

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Hello and welcome to Unstressed. I'm doctor Ron Ehrlich. Delicious healing. That's the name of today's episode, and it's a compelling title and a compelling goal for us all. My guest today is an integrated medical practitioner, Dr. Tumi Johnson. Tumi's personal story has greatly informed her professional and personal journey. I'll let Tumi explain that herself. I hope you'll enjoy this conversation I had with Dr. Tumi Johnson.

Welcome to the show Tumi.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Thank you, Ron. Thank you so much for having me on here.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Tumi, there's so much I wanted to talk to you about today, but I wonder whether you might share with us your own journey that's brought you to this point in your professional life.

Dr Tumi Johnson: That's a lovely question. I think probably I would go back to, I'm the first generation Nigerian American child. So, I lived for the first 12 years of my life in Nigeria and then we moved to the states when I was 12 years old. I think that has relevance to what you're asking me because that background, my background, the West African background, I grew up with a lot of nature, and a lot of understanding that health was holistic. My father is actually a pediatrician, retired now, a 50-year pediatrician and the idea of food and the importance of good food was always really stressed in my family.

Dr Tumi Johnson: And then when I moved to the states, I had this really hard time of acclimating to a new culture. To be honest, I was a tween, I was a 12-year-old girl moving from West Africa to Tennessee at the time.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Oh my God.

Dr Tumi Johnson: To help with that, I would go to the public library all the time. I'd lose myself in books. And one book I found was a book by B. K. S. Iyengar who was one of the fathers of teaching yoga. I used to look at those pictures, and I would learn the poses to the pictures in that book. As I learned yoga when I was 13 years old, I began my own study of yoga and it's been transformational and it also was huge in my health journey and it really influenced me becoming a physician and a doctor and a holistic physician even later on.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Not bad. And then of course with that kind of an introduction or background to be thrust into a Western Medical School would have been quite confronting. How was it? I don't know. How was it?

Dr Tumi Johnson: It's a really great question. I think the short answer is yes. I was so excited to become a doctor and again, my father was a physician and was raised in the western tradition, but I think because of his background had inside of him also a holistic way of thinking about things. But I did go the traditional route. I went through Western, a very good medical school in the states. And yet, I really felt that something was missing in my education. It was an incredible education. Again, I wanna stress that, but I was really craving the desire of how, knowing that yoga had helped me so much, knowing that nutrition was important and not feeling all of that in my education.

Dr Tumi Johnson: So, I went to the Amazon, I did some medical volunteer work in the Ecuadorian Amazon, in the middle of medical school, to work with Shamans and herbalists to learn and really round out my education. So yes, it was confronting. But I think the lovely thing about confronting experiences is that helps you stand in your power. It helps you question what is it that you feel like you're missing and then fill in those missing parts.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Well, for some people, the university degree is the beginning of their professional life and a lot more learning doesn't always follow. But for others, it's really just the beginning of a lifetime of learning. I think one of the things about health that I've always found is the more you learn, the more you realize you don't know.

Dr Tumi Johnson: So true. It's so true. I think it would be remiss of me to mention one thing that also was part of my education, which is my own health struggles. I had pretty bad asthma as a young girl. Eczema, a skin condition. I also had suffered from pretty bad depression that probably reached its peak in medical school and it came to a very, very severe, severe peak that I share about in my book. I bring this up because you were just mentioning how formal education can be the beginning of true education. That's what it was for me is that going to school was just the tipping point.

Dr Tumi Johnson: When I went through that struggle of severe depression to the point where I tried to take my own life, it really confronted me, use the word confrontation, and I had to sort of say, "How do I now create a life that is worth living, that is more than just bearable?" That's what then introduced me to healing modalities outside of the formal education, that's how I deepened my yoga training, that's how I deepened into more nutrition and found meditation. I so agree with you that what we find in university, in medical school, in law school, whatever you're training might be my just be the tip and there's so much more there to discover.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: We're gonna talk about your book "Delicious healing." But I'm intrigued by these health challenges because were they there when you came from Nigeria to America or were these that developed as a result of ...?

Dr Tumi Johnson: Great question. The asthma I had, even in Nigeria, and pretty severe, and I was constantly on medications and was always in and out of the hospital for it. However, moving to the states, asthma is a disease, a multifactorial in a holistic issue. While there may have been physical triggers, there were also, as there are for many people, emotional and mental triggers. So, being in a high-stress environment, being in an anxious circumstance would also be a trigger for my asthma. Again, coming to a new culture, dealing with some of the issues that I had when I moved to the states that did make my asthma sometimes worse. And then the depression definitely took root when I came to the country.

Dr Tumi Johnson: I don't blame the states for it being, growing up partly in the states has been a complete blessing to me. I have dear friends and my parents and my family are still here. I think it's more again of cultural acclimation and cultural difference and what that can lead to. Then, there were some issues in our family home between my parents and that definitely led to feelings of depression and worry and anxiety. So, life, it's life that happened.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah. Listen, you mentioned that during your time at the university you went and did some volunteer work and I guess that explains, 'cause I know that you were awarded at university, Humaneness and Unselfish Service in Medicine Award, which is pretty extraordinary and you've worked with Doctors Without Borders in West Africa and you mentioned Amazon, and I know you've been to Haiti and Kenya among other places. I'm guessing it was a very different experience from, I think you were studying in New York at the time. What did you observe there about the health challenges compared to what you were seeing in America?

Dr Tumi Johnson: There are a lot of differences and there's also a lot of similarities. For clarification, I did my medical school at a great university, Vanderbilt University Medical School, one of the top universities in the states and then I went to New York for my residency training for my house doctor training. I chose that program. I was privileged to be able to go there because it housed, as part of the program, the oldest public hospital in the United States, Bellevue Hospital, really well known. What I loved about it was that it drew from a big immigration population, a big homeless population in New York. So, I got to work with people who were marginalized a lot and I understood that. I resonated with that at a very deep level, given my own history.

Dr Tumi Johnson: So, to be honest with you, when I continued to do medical volunteer work, I've been doing volunteer medical work since I was 17, maybe even before. Around 17. Well, as I was doing more medical volunteer work, when I went to Doctors Without Borders after my residency training in New York, there were actually a lot of similarities because in New York I was working with again, with a lot of an immigration population, a homeless population, a population that was struggling.

Dr Tumi Johnson: So, I saw that when I was working as a field doctor in West Africa working with literally starving children and their mothers. One of the things I think I would love to share is that there's so much more similarities and differences in all of us all around the world. And there might be these differences in terms of the color of our skin or the languages that we speak or even our socioeconomic background. But the similarities far outweigh the differences. So, it was really beautiful to be able to bring my training as a doctor in New York in that hospital are those hospitals in NYU to the field in West Africa. Were there differences? Absolutely. I had to also learn about the discomfort of not knowing the other. The other being this person that you may not fully understand culture-wise.

Dr Tumi Johnson: 'Cause I was working in West Africa but it was a different culture than what I had grown up within Nigeria. So, this idea that we are all similar, but also to respect and to be open to not knowing the other person, even if they may look very much like us, to be always sensitive to the fact that somebody is standing in front of you with a different experience and to question and to ask and then to shut up and listen to what is said to you.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Which for a doctor growing up, going through medical school, it's not kind of the way that a lot of doctors are trained. These are to me, to be fair, when you're talking about is sort of a sense of humility and listening, and I remember once learning from a very wise old doctor that I had the privilege of doing course from, she once said to me, "If you listened to your patients, they'll not only tell you what's wrong with them but if you ask

the right questions, they'll often tell you how to fix it." But that kind of humility in terms of cultural differences would be quite ... well, it'd be a real development for you. It'd be a challenge as well.

Dr Tumi Johnson: I think Ron, you're really nailing something that I think is a wound. I'll be quite honest, a wound, especially in western traditional medicine, which is that during medical training you are taught to really exude confidence almost to the extent of, I think that can be read as arrogance, right? You're supposed to convince your patients that you have the answer and to instill in them a sense of confidence in you. The other part though, I really believe, and it's been more and more my experience, now 15 years as a physician, there needs to be that humility. There needs to be that listening and balancing that line. I think that there can be sometimes an overemphasis on the first part, that idea of I need to exude confidence, I need to exude a, I know it all and maybe not enough of that that you speak about the humility, the listening.

Dr Tumi Johnson: We hear it. We hear it in medical school. I'll be very fair. People say, as the physician you speak about talks about listening to your patients, but also Ron, when you're given 15 minutes or 20 minutes with that patient, the reality for many doctors, and I'm privileged to know many physicians who do have good hearts and do have good intentions, but they're given 15 minutes with their patients and they want to exude that confidence and then their patients are left feeling unheard, feeling unlooked at. So, I think that is a real wound in the medical culture that I believe is hopefully with all the visibility and the conversation is beginning to be healed.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Because I think to put yourself out of your comfort zone into these cultures, as you've mentioned, Amazon, West Africa, it takes you out of your comfort zone and I guess humility is a good lesson to learn there. What else can we learn from these other cultures? What else have you brought back?

Dr Tumi Johnson: I love that question. I will name a few that just come up for me. One is the importance of nature, to be honest. The fact that we are nature. There tends to be, in the place at least that I've worked, real proximity to nature, like actual people living, people growing their own food, people being very aware of the seasons and the time of day because there's the absence of electricity. They can't dominate nature as we think we can in many "modernized societies."

Dr Tumi Johnson: So, there's this harmony and, and symbiosis and a connection with nature that I think is so beautiful and so healing because again, we are nature and there's true medicine in nature. I'm talking about, not just in terms of traditional plants or the herbs, but in being with planting your feet on the earth, with being outside, with moving in nature. I'll remember, I'll never forget working with [shivaji 00:15:24] Indians in the Amazons and we would walk for a couple of days to get from one village to the other through the Amazon. The way the Shiva would move, the Indians there being very low to the ground, looking at the rocks, they had and have such presence. It really taught me about moving.

Dr Tumi Johnson: I'm also a professional dancer and I've now incorporated a lot of my dance work into my medical work. I really got a real lesson in dance and movement in that

experience there because I learned a lot about presence. It's not just about doing the movement, whatever it is you do in terms of exercise or movement, but it's about being very aware of the moment, of your terrain, of what's around you so you can move with efficacy and grace and efficiency.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: I was gonna ask you how this in this experience in these various countries has affected your medical practice back in the states. How has that changed or developed over the years?

Dr Tumi Johnson: Yeah, tremendously. I know I'm a very, very different doctor than I would be had I not had those experiences. So, they are a true blessing. I would say in a few ways. I prescribe to my patients now moving in nature, I prescribe being out in nature, and the medical studies back it up. I talk about medical studies and scientific studies, talking about forest bathing, talking about being out in nature as a way to heal anxiety and depression and chronic pain. The studies show this and I experienced it firsthand when I did this work. The other thing how it influences that, food is one of the most elemental parts of nature. When I came back, I'll bring in my experience with Doctors Without Borders into play here. That work there is where I really got to see food as my medicine in no other way as I had. Again, working with starving children who when we gave them nutrient dense food flourished in a way that it was incredible.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Their immune system became healthy again. They were able to then heal along with well-chosen medication, things from tuberculosis, malaria, meningitis. They came back to life with nutrition. So, I came back, I was living in New York at the time, and I looked at my own diet and I realized that I could really clean up my own diet. That led me down the journey of a plant-based diet, which is what I've been adhering to. The medical studies again really show, it's not about necessarily eating a hundred percent plant foods, although that is what I choose and I've been amazingly healthy on, but that you want the majority of your plate to be from the earth.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Full of vibrancy, full of antioxidants, full of nutrients. So, when I saw healing in my own body from moving my diet, changing my diet this way, I began to prescribe it and I began to see patients healing from diabetes, hypertension, chronic pain, all sorts of issues from changing their diet. It's influenced my practice incredibly Ron because the first thing I now ask patients is, "What are you eating?" I do food diaries with them and then I help them heal their diet and then we get into movement practices and nature and mindfulness. All of this, I believe has stemmed from my experiences, doing my medical work abroad and here.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: And of course he's written this book, *Delicious Healing*. I think we've kind of already touched on some of those issues. But tell us about the book. Tell us why you wrote it. What the main messages are about it.

Dr Tumi Johnson: I wrote the book almost unwillingly, to be honest. I was in Bali at the time and I had this very ... I started meditating about eight years ago and went to something called Vipassana. I went to Vipassana meditation retreat, 10-day silent meditation retreat that also changed my life for the better. I've been meditating daily since. Doing the meditation in

Bali, I got a very strong calling to write this book. I've always been a writer. I'm a poet as well, and I always thought the first book I would publish would be a poetry book, but that calling was to write a book and to include poetry in it and to include my dance in it, but to really talk about my healing journey and I didn't want to do it because my healing journey was one about, as I shared earlier, wanting to take my life about severe depression, things I'd never spoken about before in public and only very, very few people knew about.

Dr Tumi Johnson: For me to sort of lean into or not lean into, dive into true discomfort and reveal myself in this way, felt so, so scary to be honest. But I also felt that that book needed to be written because I'd spoken to so many patients and clients by this point who were also struggling with the shame of whatever their disease was, whether it'd be mental, emotional or physical. So, to share that a doctor in a white coat could have these things and heal from them through a holistic method, it was clear to me that that story needed to be told. So, that is the story of Delicious Healing. My own journey of true healing to now living the most incredible life, the most delicious life I call it, that I could live coming from being a broken young woman to that and speaking about how to do that through holistic natural methods, how I did that and how I've guided people towards to doing that.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Then also, incorporating my dance, incorporating poetry and incorporating the studies from the medical literature that back all of this up. That is what Delicious Healing is. And it incorporates also, the end of every chapter there are practical tips that I call prescriptions, practical tips that you can do in your own life, just shift you into the life that you want to live.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Well, I know from my own experience, it's a very cathartic experience to commit to writing things that you've learned along your own journey and sharing, and you've been able to do all that despite your medical training. I know you've picked up a lot of extras along the way. Look, one of the things that definitely most every diet that [gray on 00:22:28] is the plant-based aspect of it. There's also raw vegan too, which is something that I know you feel quite passionate about. Tell us about the raw vegan diet. Why do you think it's so good? It's obviously the plant aspect, but there's more to it. There's more to it than that, isn't it?

Dr Tumi Johnson: Sure. Thank you for asking. I don't get that question very often. I'm somebody who's not a fan of Dogma and so sometimes even these labels, you're a raw vegan, sometimes I feel like people can kind of, their eyes can glaze over like, oh, I could never do that. I always say one about you doing what I do, but it's just about for you to know what the option is. For me, a raw vegan, like you said beautifully, it's really about plants, it's really about eating from mama earth, from mother nature, as nature I believe intended us has to eat. I've been eating a raw vegan diet now for eight years, thriving on it. I think part of the reason I thrive on it is that I don't see it as a rule, even though I've been 99.9% raw vegan and I've been a hundred percent vegan.

Dr Tumi Johnson: But sometimes I might have a few cooked mushrooms. My Nori wrap might be toasted. I might have cashews that are not completely raw. I don't get tied up in these labels. What is more important to me is that I'm choosing food that is natural, that is preferably organic, that is ripe, that is seasonal and that is varied. So I'm eating the colors of

the rainbow. I really believe that's what we are meant to eat because those colors of the rainbow translate to different nutrients. What I try to talk about with people is eat food that is whole and natural as much as you can. What I've found with a raw vegan diet, or a raw living foods diet, is that it basically gets out of the body's way. The body is meant to thrive, the body's meant to heal.

Dr Tumi Johnson: When I eat a raw vegan diet as I have been for eight years, my recovery, Ron, is incredible. I can dance and I do dance for two hours every day. I do dance performances all over the world. At 41 years old, I'm at my healthiest and fittest as I've ever been. I don't take any medications, nor have I had to, and this is a woman who was a pretty sickly girl for a lot of her life. I share all this, not with arrogance, but with happiness and with the idea of showing people again what is possible. Eat more fruits and vegetables. That's the bottom line.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: No one argues. Certainly not with the vegetables. This is a great opportunity for me 'cause I'm not a raw vegan person. If I asked you a couple of questions, like for example, fat. We've had a pretty important relationship with animals throughout history and fat has been an important part of that. What do you say to somebody that says fat?

Dr Tumi Johnson: Wonderful question and I do believe in our incredible ... for me they're sisters and brothers in different species, but animals are our sisters and brothers. We have had an incredible relationship with them and I believe we're supposed to be stewards of the earth and guardians of these other species. Fat can be found in animals, but it can also be and is easily found in plants. One of my favorite fruits is durian. Now, not everyone is privy to durian. You might be aware of it because you're in Australia. Very fatty fruit. Now, another one people might know of well is avocado.

Dr Tumi Johnson: But apart from fruits like olives and avocado and durian, which have good amounts of fats, they're also the nuts and seeds, which I think are wonderful foods and I incorporate them in healthy amounts. Chia seeds, which are healthy in Omega three, anti-inflammatory fats, really helpful. Flaxseeds is another option, hemp seeds. Well, you can find healthy fats in your fruits and vegetables and your nuts and seeds in a healthy amount that doesn't begin to what's the word clog up and make your blood sluggish. They can end up being proinflammatory and lead to a lot of issues.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Well, I mean, as far as ... I think people go down this path for two reasons. One is ethical and the other is health-wise. And from an ethical perspective, I totally get that because I think the way we've had a relationship with animals for millions of years and I think we've always treated them with a huge amount of respect and seeing them as sacred. This is a very important part of our relationship and I think industrialized meat production has bastardized that beyond belief. So, from an ethical perspective, I totally get it. Here's another word that when I think about raw thing and diet and I think fire is something that was a pretty important discovery on our human journey 'cause it made a lot of different foods available to us.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: I think it's fair to say, from the time it was first harnessed, say 1 million or 2 million years ago, Homo sapiens have done reasonably well as a result of that.

We could argue about whether that's true or not, but we've certainly evolved. What do you say about that? What do you say about the raw aspect of ... fire has played an important part. What do you think about that?

Dr Tumi Johnson: It really has. I'm glad you bring that up because I think there's this idea that we either have to embrace our past and our evolution or we have to completely, not just ignore it, but actually, look down on it and it doesn't have to be that black and white. What I would say to that is that fire was incredibly helpful, especially as there was this human migration from the tropics to colder environments. Humans are incredibly resilient beings and creative beings and fire were so helpful for us to survive in places that are frankly not the most hospitable to our species.

Dr Tumi Johnson: We're now able to live in every corner of the earth because of things like fire and our ability to harness and use fire. Does that mean that we thrive naturally in those environments? No. Let's be fair. We may live in the Arctic and we may live in very, very cold places, but it's not necessarily mean that is our natural habitat. I'm not saying we should all run to the tropics. I'm just saying that's a reality. So, understanding fire and being able to harness it in that way with extremely powerful creative and helped us to frankly survive.

Dr Tumi Johnson: But Ron, I believe we're in a new era now. We're in an era, not just of survival, I believe we're in this era of increased expansive consciousness and thriving. I believe the work that you do speak to that. There's just this burgeoning of wanting to have conversations around how do we thrive as a species emotionally, mentally, and physically. So, what I would say is if we can, as we can now, eat foods, we have so much at our disposal. If we can eat foods that are truly designed for us if we can live in ways that truly harmonize with nature, what does that look like? I would want to offer because you talked about the animal aspect, there's also the planet aspect and what we've done to the planet.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Oh God, don't even ... you've just had to listen to some of my podcast Tumi.

Dr Tumi Johnson: I have. Really it's one of the reasons I reached out to you, 'cause I have some respect with some of the things you've shared. Fire, the dark side of what we've done to fire because the fire itself is not bad. But what we've done in terms of harnessing and wanting to survive, the industrialization. My point is that finding a way to be more harmony with nature might look like simplification and part of that simplification could look like eating more and more of a natural plant foods diet.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, I was thinking of it. The whole story about fossil fuels and fire and all that is ... well, that's a whole other story, but I was thinking of it more from the foods that became available to us because we cook them.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Yes. Again, I always say when your living environment, when you have a season, a winter season and it's hard for you to find fresh fruits and vegetables, does it make more sense for you to import mangoes from West Africa and then to eat potatoes and cook them? So, I totally agree. I would though say again, what environments do we naturally

thrive in? And so, wherever you can find seasonal fruits and vegetables, eat that, and then do the best you can with where you live.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Look, I'm all for people having choices and making informed choices as well. I think that's really important and being respectful. We did a great podcast recently with Professor Fred Provenza who was talking about not only the wisdom we can get from watching how animals choose their food, but also the wisdom of plants in their ability to communicate, not just with the microorganisms in the soil, but with each other and predators and actually communicate a whole range of things.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: It gave me a whole new respect for the sentient almost beings that are plants. But the other question and this is my last one, I'm just kind of out there because you have a raw vegan approach and this is my opportunity to ask these questions and share them. Now, another one that intrigues me about the raw vegan diet, and maybe I've missed something, but is there a culture in all of human history that has thrived and survived generation after generation on a raw vegan diet?

Dr Tumi Johnson: The short answer for that is that we don't know because we've basically been recording history for a limited ... let me put it this way. There's recorded history that we know of and there's history that, and I will share, this is what is lovely about my background and knowing this in West African, in many cultures there is a, not written history. There is a history that is more shared through a story, oral tradition. I believe there's a huge part of our history, tens of thousands of years, Ron, again, before the fire, where we weren't eating raw foods. Whether we supplemented that with insects and plants and animals that we first always if you look at the native American tradition we first gave thanks to and we killed with so much sacredness and humility and gratitude, which is not what it looks like today in terms of our modern society.

Dr Tumi Johnson: My point is that we don't know. I would say that yes, there were many cultures that were eating definitely raw because fire had a beginning and there was ... we predated fire. And then in terms of vegan, in the tropics and in Africa, which is arguably the birthplace of humanity, that's a lot of fruits, that's a lot of vegetables. I believe that's actually our history. One thing to also say about that question, because I love this question, is again, that was our history. Where are we now? What works best for our guts. I wanna say a few things as a doctor and anatomically that might be very of interest in what we are physiologically capable of. We have opposable thumbs and we have vision that is perfect for being able to pluck fruit and see fruit in a way that lines cannot do.

Dr Tumi Johnson: We don't have the canines have true carnivores. Our gut length is about three times the length of our heights. We're 22 feet around of our intestines versus the short gut of true carnivores. Physiologically, we don't make lipase, which is an enzyme to break down meats. And we have something called Thailand, which helps to break down carbohydrates, plants basically. Physiologically in so many ways, it points to our natural food being plants and especially fruits. So, it bears thinking of, and again, I'm not dogmatic. I just want people to know that there are options and to look at those options. Again, I've been thriving on this for eight years, but more than me, people have been thriving this way of

eating for 20, 30 plus years that I've had the opportunity of meeting so I wanted to share that. Thank you for letting me speak about it.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: No. Well, thank you. But listen, now you've mentioned your book and you've mentioned that at the end of each chapter there's a sort of a prescription, but I wondered if we could leave our listeners with just a few tips about incorporating what you've learnt along your journey and to improve their health. What would they be? You've already mentioned some, but let's have a couple of tips to leave our listeners with.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Beautiful question. We've talked a lot about food so I wanna leave about one thing with food, and it's not about what you eat, it's about how you eat. If there's one thing that I would say around your food outside of what kind of foods to eat, how do you sit with your food when you eat? If you eat one, two, or three meals a day, take the time, give thanks in whatever way feels good to you about that food in front of you. Turn off all distractions as much as you can, computer, Internet, TV, phone, and eat that food with mindfulness. Ron, I cannot tell you how life changing this can be because digestion is all about the parasympathetic nervous system. It's all about relaxing to be able to eat. So many of us eat under stress and duress and we can't digest.

Dr Tumi Johnson: We're not what we eat, we're what we digest. So, if you're eating the best of foods, no matter what diet you believe, and you can only digest a little bit of it, where does that leave you? I think it leaves a lot of people with the disease. So, mindful eating, even if it's one meal of all your meals a day, preferably all your meals, I think is transformational. That's one thing. The second thing I would share is even if it's just five to 10 minutes every day, I would recommend, and this maybe is similar if it resonates with you, is meditation. There are so many apps out there now. I don't have affiliations with any of them, but I know Insight Timer, there's one called Headspace, I believe.

Dr Tumi Johnson: The ability to to be silent in a world where there's so much information and there's so much noise, I believe first thing in the morning is the best way because then you don't have any excuses to not do it the rest of your day. 10 minutes, set a timer, use a guided meditation if you need to flood your mind wanders too much. Start your day that way. Life changing.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: You've already mention of mindful movement as well, which I loved. Look, we're just about to finish up, we've covered some good territory here, but taking a step back from your role as a medical practitioner, as an author, as a dancer, as a poet, because we're all on a health journey in this modern world, what do you think the biggest challenge is for people on their health journey in our modern world? What do you think that is?

Dr Tumi Johnson: That's a great question. If it's one thing, you know what? I'm going to say something just came to me. I'm gonna go with it. Self-love. True self-love and self-acceptance. When we can master that and it's a journey for all of us, choose self-love and choose to self-acceptance. When we master that, we understand that the wisdom and how to eat, how to move, how to be is all within us.



Dr Ron Ehrlich: Tumi, what a lovely note to finish on and we are going to have links to your website to your wonderful book and thank you so much for joining me today and sharing your wisdom with us.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Ron, thank you so much and I wanted to share that I so appreciate the work that you're doing and having these amazing conversations through your podcast and through your book.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Thanks Tumi.

Dr Tumi Johnson: Thank you.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Self-love. What a great note to finish on, but so is that word mindfulness, whether we're talking about, well, not only the choices we make about what we eat in order to nourish our body and mind, but equally important how we eat as well as how we move and ultimately how we think about all those things about the world in general, about how we fit into it and the effect those decisions have on the planet.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: It doesn't matter what diet we are talking about. There is universal agreement that plants play an important role. And given the toxins and all the stresses we're exposed to, eating the colors of the rainbow with all the primary compounds, they are proteins, fats and carbohydrates, and the secondary compounds, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that are in plants. Well, regular listeners will remember the episode I did with Professor Fred Provenza. When he pointed out as an example of the power of plants of real food, the humble strawberry has over 5,000, yes, 5,000 volatile compounds, many of which we don't fully understand their roles, but eating whole foods has got them built in.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, that laboratory we call nature has been working very hard over the last hundreds of millions of years to develop real foods in all their complexity to nourish us. Now, I might not agree with the raw vegan approach, but I totally understand where it's coming from. Regular listeners will know I do feel that animals have a place in our lives as they have throughout human history, but we do eat too much. We do and then, do we respect those animals? Do we treat them as sacred? Well, clearly we've got a long way to go on that one. We will have links to Tumi's book, *Delicious Healing* in the transcripts of this episode. Now, remember we now have the Unstressed App. Yes, you can find it in the app store or on Google Play.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: You just search "unstressed" and bingo, there it is. Interestingly, the dropdown menu on that APP has some breathing exercises and if you scroll down and go to the one I've called four by four by four that means through your nose, inhale for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, then hold your breath four seconds then you will switch on that parasympathetic rest and digest part of your own nervous system. It only takes a minute, but it's a great thing to do before every meal addressing how to eat that Tumi referred to. It's also worth doing throughout the day when you are stressed and definitely just before you go to sleep. There are lots of other resources on that app. It's a great way to stay in touch when we post each new episode. So, until next time, this is Dr. Ron Ehrlich, be well.



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