

*Stephanie
Dodier*

**The Beyond The Food Show
PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**



the
BEYOND THE FOOD
Show

WITH STEPHANIE DODIER

Podcast Transcript

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Stephanie: Welcome to Episode 39. In today's episode we are getting into a topic that I've been wanting to tackle since the beginning of The Beyond the Food Show podcast. It is the M word - meditation.

My guest that's going to take us through the M word is not a monk. She is not a priest or even a yogi. She's actually a former Broadway actor that, just like me, wanted to heal herself and she discovered meditation. Emily Fletcher will talk to us about meditation in a very simple and refreshing way that will help us with our weight loss, our emotional eating and our food craving, and our nervous system, which we know is so important in us achieving our health goal and regulating our mindset. So stay tuned for that.

Now before we dive into this, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the support of my new book and my new program, the Keto Connector. The feedback has been mind-blowing - is the word that I can use - not only from the beta testing group but also from all the people that I've been over the last four days getting in to the Keto Connector book and started to receive the tag-along video series that I've created also. So you can get the book and the daily video series for \$27. And I purposely created that product at that lower price point to make sure that everyone would be able to get on to this path of achieving your health goal from a very mind-body centered and health centered.

So I encourage you to go in the show and out and check the Keto Connector, or you can go on Amazon as well - it is now available on Amazon - and check out the review. I mean, I've got a ton of health experts who've looked at it and they just - they are amazed of the way into which we presented this information to make it easy, simple to get. So same train of thought as what Emily's going to teach us today about meditation. So I encourage you to go and check that out.

Now the show today is being brought to you by our sponsor FBomb. Now what is FBomb? For most people, they have no idea when it is. FBomb stands for fact bomb, not the other word. So fact bomb or FBomb is a product that this company has created that allow us to carry on-the-go easy and healthy sources of fat. So they come in these little black pouches and there's all kinds of oil such as coconut oil and MCT oil. But they also started to create those amazing nut butter. My favorite one is Macadamia Nut with sea salt butter. It's this little pouch that I can squeeze in my mouth when I'm on the go. It allows me to carry my healthy lifestyle with me on the go. So go check them out, www.dropanfbomb.com, and use coupon code beyondthefood to get 10% off your first order.

So are you ready to talk about the M word - the meditation? If so, let's do this.

Founder of the Ziva Meditation and creator of zivaMIND, the world's first online meditation training, Ziva's mission is to make meditation attractive and accessible to people who are ready to up-level their performance and their life. Our guest today is a leading expert in meditation and has been invited to

Podcast Transcript

companies like Google and Barclays and Sweetgreen to help improve company performance through meditation. So welcome to the show, Emily Fletcher.

Emily Fletcher: Thank you. Happy to be here.

Stephanie: It's an honor to have you on the show. And my listeners hear me all the time talk about zivaMIND as a recommendation to help them in their process of healing and weight loss, so an honor to have you here and talk to us about exactly what Ziva Meditation is. So if you want to explain to us what it is, that would be a great intro.

Emily Fletcher: Sure. So I found meditation about 10 years ago after my Broadway career. I was on Broadway for 10 years and I found a practice that really helped to cure my insomnia. And I stopped going gray, I stopped getting sick, I stopped getting injured. And I actually did lose weight as well. I know that might not seem like a concern of a Broadway dancer because you're dancing so much, but actually my relationship with my body changed very much once I found this practice, which we can talk more about in a bit. But I found an ancient practice that really made transformative and very fast transformations in my body and in my mind. And so I felt inspired to be able to share it with others. So I left Broadway and went to India and trained for three years to be a teacher.

And then I have started Ziva about five years ago and I started by teaching in person. And our mission at Ziva is to make meditation attractive, accessible and easy to adopt into a modern busy life. And people's lives were changing so much from the in-person training that they said, "You know, Emily, I want my cousin to learn in Idaho," or "I want aunt to learn in Missouri," and they don't have access to a teacher. So that's why we created zivaMIND.

So zivaMIND is different from what we teach in person but it's an eight-day training. It's about 30 to 35 minutes a day for eight consecutive days and it's designed to make you a self-sufficient meditator. It's designed to give you a practice that you can do on your own every day, 15 minutes twice a day. And in this practice you're giving your body rest - it's very deep. So when you come out of that meditation, you're more awake, you're more conscious and you're better able to perform at the top of your game.

As I mentioned, at Ziva we believe that we meditate to get good at life, not to get good at meditation. So zivaMIND is unique in that it's not like a drop-in studio or it's not like a Headspace app or even a guided visualization, which are all lovely and those are all really good tools to help you feel better in the right now. It's like if you're stressed and you listen to a guided visualization, you'll feel better in the right now. The way that Ziva is different is that it's helping you to handle not only stress in the right now, but it's moving you through a system and teaching you a self-sufficient practice that will get rid of stress from

Podcast Transcript

the past. And the cool thing there is that when you start to eradicate stress that's been stored in your body from the past, that is the thing that allows you to perform better in the future.

Stephanie: That is brilliant because we teach about food craving and emotional eating often link to behavior that you've learn when you are young and patterns that were ingrained into you when you were young. And we had a nervous system specialist who explained to us that it's actually stored in our nervous system. Those patterns are stored there and we need to learn to release them. So that's what Ziva Meditation is doing, is releasing those old stressors and patterns in your body?

Emily Fletcher: Yes, 100.

Stephanie: Brilliant.

Emily Fletcher: So it's very much like every single time you've ever been stressed, any trauma you've had around food, self-induced or externally induced, that stuff gets lodged in your cellular memory. And now we're starting to understand that it goes even beyond the cells and it actually impacts your DNA, like it's impacting and changing your genetic code, which is what the whole study of epigenetics is, which means that this stuff is not only impacting your life but it could potentially be passed down from generation to generation.

And that's not to freak people out. It's actually very encouraging because it means that whatever you were born with, even if your parents had food issues or if maybe your mother wasn't eating exactly the best food while she was pregnant with you, it means that this stuff is changeable. You have the power to impact it. So every thought you think, every bite of food you eat, every meditation that you do, every single time you exercise, it's changing your neuroplasticity, it's changing the way the stress is stored in your cells, and it's also changing your genetic code a little bit.

So I actually find it really uplifting. It means that it's not necessarily set in stone, your path or your blueprint for health. It's a blueprint, right? And now we get to decide how we build the house. We can build the first story and then change how we build the second story. That's up to us.

Stephanie: We're not stuck. We're not a victim of our DNA. And unfortunately, that's what mass media will share to us as a message, is we're a victim of our genetic code. But we have the power today with technique such as zivaMIND with other body works or other technique to change the outcome of our life. We need to move from being a victim to being empowered.

Emily Fletcher: Yes.

Podcast Transcript

Stephanie: And taking charge of what's going on in our thoughts and our nervous system is a way of being an empowered person versus a victim. So what's the neuro or the science - the neuroscience behind how this happened and how this change happened in our body?

Emily Fletcher: Sure. So when people do zivaMIND, they use a mantra. And this is not like a slogan, okay, it's not an affirmation. It's not like "I'm a strong angry woman" or "I want a million dollars." Those aren't actually mantras, those are slogans. And the mantras that we use, they're actually designed to act as mind vehicles. That's what that word means. It's a Sanskrit word. Man means mind, tra means vehicle. And so these mind vehicles are designed to help induce some deep rest. And they're actually designed to de-excite the nervous system. So it's the opposite of exercise.

A lot of people say to me, "Emily, exercise is my meditation." And exercise is great. It's really good for you. It will get the endorphins going. It is not the same thing as meditation. Meditation is all about de-exciting the nervous system. And when you de-excite something, you create order. And when you create order in your body, when you create order in your cells, then actually the lifetime of trauma and stress that we've been accumulating can start to come up and they can start to be released from the body.

So the way I like to frame meditation for people is that Ziva Meditation is not a spa day for your brain. This is not the place to go if you want to feel good for 15 minutes. I mean, yes, sometimes it feels good. But this is much more like cleaning out your old dirty closets. And the cool thing there is that once you clean them out, then you have a clean closet, and then it's much easier for you to find where that pair of shoes is. It's where - it is easier to find your winter coat. And that shows up actually as an increase in cognitive ability. Your mental and physical performance gets better when that stress isn't taking up so much space in your body and brain and not paying rent.

Like I absolutely believe that stress makes you stupid, right? And because it's preparing your brain and body for an imaginary predatory attack. But the reality is our stresses today don't come from tiger attacks, it comes from in-laws and too much crappy food and red-eye flights in iPhones and not knowing which Skype ID to call someone on. You know, like all my stress comes from these new modern things. And so our body goes into this fight or flight stress reaction but that that we never have a chance to actually outrun that tiger or fight that tiger, which is why people say that exercise is their meditation.

So exercise is actually good enough to handle all the new stress that you're interacting with today. But if you want to get rid of the backlog of stresses you've been accumulating your whole life in order so that we actually to give the body rest. And that's what we do in zivaMIND. And it's actually twice a day for that same reason. Once-a-day meditation will clean out all the new stresses you've been getting from today, but if you want to get rid of the dog that barked in your face when you were 10 or the people that didn't come to your birthday party when you were 12, then you have to do it twice.

Podcast Transcript

Stephanie: So it's kind of a - I don't want to say a therapy, but it's a work towards that baggage that you have inside of you. So it's a therapeutic way of getting rid of that baggage.

Emily Fletcher: That's right. It's a system that people move through. And what it becomes is a strategy, right? You start to implement a strategy to handle your stress. Because if you're not handling your stress, it is handling you.

Stephanie: Oh, totally.

Emily Fletcher: It's like if you're not handling sugar, it is handling you. And we know now, without a shadow of a doubt that sugar and stress make you stupid and they cause all kinds of havoc in the body. So if you're not actively setting up strategies in your life to manage those, then those things are managing you. And so what zivaMIND is doing is just giving you a strategy every day, twice a day, to get rid of the backlog of accumulated stresses so that you don't need those tactics, so you don't need to take the Klonopin when you're having the panic attack. You don't necessarily need to have the guided visualization to get you out of your mind when you're about to freak out about a job interview, because if you're actually meditating every day, twice a day, you're not going to get into that red zone, you're not going to go into that fight or flight as frequently.

Stephanie: You're going to move from managing stress to not having stress.

Emily Fletcher: Yeah. Well, it's interesting because it's not that the stress - it's not that demands in your life go away, right?

Stephanie: Exactly.

Emily Fletcher: It's like, yeah, people still die and there's still traffic and there's still in-laws and there's still kids. Like there's still demand, right? So it's not that those things don't happen, it's not that you don't feel them. What I've noticed is that you actually feel them more intensely, you feel them fuller, but you feel them faster, and then you move through to the new now.

So it's like - most of what a fight or flight stress reaction is, is it's you reacting to something, a stimulus tapping in the now, but you are reacting with the entire backlog of trauma that you've had from your whole life and you're letting that out on your partner. Like when he asks you what you want for dinner and you're like, "I don't know, I can't make another decision because - why are you even asking me that?" Like that's not an appropriate response to that one question.

So as you start to have that strategy in place to deal with all those stuff in the past, you can handle each new stress in the present with an appropriate amount of action.

Podcast Transcript

Stephanie: Or reaction.

Emily Fletcher: Reaction, yeah. You respond instead of involuntarily reacting.

Stephanie: And it's changing your perception on the events that occur in your life, which then triggers a different reaction, am I correct?

Emily Fletcher: Yes, it's like - the way I like to say that is that as you up-level the projector, the projection changes. You know, it's very hard to have a romcom of a life when you have a horror flick playing internally. Like if this thing is saying, "I suck, I suck, I suck. I'm going to die alone with cat eating my face. I'm fat and old and ugly," then how do you expect to have like a Julia Roberts romantic comedy of a life showing up.

Stephanie: Or a glow, right? It's not going to happen.

Emily Fletcher: Exactly. And so what we do is we change the actual projector. We change the story that's going on internally largely just by getting rid of that stress because it's the stress that's causing the negative story. And then once that's gone, as you change the projector, the projection changes. And so people oftentimes spend so much time trying to fix the circumstances of their life and no time actually changing the thing that is creating the circumstances. And what zivaMIND does is that it gives people a way to take their brain to the gym so that they actually up-level the thing that is creating the blueprint for their body and the blueprint for their life.

Stephanie: And I think that's brilliant because I know that people that struggle with their weight, struggle with emotional eating or craving, the root cause is what's playing in their head. And the reaction to that song playing in their head will drive them to have the piece of sugar or the piece of whatever it is instead of - they're not nourishing, they're not acting in the now and nourishing their body, they're playing the old song and reacting to the old song.

Emily Fletcher: Yes. And that's a really important point. So when the body gets stressed, we launch into fight or flight, right? And I'm sure you've talked about this before but if we you want to understand why the body reacts to stress, we've got to go back in time 10,000 years - they were hunting and gathering, a saber-toothed tiger jumps out at us. Now the body is going to launch into a series of chemical reactions when that happens. One thing that happens is that your digestion floods with acid to shut down digestion. And that's really important because when you're stressed that means you're not digesting your food as effectively as you couldn't be.

Now the other thing that happens is that when you're in fight or flight, your body goes into survival, right? Like that amygdala kicks in, that fear center, that reptilian part of the brain which is 300 million

Podcast Transcript

years old. It predates language. So you can't rationalize, you can't negotiate with the fight or flight part of your brain. Once you're in that survival mode, your body starts looking to feed on fight or the other F-word, anything it can fight, right? Like this meat suit wants to do everything it can to stay alive. And - because there's three Fs I learned from my friend Dave Asprey who's the Bulletproof biohacking guy, and I just think it's so brilliant because the way he says it is that when you're in fight or flight, basically like this reptilian brain - he calls it the golden retriever brain - takes over, right? And it just starts moving all over the place.

And it's very hard to wrangle your brain when it's in fight or flight. So it's like, "I want that cookie." "No, don't eat the cookie." "But I want that cookie." "Don't eat the cookie." "No, I want the cookie." "Don't eat the cookie." But the thing is, if that fight or flight is the main thing that's going on, you can't negotiate with it. Eventually you're going to eat the cookie cause your body's looking for as much fat and as much sugar as it can, because those things used to be very rare, so it was an easy way to stay alive with those calories that you get from fat and sugar. Now fat and sugar are everywhere. And so if we're in fight or flight, we have a thousand opportunities to eat that fat and sugar all day. And then it becomes addictive and then we want more and more of it.

So the way that meditation helps with this is that it allows you to move out of fight or flight and into what I call stay and play. And it allows you to be right here, right now. It actually wakes up the executive part of the brain. And that part of the brain you can negotiate with. You can speak to that part of your brain. It does understand language. And then you can actually like follow through, "If I eat the cookie then I'm just going to want more cookies and then I'm going to break out tomorrow. And then I'm probably not going to feel so good because I don't eat - you know, gluten doesn't agree with me anymore and then that's not going to feel very good. I'm going to choose something else," right? You can negotiate with the executive party of your brain. You cannot negotiate the fight or flight.

And this is why a lot of people who do zivaMIND say that they actually start dropping weight because they're not eating from a place of survival mode, they're not eating to fill a void, because they start to feel fulfilled internally by releasing dopamine and serotonin in their brain and body. So then when they eat, it becomes a celebration instead of a way to fill themselves up.

Stephanie: It's brilliant because that's going to move me into the next piece where people struggle a lot with which is eating mindfully, right? Though you may not be craving, one of the disconnects that happens is when you eat with your phone or when you eat watching TV, you're not savoring every piece of food. You're not sending that message to your body that you're eating. And then you will overeat, which is the next problem that people are faced with.

Podcast Transcript

Emily Fletcher: Yes. And I have say I'm guilty of this sometimes. I know I'm a meditation teacher but sometimes I just say, "Well, let me just answer a few emails while I have a snack." And so I'm trying to be better about it myself. And I've actually created a guided visualization specifically around mindful eating, so I understand the concept really well. But I think we all have to hold ourselves to a higher standard because there's technology everywhere. It's really easy to just scroll through Facebook, scroll through Instagram while you're eating.

But the thing that made the most sense to me around this that really kind of woke me up was that, when we're hungry, yes, our stomach is hungry, and yes, our body needs nourishment, but also all of our senses get hungry as well. Our eyes want to eat, our nose wants to eat, our taste buds want to eat, our eardrums want to eat. And so if you make eating a five-sensory experience, then it's like you give your brain some time to communicate to your stomach that you're full and then all these other senses get satiated, versus - instead what most of us do is that we fill our gut with food and, yeah, we don't have that like rumbling in our stomach anymore - our brains didn't even know that we ate anything because we were too busy scrolling through Facebook. So I like this idea of satiating all five of the senses, letting them be as involved in the eating process as your stomach is.

Stephanie: And you end up eating less when you do that because you don't eat as fast, because that's another big problem when people eat too fast.

Emily Fletcher: Yeah.

Stephanie: But I'm sure when you practice Ziva Meditation you are more aware of your moment of eating and you are able to practice mindful eating much easier than if you are constantly in that other part of your brain you talked about.

Emily Fletcher: Yeah. So actually the woman who inspired me to start meditating, she was understudying five lead roles in a chorus line and she was like everything she did was a celebration. Every dance, every song was a celebration. But the thing that really struck me is that every single bite of food she ate, she would be like, "Oh, this is sensational." And I was like, "What do you know that I don't know?" And I just thought it was because she was Australian. But like now that I know a lot of meditators, I see them actually celebrating every bite of food. If they have a cocktail, they'd say, "Great, let's celebrate it. Let's savor it," versus just like trying to fill an unfillable void.

Stephanie: Exactly. And that's where we get in trouble with food is when we use food to numb ourselves or fill the void, the lack of, which interestingly enough as you progress in this world of being more mindful in meditation, you find that a lot of those lacks can be filled by yourself. And I know that

Podcast Transcript

was my experience with meditation is I went from a place of "The world doesn't give me enough" to "I can give to myself enough."

Emily Fletcher: Yes. I love your experience because that's really a big part of our teaching at Ziva, is that meditation allows you to transition from being need looking for fulfillment, and instead it allows you to be fulfillment looking for need. Where can I contribute? What can I give? And I know that might sound like a hippy dippy esoteric concept, but the reason neurochemically that that's happening is that within 30 to 45 seconds of practicing Ziva, you're flooding your brain and body with dopamine and serotonin, which are bliss chemicals. And they feel amazing and they allow you to feel satiated and fulfilled. And then you can't help but look at everything in your life from a place of "What can I contribute? What can I give?" instead of looking at everything and you're like, "What can I take? How can this fill me up?" Because the reality is nothing out here can fill you up. No person, no place, no thing has the ability to fill you up.

And so this is why meditation really impacts everything - your work, your sexual performance, your physicality, your relationship with food, your relationship with alcohol. Anything that you happen to be addicted to, meditation is going to help you to transcend that addiction because it's giving you access to the actual thing that you're looking for which is fulfillment.

Stephanie: Absolutely. So before we run out of time I want to address one component that I hear all the time and that I was a victim of myself before I moved to learning meditation is - and I still remember the first time I meditated was a Deepak Chopra, an Oprah series - I don't know if you know that. I sat in my guest room, on the floor, my legs crossed. I'm like, "Okay, I'm meditating today." And I put on the song and then it guided me through. And as the moment came to be silent, I felt like it's been 15 minutes and I opened my eyes, it had only been one minute. I'm like, "Oh my god." And my mind was just running everywhere.

So people sometimes have attempted meditation with a huge failure and it felt terrible for them. And they don't know how to move or they are in fear of moving to learn because they say, "I can't do it. It's not for me."

Emily Fletcher: Yeah.

Stephanie: So how do we help people move from that place to a place of wanting to learn?

Emily Fletcher: Yes, good. So I'm so glad that you brought this up. It's such a good question, and I hear it all day every day. "Emily, I've tried to meditate." "Emily, I want to meditate. I know all this neuroscience is out there but I can't do it because my mind is crazy. I can't do it because I can't stop my mind from

Podcast Transcript

thinking. My stress is special. You know, my brain is special. And I did it and I heard a siren outside - I don't know if you can hear that siren - but I heard a siren and I was thinking about the siren. And then I felt like I was failing because the siren made me feel stressed." And so this is why I'm on a big, big mission at Ziva to help people know this one thing. And if people take only one thing away from this whole interview, this will be a valuable gift, okay?

So if you tried meditation and felt like you were a failure because you couldn't stop your mind from thinking, you're not a failure. Here's the really good news - the mind thinks in voluntarily just like the heart beats involuntarily.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Emily Fletcher: I'm going to say that again - the mind thinks involuntarily just like the heart beats involuntarily. So trying to give your brain a command to shut up is as effective as trying to give your heart a command to stop beating.

So just to really drive this point home, on the count of three, I want everyone to try and give their hearts a command to stop beating. Ready? One, two, three. Really try. Try and get it to stop. See? It doesn't work, right? And then we feel silly for trying. And the only reason that that is silly to us is because we understand that the heart is involuntary. And yet this is the criteria by which everyone is judging themselves as to whether or not they're good meditators. How good am I at slowing down my brain, clearing my mind, quieting my mind? So hear me when I say this - no one can give their brain a command to be silent.

So what we do instead is that we utilize whatever tool, whatever technique you've decided to use. And I'm - obviously I'm biased. I think that what we teach is the best, right? We teach something else. But it's not the only way to skin a cat, okay? There's lots of different ways to meditate. So whatever technique you use, you just let that be the technique.

But know that meditation is like any other skill, okay? Don't just assume that you should magically already know how to meditate.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Emily Fletcher: That's what most people do. They sit down, they close their eyes, and they're like, "All right brain, shut up," and then they can't do it. And it's like, well, what if I were to say, "All right, for 20 minutes start speaking Japanese." If you don't know how to speak Japanese, that's a silly challenge to take, right?

Podcast Transcript

And so know that two things - one, meditation is like any other skills. It takes a little bit of training. It takes a good teacher. It takes a bit of practice. But once you have that, it can be ridiculously enjoyable and very simple.

And then the other thing is that whatever technique you use, please don't expect yourself to be able to give your brain a command to be silent. That's not the point. The point of meditation is to get good at life, not to get good at meditation.

Stephanie: And it's - correct me if I'm wrong but it's not about shutting off your mind.

Emily Fletcher: Nope. At least - so the different styles of meditation are different, right? So there's mindfulness, which is a derivative of a monastic practice, which is more about directing your focus. And that's what most people think of when they hear the word meditation. Like if you were to watch a YouTube video or do a guided visualization or breath work, most of these are direct focused styles of meditation. Whereas at Ziva what we do, it's all about inducing deep rest, okay? And so just like your body knows how to heal itself when you sleep, similarly your body knows how to heal itself when you give it a deep rest with this style of meditation. And then you become more awake in your waking state, you become more conscious. Your cognitive abilities get stronger because your brain isn't spending all that energy trying to handle all the stress.

So there are different styles of meditation. And so I'd say just find a teacher that you respect. Find a style that resonates for you. And then invest the time and energy in learning it. And then once you have that, you're going to find that the return on investment is exponential.

When people say I don't have time to meditate or I don't want to pay money to meditate, I'm like, "This is your brain. We're talking about your brain. The thing that's in charge of everything else in your body and every decision that you make. How is that not a worthwhile investment?" Again, I'm biased but I don't get it.

Stephanie: I totally agree with you. It's like people who want to learn to run a marathon, they'll have no doubt to go take a class, to get a trainer, and they'll be patient with themselves to learn to run the marathon, right?

Emily Fletcher: Yeah.

Stephanie: You know you go for a walk, then you run 4 km, you walk 4 km. Approach to meditation is, in my belief, the same way you need to practice and learn a technique and then you will get good at it. And that's why I encourage people to - because I teach online to go to Ziva Meditation and it's on my blog post and it's on my podcast because it's a place where you can do it safely online.

Podcast Transcript

Emily Fletcher: Yeah. And we have a really beautiful - like in addition to the training that people moved through. And once you do zivaMIND, you have access to that training for the life of the program. So if you wanted to go in again, in a few months you could refresh.

And we also have a really beautiful online community. And so you can get support from me and also from other people in the community. We have, I think, 3,000 or 4,000 people all around the globe in there. And it's not - we keep it really clean in there in that we're only talking about meditation. People are there to support each other. People are there to share their experiences. And I'm actually really proud of the global community that we've created.

Stephanie: That's amazing because success comes with support, right? And same thing with people trying to lose weight or change their lives, you need to be in a community that will support you. So that's awesome that you're supplying that with the course because as you're going through - even setting the habits of sitting down for two times 15 minutes a day, you need that environment that will support you and feel your challenges in doing that.

Emily Fletcher: Yes. Because to be honest, there's a lot of places, there's a lot of communities and cities and states and countries where no one is really meditating yet. And so oftentimes they - if you do zivaMIND, you might be the first person in your church or the first person in your school that's doing it and sometimes you feel a little crazy where you're like, "You know what, I don't want to complain that much anymore. I don't want to smoke pot and talk about how there's no men and no jobs with my friends anymore. That doesn't feel that exciting to me." And so it's helpful to know that you're not alone and that you're not crazy and that actually food does start to taste better and sex does get better and you do have better parking karma, and to be able to share your successes and celebrate in that and not feel so alone I think is a big part of it.

The way I've been taught is that any good teaching has to have a good teacher, a good teaching, and a good tribe, right? That if you have all three of those elements, then it's much easier to stay committed long-term. And so that's one of our big missions at Ziva is making this stuff easy to adopt. And so if you have all of those elements in place, that makes it a lot more enjoyable and a lot easier.

Stephanie: So you talked about all the positive things that can happen beyond food. So what else can happen? What is the other area of your life that will improve when you start doing zivaMIND?

Emily Fletcher: So I would say - I mean, the thing we really focus on at Ziva is better performance, giving people tools to perform at the top of their game. And the reason why meditation helps with this is because, like I said, that stress is making you stupid, right? There's a reason why you can't find your keys

Podcast Transcript

when they're in your hand when you're rushing to get out the door. There's a reason why you can't find your glasses when they're on top of your head. Because that stress is costing you something.

And so once we start to get rid of that, you start to increase neuroplasticity, which is the brain's ability to change itself. And you also start to strengthen something called the corpus callosum. And the corpus callosum is the bridge that connects the right and left hemispheres of the brain. And the left brain is in charge of the past and the future, critical thought, language, math, balancing your checkbooks, really important activities. But for most of us, the left brain is overdeveloped. And in Ziva what we do is we start taking that right brain to the gym, which is in charge of present moment awareness, creativity, intuition, creative problem solving. And so that thing starts to get stronger.

But then over time the right and left brain start connecting with each other because you're strengthening that corpus callosum, you're thickening the bridge between the critical mind and the creative mind. And so that is the thing that allows you to come up with all these amazing ideas when it's go time. It's the thing that allows you to be in flow state even when you're in the middle of a high demand situation.

And so as this starts to seep into your life, you start to perform better everywhere - from the boardroom to the bedroom, in traffic with your kids. So you don't have to be a performer, right? It doesn't matter what you do. The better your brain works, the better able you are to perform at the top of your game, whatever your game happens to be.

Stephanie: I think it's brilliant because that's when it moves people beyond just looking at food. It's your whole life that becomes better. And that's what we're after. We're after happiness, right? And living a good life.

Emily Fletcher: Yeah. That's the point, right? I mean, why are we here? To spread as much happiness as possible and to enjoy ourselves as much as possible. And that's hard to do when you're stressed and sick.

Stephanie: And part, I believe, that the reason why we're there as a society is because we don't have the practice of meditation or connection with ourselves. And we're disconnected because we're not taught that in school. For many people hearing this message today, this is the first time they ever understood the concept of meditation where if you look 3,000 or 4,000 years ago it was taught to everyone.

Emily Fletcher: Yes, it was a part of either the community or part of the family or part of the church. And now because people aren't going to church as much as they used to, even 10, 15 years ago, and our family structure is changing and our schools are changing, and so these contemplative practices, this

Podcast Transcript

way to go inward, there's nowhere really to learn that in a communal way. It's happening more technologically and digitally than it is in person. And that's something that I would love to see change. I'd love to see some practices taught in schools. And if not church, then communities.

And there are some of my students that are creating like in-person - like these big thousand in-person meditations in New York City, which is really exciting. But at the end of the day, whatever way works for you to create a doorway in and a way to start to look inward for your fulfillment instead of outward, I think that's very valuable.

Stephanie: And brilliant. And we'll end on that because that's exactly what we're looking in this community to look after is looking for your own feeling of happiness instead of looking into food or other behavior to make you feel better.

So I understand you have a gift also for people here, something that they can tease into the world of zivaMIND.

Emily Fletcher: Yes, absolutely. So if you're not really sure if you want to totally commit yet, if you're not really sure if I'm your teacher, you can simply go to zivameditation.com/gift and there's a download there for you. It's a guided visualization, so that would be more of like the "I'm feeling kind of stressed and I want something in the right now." That would be a lovely way for you to have a tool. And this is actually designed to help you perform at the top of your game. But you could also try doing it before you eat so that you're super present and in your body. It's designed to bring you into your body into the right now, and that makes everything better.

Stephanie: Amazing. So we'll link to that in the show note and we'll link to your website. And the Ziva Meditation is always on the sidebar as well of the blog posts if that's where you get your information from. And I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and I look forward to meet you one day.

Emily Fletcher: Yes, I would love to meet you in person. And thank you for having me on. It's a real honor.

Stephanie: I think we would have a very good conversation. Thank you very much, Emily Fletcher.

There you have it. We tackled the M word in a very refreshing way. So if you are a fan of Emily, you can go check out her work and get her free gift in the show note, which can be found at www.stephaniedodier.com/39. Now that's where you can also pick up the transcript and the link to join my private community. But also check out the Keto Connector, which is the program that I just launched four days ago, which is all about moving you from worrying about food to move on to healing your body



The Beyond The Food Show – 039
Changing the Blueprint of Your Life with Emily Fletcher,
CEO of ZivaMind

Podcast Transcript

and your mind, and we talk about the mind-body connection just like Emily talked about. So if you think that's for you, go check it out in the show notes.