

ADDICTION

SUMMIT



When Fascination Becomes Obsession (and Addiction!)

Guest: Dr. Deanna Minich

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Dr. Thomas: Well, welcome to another edition of the Addiction Summit. I'm Dr. Paul Thomas, your host. Today, I have the pleasure of introducing to you Dr. Deanna Minich. She is an author, a teacher, an artist, and a speaker. She is the founder and runs Food & Spirit.

And the book that I want to highlight today or she's probably going to highlight for you is just one of many. And that is this one, *Whole Detox: A 21-Day Personalized Program to Break Through Barriers in Every Area of Your Life*. So that being said, thank you for being with us for this summit.

Dr. Minich: Thank you.

Dr. Thomas: I know you have just so much information to share. This being an addiction summit and your expertise, you're a PhD in nutritional biochemistry. So you've got a lot of knowledge. How do you tie in addiction with food, for example?

Dr. Minich: Well, first of all, I want to thank you for doing this summit. I do think that the information on addictions needs to get out. And people need solutions because it's something that people wrestle with, as you have seen in your practice.

For me, personally, I've had quite a journey with food and eating. So when I was very young, when I was about eight or nine, my mom got into this whole personal revelation that she was having with food and faith. And so it really tightened up what we could eat at home. It tightened up how we were living. And so there was a lot of restriction and a lot of rigidity. And what happened for me, in that whole process, as I became a teenager, was that I just wanted to bust out of that. My dad was a Chicago police officer. I went to Catholic school.

Dr. Thomas: Oh, my, double trouble.

Dr. Minich: There was just so much. I was just put into a box.

Dr. Thomas: Rules, a lot of rules.

Dr. Minich: A lot of rules. And so I feel that what happened was I wanted to find my freedom. And the way that I thought I could find that was through food. And so I started binging. I started overeating. I was emotionally eating as a teen. I would eat in secret because I knew that it was forbidden.

Dr. Thomas: So I'm a missionary kid in Africa. And there were things like masturbation you couldn't do. That was secret. There was definitely a no smoking, or drinking, and all that. So I had a very similar pattern with some of those things.

Dr. Minich: So you understand?

Dr. Thomas: I totally understand.

Dr. Minich: Exactly. I think that, in part, addictions can come from, it's almost like the things that are considered taboo, but there's something deeper there. And so, for me, it was through the conduit of food. That was the biggest thing that I felt like I couldn't have. And I wanted to have control over. So I didn't go in the direction of anorexia. I went in the other direction of excess. And oftentimes, you see that with addictions. As you know.

And now when I look back, I don't even know if I would call it an addiction. What I had going on. To me, now the way that I see it is that eating has become a path of personal growth. And I think that at the underbelly of all addictions is something deeper. There's something really juicy. There's some lesson to be learned. There's some relationship to be had. And for me, it was through that relationship with my body and with food.

So I don't see addictions as a bad thing unless we are feeling shackled. Feeling controlled by something. But then again, how do we find our way out of that? And what are we actually really longing for?

Dr. Thomas: Right. I think so many people have a compulsive relationship with something. That if it was food, then you might call it a food addiction. Or it's just you don't have the right relationship with food. You might have been using it to mask or get away from something else.

In my case, I had a phenomenal childhood. I was running in the woods, so to speak, in Africa. So why did I become an alcoholic? I was asking myself this at one point. And I realized, I did have stressors. I went off to boarding school. Left my family in Africa. Came to the United States for college totally alone. Drink for me was relief. And food, perhaps for you at that point, was relief of some stress. I'm guessing.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, I think it filled many different needs. So when I was emotionally eating, I could have been angry. I could have been sad. I could've been really happy. I could've been celebrating something and wanting...Just like somebody having a drink, there might be a celebratory aspect to that just like with food.

And the research even suggests that having, what we might call a negative mood versus a positive mood can lead to the same behavior. But the difference is that a negative mood can take you down that spiral. And I think that's really what you're approaching with the Addiction Summit is looking at that downward spiral where we don't feel in control. So with a positive move, we could have an emotional eating event. But then, we're done. It doesn't go on to the next one. So the next one is always what we're thinking about, that cycle. And how do we break that cycle?

Dr. Thomas: Right, right. So how many of you watching have had an experience with a substance or a behavior where you used it when you didn't feel good? You were just tired or angry or lonely. And you also used it to celebrate. I did that with alcohol. And it sounds like you did that with food. I've done it with food, too.

And so one of the things with the Addiction Summit is trying to get an idea from experts like yourself who've really studied this. And your expertise is in the area of food, and, spirit, and so much more. And so I really wanted to have you share it all. But tell us a little more about what you've learned in your

research. And what led you to write this book? And maybe more about that program.

Dr. Minich: Sure. Well, I started to study different spiritual traditions. So even though I grew up Catholic, very fundamentalist, very again strict, the moment I went to college, I just began doing everything that was the opposite of how I was raised. So I took my first yoga class when I was 19. I took a World's Religion course when I was a freshman in college. I took every course I could take that was not under the guise of pre-med. I was taking philosophy and literature.

And I just had this amazing exposure to so many different things. Had so many different teachers. Started to travel. And so I realized that I was obsessed with food. I did have this obsession going on. And obsession is an interesting word vis-a-vis addiction. In your book, you talk about a spectrum. And what's interesting is when does a fascination become an obsession become an addiction?

So I think I did have a wake-up call. And I began to become much more aware of my body, especially when I started taking yoga classes and I started doing different things with my body and realizing, "Wow! You know, I don't have to do things one certain way." So I started opening up. I started taking all these different courses. I went on to study nutrition, of all things. I decided not to go to medical school like you did.

Dr. Thomas: Right. That was a smart move.

Dr. Minich: No, I was just working for so many different medical doctors. And I felt that, "Goodness! You know, where are the solutions?" I just felt like it was just a lot of script writing. And I didn't feel the relationship with the patient in the way that I thought that there would be. Now, looking back I'm thinking, "I could've created that." And there is space to do that. So I don't want to discourage anybody from going to medical school.

My path was perfect for what I was needing to do, which was to search through that conduit of food. So I went to graduate school. And I got a master's in nutrition. So I liked it. And then I went on to do my PhD in nutrition.

And all the while, I was studying nutritional biochemistry and getting into the science of food, I was trying to heal myself. I had endometriosis. I had irritable bowel syndrome. And I had just acne. It was just like everything was all

connected. And now, knowing functional medicine, it makes complete sense why I would have all these things coexisting.

But I realized that food alone was not healing me. The thing that I thought would solve the problem, because that's what it did for my mother and our family in some way, was not working for me. I think I got about 50% to 70%. And I was still having a lot of emotional issues. I was still having a lot of body issues.

So you don't know this part of my story. But what I started to do is I tapped into color. I started painting. There was no rhyme or reason for it. It was an emotional space that felt free and open and expansive. And nobody was going to judge me. And I always felt that with school and science, it was so absolute. It was so objective.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, you were right or wrong.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, it's either you got an A on the test or you didn't. You got something wrong. And so with painting, I could be messy. I could be sloppy. I didn't have to be my perfectionistic self.

Dr. Thomas: You found freedom there.

Dr. Minich: I found freedom. And that did it for me. And I have to be a little bit more disclosing here. It was my husband, Mark—who at the time was not my husband, but later became my husband—who said, “Deanna, I think that you're painting your ovaries and uterus over and over again.”

Dr. Thomas: Interesting.

Dr. Minich: And I had so many reproductive issues. This is where a lot of my sensitivities were manifested. So I had, not just endometriosis, but I had a blocked fallopian tube. This is called hydrosalpinx. And it was getting worse. And it was filling up with fluid and causing pain. So all of these things went away once I started painting.

Dr. Thomas: Interesting.

Dr. Minich: Isn't that interesting? My gynecologist said, “Deanna, whatever you're doing, just do it.”

Dr. Thomas: “Whatever you're doing, keep doing it.”

Dr. Minich: And I didn't want to have to start explaining. But there is this element of flow of vitality of creativity. And I do believe that what addictions are calling us to do is to tap into our sense of flowing. There is that sense of, when something is blocked or stagnant, we get a symptom. We might get pain. We might get anxiety. We might get indigestion, whatever it is. Creativity opens up that well.

And so the program that I developed, the Whole Detox program, is a way for people to tap into color. I feel like color can enable us to tap into something that is universal. It's the collective consciousness of what color symbolizes. It's the frequency of color. And how it impacts us psychologically.

So I bring in color in a variety of different ways, whether it's through food or through emotional colors that we feel. "What color do you feel today?" Normally, I ask people, "What is your favorite color?" I would guess blue.

Dr. Thomas: You got it. You got it. With a Hawaiian shirt.

Dr. Minich: Eyes, a Hawaiian shirt.

Dr. Thomas: So that's a colorful color, lots of colors. Now the passion part, you're the first person I've interviewed so far who's really tapped into that. And if you're struggling with an addiction, in my experience—and I don't know how yours was back when it was a struggle, when you were still in those struggles—we weren't tapping into passion.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, and creativity.

Dr. Thomas: We were isolating and creativity.

Dr. Minich: And our child-like selves that can be messy and can play with food and have fun with color in a variety of different ways. And I think that that's what happened for me as I got into that. And also, the word freedom, I want to bring that in. That was what you mentioned, too, is that when we feel free, we don't feel controlled or addicted to something like it's pulling us, rather we can take it in and decide what to do with that experience. We have the locus of control. We feel creative in that experience.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, yeah. In my opioid clinic, I treat young folks 30 and under who are addicted to heroin, typically, or other opioids. And it's like bondage when you've run with that so far that the withdrawal is so intense that you have to have your opiates. And you're in bondage. And so it's the opposite of

freedom. And so what I want to have us help our audience and have you share is, what are the tools you've put together to help people find that freedom?

Dr. Minich: Yeah, excellent. Well, I think in two numbers, the number three and the number seven. So we're going to go at the number seven to start. And I do believe and think that there are seven different underlying reasons for addictions. So I want to take us through them. And maybe give some ideas.

Dr. Thomas: I like it. I like it. Pay attention, folks.

Dr. Minich: Let's see what you think. Okay, so the first reason for addictions is the sense of fear. The what if? And so often to cover up fear, we bring in something that is coaxing that or comforting that. Fear is a big driver of our behavior. And we're either moving towards love or we're moving towards fear. So that fear response, survival response, feeling like we need to have that control. Back to that control word.

So that's a big one. And that's where I see a lot of food addictions entering in like, "I want control of my body. Nobody can tell me what I'm going to put in. I get to have control."

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, "At this moment, I have control of this cigarette or this drink or this--

Dr. Minich: "Or how I'm going to feel, yes."

Dr. Thomas: I'm going to feel so much better with this needle. At least for the moment, I have control." And it takes away that fear.

Dr. Minich: The fear, yeah. The second reason for addictions, I believe, is the whole spectrums of emotions. I know that when we focus on fear, it's one, "I don't want us to let go of all the emotions." So number two is really looking at all the different emotions, and how they're responding, and not expressing those emotions. It's so important.

Dr. Thomas: So having those suppressed.

Dr. Minich: Having them suppressed, which causes stagnation.

Dr. Thomas: Or just inability to express them.

Dr. Minich: That's a really good point.

Dr. Thomas: Maybe you've been so--

Dr. Minich: Just stuffed down and suppressed for so many years.

Dr. Thomas: For whatever reason.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, so it's so important to express. And when we're not expressing, at least even for me with my food issues, I was making sure that I didn't feel something uncomfortable within me emotionally. And I would take food and stuff it down. That was my process. So all emotions, whether it's grief or anger, or extreme sadness, or maybe it's disappointment, maybe it's rage, whatever it is? using the addiction to move that through and stuff it down. So that's emotions.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, not have to feel. And that's interesting. If you've had an addiction or you're in one, you know you get to that point where you don't even feel anymore. At the end of my drinking, even when I smiled, it was a fake smile.

Dr. Minich: It was fake, yeah.

Dr. Thomas: There was no inner joy. It was an emptiness. And I'd stuffed for so long. That's so important.

Dr. Minich: Well, I like what you said about some people not really knowing what they feel and being tapped into that. I remember having a patient in the clinic some years ago. She was crying. And so I was in the room with the physician. And we were talking with her about food and some other things in her life. And the physician brilliantly asked the question, he says, "What do you feel right now?" She was like, "I don't even know." She was crying. She was so out of touch with her feelings. But her body was responding.

Dr. Thomas: Her body was telling, yeah.

Dr. Minich: Yeah. So and oftentimes, when we don't know what we feel or we feel uncomfortable with what we feel, enter in again, something to mask it. Okay, so that's number two.

Number three is really the sense of, I would say, overworking and overdoing ourselves physically.

Dr. Thomas: Guilty!

Dr. Minich: Well, addictions can come from a very naïve place. Maybe even a reward. And so we can get that dopamine rush of, “Oh, let’s do this. I deserve this because I’ve worked really hard at this.” And we’re constantly putting ourselves out. And so what’s at the root of that overwork, or that perfectionism, or the need to please in that way? So I do think that there is a sense of reward that people are looking for with addictions.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, yeah. Work hard, play hard was my motto back in those days. But it’s like you were reading my mind back then. It was always, “I deserve this, right, because I’m working so hard.”

Dr. Minich: Yeah, and I felt the same way with food. It’s like, “Hey,--

Dr. Thomas: “I’ve earned this.”

Dr. Minich: I did really well in school today. I’m going to go whole row of Oreos or a cookie.” My thing was chocolate. I had to have chocolate. Even now, I think about chocolate is my biggest teacher. What is chocolate teaching me? So anyway, that’s number three.

Number four is that addictions can come from a need for love.

Dr. Thomas: Unmet need, probably.

Dr. Minich: Unmet need. And most people are searching for more love in various ways, whether in an intimate relationship from their family or origin, from friends that may or may not accept them. So again, that dichotomy between fear and love. That we are looking for love. And so we may feel that we get love or that sense of assurity through a substance. Or at least it changes our neurochemistry to think that we’re in that space.

Dr. Thomas: I have a brother who’s still drinking. And he told me once, he says, “I don’t know how I could ever give up alcohol. It’s my best friend.” So that connection with the bottle that some alcoholics have that this is just my best friend. And when you said that thing about love and needing that, I often wonder, too, if in any way it applies to our inability to love ourselves.

Dr. Minich: Definitely, definitely, self-love.

Dr. Thomas: Some of us had childhood trauma. No parent does it perfect. I had really good parents, mom and dad. But they weren’t always there. And I’m off spinning on my own having unmet needs and then feeling less than even

as late as medical school. I went to Dartmouth. And back there on the wards, we called it pimping—I don't know if that's an okay term to use—but they would line you up in a circle and make you look stupid. Ask you, "Well, Paul, Dr. Thomas." And they'd ask you a question. There's no way I could know. And I'm sitting there trembling and feeling inadequate--

Dr. Minich: The fear.

Dr. Thomas: fear. And I think my own self-worth just went down.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, yeah. Well, and that really, I think taps into the third reason of reward and feeling the need to exhibit one's sense of self-worth in everyday life. And when that shut down, especially by your tribe—in medical school that was your tribe.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, right, that's your tribe.

Dr. Minich: And that's what you're doing full time—and then you don't feel accepted. Acceptance is a huge piece. And that's part of the love that you just spoke of.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, that's a good point. I hadn't thought of the tribe aspect. That's big. That's big.

Dr. Minich: Yes. And even think about when people do drink, or eat certain foods, or do drugs, there usually is a tribe that they're connecting in to because they don't feel--

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, at least, they're connecting.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, they don't feel accepted in other realms. And so they're going to engage in that. Yeah.

Dr. Thomas: Hey, in that case, you need a new tribe.

Dr. Minich: You need a new tribe. That's big. What you just said. That is a huge tool to your question of finding people that support you. And that's not easy. When people are wanting to break free of their patterns, staying within old tribes only begets the same patterns. It's not like we have to completely leave people behind. But we need people to support us in those new patterns.

Dr. Thomas: Right. Yeah, if you're going to break free from an addiction, you can't hang around the people you were doing that addiction with. You still love them if they're your family. You're still going to love them if they're your friends. But you're not going to spend your time there. You have to find that new tribe where you're safe, and where your positive self, your loving, and your passions are nurtured.

Dr. Minich: Even if it's an online tribe, you find a Facebook group that you're really connected into. You can create your own tribe. It could be one person. And what else helps is also animals, I think.

Dr. Thomas: Oh, yes.

Dr. Minich: Being around animals and nature.

Dr. Thomas: They're so nonjudgmental.

Dr. Minich: Being loved, that's what they're about.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah. I interrupted you. Review where you're at with your seven. Okay, we've got--

Dr. Minich: Yeah, we've got fear. Then we had emotions. We had rewards. And then, we had love. And then, we're ready for the fifth one, which is—this gets back into the freedom—free to be who you are. So many people are...You said it with the smile. You put on a smile. You feel confined by the society.

Me, as a woman, sometimes I feel like there are certain societal imprints that are placed upon you. And some people don't even realize that they're doing it. But they do it anyway. And so that can feel very heavy sometimes, and not wanting to fit in, and not really accepting who we are. Again, it gets back into the tribe aspects. And so really embracing our truth. Who are we authentically?

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, trying to be authentic.

Dr. Minich: Being authentic, the A word, another A word, instead of addiction. The antidote to addiction is truly authenticity.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, I heard that word. And I heard that word. And before I really understood how to do that, it was just a word. And I've had to learn because I was just a human doing, rather than a human being. And I wasn't

in touch with my feelings, and my emotions. And all these things you're talking about. That all helps you become authentic.

Dr. Minich: Absolutely. Yeah, that's a really good way to string it along. It is a spectrum. Again, your choice of that word spectrum really is keyed into everything I talk about with color. And each of these, I even think about them as being a color. The truth, speaking from that place of authenticity.

The sixth one is an addiction to the need to know. And this, in part, is coming from...I don't know if you know Angeles Arrien's work. She has since passed on. But she was a PhD at Berkeley in cultural anthropology. And she looked at a variety of different cultural archetypes. And found that there are four major addictions. And she goes into those addictive patterns.

And one of them is the addition to the need to know. And these are the people, I see them so much because I'm in the teaching profession, where people can never know enough. They need another certification. "Oh, oh, I'd better do the next workshop. I'd better listen to that webinar. I'm not quite sure." There's no sense of confidence in what they already know. That the knowing is inside. And they need to trust that.

Dr. Thomas: In today's world, that would be an impossible place to be. There's unlimited information.

Dr. Minich: And that can almost be an addiction, in and of itself.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, you never know it all.

Dr. Minich: You never know it all. Then, you get the sense of being deflated and feeling low self-worth. I don't know if you see that a lot, but I see it with professionals.

Dr. Thomas: Oh, yeah.

Dr. Minich: I see it with healthcare practitioners.

Dr. Thomas: Oh, I've actually felt it. And I flash back to those times on the ward where I was made to feel inferior. And so I often will get that even as a triple board-certified doctor who's...I know my stuff. But I'll get insecure because I don't know something.

Dr. Minich: Well, you're being put on the spot by somebody. And then, you're under a magnifying glass. All eyes are on you. And there is this sense of humiliation, the shame.

Dr. Thomas: But we can get comfortable with, "You know, I don't know. I'm going to have to look that up."

Dr. Minich: Exactly, yeah.

Dr. Thomas: My patients do it to me all the time, honestly. Life is so complicated anymore. I had a new patient with a rare diagnosis that I heard about when I was in medical school. That was 30 years ago. I had to look it up. Well, that family knew more than I did at that moment because they had already looked it up.

Dr. Minich: Sure.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah.

Dr. Minich: So the addiction to the need to know. And then, the last addiction is more of a spiritual one. You look at all these dietary supplements and how we can take something for just about anything. The thing that we cannot take anything for is that sense of being connected into our own spirituality.

And what is spirituality? It's a sense of meaning and purpose. It's not a religion. It's a sense of being connected to all of life. To really being tuned in, tapped into why you wake up every morning. And when we don't have that, that can lead to depression. It can lead to so many just feelings of desolation, worthlessness.

And then, what do we do? We turn to something else to fill that gap. And then, it becomes, "Ooh, that's giving me a sense of...Or it's masking the fact that I don't have the sense of meaning and purpose." And so then, it fills that gap again. But I think that's a big one. In fact, if you look at *The Blue Zones*, and some of the factors of longevity, and what makes people--

Dr. Thomas: Tell people what *The Blue Zones* are.

Dr. Minich: *The Blue Zones* is a book that was written by Dan Buettner, which he looked at where do centenarians live in the world? People that are 100 years old or older. And he found that there were nine principles. And one

of them was a sense of purpose. That we need purpose. It's one of the anecdotes to addiction is--

Dr. Thomas: That's so important. I used to ask my kids, "Are we human beings?" Then I would say, "Are we humans having a spiritual condition or spiritual beings having a human condition?"

Dr. Minich: Steven Covey.

Dr. Thomas: Is that where that came from?

Dr. Minich: Yes.

Dr. Thomas: See, it's good to have somebody keep me honest about where I learn my truths.

Dr. Minich: Well, no, the essence is great. I just want to give acknowledgment to—

Dr. Thomas: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Dr. Minich: because his work is fabulous.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, I've read a fair bit of his work. Now, see I'm embarrassed. There you go. See still a work in progress. But that's the wonderful thing we can always be working on ourselves.

Dr. Minich: I don't think it ever stops.

Dr. Thomas: It never stops.

Dr. Minich: And that's the authenticity piece. That's really coming into our sense of vulnerability and who we are as human beings. If we're still in a body, we still have some work to do is my philosophy.

Dr. Thomas: Yes, yes. In your book, I think you talk about thoughts and affirmations. And I think that's really important, especially if you're still in the pit of struggle with an addiction or just--

Dr. Minich: Let me just run through seven quick tools based on what we just talked about. So, first and foremost, being that I studied nutrition, I'm going to say that it's really important to eat colorful foods. I don't think it's so

important to be keto or to be paleo or to be vegan. I think it's really important to tune into your own body.

The science says that food drives mood. If we can drive our mood through our food choices, that's going to change our choice and change our behavior, so less addictive behavior, potentially. So eating fruits and vegetables, we can all do that no matter what our eating type is. No matter what diet you follow. So that's number one is change your foods to include more color. And that's what I teach wherever I am.

The second thing is be in touch with your emotions. And most people don't know what they feel. Just like that patient, she didn't know what she felt in that moment. Most people don't know. They have no clue what they're feeling because they've suppressed emotions for so long. You pinpointed that.

Dr. Thomas: Oh, I was there for a very long time. So if you're like I was for a long, long time, and you don't even know what you feel, how do you start to figure that out?

Dr. Minich: So what I have in the *Whole Detox* book or somebody can even just make this checklist where I wrote down 20 emotions, all different kinds.

Dr. Thomas: There's 20 different emotions?

Dr. Minich: At least, there are more. I wrote down the 20 main ones. And I--

Dr. Thomas: I've got work to do.

Dr. Minich: The spectrum, right. And at the end of the day what you do is you go through in a checklist. You simply go through. And this takes 30 seconds. These things do not take long, except for maybe the food. You have to think about the color. So you just go through, "What did I feel today? disappointment or contentment or fulfillment. What are those different emotions? And start to dialogue with them. Just realizing and recognizing what they are is half of it.

Dr. Thomas: That's half of it.

Dr. Minich: That's the awareness.

Dr. Thomas: Awareness, being in touch with it.

Dr. Minich: Being in touch. Just knowing.

Dr. Thomas: Just checking it off. Making acknowledgement, yeah.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, so that's that. Okay. So then, the third one about reward. That being driven towards an addiction because of a reward. One of the reasons for reward and the fact of being a driver, a driver driver, an overachiever, working so hard, a workaholic, feeling like we need to get something on the outside of us.

So one quick exercise people can do. I call it the energy inventory exercise where you take a piece of paper. You can fold it in two. Or you can just make a line down the middle. And on one side you write all the things that give you energy. And write it all down.

Maybe it's going up into the mountains and taking a hike. Maybe it's listening to certain music. Maybe it's having a conversation with a certain friend. Be exhaustive and time yourself. Five minutes, just five minutes just to go through all the things that give you energy.

Dr. Thomas: At that moment or in general?

Dr. Minich: It could be at that moment. Yeah, it's true because things can change. And then, spend another five minutes writing down all the things that zap your energy. What takes it away? And spend the same amount of time and write all that stuff down. Maybe it's going to work. Maybe it's driving. Maybe it's being stuck in a commute. Maybe it's, goodness, it's being around a certain person. Whatever that is, make the list.

And then compare the sizes of the list. Is the size of what nourishes you shorter than what depletes you? You'll want to know that. Just look at the inventory. And then start to adjust so that you don't feel like life is taking energy from you to the point that you need something. You need joy. And you've got to fill it up with reward. Just make a subtle shift.

And all these things, sometimes it's like one little thing that we do. We work like a snail on one little thing. I think we get so used to overachieving that we want to overachieve in our personal growth. And personal growth works a little bit differently. We can do something really small.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, just chip away at it.

Dr. Minich: Just chip away. Yeah, that's a great analogy.

Dr. Thomas: So question for you on that one on the takes away energy or gives energy. Where does our addiction fall on that ledger? So if I spend too much time gaming, or Internet, or drinking, or smoking weed, or shooting up, because I might feel, momentarily, that it gives me energy because actually I'm in withdrawal from having over done it yesterday.

So when I first have my substance of choice or my behavior of choice, it's a little boost. So I might be tempted to say, "This gives me energy." But isn't it maybe on the other side of the ledger?

Dr. Minich: It could be on both. And if we're really honest with ourselves, what I would say is that there can be certain things that fall under both categories. And what I usually do, when I'm workshopping, with people is I have them do very quick stream of consciousness activities. There's also another device that people can wear for fun if you like little tech gadgets. It's called HeartMath. Do you know HeartMath?

Dr. Thomas: I do. I'll confess. I purchased it. And I haven't used it.

Dr. Minich: Well, let me tell you how it applies to what you just asked, which is a really great question. If you wear the HeartMath device, and you just put it on your earlobe, and what the HeartMath device is doing is it's assessing your autonomic nervous system. It's looking at heart rate and brain function simultaneously and giving you a readout in a color.

And the heart doesn't lie. So if you're doing this list, and you're on the plus side trying to think of all the green/gold things, things that give you energy, and you start writing things down, and your heart rate variability goes into red, there's something that's not right.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, you may not be truthful.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, you might not. And I actually had that case working with somebody on their food. A 62-year old man, who I did have him connected to the HeartMath device. And we were talking about his food addictions. And one of the things he said was that he liked chocolate. And how chocolate was so healthy for him. And it was fascinating to me to be working with somebody like me who also had this chocolate fascination/obsession/addiction at one point. And what I noticed was that his heart rate variability went into red.

Dr. Thomas: When he said that it was a good thing?

Dr. Minich: Yeah, and he was talking about it like it was a good thing. He was so excited. And looking at him and his body language, you would think--

Dr. Thomas: You would think it was a good thing.

Dr. Minich: it was a good thing.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, it's like when I was drinking. And I couldn't wait to have my drinks, right?

Dr. Minich: Yeah.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, but uh, uh, HeartMath doesn't lie.

Dr. Minich: It probably doesn't. And then, he was talking about salads and green leafy vegetables. Even though, he wasn't so excited, I looked over at the heart rate variability. And I called his attention to it. And I'm like, "Look at this. It's in green." Your heart knows. So I do think being honest with yourself and really coming into that place of authenticity is key.

The fourth modality, I think, is essential is movement, physical movement. Even in the addictive world, there's the 15 minutes wait out. And so you hear about if you are in a place where you feel like you need to engage in something that's not beneficial for you, removing yourself from the situation for 15 minutes.

Dr. Thomas: Okay, pause.

Dr. Minich: Pause.

Dr. Thomas: Time out.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Thomas: And then see if you really have to do that 15 minutes later. Is that what you're talking about?

Dr. Minich: Yeah, in 15 minutes, one/five, your neurochemistry can change and alter and especially removing yourself from the situation. So let's just say that I feel a strong draw to chocolate. And I'm in my kitchen. I want to move.

Move out of that for 15 minutes. So I can go outside my front door and walk for seven and a half minutes. Walk back to my front door in another seven and a half minutes. That's 15 minutes. A breath a fresh air got my body circulating. And chances are, I'm not going to have that same draw to wanting to have that substance.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, that's a really good...I've never had it explained like that. Thank you for sharing that because it makes total sense. We're so impulsive with our addictions. It's subconscious I think. We don't even think about it. If it's alcohol, you just grab the drink. And if you were to take a walk, that angst that was making you grab that drink, maybe might leave.

Dr. Minich: You get perspective. Yeah. And that's one of the things of emotional eating, in fact, is its immediacy. You got to do it now. You feel something. You want to eat it. Drink it. And it's usually very specific. That's how you know if you are addicted if it's for one thing. And it can't just be many things. And it's really connected into hunger. So that is the fourth thing, physical movement. Like actually moving yourself away. Your physical body has to move that 15 minutes.

The fifth thing is what I talk about with—you were asking about it—affirmations. This is something that I used a lot on my own personal journey is having affirmative words. And it was really funny because when I get into something, I'm really into it. I think there's that phrase about addictive personalities like an all or nothing. Like when you get into it, you can apply all of that wonderful energy--

Dr. Thomas: To positive things.

Dr. Minich: to something that's really healing. So I did, especially with affirmations. And when I got into affirmations, I had them on my bathroom mirror. I had them on the steering wheel of my car, on the refrigerator, on my juicer, my blender. These words were all around me.

Dr. Thomas: Positive words.

Dr. Minich: Positive words. Things like joy. Sometimes just one word even at the dining room table. What I ended up doing was making a card deck of positive word affirmations. I just came out with my second deck. It's called Nourish Your Whole Self, which is actually what we're talking about is how do you nourish, not just your food, but through everything, through the words

that we speak, through how we move our bodies, through the rewards and our giving and our taking of energy. So there's a lot we can do.

The sixth way is to do a visualization. Imagining. "Imagination is more important than knowledge," as Einstein would say.

Dr. Thomas: So walk us through a brief visualization.

Dr. Minich: Yeah. Well, first of all, we have visualizations if we dream at night. We have visualizations during the day for day dreaming. We're always imagining when we let ourselves go there. I worked with an oncologist in Chicago who did a lot of active work in very specific, guided imagery techniques to help people that had cancer to feel more in control of their immune system and of their bodies.

So how could we walk through that? It could be something as simple as closing the eyes. Oftentimes, when you do a guided imagery, you close the eyes in order to imagine. And you can go inside. Look at your body. You can imagine yourself how you feel when you have this specific substance in your life. It can be a feeling, guided imagery. I wrote a book of 100 different visualizations.

Dr. Thomas: Oh, wow!

Dr. Minich: A lot of them.

Dr. Thomas: So that's why I'm pinning you down to one. You go, "I have 100."

Dr. Minich: How do I just zone in to one?

Dr. Thomas: Just pick one.

Dr. Minich: One simple one that I do now is with color. So just closing the eyes. Taking a nice deep breath in and imagining the color red coming into us. And having that just disperse through and energizing us because the color red is very energizing, and healing, and passionate. Back to that word passionate, as you were saying.

Dr. Thomas: Passion. Passion.

Dr. Minich: And then, going through the colors. So visualization and having one that you do consistently. A lot of the mindfulness research will suggest

that meditation, visualization, these types of mind/body therapies are excellent when they're practiced consistently. And it's not like we have to do them for 30 minutes a day. We can do it...Visualization can take, goodness, like 15 seconds. We close our eyes. We just imagine something.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah. I have one that I share with patients who are struggling with anxiety. And that is just to follow your breath. Take slow deep breaths [*demonstrating deep breaths*] in and then out. And some people call it square breathing.

Dr. Minich: Square breaths, yeah.

Dr. Thomas: Right. So you go around the square, but slowly so you don't hyperventilate. And that can really help. Just maybe lower your shoulders and take a deep breath. Yeah.

Dr. Minich: Well, that'll change your heart variability. Back to the HeartMath. Just a breath.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah. If you have a place you love...So when I go to Maui once a year, as my reward for all the hard work I've done all year--

Dr. Minich: I'm glad you do that.

Dr. Thomas: I have this space. And I can close my eyes. And I can hear the ocean. But maybe it's a waterfall. Maybe it's the ocean. Maybe it's the sound in the forest. You can go somewhere where you find peace.

Dr. Minich: Yes. There was a study out not too long ago that showed that there was a picture of nature. That it reduced people's anger compared to not having a picture of anger. And that was done in a prison. So they would put a poster--

Dr. Thomas: Just the presence of a picture.

Dr. Minich: a poster of a forest of many trees. Or a poster of a beach. Back to the ocean. So soothing. And so when we see that image and we remind ourselves of that image, we go back to that. And our mind's eye can be really powerful.

Dr. Thomas: Really powerful. We forget to do a lot of these simple things. So if you have come to the place like I had not that long ago where I'd forgotten, just apply some of these tips.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, it's just, again, a couple of seconds.

Dr. Thomas: I think you were almost there.

Dr. Minich: The last one is meditation or prayer, either one. And for some other people, I would just even say stillness. You mentioned it when you said, "We are human doings rather than human beings." And we are so much in the mode of moving and doing, and not in the mode of stillness, reflection, silence.

And that's something that I've been cultivating for myself, even now. I used to be very much a doing person. And I've really just had to get real about my schedule and what I'm committing to. And when I do that, when I have that place of stillness within, it's like you're in that place of calm.

And when you're in that place of calm, you're going to make different choices in the outer world than you would if you weren't frenetic, chaotic. Like, "I've got to get this done. I'm going to reach for caffeine because I need to fuel my thinking. I need to be sharp." And really letting go of that.

So I just watched...I don't know if you know who Ram Dass is. But he's done a lot of work in consciousness. And I was watching his documentary last night about just a place of stillness. And how important that is. It doesn't matter what we call it. If we want to call it meditation and we do it in a certain way with a mantra or something that we say over and over.

Even today, I was saying the Our Father going down the road just in a very meditative way as I was driving home. So a prayer for people that are into prayers. So whatever your choice of meditative medium is. You can do nothing. You can do something. You can be walking in a garden very still. You can walk outside being in nature. It creates calmness.

Dr. Thomas: I've always been such a high-energy person. It's like, "Meditation really? Are you kidding me?" And then, I read a book. It was very simple about the fact that you can just calm. Focus on breathing. And when thoughts come, I thought I had to keep them out. So then--

Dr. Minich: That's impossible.

Dr. Thomas: I'm spending all my energy trying to keep these thoughts out. "I can't meditate." And this author was just saying, "Just acknowledge the thought. And move on."

Dr. Minich: Like clouds.

Dr. Thomas: Yeah, just let it pass. And it was like, "I could do it." not very well. So you can meditate, too. If Dr. Paul can, you can. Oh, gosh.

Dr. Minich: So that was seven modalities. Seven reasons for addictions. At least, how I see it. And what I would say is this might seem overwhelming to most people because we give a lot of information. What I typically ask people to do is pick three things. Pick three little things. And if three seems like too much, just pick one.

One little thing that you can say, "Hey, you know what? What they were talking about really speaks to me. It's this thing in this moment." Write it down. When we actually write something, going from brain to hand, there's a different sense of really connecting to it. And then, doing it. Knowledge is one thing. But when we move knowledge into action, and then that action keeps repeating, it becomes a part of us. So we just have to do that slowly. We just pick one little thing.

Dr. Thomas: In your book, you're talking about a 21-day program. But is it seven things you do three times over" Or is it 21 different days?

Dr. Minich: I know back to the three and the seven. I give people a menu of seven things that they can choose. They can do them all if they want. Or they can pick and choose. And they can just say, "Hey, Deanna, I just want to work on one thing. This whole program, I just want to focus on color. I just want to focus on food."

I let you select because you are your best healer. I can provide the tools for you to choose from. But I never want to do the same restriction. And put you in a box and say, "It has to be done in this way." I give you choice.

Dr. Thomas: Wonderful, wonderful. So my sense was when I was in my addiction is my body was pretty toxic. I was filling it with substances I didn't need. I wasn't eating well. I wasn't resting well. I wasn't exercising. I certainly wasn't doing anything spiritual or self-reflective. Basically, I was a mess.

And to start this journey and then to continue so that we can get into action, do you have any final thoughts, final suggestions, last wisdom, you want to impart to our audience?

Dr. Minich: Intuitively, the word I'm getting right now is believe. Believe in yourself. The more that we really connect...I think it's taken me decades to realize this. I'm finally realizing it in the latter half of my 40s here where it's not about beating yourself up about anything.

I like that you're so vulnerable. And you tell everybody what you've been through. And there is this sense of, "I was there." And really owning it, and being that, and being true, and showing who you are, and having an acceptance of that.

Not to say that we might feel like, "Gosh, what if I'd made this other choice?" But I feel like it's all perfect in its own way. There's always a lesson. And if we just believe in ourselves, and we really have that trust, and that confidence—so many people lack the confidence in who they are—and so we believe in you.

Dr. Thomas: You do?

Dr. Minich: I really feel like...Sometimes I just wish there'd be some way to put confidence, trust, belief into a bottle. And they'd be like the best supplement ever.

Dr. Thomas: Yes, yes. Well, you, watching this right now, the two of us believe in you--

Dr. Minich: Absolutely.

Dr. Thomas: because you're just fine. You get to draw a line in the sand. And you get to recreate yourself starting from this moment forward. And we've got some tools. Thank you for sharing all this wisdom and your tools and your book. And I think there's even a way people can even access you online so they can just get right to the information.

Dr. Minich: Yeah, sure. You can reach out to me if you want. And my website is my name, DeannaMinich.com. And that's the mother site. So you can find the *Whole Detox* book. I have a podcast. I have a blog. I've trained a number of practitioners. And I recommend seeing those practitioners. They're really fabulous in what they know about food and spirit. So yeah, stay connected.

And thank you for putting on this summit. I know what it's like to put on a summit. All the work that it takes. And so I know that sometimes when there are viewers, they can tap into your passion for what you're doing here. And I know that it takes a lot of work. So a huge pat on the back for you.

Dr. Thomas: No, thank you for letting me in to your home on a Sunday. She had things to do, folks. So stay tuned. Check in. And thank you for watching. I'm Dr. Paul.