

And what we're really talking about here is we're talking about a relationship between your brain, your belly, and your bowels. What is that relationship? As opposed saying, okay, the brain is over here, the belly is over here, the bum is over here, or your bowels are over here and let's work at each one. When the reality is, is where we really do have to experiment is how each plays off the other and be willing to explore where things are at.

And the reason I bring up my experience is because I distinctly remember thinking, "Wow, I'm constipated. Why am I constipated? I mean, my inner world is wanting to slow down, my bowels are giving me the message I need to slow down." I'm like, "What? I'm not going fast. What's up?" It was almost like, "What? You're wrong." And then I'm like, "Wait a second, my body's rarely wrong. Something else is wanting to not stop going as fast."

And so I remember very clearly where I was in my house when I had that, I can learn now laugh at it, moment of like, "Well, let's just experiment with going slowly. Let's just experiment with this idea that maybe just for fun, that my body is telling me to slow down. Let's just pretend." It just gave me the freedom to pretend.

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And then I started to recognize some relationships to coffee. And then I started to notice some relationships to other food. And then I started to notice relationships to when I wasn't speaking up, or when I was maybe speaking too much, or about something, or whatever. I started to really recognize all of this.

And then sometimes it can sound a little crazy making in the way that I'm describing it, and it's actually just you're getting the condensed version over a period of time where I noticed all of these patterns. And so now it's like I've got this mandala of understanding of these various messages in my system, that I now have enough evidence and information about what they're offering me.

And granted, I'm getting older and things are shifting in myself, and in my brain, and my values and all that. It's not that I'm stuck to them as, "Oh, if this happens in my bowels, this means what's going on in my brain. Or if this happens in my bowels, this means I need to slow down." It's not that black and white.

It's more like, "Huh, hmm, curious. I'm going to put that up as a data point. I wonder what happens next." And then that becomes a data point, and then you just start to expand it out. And here's what really is interesting, if you're someone who has a condition where you are working with a medical team on the management or the recovery of this condition as we're talking to digestion or we're talking from a mental and emotional standpoint.

If you're able to have this data of how, what is impacting you, when you're starting to notice these relationships, you can bring that data to somebody, and then outline more clearly of like, here's what I'm noticing. And then when you have that data, when you give that to somebody who has their whole wealth of background and what they know how to do, then you both are now in collaboration working together to help improve your situation.

So it's not that when I said, you know, this is not the medical model, I want to make sure that people don't interpret that as saying I'm against the medical model. Not at all. I'm saying, this is not the medical model, and we

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can take all of the information that's discovered inside of it to the medical model. And if you're working inside of that, then you can actually make the science more effective. You bring brilliance to the science in terms of helping yourself get well.

Mona: I love that, because it really is about relationship. Everything's about relationship. Yoga, union is all about relationship. And so the idea of us deepening our relationship to ourselves and using that information to deepen our relationship with our team, whether it's a complementary team, or a medical model team, or any other team.

If you have that data about yourself, you can bring it to everybody you're working with where it makes sense in order to deepen your relationship with them and therefore the work that you do together. It's super cool.

Susi: Yeah. And I would even say that then when they're giving a suggestion, whatever that suggestion is, you can feel more into your system between your brain, your belly, and your bowels of like, "Ah, hmm." You can now feel into all right, is this the right thing are not the right thing? Or this is kind of the right thing, but I think I'm going to tweak it to really suit what is going to work for me.

And then that just gives you a whole level of power and a whole level of empowerment, I suppose, when you really bring these together. Which ultimately helps you stand that much more on your feet and helps you digest the various layers of the experience.

Mona: It helps you become more svastha. So in Ayurveda, the Sanskrit word for health is svastha. And the loose translation of svastha, sva as in svadhyaya, right? So sva as in self, and then -stha as in stability. So it makes you more -stha, stable in your sva, self. So it lets you, like you said, stand on your own.

And that's svastha is all about organized doshas, strong agni, proper development of tissues, proper elimination of wastes, feeling a sense of contentment in the mind, and the senses, and in the spirit. This is what we

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call health from an Ayurvedic perspective. And so any tools that allow us to navigate our world more skillfully on our own and to really start to recognize the nuance, I think that's one of the words we haven't said yet, but it's such a part of it.

When we talk about tweaking something to make it work for us, we're talking about the nuance of every recommendation that has like 20,000 layers to it. What's your layer? Right? How do you do the thing so that it works for you?

And then when you change, you also realize, oh, I don't have to throw the baby out with the bathwater. I probably just need a couple little tweaks here and there to bring myself back on track, back into steady in myself, right? Seated in myself.

Susi: Love it, it reminds me of a conversation we had in a previous episode with Austin around depression. And he said, you know, we don't take care of a house plant the same all year round. So why would we take care of ourselves the same all year round?

Which is really, really, really lovely when we're thinking about this relationship to bowels and seasonally what happens in our brains, seasonally what happens in just the various comings and goings of life and how that impacts us at different times of the year.

Mona: Yeah, we change over time, it's one of the few guarantees. And if we can attend to that, everybody benefits.

Susi: Lovely, lovely. Well, if this conversation has sparked your interest in this relationship between our brain, and our bellies, and our bowels, you will really like one of two things, or even both. Which is Healing and Revealing Human Potential. Mona is coming in in February to talk more about the relationship to anxiety and depression.

And inside of the certification program where we train people to become really excellent yoga therapists and not only make a difference, but also a

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prophet in what it is that they do, she is one of our primary Ayurvedic teachers in that program. So we help really train and up-level your skill in terms of helping people get better.

So if you're interested, send us a note to health@functionalsynergy.com and we'd be happy to support you along the way.

Mona, thank you so much for being here again. In the show notes we're going to put down Mona's other episodes where we talk about other aspects of Ayurveda that you can harken back to very, very easily. So do go take a look in those show notes.

And then, Mona, if people want to reach out to you for consultation, what's the best way for them to reach you?

Mona: The best way is to send me an email, Mona, M-O-N-A, @monawarner, M-O-N-A-W-A-R-N-E-R, .com

Susi: Perfect. Thanks again, Mona. Take good care.

Mona: Thanks. Take care, everybody. May you poop spectacularly.