

Belinda Fettke: Veganism, Public Health Messages and the Influence of Sanitarium

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:00:01] Before I start, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians on the land on which I am recording this podcast, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. I pay my respects to their elders of the past, present and emerging.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:00:28] Hello and welcome to Unstress. My name is Dr Ron Ehrlich. Well, today we're going to explore Public Health messages. Why are they so confusing and contradictory? Also, we're going to explore Veganism.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:00:42] Veganism is a popular movement, and it is based on two or three basic principles. One, that animal welfare is being compromised by the way industrial animal agriculture is being conducted. And I have absolutely no argument with that. To any regular listener on this podcast, you will know championing Regenerative Agriculture is an important issue. So that Animal Agriculture also has not only animal welfare issues but also environmental issues. So that's an agreement there, right there. And then but the other one is that Veganism is associated with health and wellness and we're going to cover that topic and challenge that notion.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:01:27] In fact, my guest today is Belinda Fettke. Now, Belinda's background is in Nursing, but she is, over the last 10 years, become an amazing Medical Researcher and a Researcher of Medical History, not just of medicine itself and public health messages. Belinda is the wife of the guest that I had, one of my first guests on the podcast. I think it was in the first three or four episodes where I spoke to Orthopaedic Surgeon, Dr Gary Fettke.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:01:57] Gary had his own health challenges, which included Cancer and Diabetes, and he dealt with those in an amazing way, and then became an evangelist, if you like, for proper health advice. And as an Orthopaedic Surgeon, he was dealing with the ravages of Type-2 Diabetes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:02:17] Type-2 Diabetes results if it's uncontrolled in amputations and an Orthopaedic Surgeon does those amputations. So Gary was doubly inspired not just by his own health experience, but by wanting to advise patients to avoid his services. And that led him down the path of giving health advice.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:02:42] In Tasmania, in a small town in Tasmania called Launceston. And that resulted in him being taken to the Medical Board by a Dietician who was representing the Australian Dieticians Association. And that led to an incredibly traumatic time in his life, of which I have to say he was completely exonerated. And in that process, he and his wife, Belinda, embarked on extensive research in how public health messages are translated, how they are formed, and also the broader issue of Veganism and where that as comes about.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:03:19] Look, there is so much in this episode, I think it's worth listening to twice. It's certainly going to go back and have another listen to it. But I hope you enjoyed this conversation I had with Belinda Fettke.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:03:34] Welcome to the show, Belinda.

Belinda Fettke [00:03:35] Thanks very much, Ron. It's a pleasure to be here.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:03:38] Belinda, I spoke to Dr. Gary Fettke, your husband, very early on in our podcast. In fact, I wanted him to be one of my first guests. And I've been looking forward to following that up with the discussion with you because I know your background is in Nursing Research. But I wonder if you might just share with our listener a bit about your own background.

Belinda Fettke [00:04:01] I guess my own background, as you mentioned, was Nursing, but I gave that up a very, very long time ago. The reason I started going into Research was because I watched my husband firstly improve his own health using low carbohydrate principles. I watched a man who was diagnosed with a very aggressive Pituitary Tumour in 2000 and then be told in 2011, really after too lots of Surgery, Stereotactic Radiotherapy and 11 and a half years of chemo, that there was nothing else I could do.

Belinda Fettke [00:04:30] And he had been researching. He'd been looking into all the latest technologies and modalities to improve outcomes for cancer. He'd been looking at that for a long time. But in 2011, when he was pretty much told there was nothing else they could do. He knew he had to make a really determined effort. So he delved into Dr Google and he looked up Colin Champ and Dominic D'Agostino, who are doing some really incredible work on cancer, metabolism, and the link to glucose.

Belinda Fettke [00:05:03] In 2010, a guy called Luke Tapi had only just described the metabolism of fructose. So it was really, really new. And he was given the book Sweet Poison by David Gillespie. And he thought, what on earth does a lawyer know about sugar? I'm a doctor. What does a lawyer know about sugar that I don't? So there was a whole series of things that all started to come together at the same time. And also our Pharmacist, who is very holistic and looks into lots of other things, suggested that maybe Gary tried Metformin because the unexpected side effect of Metformin was it appeared to be putting cancers into remission. And Gary thought, "Oh my gosh, I'm already taking 15 medications. Why am I going to up another one?".

Belinda Fettke [00:05:49] Because as you would be well aware, when people start down this road of mandating sick care, then you just keep adding on more medications to counteract side effects. And it just goes on and on and on. And as I just went, why would I take another drug when if I think about it in really simple terms, it's stopping the uptake of sugar or it's actually pushing sugar into the tissues instead of keeping it into the bloodstream. So I'm going to give up sugar. That's where he started in 2011.

Belinda Fettke [00:06:19] And as he came to understand the power of that message, that he started to improve his health pretty much straight away, went cold turkey, gave up sugar. It took a little while for him to.. So it wasn't long after that he started to look into the role of polyunsaturated oils and how they were harming so that seed oils, not the natural poison or that are in whole real food, but the actual manmade seed oils, the harms of those. And then he suddenly clicked, "Oh my gosh, starches are just glucose as soon as you put them into your mouth."

Belinda Fettke [00:06:54] So these highly processed cereals, pastas, and polished rice, that and bread, actually become glucose. And for him, with his cancer that was making his PET scan light up like a Christmas tree, his cancer was feeding on glucose. So by reducing those sugars and certainly the unsaturated oils. Oh, my gosh. Yeah. He's had his cancer in remission just through diet for over seven years now, which is incredible and

something that we never thought was possible. And the thing is, we were never told about diet in the beginning.

Belinda Fettke [00:07:34] And I do think looking back and this is just hypothetical, but Gary appeared to be driven to eat even more glucose sugars when his tumour was active. And it was like he was looking for it to feed it and he just couldn't get enough. He was eating by the dietary guidelines, you know, 9-11 servings of carbohydrates today. But he really was he was eating a lot of cereals, bread. It was amazing how his body was looking for it and he doesn't anymore.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:08:06] You know, this reminds me just why I was so looking forward to talking to you, Belinda. And you've been busy doing research on so many of those messages. And public health messages is something that I've focussed on also and have intrigued me for many years. I've written about it in my own book, why public health messages are so confusing and often contradictory. And I kind of speculating about the sources have influence in those dietary guidelines, and I wonder if you might share with us a bit about your current work and research on that issue.

Belinda Fettke [00:08:42] The reason I've gone into this and looking at the public health messaging and how there's a lot of misinformation and where this messaging is coming from. But the reason I went into it was because Gary in 2014 was reported to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. He was reported to the Tasmanian Medical Board for recommending his patient in the hospital with complications of Diabetes, with Gangrene needing amputation.

Belinda Fettke [00:09:13] He recommended that they reduce sugar because he was saying how much was helping him and he was looking into how it was improving people with Type-2 Diabetes, slowing down the progression of the disease, even putting it into remission. In fact, he was even reported inappropriately reversing Type-2 Diabetes. So it was getting out of hand.

Belinda Fettke [00:09:32] And I watched Gary. I watched all these other people. He became part of the low carb down under group in 2014. And they were talking about the Science. And I watched him getting bullied in the face. And I thought this honestly, this has got nothing to do with the science. In fact, I think they were even talking about from 2012, 2013, sorry.

Belinda Fettke [00:09:53] About 2014 when Gary was reported, I just went this makes no sense. So where is this and teammate demonisation of animal proteins and fats coming from? Before we go further, I'm not anti-vegan, anti-vegetarian, not anti-religion, this is a really, really important thing to consider -- is that our Dietary Guidelines are becoming plant-biased. That's what I have termed it.

Belinda Fettke [00:10:24] And if this messaging is a guideline, it should be flexible. It should be looking at individual cases. It should be looking at how to improve individuals' health. It shouldn't be a blanket rule book, which is what it appears to be, because we would get into trouble. He can tell people to reduce smoking because he's seen the harms and the complications that can happen when he is operating because he's an Orthopaedic Surgeon. He's not a Respiratory Physiologist, and he can tell them that, he can tell people to exercise and move more. Not specifically. He could send someone to a Physio, but he can give a broad discussion on exercise and mobility. He should be able to tell someone to reduce sugar. I mean, it's hard to believe, but in 2013, 2014, that was a criminal offense,

obviously, and the AHPRA Tasmanian Medical Board decided to investigate him for two and a half years.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:11:24] I mean, the trauma. Psychologically, I mean, you've got enough to do as a health practitioner dealing with people and your own approach to them. But to have this to deal with is just.. I can only imagine. And the fact that he's still in remission is incredible.

Belinda Fettke [00:11:41] I know. And he was improving people's health. He was presenting, he virtually presented a thesis to the medical board and he underlined everything. He was just giving them research paper after research paper showing how this was helping. And so that's why I began my research. This is this makes no sense. So I looked at the person who'd been brought in as the expert witness. They only had one for two and a half years. And he is the Professor Emeritus of the entire Southeast Asia Pacific region, pretty much the biggest nutrition gun in that area.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:12:17] Wow.

Belinda Fettke [00:12:17] And I think this is for a doctor in Tasmania like we are far, far away. We're in Launceston, you know, a population of one hundred eighty thousand people or something. It's a ridiculous catchment area. It's.. we're so small here. And why did they need someone so big to be determining if an Orthopaedic Surgeon could talk about reducing sugar?

Belinda Fettke [00:12:38] Of course, his messaging got more involved as he went on, but it was still any recommendation to people with Type-2 Diabetes to reduce their sugar, processed carbohydrates and reintroduce healthy fats. So he just refused to be quiet. He is still out there and he was lecturing and he was still talking to his patients because he said, this is a determination that's going to cause harm. But I had to work out why.

Belinda Fettke [00:13:05] So when I looked at this expert witness, he was working for Sanitarium at the time of his work with AHPRA. And so I first went, because I thought he must work for the sugar industry, you know, he has to be working for the sugar industry, you know, and that is going for the cereal industry.

Belinda Fettke [00:13:25] And over a couple of years, I uncovered documents that actually showed that the Dieticians Association of Australia was in partnership with a group called Cereal for Brekky. And this group was Sanitarium, Nestlé, Kellogg's and Freedom Foods. And they had a group under at the time when it was formed, it was someone who is very high up in the board of the Dieticians Association of Australia. So she was running this Australian Breakfast Cereal Manufacturing Forum group, which was called Cereal for Breakfast. And they had a partnership.

Belinda Fettke [00:14:00] This partnership for \$23000 a year. And I'm sure we could have garnered \$23000 or \$25000 just to up them if we'd known about it, but for \$23000 a year that Dieticians Association of Australia. So remember that this is the Accrediting Registration Body of Dietetics. They also provide education resources. This is their body that dietitians would be trusting to give really important information to them about dietetics.

Belinda Fettke [00:14:32] Taking a partnership with his Breakfast Cereal Group, and in the determination of that partnership, it said the Dieticians Association of Australia had to

use their dietician members to influence, protect and actively defend zero grains and sugar, even sugars messaging.

Belinda Fettke [00:14:52] These documents named Gary as targeted for active defense.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:14:58] Yes,.

Belinda Fettke [00:14:59] And within weeks of this minuted document being tabled, I guess, but I didn't find it that quickly. But with it being tabled, the CEO, the then CEO of the Dieticians Association of Australia, wrote to Gary's hospital twice asking for them to silence him. And while I didn't specifically mention Gary's name, we know it was about Gary, because in the 845-page document that was sent to the Tasmanian Medical Board, these phone calls and emails had been logged as part of his case. So this is unbelievable. And it was a Dietitian who reported him. And you just go, "OK, the Cereal Industry's after him. They want him silenced." And from there, I kept delving down deeper and deeper and looked into who Sanitarium actually was. But this expert witness worked for a Sanitarium from the year 2000 through to 2016, the entire way through.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:15:56] Wow. And just remind us of his position?

Belinda Fettke [00:16:01] While he was at the Monash University as Emeritus Professor, he's mostly working in Taiwan now. But he was head of the IUNS for a long time, the International Union of Nutrition Science. He started the Asia Pacific Society of Nutrition and the Asia Pacific Clinical Journal of Nutrition Science. So he began all of these things. He was head of Nutrition Australia in 2000 while working for Sanitarium, and no wonder Nutrition Australia had them as their platinum sponsors and using their educational material.

Belinda Fettke [00:16:37] So the more I looked into Sanitarium, the more I found, "Woah, Sanitarium's providing resources to GP's at the click of a button on their software programmes.". 90% of GPs have these software programmes installed on their computers, and all I need to do is click a button for Type-2 Diabetes, for Gestational Diabetes, for Insulin Resistance, for Obesity, for Irritable Bowel Syndrome.. All care of.. Thank you very much, Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing, Sanitarium Health Food Company.

Belinda Fettke [00:17:11] When did we become so brainwashed that we actually believe their messaging and where their messaging comes from? And why is it anti-meat? And I hadn't even thought about, I was to think of this company. So that's where I've dealt in the last seven years.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:17:27] Mmm. Gosh, you're unpacking that. I mean, this is a story that as I hear you talk, I'm even more shocked. And this is not a story that I have been unaware of. I've been following it more or less for 25 years. But the more I hear about it, the more incredible it becomes because it's a story so easy to miss when you hear it. And that's what this is about. This podcast in general is about it, it's difficult to ignore. But what impact does that have on public health messages as a whole?

Belinda Fettke [00:18:00] Well, then when you look at the public health messaging, you think, where has it come from? You know, who's been telling the Dieticians Association of Australia to protect Cereal industry? Who has been doing these things? You look at the sponsorship of the Dieticians Association of Australia, sponsoring their spokespeople, programmes from the 1990s, looking right through. It's come from the food and

pharmaceutical industries. And I cannot believe how much we've uncovered like we would have been so naive. And honestly, if they'd just used somebody local as the expert witness, I would never have even known about any of this. We would not have met. Because we'd just be here in Tasi going to bang our heads against a brick wall.

Belinda Fettke [00:18:44] It was only the fact that this highly-profiled person came into Gary's case that has sent me down all these pathways. But looking at the public health messaging in particular, we're looking at a group of people. And this is where I've come to understand the Sanitarium Health Food Company is wholly owned by the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Belinda Fettke [00:19:07] And in understanding their principles, their beliefs, their teachings of a church that only started in 1843. 1844 was when they started to splinter off from a group. And in 1863 they were incorporated. And in that year, in 1863, their Prophetess, their church founder, had a vision from God telling her that meat would spiritually, morally, and physically corrupt people.

Belinda Fettke [00:19:37] So it was a very, very strong anti-meat messaging from the beginning of the founding of that church. And a guy called Joan Sabate, a very devout Seventh Day Adventist who works at their university in Loma Linda in America. He published a paper in 2008 saying the Global Influence of the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Diet. And if you look at that academic papers published in religion, but they actually explained and it came on the back of Gary presenting my research in America in 2017, and within their references, they actually reference my work. Sanitarium is the motherboard. And it's the motherboard for the world. Like it's amazing how much influence they have in not only creating health food..

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:20:27] We'll get into that.

Belinda Fettke [00:20:28] And so they also, they own I think it's 46 hospitals in the US, over 20 of them in Florida alone. So they are the health care in America and they own many medical schools around the world. Specifically, Loma Linda is the biggest and they have 800 staff at the university.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:20:53] I mean, when I was exploring sponsorship of so-called professional organisations, well, they're not so-called. They are professional organisations. The Dieticians Association of Australia, for example. I know for a fact, if you go looking on that site now, you won't find it.

Belinda Fettke [00:21:12] No.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:21:13] I don't know whether they've stopped sponsorship or whether just hidden it. But when I was looking this up from my book in 2015, Kellogg's Campbell's Nestlé, Unilever, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Sanitarium, The Grains and Cereal Council, The Dairy Council, Dairy Australia were all sponsors of the Dietary Association of Australia. And they were then invited or they won the tender for the Australian Healthy Eating Guidelines, which finds its way into every doctor's surgery, as you have said.

Belinda Fettke [00:21:48] And the thing is, if you read the fine print on the dietary guidelines, it says it's only for healthy people. Yet the Dieticians Association of Australia use it for unhealthy people. Diabetes Australia, the Heart Foundation, they all say, look at the Dietary Guidelines. And these Dietary Guidelines are plant cereal-based guidelines

that do not improve health for everybody. And my husband is definitely a living example of that. He followed those guidelines with 9-11 servings of carbohydrates.

Belinda Fettke [00:22:20] He insisted. I was a bad girl and he insisted we go to margarine and use all the seed oils. And his body was so sick and so inflamed from all those things. I was eating the same diet and I didn't have the same issues. So, you know, we're talking about individuals here. But over time, if you keep going to the casino and you keep rolling that dice, in the end, the house always wins.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:22:45] So a lot of people have rolled that dice. The incidence of diabetes is going through the roof and cancer is affecting one in three people by the time they hit 60 anyway. We talk about daily deaths. Daily deaths. You know, we become very focussed on that.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:23:03] Through this covid, 50000 people a day die of Cardiovascular Disease, 25000 die of Cancer, 10000 a day die of Diabetes. So a lot of people have rolled the dice and followed advice and maybe could be doing better.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:23:19] Okay, let's move on a little bit, because one of the things that's happened is, of course, Veganism. It is an intriguing movement because at first glance it appears so appealing. I mean, it perpetuates the idea that compassion towards adults go hand in animals rather.. and adults. But their compassion towards animals goes hand in hand with health and wellbeing. Have you been exploring this, the Veganism and the origins of Veganism?

Belinda Fettke [00:23:47] Absolutely.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:23:47] Is this back to.. Tell us about the origins of Veganism.

Belinda Fettke [00:23:50] So the origins of Veganism, I've really looked into this and I could do a whole thesis. I think so. A very quick discussion on it. Looking back through religions. All the way back, you know. You consider Pythagoras and different people who over time advocated a vegan diet. And these people were, I would say, privileged people. In later in their life, they didn't start as babies being given a vegan diet.

Belinda Fettke [00:24:21] So it's a really, really important thing to consider from all of my research as well. That this decision making was well into their adult life, that they decided they wanted to be compassionate about animals. But if I went back all the way through, I've got friends in India and I've spoken to them, you know, we think India is a vegan or vegetarian country. And in fact, 80% of Indians eat some sort of animal meat and definitely animal fats. The other 20% are vegetarian unless they have been forced by their caste to not be able to eat animal proteins and fats. So it's a malnourishment or it's a privilege.

Belinda Fettke [00:25:04] And I and I think they're the two extremes of veganism, even the Jain Religion, who's probably one of the most strict about not harming an animal. They won't put tubers out of the ground because that destroys the plant. They'll pick fruit and they'll pick leaves off trees, but they will not pull up a tuba root. But even they.. are encouraged to eat game. Which is clarified butter. Because Vitamin B12 is essential to life and you cannot get it from a purely plant diet. So it's a privilege to be out to eat a Vegan-diet in the Western World because they can have supplements. It's a malnourished diet in an indigenous community to not be able to eat any animal protein or fat.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:25:48] Is there a culture in all of human history that has survived generation after generation, not just survived but thrived, or let's say survived generation after generation on a vegan diet? Have I missed it? Is there a culture in human history?

Belinda Fettke [00:26:04] Not that I'm aware of. As, say, the stunting is just getting more and more pronounced. Friends of ours in India are devastated. And I've got some very good friends who are Vegetarian and will not eat animal protein, but they eat animal fats and they said without that, our health would be very poor. And they are able to do a Low Carbohydrate Diet very successfully as a Vegetarian.

Belinda Fettke [00:26:27] So I would think a Vegetarian Diet, and an Omnivore Diet, and possibly even more of a Carnivore Diet back as we evolved. Good for health. When you go to that vegan extreme that you're starting to go, "Okay, I can be privileged to have a vegan diet because I can supplement I can have an injection every three weeks so I can do this." It's a privilege and indigenous communities do not have that privilege.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:26:55] Hmm. The other question I ask them because the appealing part about the vegan approach is that it doesn't kill animals. And it's interesting to hear you mention the Jains who don't even want to kill a plant by pulling up its roots. That is interesting, but we won't go there. My question to them is, how big does an animal have to be before it counts?

Belinda Fettke [00:27:19] Completely agree with that.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:27:20] I mean, because if I'm not mistaken, in order to grow vegetables, a lot of land, natural habitat needs to be cleared. And that affects, I believe, animals and the microbes in the soil. And then to keep those crops free from pests, many of which, in fact, all of which are animals as well, and microbes. You know, how big does an animal have to be to count? What do you think?

Belinda Fettke [00:27:48] That's a really, really great question. I think it's the elephant in the room.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:27:52] Yeah, yeah. I like to I just ask those two questions respectfully. Historically, what is the story? How many generations have survived, and are you happy to be part of the human experiment? And my second question is, how big does an animal have to be to count?

Belinda Fettke [00:28:09] I think Lierre Keith --

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:28:10] She wrote the book Vegetarian Myth.

Belinda Fettke [00:28:12] She did. And she was also interviewed for Sacred Cow by Rogers and Robb Wolf's documentary and in their book. But she makes a beautiful case as being someone who is passionate about sentient beings and protecting them and tried really, really hard to be an ethical eater. What she considered was ethical by not having the big fluffy, the big animals that we could see with our eyes easily and realise that even trying to grow her own vegetables. She was having to kill animals to grow.

Belinda Fettke [00:28:47] And she said, "I've just realised there is no life without death." And I think that's a fascinating commentary and it's about respect. OK, we need to be respectful to people, we need to be respectful of the Earth that we live on.

Belinda Fettke [00:29:03] So how can we create a more sustainable future going forward? In Tasmania, I am privileged. We have beautiful fresh-produced. Like, we can literally go to our markets and get fresh seasonal local food that I know has not been, you know, paddock to plate. Even the organic thing is is tricky because you're potentially cutting out part of the circle of life. Is organic. But I'm talking about, Does through.. you know, have a few odd-shaped things and a few eaten leaves. But, you know, we're talking about eating fresh, seasonal, local. And we can do that here in Tasmania. It's not possible as possible everywhere else. So I am privileged in that way. But I really believe in supporting local farmers as much as possible. And if we can move more towards that, it'll be fantastic. Get away from the big corporations that are trying to own everything.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:30:03] Because the other one is and I do I do share the vegans concern about this -- is Animal Welfare. And I think that is a huge and very relevant topic. And that's why I've also focussed on my programme and my interest on Regenerative Agriculture. And what is good for the animal is good for the planet and good for us, of course, along the way. So it's a win win-win.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:30:29] And the animal, if the animal has just one bad day in its life, the day that it dies. And we respectfully consume that animal and the whole animal, then I think that's a whole different narrative. But that is an interesting one. And but it's also the way that Veganism is also connected with Environmentalism, isn't it?

Belinda Fettke [00:30:56] Yes. Well, if you look at Loma Linda, Joan Sabate, he's taken Ellen G. White's messaging and take it then into that climate group. So he's now developed an Environmental Subspecialty at Loma Linda University. And he's very involved in if you see studies saying beans over beef and you see study after study after study, he and the Seventh Day Adventists have become very involved in that space as well.

Belinda Fettke [00:31:25] I mean, masturbation. And then it's moved right through, Anticancer. They've been very involved in that area and now it's become environmental. And again, it's it's about how can they take their message even further and get more people to buy into it? It's.. they've been commissioned.

Belinda Fettke [00:31:41] So since Adventism, Ellen G. White taught that it was the duty of the church to take on public health messaging. This is back in the 1800s, public health messaging to demonise animal proteins and fats and promote the Biblical Garden of Eden Diet.

Belinda Fettke [00:32:02] And this is where a group who are intent on proving, not disproving divine inspiration, are taking public health messaging right throughout the world and becoming really prominent in Medicine, in Dietetics, in Research and shaping our world view on the the gospel truth of the health benefits of plants and this demonisation of animal proteins and fats. And they've been very, very successful, involved in education. They're very involved in Medical Evangelism. And these two things being taken right throughout the world through either the church area or through Seventh Day Adventist Groups can also make their own thing. So the American College of Lifestyle Medicine in America that has its roots in Seventh Day Adventist teachings and they promote a vegan diet. If you look at the resources on their website, there is not a single animal protein or fat on those resources, even for children.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:33:06] The American Society of Lifestyle Medicine,

Belinda Fettke [00:33:09] The American College of Lifestyle Medicine, which was the start of the lifestyle medicine associations around the world. So they are the key group that founded it. So a guy called John Kelly, he is a devout Adventist. He not only founded the Christian Association of Lifestyle Medicine on the Loma Linda University campus in 2003, but was the founding member in 2004 of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine because the Christian Association was probably only going to be to a small group. So then the American College of Lifestyle Medicine was founded in 2004.

Belinda Fettke [00:33:46] He has since written the Board Review Manual on Lifestyle Medicine, which every lifestyle, medicine society around us, around the world do the board review manual and the international exams. So he's been involved in that. And his latest thing, which has been my research, because I've really honed in on Type-2 Diabetes because of Gary's interest in promoting a Low Carbohydrate Diet and the results that people are getting around the world and more and more studies and showing how effective it can be. They have just John Kelly has been the lead author of the position statement of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine.

Belinda Fettke [00:34:26] And there when I go through the position statement and look at the Low Carbohydrate section, every single reference in that makes it seem like animal proteins and fats are just the worst things. "Low carbohydrate diet is not only unsafe but unhealthy." Their references are about my studies that some of them don't even talk about animal proteins and others actually contradict their cherry-picked narrative for that space.

Belinda Fettke [00:34:55] But I completely left out, even though they've referenced low carbohydrate, they've referenced Eric Westman and another study, but they've put it in their position statement tucked away before the invention of Insulin. So you wouldn't even consider that it's got positive results about low carbohydrate, even though if you looked at their references quickly go, "Oh, well, they're discussing both. They considered both." But the way they've positioned it. And so not only that on this position statement, they've produced a Diabetes Bill of Rights. And he, again, is the lead author.

Belinda Fettke [00:35:25] The Diabetes Bill of Rights is an exclusive document. It does not allow people to consider animal proteins or fats in their diet. An inclusive document, which is what? Virta Health, Diet Doctor, you know so many people, Gary.

Belinda Fettke [00:35:41] What we're doing is supporting people regardless of their religious beliefs, ethical beliefs. We support people to achieve health. And in my mind, this Diabetes Bill of Rights, it's sort of pulling on the American Bill of Rights, which is a huge call. 27 Ratified Amendments giving people freedom of choice.

Belinda Fettke [00:36:06] And this American College of Lifestyle Medicines' Diabetes Bill of Rights is an exclusive document. Because there is no consideration. The people then who are delivering and facilitating the online course, the health professionals, again, only published last year. So the same men who started it in 2004 are hugely involved in 2021, they were delivering, including Neil Barnard, who's an animal activist. You know, so against Low Carbohydrate animals.

Belinda Fettke [00:36:42] It includes every single person in it is a Vegan advocate. Either for religious ideology or for ethical beliefs. And there's no one giving it a considered

opinion in that animal proteins and fats could be part of a diet. And you have to consider that the seventh Day Adventist Church believe in the Biblical Garden of Eden Diet.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:37:04] Tell us about the Biblical Garden of Eden Diet.

Belinda Fettke [00:37:07] John Kelly in his slides that were in the American College of Lifestyle Medicine up until 2008. The slides show that he has put up there, that Adam and Eve were part of Lifestyle Medicine. Lifestyle Medicine was Genesis. It was when Adam and Eve had their beautiful home in the Garden of Eden being given a vegan diet because fruits, grains, nuts and seeds were the Garden of Eden Diet.

Belinda Fettke [00:37:32] They have no belief that there was any role for evolution or ancestral diet because we began with God's Diet was fruits, nuts and seeds.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:37:46] Hmm.

Belinda Fettke [00:37:47] We weren't even given permission to eat vegetables till after the fall of man. So this is a really specific diet and a belief that Science aligns with the Bible. Everywhere in Lifestyle Medicine, you see evidence-based, evidence-based, evidence-based. But that evidence has to align with the Bible and God's Laws of Nature. So there is no role for animal proteins and fats in the diet.

Belinda Fettke [00:38:16] And Ellen G. White came to Australia in 1889 and was here till 1900, so she was here for nearly 11 years. She founded the church, the schools, the publishing company, the hospital, and she was determined because I have jumped a little bit. John Harvey Kellogg worked for the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the devout Seventh Day Adventist.

Belinda Fettke [00:38:43] They, Ellen and her husband, paid for him to go to medical school. He was only 12 when he first started typesetting her sermons about meat causing masturbation. About do not put meat in front of your child because it wasn't only men, but women and children who were afflicted with the sin of masturbation or self-biased as. They referred to it. And it caused everything. And we still hear, you know, masturbation causes blindness.

Belinda Fettke [00:39:14] She claimed all of these things. And again, it was part of the temperance movement in the 1800s. But she said she was shown by God all these things were true. And so when she came to Australia, she wanted to set up Kellogg's model because John Harvey Kellogg and his brother owned it at the time. So she wanted to set it up. Our food industry here, this time at the church, owned it, and that was Sanitarium, and her statement at the time it was set up was "The Health Food Business is to supply people with food, which will take the place of flesh, meat, milk and butter."

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:39:53] Wow. What a mission statement. Which brings us to that Health Food brand. I wonder whether the word plant-based, which has become very popular, will be to the 21st century where processed food was to the 20th century.

Belinda Fettke [00:40:09] Yes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:40:09] What you want to tell us about the Health Food brand.

Belinda Fettke [00:40:12] T. Colin Campbell, who wrote The China Study, which has been pulled apart by Denise Minger and many other people. And I'm I'm concerned that he did that study with a guy called Junshi Chen who was one of the very first people in China to meet up with Alex Malaspina, who started the International Life Sciences Institute. So ILSI, which is the food and pharmaceutical and tobacco cover of the world, Junichi Chen was met with Alex Malaspina before he went off to find T. Collin Campbell and do The China Study.

Belinda Fettke [00:40:46] So that's also an interesting titbit. So T. Colin Campbell claims that he coined the term whole food Plant-Based to be a Euphemism for vegan diet in back in the late 1980s or early 1990s. But he claims to have coined that term as a euphemism. And so the Vegan group have continued to push whole food Plant-Based Diet because it sounds good, like for you and I, a whole food plant based diet is what I would consider I eat.

Belinda Fettke [00:41:21] I eat plants and I eat a whole food diet. I eat animal proteins and fats as well. But this is, my plate often looks like it's plant-based. So I would say hijacking of the term was a deliberate hijack and T. Colin Campbell actually has an article where it tells about how he did it and why he did it.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:41:45] And The China study. I mean, there was another study that came out called The Lancet Report, which was based on that. Was that I mean, what --

Belinda Fettke [00:41:56] I don't know if it's completely based on it, but EAT-Lancet Planetary Health Diet is written by the Elite and the Food and Pharmaceutical Biotech Industries. This diet that's meant to be saving us and saving the planet is actually, if you take out all the nutrients, a guy called Marty Kendall has done a fantastic breakdown of all of the nutrients. And his wife has got Type-1 Diabetes. And we met up through the Low Carb Down Under group.

Belinda Fettke [00:42:29] He is an engineer in his past life and he's just gone, this makes no sense, the dietary guidelines. So and would you believe and he didn't talk about it earlier, but he used to be a Seventh Day Adventist. So we are going into discussion around the church as well. But, yeah, it's fascinating to see where this messaging is coming from.

Belinda Fettke [00:42:50] And the Planetary Health Diet is quite different. Over the years, I accept that Walter Willett was the lead author and the only nutritionist on that paper. I actually wrote about the EAT-Lancet: Is It Hijacking Our Health? And Marty Kendalls also done a fantastic one. But in mine, I summarise a whole lot of different people's views and articles. So it's a fantastic one if you want to use it as a resource, because you can jump into lots of other discussions around it.

Belinda Fettke [00:43:20] But I think what I've discovered over the years is all the way back to the 1940s, when Loma Linda University was called the College of Medical Evangelists, there was a guy who was very keen to prove, not disprove Ellen G. White's visions. He decided to go and do his doctoral dissertation under Frederick Stair at Harvard University. And in my mind, this is the collaboration. This is the time when the food industry, because the Harvard School of Public Health was set up by the food industry and bankrolled by the food industry.

Belinda Fettke [00:43:56] So his friends are sitting there with and Christy Kearns has done some amazing research back into how much funding Fred Stair actually got from the sugar industry and Harvard. But it was a man here who's being paid to deliver and the demonisation of animal proteins of fats because in the food industry can make or they're processed foods.

Belinda Fettke [00:44:17] And this guy comes from the College of Medical Evangelists to do his doctoral dissertation. Imagine that. This is like no funding. He can say no financial disclosures because it's a belief. And they've done these studies and that study being published in 1954. And from there, they were able to meet with the US government and they were able to influence the McGovern report. And so it goes on.

Belinda Fettke [00:44:41] So if you look at religion and vested interests and I'm talking food, pharma, biotech, all of those groups, certainly chemical industry and all of those others. If they align because they have the same messaging or the same outcome that they are working towards, if they align, they are really powerful allies. Because these guys can say, I have no financial conflict of interest and these guys can say and we want your information because then we can put out, it looks like, validated research about the harms of animal proteins and fats and the pro zero grains, soy messaging.

Belinda Fettke [00:45:23] The Seventh Day Adventist Church. One of the guys, a guy called Harry Miller, he went to China and he set up, I think, 16 different Sanitariums. And with each of these sanitariums in the hospitals and the schools attached and a food industry, he developed the very first Soy infant formula.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:45:44] Hmm.

Belinda Fettke [00:45:45] And it took him 10 years to get it through the American Medical Association to be accepted as safe. But he lobbied for 10 years because he had to find something that had no animal protein or fat in it for them to be able to then promote and give to their children so that this soy movement, and I'm not talking about the fermented soy from Asia that's been around for centuries, not that. I'm talking about the highly processed soy that was introduced to the US and to our diets through the advocacy of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Belinda Fettke [00:46:24] John Harvey Kellogg, when he left the church in 1911, I think was that year. But he still believed in their dietary approaches. And in fact, he still adored Ellen G. White right through to his death. And he went and talked to the Soy Bean Association in America advocating soybeans for human food. He was a proponent of all of that. So all this messaging about processed soy and soy milk and all those other things have come from a place of Seventh Day Adventists.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:46:59] And, of course, the government subsidies for soy and corn in America are just unbelievable. I mean, they're extraordinary. And it's also interesting the life coming back to Lifestyle Medicine Group, because I do find it interesting. As you know, I've been president of the Australasian College of Nutritional Environmental Medicine in 2019 and 2020. And have been a Member for many years, but I've had connections with the Lifestyle Medicine Group, and I know they shy away from any controversy, anything that is slightly out there, particularly when the EAT-Lancet, The China Study, The Food Pyramids, all reinforce.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:47:39] Lifestyle Medicine is a great term because --.

Belinda Fettke [00:47:42] It's a brilliant term.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:47:44] A brilliant term and you'll be interested to know another guest that I had at the end of last year was Australian of the Year, James Muecke.

Belinda Fettke [00:47:50] Yes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:47:51] And James is an example of what must go on in tens of thousands of medical practises in Australia and an extraordinary Ophthalmic Surgeon, also like Gary, who's an Orthopaedic Surgeon dealing with the ravages of diabetes and very busy professional, just accepting what he sees as the Australian Healthy Eating Guidelines.

Belinda Fettke [00:48:14] Yes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:48:14] And as soon as he is made Australian of the Year, something about champion diabetes. I'm going to look into this a little bit. This is after 35 years of practise and being award of Australian of the Year.

Belinda Fettke [00:48:25] Yes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:48:25] Says, "Oh, my God. I mean, is this really happening?" And so this group of lifestyle, medicine and not wanting to be controversial and keeping with them, it's such a perfect storm. And as I talk to you and one story leads to another down a rabbit hole here and there, it's it's a head spinning story. It's a head spinning story.

Belinda Fettke [00:48:49] It is head spinning. And I think in a nutshell, if you just consider. That it's about inclusion. It's about respect, and it's about an acknowledgement that there are ancestral groups like Westernise Price looked at all the indigenous groups or not all of them, but went and looked at a lot of indigenous groups around the world.

Belinda Fettke [00:49:12] Cross section, came to Australia, went all over the place and saw that people who had the greatest health were people that ate fresh, seasonal, local, and for most groups that included pork fat. Not in Australia, obviously, but it's it's fascinating just looking at indigenous cultures and what they were eating. And if you consider that the Seventh Day Adventist Church, ah, through their Lifestyle Medicine group, the South Pacific Society of Lifestyle Medicine and what's called a Chip Programme, it's the Complete Health Improvement Programme that Sanitarium bought the rights to in 2012.

Belinda Fettke [00:49:54] And this complete health improvement programme was designed and created by a guy called Hans Diehl, who is a devout Adventist at Loma Linda University back in the 1970s. He worked with Nathan Pritikin. Now even maybe not, but people may have heard of the Pritikin Diet.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:50:11] I mean, this is a blast from the past about Nathan Pritikin because go on, tell me about Nathan Pritikin.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:50:19] He was an adjunct professor at Loma Linda University and he had read Ellen G. White's work when he was in the war. And he believed, I don't think he actually became a Seventh Day Adventist, but he very much believed in what she taught,

so much so that he became an adjunct professor and taught at the university. And he met Hans Diehl and they worked together at the pretty good Longevity Centre.

Belinda Fettke [00:50:42] So Nathan and Hans Diehl went on to create a programme that wouldn't cost as much. That will be more of a community orientated one because the Pritikin Longevity. And he had to actually live in. So Hans still created this. It was called the Coronary Health Improvement Programme when he designed it in 1988. And Sanitarium bought it in 2012, used it all up.

Belinda Fettke [00:51:05] A guy called Darren Morton worked on it extensively. This Chip Programme, if you when you look at the website, says it's not a mandate for veganism or vegetarianism. It's not a mandate for that. But you look get the facilitator's guide and and I've it and put it in a lot of places. So your viewers should be able to see it somewhere. The facilitator's guide actually shows that meat, dairy, eggs are the top of a list that includes alcohol and tobacco and processed foods as the worst possible health outcomes. So, it shows pretty clearly what their ideas are, even though they'd say, oh, it's not a mandate for that. And Hans still said he's 100% vegan and his Chip Programme was total vegan.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:51:52] You know, it's so interesting to hear you give me some background about Nathan Pritikin, because I've been exploring nutrition since almost since I graduated, since about 1980 was when I first did my first nutrition course. And along my journey, I've explored many different diets. And one of them was the Pritikin Diet. And I went on it in the mid 80s, early 80s for about six months, and I felt so good. So good.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:52:20] And I think this is a really interesting thing, because when you're eating the standard diet that all the food pyramid, following the advice, you know, we got rid of butter. We got rid of it all fats. And I was on this very low fat, very clean, clean diet. And I probably was detoxifying, you know, and I was feeling good, but I couldn't stay on it for long. But my first six months were just amazing.

Belinda Fettke [00:52:49] And I think happens to a lot of diets.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:52:51] A lot of diets, and particularly when you're focussing on Whole Foods and low processed food and you're probably going to go lower alcohol if you're doing that low.

Belinda Fettke [00:53:01] Exactly.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:53:01] And then all of this, you're going to feel fantastic. But I want to focus on low carb for a minute because I think this is something really positive for people to take away. I think people listening to this will go, oh, my God, I need to be a little bit more open to where this influence is coming from.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:53:19] But let's talk positive now, because one of the things that strikes me about low carb is and again, we come back to science, a lot of science says there's no proof to show low carb is effective. And you look at what they mean by low carb and it actually is something like 250 or 200g of carbohydrate a day because the recommended doses, 310 or something.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:53:43] In fact, if you go on to the USDA site now and put in all of the parameters, which I did just last week, you know, my age, my height, my activity level, and

this is 2021. The USDA recommends that my carbohydrate intake should be between 375-420g of carbohydrate a day. I should stay on low fat and avoid all foods with cholesterol. 2021. Right. So what people mean by low carb changes from one, you know, from people even within the study. Tell us about low carb.

Belinda Fettke [00:54:22] Well, I think it's interesting to see I've probably looked at it more from Type-2 Diabetes assailant from a diabetes perspective. But Joy Kiddie, she's a dietitian in Canada. She wrote an article last year saying talking about a guy called Dr. Richard Wylder. And in 1922, he published a paper called A Primer for Diabetics. And this paper discusses how he understood in 1922 and in fact, back to 1916 that that diabetes was a disease of carbohydrate intolerance.

Belinda Fettke [00:55:01] So it's nothing new. 1916 (inaudible) where he was using a low carbohydrate ketogenic diet and he worked at the therapeutic dose, which had to be 60g or under to actually treat Diabetes, so he worked this out before they started using a low carbohydrate ketogenic diet in epilepsy.

Belinda Fettke [00:55:28] Since before then. OK, so already it was worked out, then Insulin became popular. And once you had Insulin, then people could have a normal life by eating what everyone else is eating and using Insulin instead.

Belinda Fettke [00:55:45] And maybe, in the beginning, I mean, the guys who did the patent for Insulin, they sold it for a dollar, the patent. They wanted Insulin to be accessible to everybody.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:55:58] Mm hmm.

Belinda Fettke [00:55:59] And the pharmaceutical industries make a bucket load from Insulin. Now, it is unaffordable to a lot of people. So I think 1922 carbohydrate restriction was acknowledged all the way back then. If you ate less carbohydrate, you require less insulin. So it makes sense. That's not it. If you just look at the biochemistry. If you take out the emotion. You take all those things out, you just simply look at biochemistry, reducing carbohydrates reduces the insulin required and so it makes sense for people.

Belinda Fettke [00:56:35] As normal health, I think low carbohydrate would mean less processed food, less sugar. It's again, how do you individualise it? How do you create messaging for people? That is an understandable message. Gary, who's trying to control and keep cancer in remission would pretty much be under 20g of carbohydrates per day.

Belinda Fettke [00:57:02] Our kids and our grandchildren much closer to 100-120, but they're eating whole foods, and if they continue to eat these wholefoods, which I think is what if I look at the Adventist Health Studies and look back because some people appear to be very healthy and live longer lives and they call it the Biblical Garden of Eden Diet. But if you look at the Adventist Health Study and you actually pull out their markers and what they consider things. You're actually a vegan, if you eat meat or dairy less than once a month.

Belinda Fettke [00:57:42] So that's not the message that they're giving to the normal populous and most young people who want to go vegan are going to go full throttle. They're not going to say, oh, well, once a month I need to get enough vitamin B12 in my diet. So by just having that very occasionally. So I think that's the important messaging we need to be understanding is: What is health? What do we need for health? And when you

start to consider that we don't need all that sugar, we don't need all those processed carbs, and really breakfast is not the most important meal of the day. You know, this is where my research is trying to just make it, even though I get very complex, just trying to make it simple as well is just think about health in those terms. And low carbohydrate is not what the dietary guidelines recommend. So go lower than that. Anything lower is going to be better.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [00:58:38] Finishing up now. And I just wanted you to take a step back and you've covered a lot of what you what may be the answer to this question. But taking a step back from your role as a researcher and we're all on a health journey in this modern world, what do you think the biggest challenge is for an individual on that journey? I mean, you've raised many of those challenges, but what would you say to somebody? What's the biggest challenge for us on that journey?

Belinda Fettke [00:59:01] I think the biggest challenge, we are going I set up a business called Nutrition For Life, and we own that for a little while. We gave it to our team to continue on here in Launceston. But I think supports accountability and motivation. And they're the biggest things moving forward. We created SAM with wraparound support for people who've decided to make those changes because our society just messaging is just high carb sugar. It's very hard to get away from those things if you've made the decision to change your diet and you want to go lower carb, healthy, fat, it's society's idea of snacking. It's all these messages that we get. And so I think finding someone who'll support you, whether it's a family member or whether it's a medical professional or group, support whatever works for you, support accountability and motivation. That's how you do it.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:00:04] Belinda, what a great note to finish on. And we're going to have links to your website because there is clearly so much there for people to dive into.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:00:13] Thank you so much for joining us today. I've so enjoyed talking to you.

Belinda Fettke [01:00:16] Thanks for having me, Ron.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:00:20] Wow. I mean, it's breathtaking. It's breathtaking. There's no other word to describe it, and this is an issue I have been aware of well, for at least the last 25 years, and that is, that our current health care system is really a chronic disease management system, and that is a great economic model for the chemical, food and pharmaceutical industry.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:00:49] The problem is that if the evidence is anything to go by, it's not a very good health model. As I think I mentioned in the podcast, in this interview with Belinda, we've focussed on covid and we're focussed on daily death rates. And so we've become familiar with the fact that in the first year of the pandemic, something like just over 2 million people died from COVID. 2 and a half million, and that equates to 7000 people a day. So hold that figure in your head for a moment, because we've also been introduced to the issue of comorbidities.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:01:32] And comorbidities used to be referred to as chronic diseases. And so many of chronic diseases are preventable chronic diseases. For example, cardiovascular disease. About 50000 people are dying a day, die year after year, not just in 2020. Year after year, 50000 people a day die from cardiovascular disease.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:01:56] Cancer, about 27000 people a day die from cancer.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:02:03] Diabetes, a big and growing problem ends up with something like four or five thousand people a day die of diabetes. My point is that these chronic degenerative diseases, which are largely preventable, rely on public health messages and busy doctors with their hand on their heart with the best of intentions, go to the government regulations, the public health messages, the Australian Healthy Eating Guidelines which influenced, as Belinda has outlined. And there is such a much bigger story here. There are so many details and interconnections.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:02:46] But suffice to say that public health messages are influenced by big companies and in this case, actually religious fervour which is even more interesting. And look, I'm not anti-religion at all. You know, whatever people believe and I, they have a right to. But when people's when a religious belief impacts on a whole globe health based on a belief that emerged in the late 60s and with religious fervour being what it is, is perpetuated and becomes very well supported by big corporations and big companies, which then influence universities, which then influence research, which then influence what actually goes on as you sit across the table from your doctor and then follow with your best of intentions the advice you've been given. It's a major problem.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:03:46] I hope you enjoyed that. And listen, every week I'm also asking people to go online and leave us to review. And hey, guess what? This last week I went onto iTunes and check that we've got some wonderful, wonderful feedback there and ratings. And I rather ask you, although if you haven't already done, to go and do it, but for those that have left a review, I want to say a huge thank you for your kind words and your support.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:04:14] I hope this finds you well until next time. This is Dr Ron Ehrlich. Be well.

Dr Ron Ehrlich [01:04:20] This podcast provides general information and discussion about medicine, health and related subjects. The content is not intended and should not be construed as medical advice or as a substitute for care by qualified medical practitioners. If you or any other person has a medical concern, he or she should consult with an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. Guests who speak in this podcast express their own opinions, experiences, and conclusions.