

Adjust This... - Episode 4

Intro Music: Fluff this. Let's eat, drink, and be merry.

Mell: Hi, everybody. It's me, Mell. You miss me? And yes, I realize it has been over two months since my last episode. I'm so super sorry, but life kinda threw a bunch of curveballs, and I have been adapting. Which is the topic of this podcast. Adaptation. Modification. Life throws curveballs all the time, and we've got to face them with joy instead of dread.

Zero expectations equals zero disappointments. If you don't expect anything, you get nothing. You're not so disappointed, are you? At least that's my motto. You hope for the best, prepare for the worst, is what they say. So how do we deal with being thrown curveballs that require modification and adjustment in a big way into a source of creativity and joy?

My mother's health kind of turned, and she could not eat or drink anything for 10 days. She was on an IV for a while, and we spent some time in the hospital. She had, an endoscopy and some radiation, and now she is able to drink liquids and purees. You got to get kind of creative with liquids and purees.

Plus, she requires an extremely large amount of calories, so trying to get those in that format, is a little tricky. It's daunting, and I will be honest it gets to you. I'm human. It gets to me. You try and figure it out. You're trying to do the best thing, but the funny thing about everything that's delicious pureed soups and things like that, unless they're cream soups for the most part, There's not a lot of calories in this stuff, i.e. slim fast is a liquid diet. Liquid diets don't really provide for a lot of calories. It slips down your throat and it comes right out. So it's a tricky situation, but I am taking it on as a challenge and a source of knowledge gathering. This whole process has put a lot of really wonderful people in my mom's path, some phenomenal physicians and assistants and nurses and physical therapists and occupational therapists, and we've learned so much from them.

It has also put an opportunity in front of me where I was offered the chance to study culinary medicine. And earned my certification there. So I'm very blessed that I get that opportunity. So all of these things, it is my mother that her picky diet and whatnot, trying to get her healthy several years ago when she first became ill, that's what led me to going to culinary school in the first place to try and learn how to best give her the maximum nutrients and get her healthy as best as possible.

This is taking it to the next level. And I've learned so much. I've Really enjoyed what I've learned so far. And trust me with my time management skills, which are zero at this point in time, I'm a little bit behind, but I can't wait to get back into it full time. And some of the things have led me down other rabbit holes, learning new fun and exciting things.

For instance, I'm not sure if you're familiar with the blue zones on our planet earth. Blue zones are regions that have extremely high longevity rates and very healthy people. The top blue zones. Sardinia, Greece obviously the Mediterranean diet being one of the healthiest things you can do. It's no wonder there. But also Loma Linda, California.

What the heck is up with Loma Linda, California? I don't live far from there. I'm going to Loma Linda to find out what's up there. Why is that such a healthy place? But the biggie was for me, Okinawa, Japan. That was a big kind of aha moment because they also have the lowest rate of dementia. It's like almost non-existent there.

Their diet plays a huge part of that. And when you get into the whole science of diet and how certain things like folate is really important for dementia because it processes things, it regulates homocysteine, da da da da. Not going to bore you with all of that, but Okinawa, they pretty much have a vegetarian diet.

Fish and sea vegetables, kombu, nori, seaweeds those things are basic staples in their diet. And that plays a huge part in why their brains are healthy. Think about that. Think about how to incorporate some of that stuff into your diet if you can. But sometimes it's not just, the extreme thing with, my mother having to have purees and liquids and trying to get maximum calories.

We also are dealing with diabetes, obesity, heart disease, celiac disease, gluten tolerance, lactose intolerance. There's all kinds of health issues that are related to what we put in our mouths. And there was a time when you really couldn't substitute a whole heck of a lot. Nobody really did the research to know how to substitute things.

Now, you can't throw a stick without hitting a vegan restaurant. There's so many substitutes for animal protein. Now, animal protein builds tissue. So for my mother's instances and for my personal health instances, it's not conducive for me to be purely plant based. But you don't have to be purely plant based.

Red meat's not so hot. And everything in moderation is one thing. First of all, big huge disclaimer. Talk to your doctor and your physician before you try

anything funny with your diet. You don't know if you have an allergy. You don't know if it's bad for you. You don't know if it's good for you. Always consult your physician before you do anything to modify your diet or take any supplements or anything like that, which I'm not a huge fan of supplements because you never know what you're truly getting in them .

I think that you should get your whole foods and your nutrients from the earth and the plant. If you can hit it over the head, you can pick it up out of the ground, pick it off a tree, or you can fish it out of a river or an ocean. It's good for you. The whole point is that adaptation is sometimes necessary.

When we're told we have to modify our diet, you see it all over the place. Oh, I got to add more salads and I can't eat this anymore. I got no more bacon da. We see it as being stuck in a penalty box. Sorry for the hockey reference, but it's like being put in the penalty box. It doesn't have to be.

Let's look at it as a challenge, a creative challenge, an adventure in exploring something else, trying something different. I will admit that I was a hardcore, I'll never be a vegan, except for I'm an animal lover, so for one year, way back when, I was a vegetarian because of my love for animals and whatnot.

I was a vegetarian, but I missed In N Out. I'll love a good burger every now and then. But I've become far more open minded about things, and I've gotten very interested in plant based cooking. And I do interchange things just for the fun of it, as opposed to it being something to do for penalty or to cut back on something, I do it as a flavor differentiation.

And it's made some wonderful things, I really enjoy the adventure with that. It's fun to goof around. Things are different nowadays. You didn't have the substitutes and the plant substitutes. You didn't have people looking into it and providing whole food options like avocado as opposed to butter or applesauce as opposed to butter.

Agave nectar was not really a substitute. Agave wasn't really on the shelves not so long ago. There's a lot more options and it's a lot easier to do good on your plate while still being delicious. Even with baking. Gluten free. Gluten free is everywhere. You look on every menu almost and it has gluten free options.

There are gluten free ways to make everything with all the flour substitutes. Almond flour, rice flour, tapioca, coconut, amaranth, graham. All of those flours can be substituted in just to make some delicious pastries and baked goods. When you're talking about things to substitute for butter, you've got olive

oil, coconut oil, pumpkin puree, Greek yogurt, applesauce, and bananas even can be used.

And then there's the whole lactose intolerant substitution. Soy milk, almond milk, cashew milk, coconut milk, rice milk, oat milk. And then with sugar itself, which I'm not a refined sugar person, I gave up refined sugar a long time ago. Agave nectar, which is now readily available, honey, and cane sugar. You can use cane sugar, it's the processing.

We in America, back in the 50s, got so into the convenience aspect of food. TV dinners, Swanson, Libbyland, Stouffer's, and I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that. Well, I kind of am. Sorry, but I am. Some of it is really good. And frozen foods, now you can get frozen foods, especially with the way that geography is.

Some people don't have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, but flash frozen and even some canned stuff can be just as, have all the same nutrients as fresh. But of course, we always want to try and get fresh wherever we can. It's just you cannot beat a fresh tomato or fresh picked herbs. If you can't have access to it or you have the capability of growing it on your windowsill, by all means, give it a go because there's just such a satisfaction to that.

When you get your own tomato off of a vine or pick a squash, there's a neat thing that comes with sitting down to a meal that you know you grew and you prepared with your own hands. That's a neat satisfaction thing, or at least to me, but I'm weird and we all know this, right? Anyhow, the whole point is that if you treat anything that needs to be modified, it's like you don't get the promotion, you don't get the grade that you wanted, you don't get the seat you were looking for, you can't take that vacation, you're not going to make it to see grandma this Thanksgiving.

If we all look at those things with defeat, it's going to dredge us down. The same thing with your diet, if you can't have a certain something, look at it as an invitation to explore new things and other avenues. Don't look at it as you are being penalized and the door is being slammed. So much is so depressing these days.

So many people are having such a hard time. That, it's very important to me that we try to flip the script on stuff as much as possible. Don't let the negativity win. In spite of it, be joyful. In spite of all that's not great with things, there is a lot of great and we really gotta hit the spotlight on that stuff.

And don't take for granted one second that there is good stuff, because you never know when it's gonna be snatched out from underneath you. So enjoy it, use it while you got it. There's always gonna be a pile of laundry, there's always gonna be work to be done, there's always gonna be dust, there's gonna be a pile of something somewhere, it's just life, that's the way it is.

Sometimes the piles are bigger, oh my gosh, this past two months, besides my mom, and then his majesty the beast is going through something, puberty or something, if you don't know, it's Benny, my dog, Ben yay. He is a ten month old golden doodle who's bigger than my mother and weighs more than my mother at this point in time.

And I love him so much, he's snoring next to me as I record, so I apologize for the sound in the background. But I love this thing. But he's a terror. He's a paper shredder. He will steal your glasses and shred paper no matter what it is. It's just obnoxious. And then the freezer rips and starts leaking in the line.

How does that even happen? The lining of the freezer cracks and it's not freezing, so it's dripping into the refrigerator and shorts it out. So I had to get a new refrigerator. I got a ton of frozen stuff in there. I'm a chef. Whoa, not a good thing. Put on my big girl pants, got that resolved in 24 hours.

The next thing was, the dishwasher went kaput. Have a big, huge issue on that dishwasher anyway, that was under warranty and the jerk that repaired it a while ago didn't do it right. And so I had to pay 150 bucks for the guy to come out and do what he was supposed to do right the first time. Very annoying.

So when I called them reluctantly, they informed me that it was out of warranty and that it would cost. Basically as much as getting a new dishwasher to have them come out and replace the part, which they were sure it was, and I was sure it was too because I had used my resources on YouTube to rule out other problems.

So I ordered the part myself and fixed it. Yay. I've been through three blenders and I'm like, you know what, I always was the person that said no way in hell will I spend that much money on a Vitamix blender. There's just no way. Do you want a college education or a blender? They're just exorbitant. But I have gone through three blenders in the past year, and I even, I love my shark, but the big blender, making my mom's soups and stuff, and the purees it's a mandatory tool right now.

And I can't be without my blender. But it cracked and butternut squash all over the place. On the high ceiling, on the floor, on the counter, on the refrigerator. If it was within 20 feet, there was butternut squash puree on it. Including me, because, anyhow. So, I bit the bullet, sort of, and I bought a premium refurbished Vitamix.

Gets delivered, I'm all excited, making soup, super creamy, super silky, I'm like, I cannot believe the power in this guy, it, the recipe says to turn it all the way up, but I'm like scared to turn it all the way up, I only do it half, and the thing stops. Stops. Dead stop. Okay, maybe it overheated, shouldn't overheat for that many, even for a renewed one.

Seriously? The thing never started back up again. Fortunately, I had the brain cell left to keep the box and keep it out of Benny's general direction because he would have shredded it to pieces and I was able to send it back and I did it. I bit the whole bullet and I bought a Vitamix Explorium. And let me tell you, I get it now.

I understand. I understand what the hype is about. The thing is amazing. I wish I would have done it sooner. So start your CUSCAN or whatever it is and start saving up for one because it is a tool that you will be happy you had. So I'm very happy about that. I'm sold. I'm a Vitamix convert. The dog has somehow figured out how to open the door to the pantry.

Yay! I woke up in the morning, I've got box of, or pastina, it's teeny, teeny, tiny little pasta. strewn from the pantry down the hall all over the family room. It looked like it snowed. And then there's, what is that? It looks like snow. No, it's a giant box of baking soda all over from the front door to the back door everywhere.

Just amazing. And that's on top of all of the papers that he has shredded during the night. It's, I need a trainer. I really do. I need a trainer. Loved this guy so much and he's so wicked smart. It's scary. And as he sits here snoring next to me, I wouldn't change a thing. But things happen, and we adapt.

Let's look at it as a challenge, not a penalty, not as a punishment, not as being ground down every fiber one inch at a time. We have to try and flip the script and find the joy no matter where we are or what we're dealing with. And life is hard. Family, friends, we get sick, things happen. It's not going to be a shock.

It's expected to come. There's going to be a shoe drop in somewhere, but be prepared to kick it behind with optimism. You can do this. You can make a

change. You can get healthy. It doesn't matter what shape or size you are. If you are healthy, healthy comes in all shapes and sizes. You don't have to be a size one.

As a matter of fact, if you're a size one, you're probably not that healthy. Ask a few supermodels that are now retired. They'd argue that point with you. Being healthy and happy starts with us taking a moment to see what we are eating to know what's on the plate. Fixing it ourselves, feeling that gratification, that in itself will make the meal all the more enjoyable.

And I'm not talking popping a can of SpaghettiOs open, which, don't get me wrong, I've been known to do. Again, everything in moderation, consult your physician. It starts with the plate, to the mouth, to the brain, to connect to the universe. Make the time to take care of yourself, nourish yourself however you need to, whether it's with soy, vegetables, fish, whatever.

But see it as joy. Food is life. Air is life. Water is life. Those things should be given the reverence that they deserve. Anyway, my rant is done for now. I'm going to try and do a Wine of the Week, like I can do that since this podcast is two months overdue, but I'm a big, big, big fan right now of Tempranillo.

If you don't know what Tempranillo is, Give it a try. It's not too heavy. It'll be light on the tannins. Portuguese Tempranillo is absolutely delicious and I find it to be a really nice autumn wine. It's not a good hearty winter red but it's just perfect as we're making the transition from summer to autumn to winter.

Give Tempranillo a try. I've got a bottle that's waiting and calling my name. Try to make a switch to something plant based this week. Try something a little different. Make a little change. Switch out the steak for, let's say, some salmon. Salmon, which is really, really, really, really good for you. High in omega fatty acids.

All the fatty fishes are good for wrinkles, people. If you're fighting wrinkles, which I am, try and get that in, but it's good for your heart too. So be happy, be healthy, eat, drink, and be merry. I'm hoping to have some very specific topics as I'm learning new things, phytonutrients and polyphenols and all kinds of exciting stuff like that.

I know. Can't you wait? You can't wait. Can you? Anyhow, that's it for now. I will talk at you soon. I hope that you are happy. Eat, drink, and be merry, my loves. Sláinte!