

*Stephanie
Dodier*

**The Beyond The Food Show
Podcast Transcript**



Podcast Transcript

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Stephanie: This is Episode 56 of The Beyond the Food Show and today we're talking to Evan Brand, functional medicine practitioner, about the six-letter word, stress, and it's impact on our craving.

My name is Stephanie Dodier and I'm a clinical nutritionist. At 35, I was trapped with anxiety, panic attacks, obesity, and my health completely collapsed. I needed a solution and the journey began.

In each episode of The Beyond the Food Show, we bring you an expert or a message to help you achieve your health goal, unlock your self-confidence and live a better life.

This episode of The Beyond the Food Show is brought to you forward by stephaniedodier.com. Today's episode is actually the number five in The CraveCure Series. What is The Crave Cure Series? It's 10 health experts that I've brought together to understand why we crave. I want you to understand why you crave because I want you to find the permanent solution to your cravings. We cannot solve what we don't understand.

Now the prior show of The Crave Cure Series, which was Episode 55 of The Beyond the Food Show, we interviewed Dr. Sam Shay and we debunked sugar addiction, sugar craving, but most important we showed you a path for you to get out of that vicious circle of sugar addiction and craving. I highly recommend you go back to that show to check out anything that has to do with sugar craving.

Now today is all about stress. But for you to be successful in this journey of understanding your craving, understanding your stress eating, is to have support and is to have a community of people with whom you can actually share this experience. So I'm challenging you to share this episode or share The Crave Cure Guide, which can be found in my website, stephaniedodier.com/cravecureguide, which is a tag-along guide to this podcast series and share that with three women, three other women in your environment that can support you and you can support them. Think of it like a book club, somebody with whom you can talk about this topic. For you to be successful, you need that community.

If you want to share this, you can go to the website and share either the show notes, if you're watching this on YouTube you can share this video, and get three other women in your group to take this adventure with.

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So are you ready? Let's talk about stress eating with Evan Brand, functional medicine practitioner.

Evan Brand is an author, a podcast host, and a Louisville, Kentucky based board-certified holistic nutritionist, certified functional medicine practitioner, nutritional therapist and personal trainer. His Not Just Paleo Podcast has over 5 million downloads and counting. He's also the author of Stress Solutions, REM Rehab and The Everything Guide to Nootropics.

Welcome to the show, Evan.

Evan: Stephanie, thanks for having me.

Stephanie: You're very welcome. It's a pleasure.

I want to focus our discussion today, as everybody knows, on stress. I was looking at some stats before starting and it's absolutely mind blowing — 75% of the adults in North America report experiencing moderate to high levels of stress in the past month and 44% of those people said that their stress in the last five years is actually extremely high. This is crazy. I want to explore with Evan today because he's specialist in that he wrote in a book the effects of stress on our body and our cravings. I'm sure there is a lot of impact. Am I correct, Evan?

Evan: Absolutely. Well, another crazy statistic is that depression is now the number one leading cause of disability in the United States. I predicted this back in 2012 when I first started my podcast. I predicted it would be number one because at that time depression was maybe number three or four on the list behind cancer and heart disease as causes of disability. And now, the World Health Organization just announced about two weeks ago, here in about middle of 2017, that depression has now surpassed those and it's the number one cause of disability. I see it everywhere and it's like a virus.

Stress can lead to depression and these two symptoms can coincide with each other and also craving. It's really this big, vicious cycle where you've got the sources of stress that I would be happy to break down. We've got our nutritional stress — this is being nutritionally depleted. We've got a lot of the world that is conventional produce. If you see produce that's labelled organic, you know that you're not going to be glyphosate, which is a pesticide that causes damage to your mitochondria, which can lead to chronic fatigue. If you're eating non-organic food, they label it "conventional" but it really should be labelled "chemical." If you have that nutritional stress and you are not eating organic, that's the first stress that people are up against. We add in sugars, we add in

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refined carbohydrates like breads, pastas, bagels, pastries, cookies, crackers, candy, soda, fast food, potato chips, diet drinks, even a lot of protein shakes can have artificial sweeteners like sucralose in there, which is also toxic to the brain, and then we've got our toxic oils like canola and grape seed oil, then you have a recipe for disaster. That's just nutritional stress.

People, when they think about stress, a lot of times they just think of emotional stress like a bad relationship or a bad boss, but there're actually many sources. If you just picture this bucket or you picture this barrel, that barrel can get filled up with these various sources of stress, which can include emotional, but it can also include nutritional stress. You can include spiritual stress, like you having no connection to the earth, you just feel like you don't belong, you're just floating along through outer space and you've got no purpose. You've got physical stress like being too sedentary or over-exercised, which is rare but it does happen — I've had some women that do a one-hour spinning class seven days a week, plus yoga, plus cross-fit, plus soccer, it's like whoa.

So we've got physical stress, which is too little or too much exercise, and then we've got environmental stress as well. This is your light environment. Are you getting enough bright light exposure? Are you getting enough sunshine? Are you getting fresh air, clean water? Are you grounding yourself? Are you getting your bare feet to play in the soil, in the dirt, in the sand? Or are you trapped in a cubicle under fluorescent lighting where there's no view of the windows, you're surrounded by fax machines and giant printers, there's 50 Wi-Fi signals and a thousand computers and cell phones around you. This environmental stress is very new to humankind and we don't even have long-term research on cell phones and Wi-Fi at this point, so I'm really trying to push this conversation of these other stressors.

I would consider him an acquaintance, I wish I could consider him a friend, but I've only had the opportunity of interview him once, a guy named Dr. Samuel Milham, he's a medical doctor who wrote a book called *Dirty Electricity: Electrification and the Diseases of Civilization*, and his number one biggest source of stress that he says humans are up against is our environment — high powered lines, cell phone tower, Wi-Fi. He's a medical doctor and I believe he's in his 90s now, but he's pointing the finger at all these new diseases just from environment, let alone the nutritional stuff and all these other sources or stressors I've mentioned.

Stephanie: That's very interesting. As human beings going around life, we have all those elements that can be stressing our body. It's not just the stress of the computer or our boss, it's all those other elements. But let's explain to the listener —what does stress do to our body? Because I think that's key for people to understand why they need to change or

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apply habitual habits in their life, it's to actually to understand the mechanism of what happens in their body.

Evan: Sure. One of the biggest causes of stress is blood sugar imbalances or blood sugar dysfunction. Very simple but very under-appreciated, the importance of balancing the blood sugar. A lot of times women will get anxiety. They'll go to their doctor, they get put on anxiety medication or anti-depressants, which do not address the root cause. It could be something as simple as blood sugar imbalance, where what happen is, let's say you've got a diet that's rich in carbohydrates, like you're eating carbohydrates with breakfast, that blood sugar is going to crash. When it crashes and blood sugar gets too low, that creates an emergency response. Now remember, even though we're advanced, so-called in our modern society, we have very ancient wiring systems, and so when our blood sugar gets low, that creates an emergency response and the adrenal glands have to secrete cortisol and adrenaline to get that blood sugar up so that you don't pass out or go into a comma. Now when that happens, you may get anxiety because your blood sugar is going to rapidly increase. Now, blood sugar is too high. That's an emergency response, too, so now the pancreas has to kick in overdrive to secrete the hormone insulin, which is then going to bring blood sugar back down. Many people are on this up and down roller coaster because they have a diet that does not have enough dietary fat and it has too many carbohydrates.

As we stabilize blood sugar by using avocados, coconuts, olives, olive oils, macadamias, pecans, all of our good, organic, pasture-raised animals, when we stabilize the diet with good fats and we remove the carbohydrates, except for things like a big sweet potato, people can get away with stuff like that here and then. That's our dietary foundation. Now, upon that — so if we zoom out of the diet piece and we just talk about what stress is actually doing to us, we have to talk about the nervous system.

There's a branch of the nervous system called the autonomic nervous system. It has two branches. It's got two divisions. You've got your sympathetic, your fight-or-flight, and then you have your parasympathetic, your rest-and-digest. We're designed to operate in this parasympathetic rest-and-digest mode about 99% of the time, and then 1% of the time, in ancient times, a bear or a saber-toothed tiger, when it came into the camp, we either run for three minutes and we kill the intruder or we die and it's all over. Now, we've got cell phone notifications, we've got emails, we've got Facebook, we've got Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, all these other things that we're supposed to be checking and we're constantly getting pulled out of that rest-and-digest mode into sympathetic fight-or-flight mode. Then you can bind out with traffic and you're hungry because you skipped lunch, because you were too busy at your desk job to eat, so now

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your blood sugar is off and you're stressed and your cell phone's going off and your kid is screaming in the backseat, then you've got a recipe for disaster.

People can go on this sympathetic fight-or-flight mode for so long, at the extreme end of that sympathetic go, go, go is a heart attack or a stroke, some type of massive health issue. But a lot of times, people don't address stress until they hit rock bottom. Back in the old days, my grandparents' day, they would say, "Oh, she had a nervous breakdown." That's what it was. That was sympathetic overdrive.

The good thing is we can measure this. So people may say, "Well, how do I know? Am I sympathetic or parasympathetic?" Well, there're devices called heart rate variability devices. There are Bluetooth monitors that you can wear, so there's heart-rate monitors that you can strap on your chest and you can sync that out to your smartphone. There're different heart rate variability apps and what it measures is the spacing in between your heartbeats. Now if the spacing is very steady, boom-boom-boom-boom-boom, that's not good, that's sympathetic, you're stressed.

Your heart-rate is in your heartbeats, the spacing, it's supposed to be pretty variable, so it's kind of all over the place. It's not irregular heartbeat, there's a difference, but the spacing in terms of the timing is supposed to be "variable." The higher the variable of this heart rate and heart spacing, the more relaxed your nervous system is. But if you've got somebody in the middle of a panic attack, it's going to register as boom-boom-boom-boom-boom and they would be in what's called a sympathetic fight-or-flight or low coherent state, and we can measure this.

The good thing is with deep breathing you can shift yourself out of this fight-or-flight into parasympathetic. We can do it right now live on the air. Let's have people do it now. When you're listening, if you want to close your eyes, if you're not driving, please don't wreck but if you're in a place where you can close your eyes, perfect. Close your eyes and we're going to do something called Quick Coherence Technique, which will take you from fight-or-flight to parasympathetic in just a few breaths.

Okay, so with your eyes closed, you're going to picture that there's a hole in your chest right where your heart is, and this hole is actually your breathing, too. This is how you're going to be inhaling and exhaling, through this hole that goes directly to the heart. Okay, so start focusing on your breath, and if you can, breathe in through your nose a bit, and out through your mouth like you're blowing out of a straw. Just a deep inhale, now exhale out of the mouth, parting your lips, and focus on this breathing hole in your heart in here.

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Now, the next thing is to picture someone or something — dog, animal, person — that you love, and I want you to re-experience that love that you have for that person. So their smile, their eyes, their teeth, their smell, their hair, their ears, whatever it is, I want you to continue focusing on the breath, through that tube in your chest, and you re-experiencing, thinking about how much you love that person, that pet, whoever, whatever it is. Continue focusing on the breath, so in through the nose, through that chest hole and then out. If you get goose bumps or a little bit tingly feeling in the arms, that's completely normal. That's a great sign, we're shifting the nervous system.

Let's focus on one more person or one more thing. So another pet, another animal, let's picture that person, their beautiful smile, and I want you to just fully experience how much you love that person. Okay, take a few breaths. Okay, in through the nose again, hold for a couple of seconds, and then exhale through the mouth, and there we go.

If you fully did that, you were fully present in that exercise, you should have noticed some changes happen. What did you notice Stephanie?

Stephanie: Oh my nervous system — for me it's in my hips. I have a lot of dysfunction in my hips and as soon as I bring my nervous system to a relaxed state, I feel a release of tension in my hips. That's what I felt.

What's very interesting, Evan, is in my program, Crave Cure, I have the Crave Cure formula which does exactly what you just taught the listeners to do, which is when you have a craving, to go and sit down somewhere and breathe for 10 minutes in and out to shift your nervous system. You and I are fully aligned to what we believe in and teach.

Evan: Love it! I actually got exposed to that, they call it Quick Coherence Technique or heart-focused breathing. I got exposed to it from the HeartMath Institute. I had this guy named Howard Martin. I believe he's the co-founder of the HeartMath Institute. They invented some of the devices to measure heart rate variability and he came on the podcast and did that, and I was just blown away. So every time I do a client call with especially females who are just emotionally strung-out — I've had women, they will just start crying because they've had this build-up of emotions and then they just start releasing, and they are like, "Oh my God, I'm crying. Is this normal?" I said, "Yes, this is fine. This is your body saying, 'Look, we've been with the gas pedal jammed to the floor for so long that we've just got to stop,' and that's all it takes."

If someone listening did not have the ability to put 100% intention into that, do it later when you've got time. But that strategy can be done anywhere, anytime, and is enough to really pull you out of what we call that sympathetic dominant state. People talk about

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quarter or midlife crises and, to me, a lot of that is resulting from the over-stimulation in that sympathetic overdrive they were put in. So an Epsom salt bath and that breathing technique and you're going to be in a good shape.

Stephanie: A few questions for you. You talked about the heart rate variability monitoring — that's my French accent. Do you have one that you recommend in particular?

Evan: Yeah. The device that I've used is a Polar H7 — so like a polar bear, H as in Henry and the number 7. That's a Bluetooth heart rate monitor and you strap it on to your chest. That wirelessly syncs to your phone, which I'm not a huge fond of long-term use of this, meaning don't just wear it all day and beam yourself with Bluetooth radiation. But if you're just doing it for a few minutes to check in and see how breathing can impact your heart rate variability, then go for it. But that device is maybe \$40 or \$50 and a lot of athletes use it to measure their heart rate when they're running, but I use it specifically just to measure the spacing of the heart rate beats. Like I said, it's \$50 bucks and then go on your Android or iPhone and look up heart rate variability apps and you can find a couple for free and probably a couple for a few dollars.

Stephanie: Amazing. I'll link to that in the show notes and I will personally test it myself because I've been hearing a lot about heart rate variability. I work with a functional doctor myself and he just recommended that for me. I'm definitely going to go buy this one.

For people who don't know my story, I have a huge story with my nervous system. I had a series of panic attacks six years ago that led me in a hospital to a prescription medication on anxiety and anti-depression, and I have been working on healing myself. A lot of it are thought patterns in my head and that's why I changed my job and I am now a nutritionist and all of that, but what you are talking about resonates fully with me because it is my story and it's a story of a lot of the people who are listening to the podcast right now. So pay attention to what Evan is teaching here because it's really important for you to understand how stress affects you.

Let's dive in to that a little bit more Evan. Let's say you've been on overdrive for a very long time, what impact can it have on your body? What can result from that?

Evan: That's a great question. People think that stress just does something to the nervous system but it actually affects the brain. Humans and other mammals we have two hippocampi. These are small, little — you think of them almost like a worm shape. It's kind of a long, little skinny part of the brain. It's very essentially located in the brain. And the hippocampus or the hippocampi are parts of the brain that help with the conversion of short-term to long-term memory, and you can tell people what you did 10 years ago

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but you can't remember what you ate for lunch yesterday. If that's you, you've got an issue with your hippocampi.

Now you can actually do MRIs, and autopsies are being done on dead people who we're looking at the hippocampi and researchers are saying that the hippocampi are starting to look like Swiss cheese. The reason is because the stress hormone, cortisol, which is secreted from the adrenal glands, which are a small triangular-shaped gland that sits on top of your kidneys — adrenal, meaning on-top-of-kidney gland — these adrenal glands that secrete cortisol due to stress — which is good, you're supposed to have high cortisol in the morning just like you're supposed to have a smartphone that's fully charged in the morning, the same thing, and that battery is supposed to drain, your cortisol is supposed to drop throughout the day so that you can go to sleep at night — cortisol drops, melatonin rises, then you go to sleep.

Now, if you're stressed all the time or if you're drinking alcohol after dinner, which alcohol increases cortisol, or you're having a diet that's rich in refined carbohydrates, that's going to chronically elevate your cortisol levels, and cortisol acts as like a battery acid on the brain so it actually eats apart not only the gut barrier. If you've heard of leaky gut, not only does cortisol cause leaky gut, which then sets you up for chronic yeast infections, bacterial infections and parasites, but it also affects the brain and it degenerates this part of the brain called the hippocampi.

If you can't convert short-term to long-term memory, that's not good. Also, it messes with your spacial navigation. When we think about elderly people that they can't drive or they can't go out on their own because the family members say they'll get lost, a lot of that has to do with the degeneration of the hippocampi. Also people who are saying, "Oh, you're my best friend. I know you're my best friend but I can't think of your name right now," or "Where did I put my wallet?" or "Where did I put my keys?" Those are also small symptoms that many people laugh at, but that's actually the beginning sign of the degeneration of this tissue.

So we really really have to start one, sleeping better. We have to prioritize sleep because melatonin — not only does melatonin help you to sleep but melatonin helps to act as a potent anti-oxidant. When we talk about, "Oh, let's find the cure for cancer," you're never going to find the cure, it's never going to come from a pill. But one way to reduce your risk of cancer is by sleeping well because melatonin fights cancer. It's one of the most potent anti-cancer hormones that exist.

We really have to focus on the diet, organic as much as possible, plenty of water. We've got to address stress by doing the breathing techniques that we've discussed. We've got

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to remove toxic people from our lives. If we've got bad friends, relationships, husbands, wives, it doesn't matter. If you've got to divorce that person because they're making you sick, then you have to do it. It's uncomfortable, it will be the hardest thing you've ever had to do, but I've had many women who we'll do all of the work with their hormones. I'll run gut testing on them, I'll run blood testing, we'll start treating their thyroid, we're getting their libido enhanced, and it's not until they talk about the relationship with the husband and they say, "You know what Evan, we've been having a lot of fights with the husband."

As soon as that comes up in the conversation, within six weeks they come back. "Evan, I've lost 20 pounds." I said, "What did you change?" "Nothing. I just started working on my relationship with my husband and I finally talked about all these stuff we've been shoving under the rug." And I said, "Oh my God, you didn't changed the diet? You didn't go to bed earlier? You didn't do any new supplements?" "Nope. All we did is talk it out, like you told me to." And they lose weight. So it's like, "Wow, how much do we not know about the link between emotional health and hormone balance?"

Stephanie: That's a very good point. You've taught us that stress can come from the type of food we eat, not only organic, non-organic, but the sugar load in the food, the environmental, EMF, sleep, but the emotional stress of, example, of this patient of yours who constantly was thinking about her "bad relationship" with her husband. That induced stress in her body. Is that what I'm hearing from you? The same reaction as being caught in an accident?

Evan: Exactly. And also, this can happen for any victims of trauma or sexual abuse, car wrecks, etc. These emotions get locked up in the body, and just like a recurring back injury, the same thing can happen with an emotional injury. If you've got this emotional trauma locked up, some huge proponent of EFT — Emotional Freedom Technique — that you can tap various points on the body, and you can release these traumas while saying some affirmations, and that alone can actually release some of these stressors and people can start to notice changes where they have less anxiety, less panic attacks, they sleep better, they start losing weight.

I do tapping all the time. If I'm going to go on a plane, I will go through my tapping exercise and start working on it and reduce my anxiety that way.

Stephanie: Amazing. We talked about the consequence of stress on the brain, but stress has also a consequence on our hormonal health. Am I correct?

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Evan: Yes. With stress, cortisol is the priority. Because think of ancestral times — who cares about sex and reproduction if you're running from a bear? It's a luxury. So your body is going to do whatever it can to prioritize creating cortisol, so that means estrogen, estradiol, testosterone, DHEA, all of these other sex hormones, they help you with your libido, help you with orgasm, help you with sexual drive, all of that. And these all go to the wayside in lieu of the production of more cortisol.

It's basically like in the Titanic. If you remember, when they see that the iceberg is coming, they call the signal. They say, "Look, we've got to put the engines in reverse. Hurry up!" Well, it was already too late. They crank the engines into reverse, they tried to turn the other way, but they already hit the iceberg and the ship goes down. The same thing happens with your hormones. You're headed towards this iceberg and unless you address the stress, you're going to continue to derail the hormonal balance. You're going to continue to derail that because you're going to keep pushing more cortisol, more cortisol, more cortisol, because the stress is still there, even though the stress might just be the energy drink or the bagel that you're having for breakfast.

Even if you say, "My life is stress-free, I'm retired," but if you've got gut infections like Candida — which I've tested about 1,100 women using an organic acids test, which is a urine sample — 9 out of every 10 women show up with a Candida overgrowth in the gut, 9 out of every 10. Now this is due to antibiotics, this is due to the Diflucans and some of these prescription drugs that they've been put on through their life from their doctors by having vaginal yeast infections. Typically, those prescription drugs just make the yeast worse. So you may knock it down for a bit but then it comes back. I measured this in the yearn with every new client and then I used specific herbs such as oregano or garlic or olive leaf or other herbs to naturally suppress the yeast. But just the yeast in the gut alone could be enough to be a stressor to where someone can't fix their hormone imbalance, even though they've done all the other stuff like meditation and yoga and organic diet.

You can't out-meditate a gut bug. If you've got a gut bug or an infection, you've got to treat that, otherwise the stress is still coming from the internal battle, not necessarily the external stress.

Stephanie: That's brilliant, because that's the state of mind of many people out there. It's that "My life is stress-free," while inside there may be a battle with their thoughts or even in their gut. To the body, it's the same thing. It produces that stress reaction, which produces the cortisol, which then can hurt your brain, can imbalance your hormone. And I'm sure there's a slew of other consequences but there's also the consequence of craving.

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Evan: Yes, cravings as well. So with Candida, just like ourselves, Candida wants to eat, and the best food source for Candida and bacterial infections and parasites is sugar. And so a lot of people say, “I just don’t have the willpower to battle these sugar cravings.” I tell them, “Look, it’s not you, it’s these bugs in your gut. They want sugar. So if you’re trying to just use willpower to beat sugar cravings, if you’ve not got your gut checked out, then you have to because if you’re just depending on you eating a good diet and that’s going to be enough to suppress cravings, it may not be because you may have these bugs that are actually changing your neurotransmitters, your brain chemicals. It may change them and change the structure of these receptors so that now you’re not going to be satiated unless you get that dark chocolate or you get that wine after dinner or you get that cookie or whatever it is.

The body doesn’t care whether it’s organic, raw, local sugar. Sugar is sugar. So no matter if it’s your handpicked coconut sugar, it’s still sugar to the body, and the body doesn’t care what it is. If you’ve got these infections, any way that these cravings could be satiated, whether it’s a cupcake or organic sugar, it doesn’t matter. The body just wants that sugar. And so for us to fully beat cravings, a lot of times I will use amino acids like L-glutamine, and you can get these in capsule form. I’ll tell women, if they’ve got severe cravings, you can just pop open an L-glutamine capsule and you can just pour it on the tongue, and within five minutes, you can squelch the sugar craving.

Now, will it taste as good as a cookie? No, but if it can knock the sugar craving down to a manageable level, then that’s great. And glutamine is an amino acid that’s naturally found in your animal proteins, but it’s not in very high amounts. So in a supplement form, typically I use about 800 milligrams to 1,000 milligrams, a woman pours that that on or a man pours it on her tongue, the brain will actually use the glutamine instead of glucose. So instead of the brain wanting that candy bar, that sugar, if you give it glutamine, the brain will say, “Okay, this is good enough. I’ll take it,” and then the craving goes away.

Stephanie: That’s very interesting. So gut bacteria such as yeast or Candida will cause sugar craving, and Dr. Will Cole talked about that in great depth, so you can refer to the episode with Dr. Cole, but what I’m hearing you say is that stress overall can cause sugar craving. Am I correct to say that?

Evan: Yeah, absolutely, because stress — remember, again, stress is throwing off the homeostasis of the body so stress is going to impact blood sugar. Regardless of what the source of stress is, whether it’s a bad boss or whether it’s skipping a meal, it doesn’t matter, they’re still sources of stress that throws off blood sugar.

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The best way to fix blood sugar in terms of ancestral perspective is sugar. We need quick sugar, but that's not getting to the root cause. The root cause is you've got a bad boss who's treating you poorly and that's throwing off your whole system. So the thing is you either get rid of the boss or you look for another job because otherwise you're just going to be trying to look for all these band-aides. And supplements can help — when I use supplements in the clinic, I've got my own professional supplement line that I formulated and I use those — but we've still got to work back to that root cause.

Stephanie: And that's the whole principle behind what I've been talking about, which is functional medicine, which is not treating the symptom, which in this case, for all of us on this show, is craving right now during this Crave Cure Series. Craving is only a symptom of something else that's going on in your body. Emotional or physical is irrelevant, but there's something going on that their body is trying to fix by causing you the craving to eat food.

Evan: Right. And alcohol, too. Alcohol is a big one for cravings. If you feel like you're the type of person who can't relax unless you have alcohol, it's important for you to get your cortisol levels measured, which may have been discussed, but a lot of people talk about four-point cortisol test, where you take four saliva samples.

Stephanie: Get into that because not a lot of people are aware of how to — let's say you've determined that you're stressed, like you've listened for the last 30 minutes, you say, "Right, that's me. What do I do next? Do I test?"

Evan: Yeah. "Test, don't guess," is my philosophy. I run three tests on all new clients. Now sometimes, if finances are an issue, then we can't run all three upfront because healthcare insurance does not cover functional medicine because it's just so far above the standard of care, and my first call with someone is an hour, not seven minutes, so it's just not covered. So it is cash-basis, but I've run all three labs on these clients, which include — one is an adrenal test or what's called a salivary cortisol test.

A lot of people call talk about four-point, meaning morning, afternoon, late afternoon, evening. That's outdated. Anybody is talking about four-point, stop listening to them because they're outdated. They need to get with the times. Now, there's a six-point cortisol test, and this is called the cortisol awakening response. So what you do is you roll out of bed, you collect the first morning saliva sample, 30 minutes later, 30 minutes later, afternoon, late afternoon, evening, and this plots a graph of a 24-hour cortisol rhythm.

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Like I mentioned earlier, just like a smartphone, you want it fully charged in the morning, cortisol level is high, that way you got energy through the day and handle what life throws at you. And then cortisol is naturally supposed to slope-off and it's supposed to plummet to the bottom at around midnight, where melatonin then peaks up so that you can sleep. Now if you have a glass of wine before you go to bed, you're going to mess up that rhythm. You're going to spike cortisol, and when cortisol goes up, melatonin goes down. We can measure this on a piece of paper, and when we find any issues or imbalances, we can start to use adaptogenic herbs, stress management techniques that we talked about, to get this cortisol rhythm back in check. So that's the first part.

Now the second part of stress and cravings is looking into the gut. That's with the comprehensive tool panel and that's an at-home stool test. What that looks for are Candida overgrowth, which stool isn't the best way to detect it. We'll talk about the organic acids a bit more. That's a better way to measure. But the stool test can find bacterial infections like Klebsiella, Citrobacter. These are bacterial infections that can cause autoimmune thyroid disease such as Hashimoto's, which is — about 90% of women that are dealing with hypothyroidism, low thyroid function, it's actually Hashimoto's, which is an autoimmune attack, meaning your body is killing your own thyroid gland.

We can measure the bacteria such as Klebsiella or Citrobacter that can cause this autoimmune attack. So if we find these bugs, we've got to kill the bugs. We can't just go straight to your thyroid because you've got weight issues or food cravings. We've got to go to the source, which a lot of times is the gut that's causing the thyroid issue. So that's step two.

Step three is the urine test, which is called organic acids. You pee in a cup as soon as you get out of bed and you send it back to the lab and it looks at 75 different markers. But some of the most important markers for today's conversation are going to be any type of yeast marker so we can detect Candida. We measured these two gases called arabinose and tartaric acid. If we have elevations in those numbers, we know, "Oh, you've got a yeast overgrowth."

If we found it, not a big deal. We've got to address it in two ways. One, we've got to remove the fuel, which is the sugar and the carbohydrates, or at least lower the carbohydrates. If you go on a zero carb diet, that's like impossible because even broccoli has carbohydrate, so I'm not suggesting a zero carb diet, just a lower carb. And in terms of the second part of getting rid of the yeast, which could be the cravings, the craving driver, you have to use the oregano, the garlic, the berberine, the black walnut, the bearberry, all of the different herbs that I use to kill off these things.

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So that's kind of the one, two, three body system approach I use — hormones, gut, and then yeast, detox, liver, all of that — and then I take people through this. And depending on how healthy or how unhealthy they are, we may not be able to go straight to gut. We may have to work on hormones first and then go to gut. And then we may not be able to go straight to detox, we may have to fix the hormones and then the gut and then do detox. But a lot of people, they'll say, "Oh, you know what, I'm so sick of eating that. I'm just going to go do a detox first." And then they do something crazy like a 21-day water fast. That's nuts. Please don't do that. Just start eating real food as a starting place and then go from there.

Stephanie: Awesome. So that's the process for us to address cravings that could be due to stress, and Evan taught us a great technique to shift our body from sympathetic to parasympathetic through a breathing technique that will help us regulate our stress level, and then working with those tests that Evan is talking about to actually reverse the damage that was done to our body due to the potential stress. So I hear you talk about a lot of clinic work. So people can reach out to you and work one-on-one with you, Evan?

Evan: Yes. I offer 50-minute free calls for people, and this is just to chat about health symptoms and health goals. I block out a few hours each month to open up my calendar for people, just to hear what they've got going on and see if functional medicine is the right fit for what they've got going on, whether it's depression, anxiety, hormonal issues, PMS, insomnia, hair loss, hair thinning, high blood pressure, weight that you need to lose.

Generally speaking, that one-two-three approach, even though we used that approach to discuss the topic of sugar cravings and hormonal imbalance, if you've got Lyme disease or you've got cancer or autism or whatever, depression, anxiety, you're still going to go through that same approach because you're addressing the foundations of health, which is getting the hormone in check, getting your digestion in check, restoring the microbiome, which is the good and bad bacteria in the gut. Regardless of what your symptom is, restoring these foundational pieces of your health, this really builds your platform. And then of course you can tweak and start working on diet and stress management and all of that, but just getting those foundations in order, that's the most important thing.

People can just Google my name. If you just type in Evan Brand, you'll find my website, Not Just Paleo, and they'll be able to find my calendar. And they just put themselves on my calendar and then we chat for 15 minutes. And that's just a free thing I've always done just to make sure that people are being heard, which is not often in conventional

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medicine, which — just to spend one second comparing conventional and functional medicine — conventional medicine, typically they're going to give you a band-aide approach. So if you're a woman, you say, "Hey, look, I've got an organic acids test that shows I have Candida." For one, they're not going to know what organic acid testing is because they're not trained upon that. If they did know what it is, they're going to say, "Oh, you have Candida. Okay, here's Diflucan," which is a prescription, anti-fungal. And they're likely going to give you potentially an antibiotic at the same time because they know that when you start doing that ,you're going to throw off the gut, and then you start getting all these symptoms, and it's a bad situation. Whereas functional medicine says, "Okay. Why do you have the Candida? Okay. I noticed you've got a bunch of fruit juice and processed sugars in the diet. We're going to clean up the diet. We're going to start using probiotics to crowd out the yeast, but we're going to use natural herbs to kill the yeast," and we've addressed the root cause. That's kind of where we differ.

So, yes, sometimes we are using supplements in kind of a conventional way. You've got this anxiety, here's passion flower to calm you down. Sometimes we do use that band-aide approach, but we've always got to be working backwards to figure out what's the issue. Is it liver? Is it gut? Is it detox problems? Is it hormonal? Is it infections? What all is at the root of this? And that's kind of how we work the system.

Stephanie: That's amazing. That's the whole concept behind The Crave Cure Series. It's understanding that our cravings are one of those symptoms that Evan is talking about. There're many symptoms that someone can experience but one of them is craving. And as we've talked about in previous episodes, that has got nothing to do with willpower. It's actually a cry-out from your body to tell you to look inside to find the solution.

Now before we leave, if somebody is listening and says "Yes, stress is a part of my life," what would be three tips for you, that you would give to our listeners to start addressing stress in their life?

Evan: First thing would be to start with an AIP diet, called an autoimmune paleo diet. This is organic as much as possible, good quality, vegetables, the good fats I spoke about a earlier, your good quality meats. An AIP diet for 30 days would be the first step.

Step two would be to write basically a pros-and-cons list of everything and everyone in your life, so job — pros and cons, this friend — pros and cons, this family member — pros and cons. And if you've got to remove toxic people from your life, toxic relationships, you have to start working on that. Like I said, it's uncomfortable, one of the most difficult things you have to do, but if you've got toxic people bringing you down, they don't belong. So that's number two, do a full lifestyle evaluation.

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And then number three, figure out what it is that you actually want to be healthy for. Let me explain. I always ask people on my intake form, “What are your goals once you’ve achieved your health goals?” You don’t just want to lose weight to lose weight. You don’t just want to fix your anxiety to fix your anxiety. What is that preventing you from doing? And people may say, “Well, I don’t feel sexy anymore, so I stay single because I don’t go on dates because I feel unattractive.” “Okay, perfect. We found it. You want to lose weight so that you can feel sexy to get a partner. Okay, perfect.”

So really figure out what is it that you actually want. Like maybe it is just a vanity-based goal. “I want to lose 20 pounds.” Maybe? Maybe so. Okay, but I find that hard to believe. I bet there’s probably a deeper reasoning of why you want to do what you think you want to do with your health goals. And if you find that reason, perfect.

The only reason I say that’s step three is because I want you to have motivation of what you’re working towards. If you’re working towards just a number on the scale, you’re likely going to fail. But if you’ve got this deeper purpose, or let’s say you want to start a health blog or a health podcast, and “I want to spread the message, so I’ve got to fix myself first,” well, that’s a good enough reason, and that’s going to really put some fire under your butt. That’s going to continue to motivate you as you go through some of these phases, which can be challenging at times.

Stephanie: That’s awesome. And I’ll link to an article that we have on the blog called Figuring Out Your Why, so that can help people. That’s some great question that you can start the journal as Evan mentioned.

Thank you very much for being here. And I want to mention also, you have a book. You’ve never mentioned it throughout the whole interview but you’ve got a book on stress, correct?

Evan: Yes. My second book is called Stress Solutions. I’m trying to remember the subtitle. It’s been a while because I usually don’t pitch my book. It usually just sells itself because the title Stress Solutions make sense for people. But the subtitle is Hack Your Stress, Calm Your System and Take Charge of Your Life. I outlined all the different types and sources of stress in the first half of the book — it’s an e-book. And then the second half of the book, I go into what I called Stress Busting 101, and then Stress Busting 201. So I’ve got your basic strategies for stress and then I’ve got your more advanced strategies. So supplements — what are the dosages? What are the types of the supplements that you want to use? What are short-term stress busters? Like you’re having a bad day, what do

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you whip out? What kind of supplement or essential oil can you whip out right now? And then what's your long-term stress buster?

If they just go to my website, Not Just Paleo, they'll see my store. I've got, like I mentioned, the professional supplement line. A supplement I use with a lot of clients that's pretty safe for me to recommend to such a general audience here would be my GABA Chews. It's G-A-B-A, but it's pharma GABA, and this is just a natural form of an amino acid that supports your brain. Your brain makes GABA and you have GABA receptors. This is the breaks of the brain. And if you take this GABA Chew supplement, you're just helping to increase your natural levels of GABA, and this can help to reduce anxiety. It can almost stop panic attacks on the spot. I use it a lot for my veterans that have been to Afghanistan and they have post-traumatic stress disorder. We use that a lot. So if you're looking for a quick fix, that's a good supplement. You've got chamomile tea you could be drinking. And there's more and more resources in the book, but just check-it out, called Stress Solutions.

Stephanie: I will link to the show notes. So show notes at stephaniedodier.com/056 will have all the links that we just talked about.

Thank you very much, Evan, for being with us today, and giving us a great 101 course on stress and craving. Appreciate your presence.

Evan: My pleasure, thanks for having me!

Stephanie: So there you have it. I hope you enjoyed it and I'm so glad you stuck around until the end to be with me. I hope you learned something.

If you want to help me in my passionate adventure of sharing why we crave food, you can simply go to stephaniedodier.com/056 for the show notes and share the show notes via your social media, Facebook and Instagram and tag me, and tag Dr. Evan, to let us know why you appreciate the content of the show. You can also leave a review at stephaniedodier.com/review on iTunes to let me know how the show impacted your life.

Now we've got a great episode coming in at show 57, the next episode, with Dr. Susan Pierce Thompson, and we're going to talk about how our brain is actually wired to eat and how that can impact our cravings.

I'm so glad I was able to share this information with you and that you be here with me. Thank you.