

Brain Gut 8: Their Trip Down the Rabbit Hole

READERS SUMMARY:

- 1. What is a day in the life of a vacationing doctor like?*
- 2. Accept that your epigenome is a loaded gun, and your lifestyle is the trigger. Your lifestyle can't change you. It reveals who you really are.*
- 3. Is there an important difference between giving up on somethings and letting go to get to Optimal?*
- 4. You are not your brain. Most of your thoughts and beliefs were given to you by society.*
- 5. When we don't know who we are, we are prone to be who somebody else wants us to be. We can change that.*

Today we have a guest blog post from MJ Friedman, one of two of our community members who decided to come down south and get a first hand view of what Optimal is really all about.

The other person is Danielle Thatcher. The following blog are MJ's words about her 24 hours with me while I was on vacation. I needed a break and decided to take time off and not go to Boston to be at AHS 2012. It turns out work seems to follow me no matter where I go now.

Here is Mrs. Friedman's day.....

“Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.”

Jack’s Rabbit Foot-like Vibrams :-)

Just like Alice, my curiosity (like many of yours) starting with us all working together to solve the Factor X puzzle, has been burning! While I’ve made a ton of changes in six months, I have not completely jumped in where supplements are concerned, and so now the time had come to go “all in” to the rabbit hole. After a couple of invitations from Dr. Kruse to come down to Florida, I felt like the universe was trying to tell me something. I decided for once to consider my own needs and hopped on a plane to meet Dr. Kruse. Like Alice, I found that the rabbit hole was indeed rather large and remarkable, and the experience of meeting Dr. Kruse was interesting and definitely unforgettable. He is a gentleman, driven, self-assured and also very human. He is extremely passionate about what he knows, and genuinely wants to help people ***who want to help themselves***. Perhaps the most important realization I gained from this experience is that I am the only one who can take responsibility for my wellness, and more importantly that it’s much more urgent than I’ve considered.

As a mother, and care taker of all the people in my life, ***I must not neglect myself***. My approach to this point has been first to completely change my diet and then make other changes as I understand things more and more, but Dr. Kruse instead ***implored*** me to take on my wellness at a much more urgent pace. I feel like I’ve made so many changes in the last six months, but see now that there is so much more I need to do,

and that I need to move on it. Thankfully, I thrive on challenges. My greatest challenge will be figuring out how to finance all the testing and potentially tell my children no to some things they are accustomed to having, or get a job to cover these expenses – by the way, LoL, does anyone have a perfect, stress free (have to watch that Cortisol), high paying job for me?

I asked Dannielle, a new friend also from the forum, who happens to live in Florida to meet me there, and the two of us had a most fun and interesting time together. We had so much in common, especially in that neither of us has made our own health a priority over the needs and wants of our families. In reflecting on our time there, our coming together for this experience was no accident. I think this is a common theme for many women where everyone else's needs come first. Dr. Kruse tells us that in his experience with this type of change, men think differently, and are more action oriented, where women have trouble prioritizing themselves.

One great thing that I found in meeting Dannielle and in a similar way in meeting some other people from our forum (Claudia and Alex and yes, one day Kristin, who lives just blocks from me, *and we've yet to meet!!!*), is that it is so wonderful to surround yourself with people who have similar goals and support you in your thinking! I hope to meet many more of you in the future, so we can help and support each other, as there is nothing more motivating than meeting people face to face to discuss all of this. We hope to turn this into an annual event for us all to be able to do this, or something similar!

Dannielle Being Naughty!

I was not quite sure what to expect from showing Dr. Kruse my labs. My own doctor was very happy with all of my results, and just wanted me to up my vitamin D3 to 3,000 IUs. I was hoping for Dr. Kruse to corroborate that and tell me I was

completely healthy. I found out that I am not in bad shape, but that I am normal in some categories to low normal in some others, which is not at all optimal. The scary part was that if I don't make more drastic changes now that I might be setting myself up for things like breast cancer due to my low levels of vitamin D and need for other important supplementation. Without these my immunities are lowered. Dr. Kruse thinks I should consider that I up my vitamin D3 to 20,000 IUs a day for a short period of time until my levels come up and because I live in NY and will not be able to make any from sun exposure after September 15th. He wants me to have my levels of D retested in September. We discussed how in general, I did not want to indiscriminately just load up on vitamins and supplements that might throw me out of balance in some other way, *plus taking supplements makes me gag!* I only want to have to take what I really need, but find the whole supplement scene confusing. With that thought, Dr. Kruse had a flash of inspiration.

Truth: you can't hide that from your labs!!!

Dr. Kruse is very spontaneous and flexible, which gels perfectly with how I am in life, and Danielle as well. So when he suggested that we go on what turned out to be an important field trip to **Life Extension** to help us get the proper supplements specific to our individual needs, we were all in. *What a trip!* Unfortunately I did not have time to get blood drawn which Dr. Kruse was hoping to help me set up while there because some of the testing in NY State is a pain under the current laws, but shopping with our own personal encyclopedia of supplements that is the brain inside Dr. Kruse's head, *was awesome nonetheless!*

Here we are in front of the all-important hormone sign!

One of the things Dr. Kruse highly recommended for me was that I look into bioidentical hormone replacement, as a proactive measure for dealing with perimenopause, which, like all women,

I would eventually and inevitably face. While I am currently not experiencing any symptoms or changes, the key here is prevention of potential weight gain and related health implications to the extra weight that comes with menopause through proactive intervention before it occurs. In addition Dr. Kruse explained that menopause has the same biologic effects in the brain as diabetes does. How you ask? It seems that there is a loss of dopamine in the brain. In menopause the loss is not as severe in intensity or duration as it is in T2D but it explains many of the symptoms post menopausal women face. This is why he suggests we consider talking to our PCP's about Cycloset for peri-menopause and menopause as well as for the treatment of Diabetes. Metformin also is a drug that can help women as the age too even when they do not have diabetes. He also told us about how it is used for gut health and how it is a great anti aging drug used in a specific anti aging Rx. Dr. Kruse shared with me a article about this very issue when we visited the Life Extension store.

Here are the supplements I agreed to start with in mega doses. It was not cheap, but eventually Dr. Kruse promises that when it's all under control and my diet is even more pristine (apparently I'm still having too many carbs), I won't need all these supplements, if any at all, he no longer takes them based on his labs!

One of the nicest things to see is that Dr. Kruse is for real in his willingness to help people. He spent a lot of time talking to this couple who just happened to be in Life Extension shopping for supplements. The husband is a newly diagnosed Diabetic and they talked a lot with him about diabetes and its prevention, and in the end he implored them to put back **all** the supplements they were indiscriminately buying and get tested. I don't even think the shop owner minded because he understood all about testing, and we're sure this couple will be back for the right supplements later on.

The shop owner was very interested in discussing all of Dr. Kruse's ideas. They even went online to his website.

On Diabetes: Dr. Kruse starts out by asking this couple, "What do you and a polar bear have in common?"

The couple was so grateful, and Dannielle and I both got a big kick out of watching this scene unfold! We also have a great appreciation for Dr. Kruse's lovely wife Sandy, as we can see that there is probably no place that he can go to and not talk about his passion for wellness! We imagine she does a lot of standing around; we are dubbing her Saint Sandy. We also thank her for letting us take her husband away from a day of their vacation together!

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Labs tell all, and so I was *busted* by my labs on the fact that I don't sleep enough, though I'm doing so much better than I used to. I used to love to stay up sometimes almost all night long and just think and enjoy the alone time. I have been doing much better, but I admit I can improve on that. Dr. Kruse opened my eyes to the idea that even more than what I eat, how much sleep I get is vital to my health. He explained to me that 45% of our brain is directly wired to light circuits while only 10% are wired to the hypothalamic leptin receptors. The quality of the rest of my life might depend on this information...if I want my brain to be healthy I have to make sleep *my top priority*. Dr. Kruse mentioned to us that one of us had *brain damage* – as that is what short term memory loss equates to! He used that term to make a greater point to us both. What we consider normal modern aging may not be so normal after all. I laughed a ton with Dannielle over that,

due to the no holds barred delivery of that information, but at the same time we are both taking heed! *I for one, can never find my keys!*

In addition to all that, I discussed with him the fact that though I have plenty of education as a certified teacher, his blog can be difficult to absorb. I learned it's by design, and that only the people dedicated to their health will ultimately stay with it, as Dr. Kruse promotes proactivity. We had a great debate on this topic and though our approach to education may differ; I can respect his point of view, and in actuality found him to be a caring and patient teacher. He has a no nonsense philosophy, which focuses on results, and where health is concerned I agree that's a very good thing. The point is it's there for us all and in our reach; we just have to want to put ourselves first, and do the work, and follow through on our own specialized routines. Dr. Kruse enjoys helping people who embrace positive change. He pointed us both to some reading on hormones, and it's apparent that I have some work to do to understand this all more deeply. I gladly accept this challenge and now I know what I'll be reading on the beaches of Montauk Point next week on my vacation!

When we passed this sign on our way to the restaurant, we knew we were in the right place!

For dinner Dr. Kruse took us to Downtown Disney, where we had a wonderful seafood experience.

I love Downtown Disney, we also saw Woody and Buzz at the Lego Place on our way. Speaking of Woody, there was no room for embarrassment in a conversation with Dr. Kruse, we frankly discussed many topics. Dr. Kruse taught us something very important about the health of our husbands, and one topic concerning men that came up was on premature ejaculation and how it could indicate a heart condition, because the absence of blood flow originates in the heart. So couples, if any of

you have this issue it is really important to get that checked by a cardiologist! In addition he talked about the importance of oxytocin and how it is the ultimate antioxidant for the brain. So we were given a ***“thought prescription”*** to follow daily, look at the sun upon rising, consider having an orgasm to lowering our cortisol by increasing oxytocin, and eat a big ass breakfast as out lined in the Leptin Rx. All are designed to limit inflammation in our brain. Dr. Kruse pointed out a book that even had the information about orgasm as we both bought the book. We wanted to know how much our husbands had paid him to say that! We all agreed though that sex is a part of a healthy lifestyle.

The interesting thing about a seafood dinner of shellfish is that you have to work for your food, and that actually makes for more of an experience. Dannielle and I had never had oysters before, so we challenged ourselves to try one. OK, I took the only small one, yes, I’m a wimp, and Dannielle rocks!

We actually videotaped the moment, but that I will have to burn because it has the makings of a blackmail tape hahaha so my reaction to Dr. Kruse when he asked how we liked it, besides a really funny expression was, *“NO, but YEAH, I did it!”* I am excited to have changed my thinking on this as in *“suck it up”*, if I can eat a slime ball like that, I can do almost anything! Dannielle, when asked how it tasted replied, *“it was like a large bogger in my mouth!”* We laughed a lot about that among other things! Oysters we learned are at the top of the list for being the most nutrient dense and best for the health of our brains. We also ate seaweed which kind of tasted like beans to me, the rest was not bad at all! In fact, I could eat the rest any day!

The rabbit hole is large and dark, but I am embracing my discomfort, and jumping in with both feet! I believe Dannielle is definitely up for this as well, especially after the oysters! I’m excited to have Dr. Kruse as my flashlight as I journey further down this hole, but this time I go with a

bit more urgency! Thank you Dr. Kruse.

The moral here for you all: A modern life destroys the unconscious mind.....and this destroys our ability to thin slice our world. It is time to embrace Darwinian medicine to heal what really ails us as a species. Thank you MJ for writing this piece for our community to share. Jack Kruse