



Healing the Whole Heart

Guest: Margaret Christenson

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Dr. Menolascino: Welcome to the Women's Heart Health Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Mark Menolascino, medical director of the Meno Clinic in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Thank you so much for joining us. This is your chance to hear the international world's experts to achieve optimal health, optimal women's health, and prevent and reverse heart disease. We're very fortunate today to be joined by Dr. Margaret Christenson. Thank you so much for joining us, Margaret.

Dr. Christenson: Hi, Mark, and so happy to be here.

Dr. Menolascino: Well, let me tell the viewers a little bit about you. Margaret Christenson is board-certified in integrated medicine. It is an institute of functional medicine's certified practitioner, and was a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist for 23 years. She first became interested in functional medicine's 17 years ago when trying to solve the riddle of her own health challenges.

Initially focusing on women's hormonal health, her boutique practice is now gone into the Carpathia Collaborative, a large multidisciplinary functional medicine practice based in Dallas, covering the full spectrum of complex chronic disease. Carpathia, which is the ship that rescued passengers from the Titanic, guides clients to safe harbor away from the Titanic of our

floundering conventional health care model. Carpathia provides 365 functional lifestyle nutritional medicine. It includes onsite teaching kitchen, yoga studio, and education library hosting community learning events. She's a faculty member of the Institute for functional medicine since 2007, one of the best lecturers on the team, may I add. And Dr. Christenson is super-passionate about educating her clients and her colleagues about whole systems medicine. Again, what a background, and thank you so much for joining us, Margaret.

Dr. Christenson: Yeah, you're welcome. I'm just really really happy to be here, and I'm happy to talk about what we're going to talk about too.

Dr. Menolascino: For me, I'm fortunate, when I get to sit in the audience and listen to you or when we're up on stage presenting together. But how great for all the viewers to hear from the teacher of teachers.

Dr. Christenson: Oh, thanks. Thank you.

Dr. Menolascino: You really bring a lot to it. You mentioned doing this change through the Carpathian type of model in functional medicine way back in '07. You were really one of the pioneers that saw this new pattern. Was there something that started that transition for you?

Dr. Christenson: Absolutely. Actually it was back in 2001. I got really really super sick. I couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. I had this very booming OBGYN practice that was doing great. I had all these midwives working with me. We were just doing this really amazing progressive tear, and I was just feeling worse and worse and worse and worse. And very long long story short, it took 8 years to figure out what it was, but it led me into functional medicine in 2002, and then I started teaching in 2007. And basically the underlying cause was environmental toxicity. I had severe mold poisoning and didn't know it, and my whole family was sick. And that is what got me in. And for that I'm really grateful.

And I know you had Ann Shippy, I think, talk about toxic mold, and I'll talk about that at the very end. But anyway, that's what got me into functional medicine. And it was just absolutely amazing when I started applying these principles to what I was doing with women and women's health care and hormonal balancing. It absolutely just changed the game. And it wasn't all about "a pill for every ill" and "drug it out, cut it out," which is basically how we're taught. It was, "Hey, let's figure out what's the underlying root causes at all levels, body, mind, and spirit." So, there we go.

Dr. Menolascino: You know, I've heard people talk about "give the pill for the ill," but I don't think I've heard "cut it out" or "drug it out." Is that unique to obstetrician gynecologists?

Dr. Christenson: Well, that's, yeah.

Dr. Menolascino: Well, you know, some of my favorite practitioners are the female specialists. And it's just that the tools are so limited of what they provide in the training. And to get this additional background like that... I know, for you, you talk about the 5 levels of healing and 5 keys. Is there a strategy that you like to structure this around for your clients?

Dr. Christenson: Yeah, absolutely. This is Dr. Klinghardt who defined these five levels, which he actually based on Patanjali, who was the original yoga teacher who wrote down all the yoga philosophies, but basically when you're looking at an illness, there are 5 different levels that we have to focus on. The first would be the physical level. The second would be the energetic level. The third would be the mind level. The fourth would be the transpersonal level. And the fifth would be the connection to something much larger than ourselves, the divine.

So in western medicine we're taught, really, on that first level and conventional level, which is "What's your biochemistry, physiology? What's your lab numbers? What tests can we do to figure out the imbalances?" And even in functional medicine, you know, that's a lot of where our focus is, nutritional deficits, what toxins, blah, blah, blah. That's a physical piece. But the next level up, I think, is where medicine is going in the future, this sort of Star Trek thing. And this is energy. And how does energy affect us at an energy level, whether it's sound, whether it's light? Actually EMFs, electromagnetic fields is huge, huge, huge problem with us.

And what is also the energy of our culture? What are we watching? What are we listening to? What are we hearing all the time? Is it all this chronic toxic negative energy? Stress, stress, stress, stress, stress. When we watch the news, you watch all these horrible television shows that are really negative. So important to switch the energy around. Use sound, light, vibration, joy, play. That kind of energy, it's amazing. And I know that you've done that.

And the third, again, the mind. What are our thoughts? What did we grow up with? And this is where epigenetics really comes in. We know that we can actually change our body's physiology based on our thinking patterns. And

anybody who's done any studying around this, that first 6 to 7 years of life, we have a lot of patterns laid down that run subconsciously and unconsciously in our hippocampus and our limbic system. So whatever messages that we learned often stay with us through our whole lives. But those can change. But our thoughts. Whatever that mind level of what we're thinking, are we constantly in negativity as an unconscious brain. Because that will completely affect our physiology. So that's the third level.

The fourth level is what we would call transpersonal or transgenerational. And this is where trauma and generational trauma comes in, as well as at the third level in terms of our personal life experience is going to affect our thoughts. But we can transgenerationally carry a lot of stuff and a lot of abuse. But when we go back, whatever complex illness that we are dealing with, if we are cognizant of what are the whole constellation of family patterns and the technique that Klinghardt uses I think is called family constellations, something like that. So that is important to acknowledge.

And I'll just say for my own situation, my father who's 92 is a concentration camp survivor. He worked for the underground resistance movement and he was captured by the Nazis. And he's Catholic, but it didn't matter. Of course, so much embodied trauma there that was never really dealt with and that gets passed on generationally. So we know that there's a lot of depression, anxiety, and, of course, toxic mold. What is that about? It's about toxic gases. What is Auschwitz about? It's about toxic gases. So it's really interesting to then look at those family constellation patterns at that fourth level.

And the fifth level is our connection to something that's larger than ourselves. So to the divine in whatever form you want to characterize that. And it's so, so important. Whether it's nature. Look at that incredibly beautiful, you live in such an amazing, amazing spiritually beautiful place behind you. But that connection that there is a larger energy that flows through the entire universe and all of us and whatever label you want to put on it. To tap into that is absolutely essential in order to create a whole-body healing. Whether or not you are cured, you can heal. So those are the 5 levels.

Dr. Menolascino: Well, Margaret, I love the way you wove all that together and you laid out such a great plan. I'm just envisioning myself as a client sitting in front of you in your office and hearing you talk to me like this. I think everybody's wishing they could fly to Texas to come see you.

Dr. Christenson: Thank you.

Dr. Menolascino: You really have such an eloquent way of expressing these really complex ideas. We've talked with other speakers about the adverse childhood experiences and how they contribute to future life issues. But you're talking about transgenerational trauma being manifested in next generations. That's kind of a hard concept for people to grasp. Can we dig into that a little bit?

Dr. Christenson: Sure, sure. Absolutely. So what we know is that when traumatic events happen, there's actually epigenetic changes to our DNA. So it can change the methylation pattern, so your ability to detoxify, for example. The ability to produce hormones or produce neurotransmitters can be impacted or affected. And we certainly know this at a chemical level. So we are understanding now that exposures of our mothers and grandmothers to something toxic during pregnancy can last for 3 or 4 generations down the line and it can impact us. We also know at an energetic level the same things that can happen. So if there's been a lot of trauma, that can also affect us generationally. And there goes my alarm. Hold on.

Dr. Menolascino: It's okay. I thought those were divine chimes.

Dr. Christenson: Well, actually, it goes off every two hours on the 11 to remind me to be mindful of the present.

Dr. Menolascino: I'm just going to continue. I love when our speakers have these self-care hits. And this is something that everybody can do. And here's Dr. Margaret Christenson. She doesn't just talk the talk, she walks the walk.

Dr. Christenson: So if anybody has actually ever done any 12 step work, they'll know that the 11th step is improving our conscious contact with God (inaudible 11:35). So I just remind myself every 2 hours. That's part of my job.

Dr. Menolascino: And I love how you say that. Not to get deep into that topic, but how do you understand it? How do you connect? Everybody has a different relationship with themselves, with their higher divine, and just find a relationship. Whatever that may be for you. I do think that that's a big powerful part of healing.

Dr. Christenson: Absolutely. And for me I have a daily practice of mindfulness and meditation where I take at least 20 minutes to do some meditation and sometimes I'll use guided. Sometimes I'll use silent. I have a whole stack of daily readers and there's 2 that I really recommend for folks. One is called A Pocketful of Miracles by Joan Borysenko. And Joan has

written amazing, amazing books including a book that I really recommend called A Woman's Book of Life, which correlates the physiological changes with that psychospiritual level.

So, Joan Borysenko's A Pocketful of Miracles is a great daily reader. And the other one is called The Language of Letting Go by Melody Beattie. That's a daily reader. She wrote a very famous book called Codependent No More and another one called Beyond Codependency. I think that for women that is absolutely essential reading. Completely essential reading.

So it's all learning about self-care. So those are the things that I do every morning and I've had a very long and interesting journey to get here actually. If anybody wants to watch, I have a YouTube called Reclaiming Sacred Sexuality which is all about that connection to something greater than oneself and particularly around the whole sexual realm.

So, we were talking about ACEs, Adverse Childhood Events, and also really kind of the whole Me Too movement. When we look at the fact that at least 1 out of every 3 women have had some type of sexual trauma of some sort. It can be from being molested or inappropriately talked to to really severe rape, incest, that kind of thing. And the other thing is 1 out of every 5 to 6 men.

So, when we understand what that does to our entire body, to our entire psyche, to impacting the genetic expression in our bodies, to impacting our limbic system to impacting our hippocampus at a physiological level, and how that type of energy is translated over many years and many generations... If you grow up in a house that has had... Often times alcohol and physical abuse go together. And sexual abuse, any kind of addictive behavior. It doesn't have to be alcohol. Actually, some of the worst, spiritual abuse in very tightly super highly religious households that are, sort of, fanatic.

If you look at...and this is all religions. It doesn't matter which ones you're looking at, you can see really some severe spiritual abuse. And sometimes worse sexual abuse goes on there.

Dr. Menolascino: You know, Margaret, what you're really kind of hinting at, if I may, it seems streams of behavior that just probably aren't good for people in general.

Dr. Christenson: Absolutely.

Dr. Menolascino: We talk about a lot of feelings being in the pit of our stomach or being gut-wrenching. Or we talk about people dying of a broken heart. And I know you speak about courage and being wholehearted. How do you see those 2 going together? And how do you encourage people to be more encouraging and wholehearted?

Dr. Christenson: Well, it's interesting, because the word courage or courage and it comes from the French word "cour," c-o-u-r which means heart, with heart. So to be courageous is to do things with heart. And so even if you're fearful, you can take that heartfelt energy and just do what you need to do. And then again the whole concept of wholeheartedness, using your entire being to move forward. So there's a, Brother Steindl-Rast has a very fabulous conversation that he has with David Whyte on Midlife and the Great Unknown. It's another great thing to listen to.

But he talks about that sometimes that the antidote to exhaustion is not always rest, but it's wholeheartedness. So, it's doing whatever that you're doing and bringing that great power of love into it. And courage. And that courageousness. And facing your demons. And looking at yourself first before you point your fingers at anybody else. And moving forward even in very difficult times.

Dr. Menolascino: I love when you dig into the word courage and talk about this wholeheartedness and leading with the heart. That's something that we talked with some other speakers about, heart math, and about finding this coherence. Do you use things like heart math with some of your patients? Or what are some of the skills do you help them to leave your clinic with?

Dr. Christenson: Well, we have a lot of meditation programs here. And sound baths. A heart math is something I totally have wanted to introduce into our clinic. We use a lot of Annie Hopper's work and retraining the brain and I send a lot of things like EMDR and psychotherapy, 12 steps.

Dr. Menolascino: Can you talk a little bit about EMDR? I don't think a lot of people know about EMDR. It's a very powerful --

Dr. Christenson: Yeah, I always forget what it stands for. Eye Movement Desensitization techniques. Something like that.

Dr. Menolascino: Exactly.

Dr. Christenson: And again, it's just another way of rewiring the brain where a current trauma is brought to mind and using eye movements... Or there's also a device that you can actually hold in your fingers where you get these physical sensations. But you take yourself back to, and you don't have to go deep into the trauma at all, but you can visualize a different outcome or what you could have done to change the situation. And you help to rewire the brain. And it's another amazing tool and technique.

But, you know, I just wanted to talk, I'm not sure anyone's already mentioned this, but kind of talk about electromagnetic fields. That's what heart math is working with. Our EKGs are done, because we know that the heart produces an electromagnetic field. So this getting back at that sort of energy level. We know that the brain produces an electromagnetic field. That's what we do EEGs with. And you can measure it out about 18 inches. From the heart we can measure out 6 feet. That's how far that electromagnetic field extends.

So, when you walk into a room, you can sense what's going on if you are into your intuitive knowing, if you're in your body. And that is so important for women to just totally grasp that and allow that. But you can sense what the field is when you're just picking up. And I'm sure some folks have talked about the vagus nerve. And the fact that we have more information going to the brain from the heart than coming from the brain down. So, the heart is really a receptive organ that's bringing that energetic field. And so really learning how to both open the heart to receive as well as using techniques to not block, but, what's the word, maybe screen

Dr. Menolascino: Filter.

Dr. Christenson: Filter. Thank you. Using filters. And how do you use a filter to allow in what serves you, what [inaudible] you, what opens you, what fills you... And then reflect back what doesn't serve you anymore. And that's really kind of all, heart chakra.

Dr. Menolascino: I love how you describe the brain as a receiving organ, because we think it's all just communicating out. Yet it receives through your sense of hearing, smell, and eyesight. We now think the heart is actually a communication organ. It's actually an endocrine organ as well, because it releases neurochemicals and neuropeptides that modulate the endocrine system and talk back and forth. You mentioned the heart chakra. Can you share just a brief description of how you think about the chakras? How you describe them? And what's so special about the heart chakra?

Dr. Christenson: Well, you know, it's really interesting. Again, the chakras are 7 to 8 different energy centers in the body that was originally described in yogic medicine. I just love, love, love this work. And I love Carolyn Myss's work around it, M-y-s-s. And so, really the heart chakra is about giving and receiving love. And it's the fourth chakra. The color it's associated with is green. So, if you have blocks in this energy center, and, by the way, so you have 3 chakras below that connect you to down to the earth, down to your ancestors, down to your will, your sexual and creative energies is below your heart chakra. And above it is the fifth chakra about speaking and the sixth chakra about mind and receiving and thoughts and energy. And the seventh chakra about diving energy.

So, the heart chakra meets right in the middle. And it bridges matter and energy. So, when we have blocks in this area of energy, we can have a broken heart. Or the breasts are part of the fourth chakra, so it's no wonder women have so many breast issues and breast cancer. Because sometimes in order to wake up about what's really going on in our lives, we have to cut off that piece of ourselves. Or we get a broken heart because, again, energetically something is going on that is really impacting us.

So, I always bring that in. I ask, "What are you doing to nurture yourself and are you giving yourself away? Are you trying to take care of everybody else and not giving yourself the heart nourishment you need? The sweetness and beauty and joy in your life you need."

Dr. Menolascino: Margaret, I just want to take a second to tell all of our viewers. This is Dr. Margaret Christenson. She graduated cum laude. Bachelor of Science in Biology. Top 10 in her graduating class. Alpha Omega Alpha at Baylor College. A resident at Baylor. An OBGYN. On the faculty at Baylor and one of the senior faculty members of the Institute for Functional Medicine and lectures internationally, nationally.

This is what your doctor could be like. You could have a doctor that's that good at medicine, but also can talk about trauma and adverse childhood events and chakras. Those people do exist. And I encourage everybody viewing to find someone like Dr. Margaret. They do exist. This is the future doctor you're listening to right here. Someone who can incorporate all of this and treat you as a unique personalized person like that. It's so great to hear you talk like this, Margaret. I love the way you think and I love the way you share.

You mention Joan Borysenko. And if I could leave a pearl for our viewers. We've had Carolyn here. We've had Joan here speaking. Joan taught me, when

you feel no down in your belly, don't let yes come out your mouth. And I think Obama said the 3 second rule. Count to 3 seconds before you say yes to anything. But if you feel no in your belly, don't let yes come out your mouth. That's a great self-care pearl for women.

Dr. Christenson: Yeah. Absolutely.

Dr. Menolascino: You were talking about EMFs and EKGs, EEGs, and then the vagus nerve. We talked a little bit about that in a previous talk, but let's talk more about the vagus. It's the wanderer that touches every organ, really ties the brain to just about everything. How do you visualize that? And what can we do to help it be the best she can be?

Dr. Christenson: Oh my gosh. It's such a powerful connection between the brain, the heart, and the belly. So, you talk about that, again, we have gut feelings for a reason. I'm sure somebody's commented on the 90% of our neurotransmitters are produced in our intestines. So when you're getting that gut feeling, and then oftentimes you'll get a physical feeling in your heart, a tightness or a shrinkage or pain.

And then it's connected to the brain. So there's all kinds of things that we can do. And when we have these nerve issues, you can get a lot of palpitations. You can get a lot of anxiety. Again, it can be coming from all 3 of those places. So, anything to increase the parasympathetic tone. So, that's the rest and digest, rather than sympathetic overdrive can make an amazing, amazing difference.

And we have that here at Carpathian. We have an amazing functional chiropractic neurologist. So, she's taught us all kinds of stuff. And then my naturopathic partner, Dr. Heidi Iratcabal, also. So one of the things you can do to increase vagal tone is gargle. Gargle every day. Sing. And I have a toothbrush here on my desk that I... You can just gag yourself, because that's one of the things when you brush yourself.

Dr. Menolascino: I've never heard a doctor recommend --

Dr. Christenson: Yeah.

Dr. Menolascino: But it does work.

Dr. Christenson: So, but gargling your ABCs a couple times a day, those are kind of some simple ways to --

Dr. Menolascino: I do that every morning, Margaret, just for that reason. I think it was from listening to one of your talks, actually.

Dr. Christenson: Okay.

Dr. Menolascino: I specifically do that to turn on my vagus. And then do it with the intention. When I encourage everybody to do it, look up what the vagus nerve looks like and see how it wanders all around. And while you're doing your gargle, visualize it. That's that power of intention. Do you sometimes use that in your therapies?

Dr. Christenson: Absolutely. Absolutely. Intention is perfect. And, again, if we're coming back to the vagus nerve, we know that 80% of the information running through the vagus nerve is coming from the gut and from the heart to the brain. And only 20% is efferent. So, 80% is afferent, going from the body into the brain, whereas only 20% gives directions. So, just kind of what you said, the heart is a receiving organ, the gut is a receiving organ. Our instinctual selves are so important to pay attention to that intuitive self and that energetic knowing and all that's been squashed.

And another really great author and book that I recommend is anything by Jeanne Achterberg, Dr. Jeanne Achterberg. She wrote a fabulous book called *Woman as Healer* that tells the story of women in the healing arts from the Pre-Christian times, pre-historic times, but through the witch burnings. What all the witch burnings were about. And it's women who were healers who had knowing and intuitiveness. And so paying attention to that intuitive energetic receiving that our whole bodies can do through Carolyn's work, through Joan Borysenko's work, through...

Jean Shinoda Bolen is one of my big teachers and mentors and she's an absolutely amazing author. Any of her work, *Goddesses in Every Woman*, *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Pilgrimage*, *An Urgent Message from Mother: Gather the Women, Save the World* is the ...

Dr. Menolascino: Well, you've really given us some great books for our listeners. I think you've talked about Joan Borysenko, Carolyn Myss. Can you give the other couple authors?

Dr. Christenson: Yeah, yeah. Joan Borysenko is absolutely fabulous. Carolyn Myss, M-y-s-s. It sounds like you've had her. And Dr. Jean Shinoda Bolen. She's a union psychiatrist, so she is the women's Joseph Campbell. All of her

work is about archetypal energies that we are living with and moving with and how to harness those. Absolutely fabulous, fabulous work. And Dr. Jeanne Achterberg. She has also written Visualization Imagery in Healing. She was one of the pioneers in that area. Shamanism and Modern Medicine. That's another great book that she wrote. But her book, Woman is Healer, incredibly, incredibly powerful.

Dr. Menolascino: Well, these are great. Thank you from us.

Dr. Christenson: Then we mentioned Melody Beattie who wrote all the codependence work. And I mean there's Brene Brown, I mean, all the work that she has on vulnerability.

Dr. Menolascino: So, Margaret, there's so much work for all of us to do, both men and women. How does someone start? Where would you recommend for people to, maybe, pick up a book that sings to them and start with that? Where would you recommend someone just get started?

Dr. Christenson: I really like just starting with the 2 I recommended in the beginning. Those 2 daily readers, The Language of Letting Go and A Pocketful of Miracles. I think that those are 2 really good books if we're talking about the psychospiritual end of things. I think if we're talking about women's health in general, I think anything by Christiane Northrup, which, oh my god, I didn't mention Christiane Northrup. She's absolutely one of my first mentors. And her book Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom is, when I read that I had just been out in practice --

Dr. Menolascino: It's right there.

Dr. Christenson: Great, great, and I think I have right up here, I've got Wisdom of Menopause sitting right there. But that book just really opened my mind. I'd been practicing for 2 years. I'd been out of residency. I was doing all the things I was taught, and I couldn't figure out why women kept coming back. And I'm giving them all the pills that I was taught to do, and I'm doing the surgeries, but they're still coming back. So, it was really Christiane Northrup's work and Jean Shinoda Bolen's work that opened my eyes and probably Carolyn Myss. Anything Carolyn Myss writes is fun. Louise Hay. You can heal your body.

Dr. Menolascino: And Margaret do you feel like OBGYN as a specialty is opening up more to the work you're doing? And how can we support them to do that better?

Dr. Christenson: You know, I'm hoping that as the field of OBGYN is dominated by, moving into more women, that's happening. And I think that we are seeing a lot more paying attention to the huge huge impact of our environment on hormonal health. Genetically modified foods and the air quality. Just the amount of chemicals that we put on our bodies and our face and everything. All of that has to be recognized.

And I think that finally we're starting to see a little more of that in OBGYN. But it's still the mentality of there's something wrong with your body. Menopause is ovarian failure. And you know, you're on the rag, it's the curse. Instead of teaching women about the power of their bodies, the power of their blood. And that's the work I learned really from Christiane Northrup.

Dr. Menolascino: But what you just said is so powerful. How as a culture, we've used the verbiage that's developed a mindset around these natural life events to turn them into a negative instead of celebrating the transition that women go through monthly and age-wise to condemn it. That's fascinating when you think about it that way.

Dr. Christenson: Absolutely. And that's one of the things that I did early in my career. I used to host workshops, Mother-Daughter workshops, on coming of age. And, again, celebrating periods and teaching women just every once in a while do the old-timey things and use cloth rags and then soak those rags and keep the blood and use that to water your plants with. And they'll grow like crazy. Most wars have been fought over bloodlines. So, blood is power. Blood is about power.

And the heart is what circulates our blood. So when we can really grasp that, instead of "it's a negative" and give the reason that women are having so many problems with it, whether it's severe endometriosis or infertility, painful cramps, heavy bleeding, those are imbalances going on. And if you can go underneath that to see why are you having that, at all levels, in physical, emotional, spiritual, chemical, nutritional, whatever abuse. I mean that's actually, severe pelvic pain and heavy cramps, the first question I ask is, "What's going on in your life?"

Dr. Menolascino: That's a question that doesn't usually get asked.

Dr. Christenson: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. I was just going to tell you a story about heart attack and one of my clients who's 50. A woman who was thin. In relatively good shape. Ate pretty cleanly. Nothing terrible. But one of her children got addicted to some meth. And this was a very well-to-do family.

Private schools, the whole thing. When she found that out, she had a heart attack, and it was about a broken heart.

So it was not just about, “Hey, let’s put you on statins and all this kind of stuff. We worked with her at many different levels. And she’s gotten into drumming. And drumming is healing. Again, that vibrational sound levels. How do you actually heal beyond taking a statin? I’m not a fan of those, by the way.

Dr. Menolascino: We’ll talk a little bit about those at the end. You know, you’re talking about irregular menstrual cycles and differences in menopause, and you talked about the toxicity. I think the average woman puts 125 chemicals on her body in the morning before she leaves for the day. This idea of toxicity, biotoxins, like mold. I know you’re one of the world’s experts on this. Can we dig into that a little bit? Because it’s just not understood by many people, let alone many doctors.

Dr. Christenson: Well, sure. Thank you for bringing that up, because I’ve hosted the toxic mold summit, which is also available online through Health Talks. Absolutely, we’re all practicing environmental medicine. That’s what we’re doing. Learning how to clean all that up is incredibly important. Mold toxins in particular can be very devastating, particularly if you are in the 20 to 25% of the population that does not clear these little teeny tiny fat soluble toxins well. And we have 50% of house, 60% of commercial buildings that have had water damage issues.

And creating these toxic molds, this is different from outdoor environmental molds, but those microtoxins that they can produce are incredibly immunosuppressive. They suppress the white blood cells production. At the same time, they trigger a lot of autoimmunity and a lot of inflammation. Autoimmune disease can be seen with it. Psychiatric illness. Oh my god, anxiety, depression, psychosis, bipolar.

You can grow up in a house that has got a mold issue and you have one person who is really super crazy. You have another person who’s addicted to alcoholism and addiction is all a part of this. And another person is with ADD, brain fog, can’t think, irritable all the time. Your kids are chronically sick. Upper respiratory infections and autoimmune disease. So, these are some of the different ways. And we know that microtoxins can be damaging to the heart, because one of the things they do is they affect your mitochondria.

So, your ability to produce energy. And what has the most mitochondria in the body is the heart muscles. So, it would make sense that if you have a toxin that is going after your mitochondria that your heart as well as your nervous system, because that's the other place that has as many mitochondria, are going to be affected. And that can be manifested in many different ways.

So, waking up to that, especially if you're in a house where everybody is sick all the time, but lots of different things, usually the dad's not. A, they're not there as much, and B, they've got testosterone, which tends to protect you a little bit more in terms of an immune system standpoint. But I would highly recommend that if you have any of those symptoms that I just talked about, brain fog, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, all that, and you've ever, ever lived or worked in a water damage situation, that there's plenty of ways that we can detox from it. And that's a whole other ball of wax.

Dr. Menolascino: Well, Margaret, we were speaking in Dallas at one of the hotels, and 3 of us walked out of our room at the same time. It was a hotel that had been water damaged in the past. And none of us felt good. But after about 20 minutes into the breakfast, I felt better. My friend felt better. But the other lecturer still didn't and she didn't feel good the entire time we were there. And that's that unique genetic vulnerability. For me, I didn't really understand mold 20 years ago. I heard about it. I went to talks. It was one of those things, if I'm not going to be great at it, I don't really pretend I know how to do it.

Dr. Christenson: Right.

Dr. Menolascino: But there are patients that just didn't get better for me, and I couldn't figure out. And when I went back and looked at mold, they were positive. Looked at the genetics. They were a canary in a coal mine, and when we went through those protocols, they got better when nothing else worked. So, I'm a huge believer that there are just canary in a coal mines, and it may be such a big problem. Maybe related to Alzheimer's, definitely related to heart health, hormone imbalance. And a lot of these things. If someone isn't getting better, it's got to be on your differential, what might be wrong with you.

Dr. Christenson: Absolutely. At the end, you're also in an area that's an endemic for Lyme. But one of my friends who does a lot of Lyme work, she said in her experience, this is in her office, 100% of her Lyme patients, toxic mold was the trigger underneath it. And so when you go after that at first, instead of doing years of antibiotics, watch Jay Davidson, any of his work on the chronic Lyme summit.

That's really, really important. So, please think about that. And it's so common. It's a pandemic issue. Not just houses and office buildings. Churches, dorms.

Dr. Menolascino: Cars.

Dr. Christenson: Schools. All of that. So, I think it really behooves all of us to pay attention. And then there's a whole energetic level of mold and how our whole country is being built out of cardboard and sticks. And the building codes. And what we need to do to change as a community. I don't know, who's talked about community on your --

Dr. Menolascino: Let's talk about it. Please.

Dr. Christenson: Community is so critical. Whether that's a support group of any sort that you're in. Or a book club or reading group. Particularly if you've been chronically ill, you need a support system. Any kind, whether it's online. We have, as a country, the need to energetically change the vibration of divisiveness, of negativity, of discord that we have. And the powers that be, they like divide and conquer. They like setting us all against one another.

So I would encourage everybody, work through your church group, through your PTA at school, through your recreation center, even things like prisons to work together as communities to help to change the quality of the food to organic garden, to absolutely ban the use of Round Up and Atrazine everywhere. To grow organic gardens. With mold toxicity, there are amazing, amazing things that we can do to kill off molds and get rid of them in our house with nontoxic foggers. So, as a church you can buy a unit and teach people how to help one another to go from house to house. It's kind of like a barn-raising. And the same thing, PTAs in school.

So, community. God bless James Maskell for pulling together the functional medicine community and pulling together forums there with the evolution of medicine. Any kind of community. Connect with others. Connect the dots. And that also connects our heart chakra. We're connecting ourselves with the intention of love, of goodness, of healing. And sending that out and asking for divine energy to come through you and out through your heart. Bringing the earth energy and matter. The nutrients, the Mother Earth herself. Bringing that up through our lower chakras, and we can radiate that out our heart chakra and that's how we can move through life.

Dr. Menolascino: I love how you think of community. And our friend Mark Hyman talks about refrigerator rights. And that's one thing I did when I moved into my new neighborhood 8 years ago is I invited everybody over for dinner. And I let them know you're welcome to come to my house and take something out of the refrigerator if you need it for your dinner. That we call refrigerator rights.

I grew up with that. In our neighborhood, if you didn't have an egg, you could walk to your neighbor's house, even if they weren't there, you could go into the refrigerator and get an egg. That's that sense of community we've lost in America, really worldwide. And so, one thing I encourage is, invite your neighbors over for dinner. Have a potluck and show them some clean, healthy food.

What James Maskell taught me was, he had some friends in California that one of them wanted Round Up not in their neighborhood, so they asked all the neighbors to get together and just agree not to use it. And then one neighborhood stopped using it. And then another one and another one. Now the entire subdivision is Round Up free and they have little signs as you drive down that says, "We are Round Up free." So, the power of community is amazing. Once you get a 1 plus 1, you can get 10.

Dr. Christenson: And then has anybody talked about the study of the Italian neighborhood that was in New York?

Dr. Menolascino: Roseto.

Dr. Christenson: Yeah.

Dr. Menolascino: Please. We talked a little bit about it, but go ahead.

Dr. Christenson: In talking, the power of community and generations. I don't remember the name of the community, but this is a famous study that really looked at the fact that there was a whole lot less heart attacks in this one area compared to all the areas around it, and they were trying to figure out why, because they were smoking just as much, they were eating high-fat diets with lots of butter and all that kind of stuff. But why is it that these men weren't dying, and probably women, too, they just weren't studying women.

Dr. Menolascino: They don't study women.

Dr. Christenson: No. But why were these men living and not getting heart attacks? Or even if they did have a heart attack, they survived it. And it's because they had community. There was deep community in those neighborhoods. You know, these big Italian families and multi-generations get together all the time. And through their churches and whatever. So I think that we are so isolated. In isolation and loneliness is more devastating to our health than smoking. You know?

Dr. Menolascino: Yes.

Dr. Christenson: So, connect. And reach out, and so, that's what I would say.

Dr. Menolascino: I grew up in an Italian family. My Italian grandfather lived with us. We had 6 kids. My favorite part of everyday was sitting around the big round table having a pasta dinner. And there's something powerful about that community. And it's the community, the Roseto community you talk about with the less heart attacks. And is the Mediterranean diet the best diet? Maybe, but if you eat it by yourself in loneliness, it's not. If you eat it with friends and people you care about, it may not matter so much what you eat. It may be the power of love is more powerful than nutrition.

Dr. Christenson: And that's really what the heart chakra is all about. I mean, this is giving and receiving love and being open to that. And so, I would probably add to that, when you're eating a meal, just taking a moment and pausing with deep gratitude for whatever animals and plants have sacrificed themselves to nourish us, may we resonate and vibrate in their highest good. The work that we do represents the beautiful energy that was given to us. And that's really what communion is, right?

Dr. Menolascino: It really is. And you know I teach all my clients to take 3 big belly breaths, whether you say a prayer of thanks as your belief system. But I'll ask you to take 3 big belly breaths to get the vagus nerve, get your autonomic number system, get your belly ready to eat to help everything work better. Margaret Christenson, I could talk with you for days. You're one of my favorite people to talk to. You have so much great energy and great information. How do our viewers find you? How do they connect with you further?

Dr. Christenson: Well, they can check out our website, carpathiacollaborative.com. Carpathia is c-a-r-p-a-t-h-i-a, the word collaborative, c-o-l-l-a-b-o-r-a-t-i-v-e, .com. Yeah, we have an amazing set of practitioners here. It's not just myself. My co-founder is Dr. Heidi Iratcabal.

She's a naturopath. We have 3, 4 amazing nutritionist, lifestyle, medicine, a great acupuncturist, amazing chiropractic neurologist, several other MDs, an essential oil specialist. And we do a lot of community teaching.

Dr. Menolascino: Fantastic. How can they find you on Instagram, Facebook? Are you doing anything there?

Dr. Christenson: Carpathia has a Facebook page. So, yeah.

Dr. Menolascino: And any new projects you're working on?

Dr. Christenson: Absolutely. The Mold Summit. So, anybody who's listened to Dr. Ann Shippy's talk, and she's in on it with me. And Mark Hyman. Mark almost died from mold toxicity. So, and Annie Hopper is there with us. Klinghardt. Dr. Klinghardt. So, I've got Tom O'Bryan. We've got really some amazing, amazing information about how to tackle this very pandemic issue. So, I hope you'll consider...

Dr. Menolascino: I'll be there.

Dr. Christenson: Yeah, okay. Getting that yes. Yours is on after mine. So, folks, check out healthtalks.com.

Dr. Menolascino: It's such an important topic. And Dr. Margaret Christenson, thank you so much for joining us.

Dr. Christenson: You're welcome.