



## Reverse Autoimmune Disease Summit

### Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Suzie Senk

- Dr. Keesha: Welcome back to the Reversing Autoimmune Disease Summit. I am so excited to talk about one of my very favorite subjects here, which is self-care, and, sleep. My guest this time is Suzie Senk who is a holistic family sleep and wellness specialist. She offers integrated solutions to modern day child and family sleep challenges. Her work bridges the gap between sleep and health consciousness, and vitality. Suzie began her life affirming wellness consulting practice over 15 years ago after training in herbalism, nutrition and then whole-body health. Welcome Suzie.
- Suzie: Thank you so much. I'm so happy to be here.
- Dr. Keesha: We were just talking offline; I was telling you kind of why I invited you and the correlation that I want to make between healing and reversing autoimmune disease and sleep. And you said, well, just so I know, I don't think you can reverse autoimmune disease without proper sleep. And I said, that's why I brought you in. I think that this is such an important discussion and we'll talk a little bit about all of the whys behind that. But first I would like to have you share your own story about how you came to this work because I find that we all have one and it seems to really be relevant to why we stand before people teaching what we do.
- Suzie: Absolutely. Yeah. So I have been interested in health basically all along; my mom was a nurse, so it was in the field growing up. When I graduated college, even though I got a marketing degree, I knew I wanted to do nothing with it per se. And I got trained in nutritional herbalism and I worked in an herbal pharmacy. So it was basically like being a pharmacist, but with herbs. People would come in and say, I have a cold or I have breast cancer or this is what's going on with me. And I would say, here, take these things and they will help you. And the more that I did that, the more that I discovered that each individual body is unique and what works for one person might not work for another person. And after a while I actually started feeling out of integrity with the work that I was doing.
- Suzie: So I kind of put that on hold. And I went on a deep soul-searching mission and then I went to Europe and I studied more esoteric forms of healing using tuning forks and colored lights on acupuncture meridians. And then I had a whole different thing. I had a high-tech startup, which was probably part of where the stress came in for me. But I also had a really, strong yoga practice. I've been doing yoga since I was 18 and then I had a baby and the pregnancy was stressful. The relationship that I had with my son's father was not what I wanted it to be. And so the pregnancy was unfortunately more stressful than I had hoped for. And when my son was born, he was not a good sleeper

and it was basically me and him and I was so dedicated to doing all the right things as a new mother.

Suzie: I nursed him on demand. We co-slept. And that caused me to be in, all those things combined, the stress in the pregnancy and then him not sleeping when he was a newborn. It all combined into me developing Hashimoto's, which is an autoimmune condition of the thyroid gland. And I think I actually had developed it in the very late stages of my pregnancy because the couple of nights before I gave birth, I actually couldn't sleep at all. I was awake all night long and I couldn't sleep. So I went into my labor completely exhausted and then I had a 24 hour natural labor. It was really, really intense. So I think I had an undiagnosed Hashimoto's condition for maybe the first six months of my son's life. And I remember we had a doctor come in to do like the normal tests after a child has been born.

Suzie: And he saw that I was so chronically sleep deprived that he ordered me to get a week of uninterrupted sleep. So I had to have people come in and help me with my son at night so that I could actually get some sleep. And that's around the same time that I finally got diagnosed with Hashimoto's. And then I went, I started on Synthroid, but at that time I really didn't understand autoimmunity in the same way that I do now. And so I wanted to get off it as quickly as possible and it really didn't work for me. It gave me heart palpitations and gave me jitters and I couldn't sleep with it. And so my endocrinologist said, you know, your TSH level is within normal range, you can come off of it. And I thought, okay, great. And then I was speaking with a friend of mine who also has Hashimoto's.

Suzie: And she said, well, I said, oh, I'm done with it. I don't have it anymore. And she said, what do you mean you don't have it anymore? And she said, have you gotten your antibody levels tested? And I hadn't ever, because that's not something that is normally routinely done by traditional endocrinologists. And then I discovered that I had really high antibody levels, which took me on a whole another chapter of my healing journey to figure out how to heal the autoimmunity in my body and how to get my sleep back on track because I was so chronically sleep deprived that I was basically an insomniac at this point.

Dr. Keesha: That tells us why you're really focused in on sleep. And like you, I reversed my own rheumatoid arthritis and many of the people listening to the summit are interested in reversing their autoimmunity. And the way that I conceptualize it is that we have four corners to our puzzles and we're all very unique and there's no one size fits all for anyone, including sleep patterns. One of the things that I help people understand is that there are four corners when we're trying to solve a puzzle, right? There's genetics and then there's your digestive health and then there's toxicity and then there's stress and past trauma. And it's interesting because that whole stress piece, people will say, well, you just have to reduce your stress and I just want to like tear my hair out when I hear that.

- Dr. Keesha: Because you know, anybody listening to my voice right now, if you have a newborn, what are you going to do? Throw your newborn away? You just have to have a magic wand and change the partner that you have this baby with. There would be a miracle. You'll just reduce your stress. And so you know more is actually how you manage your stress and how you teach your body to deal with its own stress. For years I worked in the intensive care unit and did hospice work. And one of the first things I would say to people is, you know, when's the last time, to caregivers that were coming in and wanting to do the vigils; when's the last time you slept? And if it had been awhile, I would say, you're not allowed in the room.
- Dr. Keesha: I'm not actually going to let you stay here unless you go to sleep. And the reason I said that was because I don't need two sick people on my hands. You're no good to anybody if you haven't slept. So talk about what's necessary during this time period of sleep, what's happening in the body? Because I think in our productivity-oriented achievement focused society sleep is often tossed out the window as a secondary issue of well, if I have enough time I'll sleep. I'll sleep when I'm dead. And so therefore I'm going to drink coffee to avoid the signal pattern that my body keeps trying to give me that I'm exhausted and I need to sleep and I'm going to keep it awake with stimulants. Right? So talk about why sleep is so important.
- Suzie: Sleep is so important for actually a really simple reason; when we get into the deepest stages of sleep, that is the time of the day that the body does its repair work. So if you don't get into the deepest stages of sleep, which can happen for lots of different reasons, then your body is basically deferring all of the repairs that it needs to do in order to keep you physically, emotionally well. And it's crucial, I cannot stress enough how crucial it is to get proper and adequate sleep. Speaking from someone who knows what it's like to be severely sleep deprived.
- Dr. Keesha: I have four of those little buggers. I keep telling people that's why women often have autoimmunity triggered during pregnancy and childbirth is because it is so stressful on the female body. And then the year following is, you know, it's just as much. So there's like this two year period. So it's very difficult now specifically like you just said by these regeneration. There are actually some specific things that happen during that sleep process. Let's go through them so that people really get that. Like typically what happens.
- Suzie: Okay, so when you fall asleep, your body goes through three different stages of what's called non-REM sleep. And as you go through those stages, your body starts to relax. It starts to unwind. The brain waves start to go into a different state called theta waves. And what happens in the last stage of non-REM sleep is that the mind is actually pruning all of the things that it has learned that it doesn't need anymore. So it's filing things away, which is really, really an important thing. We don't realize it. But what that means is that all the stuff that we're dealing with on a day to day basis, emotionally that we're trying to figure out, mentally problem solving, all of those things, they get filed away so that the brain can actually relax and the nervous system can relax.

- Suzie: And then in the REM stage of sleep, that's when it's actually so fascinating. I think that the reason why we have dreams and that our dreams are so bizarre. A friend of mine calls the dream state mental Cuisinart because it's just so random. The stuff that we think about during our dreams. But what's actually happening is that the brain is reaching to all the different bizarre, random possibilities of what could be in order to problem solve and create possibilities. So that when we wake up, we have the answers that we've been struggling with the previous day. Whether it's like, how do I deal with my child and get him to not do the thing that he's doing? Or how do I communicate with the person that I love and in a way that they can hear me or how do I get my business started and what's the next step I need to take with it? That's what happens at night. And then on the physical level, that's when, as I said, all the repair work happens. So, you know, all the organ work, all the bones, every single part of the nervous system, the hormones, everything comes back into balance as a result of a good night's sleep.
- Dr. Keesha: I just want everybody to really hear how much happens in that deep REM sleep. I mean this is when, according to Ayurvedic medicine, you know, your liver detoxes; Chinese medicine too. So for the gallbladder and the liver to be able to get rid of what it's been digesting throughout the day. And so that detoxification process is so important, and it's when the lymphatic system, I always think about the lymphatic system is like the little garbage truck, then they're going around to all the cells and they're picking up the garbage bags that the cells have left outside the membrane in the evening. So the lymphatic system gets to pick up all the trash and drain it; but if you're not sleeping and you're not giving it space to do that, what happens if you have trash buildup in your neighborhood. No one picks it up. What's going to happen, you know? Or, if you don't empty your trash in your house, what's going to happen? Vermin can start crawling in it right? And that's actually what will happen in your microbiome. It needs to have everything flushed. And so this is such an important piece of our health that again, like I said, I think it gets shelved a lot in favor of a number of different things.
- Suzie: The reality, if you get a good night's sleep, you're going to be more productive. You know that if you burn the candle at both ends and you stay up all night long and you try to cram for a test or get that final deadline done for work, you'll make mistakes; the brain won't work. But if you actually can find a way to sleep, the amount of time that your body needs, you'll wake up and your brain will work optimally and you'll be able to get all those things done and more.
- Dr. Keesha: In Ayurvedic medicine there's this word called Doshas and people have heard me talk about it before. It is like your life force vitality; I call it your aegis. And you know, one of the fastest ways that you're born with a certain amount of aegis, and then when you're done with it, you die. When you deplete, you die. And so one of the really quickest ways of depleting your aegis, your life force vitality, is to burn your candle at both ends.
- Suzie: I was interviewing another woman on sleep just the other day. And she said to me that, I don't know how they came up with this, but that for every night you miss sleep, you lose a day of your life.

- Dr. Keesha: I want everyone to hear that; I think it's not a non-essential, it's an essential when we're reversing autoimmune disease. Your body needs to rest and rejuvenate, and it needs to rebuild itself. Now, every few months you're a whole new body is what you hear. But that's only true if you're digesting in all of the ways that you're supposed to digest, which includes, you know, during the night. So we have seven different tissue layers, right? And they're called the Dhatus in Ayurveda, and they're built off of the first what you eat, you digest it then builds the next tissue layer. But again, if that digestion doesn't happen in the proper way, which includes the elimination of what happens at night, then you don't build your next tissue layer. I think that's such a great way of understanding it.
- Dr. Keesha: You have your skin on the outside, that's your upper one and everything will show up on your skin. Like you can see it, your skin is healthy and glowy and you don't have to wear makeup on it. Then you actually know that you're doing a pretty good job with your digestive process. And I can tell you, for me, sleep is one of my secret weapons. We have all these anti-aging books and supplements that you can take that are for anti-aging and anti-aging superfoods. And then I'm like, well, you know what? You can put as much as you want in your mouth, but as long as you're not actually properly digesting and eliminating what you don't need, it doesn't matter. You know, you could spend so much money on makeup and all of the anti-aging hacks; chemical things. But if you don't get enough sleep, you're going to look old and your brain is going to feel old and it's going to behave in a cognitively depleted way because that's exactly what's happening. You're depleting your cognition.
- Suzie: If you're trying to digest those supplements that you're taking for longevity, but you're not sleeping, then your digestion is off.
- Dr. Keesha: You have very expensive urine and bowel movements. That's exactly what it is. I always tell my patients, I'm really against expensive urine. I do give supplements
- Dr. Keesha: Out, but I say, I need to make sure that you're actually using them properly. There's testing we can do to know that. So people will say, what do you think about this brand? And I say, I don't care. You know, like you have to do the test to see if you're actually assimilating and absorbing what you're taking. Then we can talk about brands. So let's talk about what are some barriers that people have getting into that deep REM sleep. Actually, before we go into the answer to that question, I have a pet peeve and I want to run it past you. So I can't stand it when people put electronic things on their bodies and go to bed to check their sleep. I would love to hear your opinion about this.
- Suzie: Yeah, I'm on the same page with you both personally and professionally. I take a holistic approach to my work, so if it works for someone, great, but my personal experience and my professional experience is that even if people don't realize it, they're really sensitive to electromagnetic frequencies. It's really hard for the nervous system to get to a place where it can relax. When you've got electronic stuff all around you, even if it's not touching your body, if it's in your bedroom, you know, I recommend for all of my clients

to please get your cell phone out, turn off your WIFI. Get all of the light, the light making things and the electronic stuff out of the bedroom.

Dr. Keesha: Turn down your router; or please use an Ethernet cable and stop wearing things to track your sleep. I'll have people bring in their graphs and everything and I say, okay, well this is good. That's great, but you know what? Part of the reason that this is happening; I have a little bit of a thing with mammograms for the same reasons of there are so many false negatives and false positives. Plus we're giving people, they have the dose of radiation. And so the way that I think about it is do a thermogram first, which has no risks. And then if there's a hotspot, then you can go in and do an ultrasound or an MRI or if you have to, a mammogram. And so I think about this with, why are you polluting your space with EMF to track your sleep pattern when it's probably contributing to the problem.

Suzie: I think it's just that a lot of people don't even realize it. It's so ubiquitous today having Alexa in the home and your whole house wired and Bluetooth and it's, you know, people don't, unless you're taught to think about it, unless you're taught to think to know that there's a problem with it, then--

Dr. Keesha: Remember everybody that's listening, that autoimmune disease usually hits the canary in the coal mine. And so, the kind of very sensitive person and I'm pretty sure you classify yourself as that, Suzie. I know I do. I haven't known someone with autoimmunity that hasn't been a canary in the coal mine. So canaries use, they're the ones that actually are more sensitive to things like EMF. You need to get Alexa out of your house and they're the things that we were just talking about because it actually does affect you.

Suzie: Yeah. Also, smart meters. Since we're on the subject, I think that a lot of people might not realize they might have their bedroom right on the other side of where the smart meter, the power meter is for their house. And that thing can be really, really disruptive and strong. So check out where your smart meter is in relationship to your bedroom.

Dr. Keesha: Yes. Where you sleep. Let's talk about some barriers for people getting good sleep and then we'll talk about some remedies and solutions.

Suzie: Okay. So since we're focused on people with autoimmune conditions, all the things that cause autoimmunity are a barrier to sleep. Specifically, usually when someone has an autoimmune issue, their hormones are out of whack, their immune system is out of whack, their adrenal glands are out of whack, and all of those things, it's a really complex puzzle that all works together. And when it's out of harmony, then you're not going to sleep well. And so it's not, it's not a quick fix, which is why there's people like you out there having a whole summit about it because, you know, there's so many different aspects to look at. And I would say that the most important things to look at in terms of being able to sleep are number one, making sure that your vitamin D levels are within optimal range, which would be 60 to 80. Most doctors will say that you're normal

if you're above 30, but in order to get into that deepest stage of sleep, you have to have a vitamin D range between 60 and 80.

Dr. Keesha: 25 to 90. So yeah, it's because of the autoimmune component, right? Then it, there's a lot of science around MS. I live in the Seattle area where the sun is often times

Dr. Keesha: Not available.

Dr. Keesha: So yeah, keeping in that upper range is really important,

Suzie: Really, really important. And then along with that, you have to make sure that your B vitamins are within an adequate range because vitamin D has a symbiotic relationship with B vitamins and your stores will get depleted and then you'll have muscular pains. So that's really, really important. And with the B vitamins, you have to make sure that your adrenal glands are functioning properly. Because what happens with someone who isn't sleeping well is that their cortisol levels don't function in the normal way that they're supposed to. So normally what happens is that when you wake up in the morning, your cortisol levels spike to wake you up and then it keeps rising and then it kind of dips around midday and then it goes up again for a little bit and then it drops at bedtime. For someone who has an autoimmune condition or who has adrenal exhaustion, their cortisol levels will spike in the evening, which makes it virtually impossible to fall asleep. So you really, really have to check out what's going on with your adrenal glands and make sure that you get that taken care of.

Dr. Keesha: We do salivary testing on all of our adrenal patients, all of our autoimmune patients. We do the forepart cortisol during the day, and then fractionated estrogen, testosterone, progesterone and melatonin level. And then the precursor hormones that you use to make cortisol and your other hormone really important. That ratio between estrogen, progesterone, if your progesterone's too low, you're not going to sleep well. If your cortisol spiking, you're not going to sleep well; if your melatonin's low. That can also be a barrier. And when I usually will tell my patients if their cortisol is spiking at night before it's bedtime, then that means they're processing things that are stressful at night when they're supposed to be resting and relaxing. They're getting a lot of that subconscious stuff up because they're not processing it during the day. And so, we're doing your emotional work during the day is really important, you know, possibly with the help of one that's a trained professional, if that's required, and really working on that and then doing the work that you need to get into parasympathetic nervous system over that sympathetic fight or flight is like Suzie is saying, it's impossible to go to sleep if you feel like you're being chased by a lion and you're about to get eaten.

Dr. Keesha: That zebra knows it cannot sleep. Right. So, yeah.

Suzie: Yeah. One thing that I think is an easy fix that I suggest to all of my clients is to take a break during the day, even if it's a five or 10 minute break. Because what I found in my own life and what I see in my client's life is that they're so busy, they have so much going on that they literally don't stop at all during the day. And just five, 10 minutes

closing your eyes, you know, putting your feet up against a wall, just shutting down. What happens is that it actually allows the brain to process some of that stuff. And it's really cool to watch it happen because you know, I'll just be aware of what's happening with my consciousness and I can see it like sorting and sifting stuff and I know that that's happening so that I can then not have to do all of that right as laying down and my head is hitting the pillow. R

Dr. Keesha: I tell people to take a bath, like a detox bath with salts and some yummy essential oils like lavender before bed. So it sort of signals to the body, okay, it's power downtime and it puts a space between run, run, run, run, run, run, and then you that really lovely space and then give yourself a nice massage with sesame oil or an oil of your choice. And then you're just really telling your whole nervous system it's time for bed, you know? And I think that space is really important because we do tend to run out the clock and then fall into bed.

Suzie: And then expect our heads, as soon as our heads hit the pillow to be able to fall asleep and it doesn't work that way. We really have to create like a ritual for sleep and romance ourselves into sleep. And one of the wonderful things about taking a bath is that in order for the body to be able to fall asleep, it has to get colder. So that's one of the cues. That's one of the ways that the body will actually start to get into those deepest stages of sleep is that it gets cooler than body temperature drops. So if you take a warm bath, what happens after you get out of the bath is that your body temperature is going to go up while you're in the bath and then it's going to naturally drop. And if you can time it so that you're crawling into bed while your body temperature is dropping, then that's another way to support yourself to be able to fall asleep.

Dr. Keesha: Very nice. Which is why of course, all you ladies out there that hot flash in the middle of the night, you wake up that is like, oh, it's hot. It's time to get up.

Suzie: Especially for menopausal women; if they can, have a really cool, like I would even say like 63-64 temperature on your thermostat. That will help.

Dr. Keesha: And then also checking your hormones to make sure. I don't know how you feel about screens in the bedroom. That's another one. And I'm always like, yep, put screens out of the bedroom, right? Don't watch things an hour before you go to bed. So what's going on with the brain when you're engaged with a screen?

Suzie: Right. So one of, and this ties back into the vitamin D that I was mentioning earlier, and it's really a significant reason for why people aren't sleeping today. So we evolved during a time where the only light that we had was the light from a campfire at night. And our bodies are in tune with what's called the circadian rhythm and with the cycles of light and dark. So traditionally when the sun came up, we woke up and when the sun went down, we had just the ambient light from a campfire flickering, which actually helps to produce slow wave brainwaves. And that would help us fall asleep. And it was just, it was easy. There was no issue with waking up and going to sleep for people because they



were so in tune with the rhythms of the earth. And now we have air conditioning, which means that people are indoors all day without natural light.

Suzie: So they're not getting the cues from the sun to wake up or to, you know, the vitamin D absorbed through their bodies. And then in the evening the lights are on in the house so they're not in tune with when the sun is setting, which allows the mind and the body to realize it's time to start winding down and then they get on their computers cause they're working late. And this blue spectrum of light is just an absolute killer for people with sleep because it wakes up the brain and says it's daylight time. So if you have to have lights on in the house after sunset, I always recommend that they be amber colored or red in color and that they'd be really, really low. And there's even settings that you can get for your computer if you have to be on your computer or on your phone where they can change it to an amber tone and where it can get darker in the evenings.

Suzie: There's all sorts of fixes that you can do. But when a person is on their computers, on their screens, watching TV at night, it stimulates the brain to say, wake up, wake up. And it stimulates that cortisol back into the body and it's really not helpful. Another thing that is difficult for people that people don't sometimes realize is that there is caffeine in chocolate. So I've had a number of clients who innocently are having a chocolate ice cream before bed and they don't realize that that is what's causing them to wake up at two or three in the morning and not be able to sleep for hours.

Dr. Keesha: Sugar also, guys, will stop your digestive process. The last thing that you want to do for your options are before bed. I also think about eating in general. Like if you, it depends on your, you remember we're not all the same. So your body type in Ayurveda, Vata people need to eat a little bit more often and little bits and then people like me that are more Pitta Kapha you can't eat late into the night or you're just going to gain and it'll also make you sluggish when you wake up in the morning. So it also depends on your adrenal health once again, and as far as if you should eat a little bit of, maybe a little carb, and a little fat or a protein before you go to bed. That's all dependent on your body type and what's going on with your biochemistry. So there's not a one size fits all for that.

Suzie: That's right.

Dr. Keesha: I just like inhaled a, you know, when those little natty bugs--

Suzie: I know those little tiny guys.

Dr. Keesha: So it made me see it was coming in and I was just like, well, so what is then like a lot of people say, you know, there's always a differentiation when we're talking about sleep issues. Do you have trouble falling asleep or do you have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep or you do have trouble just staying asleep? And then do you feel energy when you wake up in the morning? I actually want everybody to answer that question

for yourself because all of those make a difference. What do you tell people in each of those little categories?

Suzie: Okay. So if you're not able to fall asleep like we said, it might be because of mental chatter. It might be because your brain is busy processing the stuff that happened in the day. It might be because you have not created the conditions for sleep because you were just on your computer five minutes ago. It might be because you ate too much; you had too much caffeine, too late in the day. It might be because your adrenal glands are off. It's not a one size fits all problem. There's definitely specific things related to sleep hygiene that everybody should make sure that they're doing right, which are quick fixes. But then if there's an underlying health condition that's contributing to why you're not sleeping, it's a detective process where you have to really figure out what's going on with your body and what's causing you to stay awake.

Dr. Keesha: Medications too can cause this problem. If your liver is getting really toxic, you'll have a hard time going to sleep. What about falling asleep and staying asleep? This is so interesting because people often use alcohol to go to sleep or pot or any kind of cannabis product. And actually the research shows that you can fall asleep with that, but you won't stay asleep; or into your REM sleep the way you need.

Suzie: Exactly. It's a sedative which is also the issue with sleeping. So they're sedatives but they don't allow you to get into the deepest stages of sleep, which is what you need for your body to do its repair work. And you know, it's interesting that you have a background with it sounds like Chinese medicine because according to the Chinese medicine-clock though the wheel, depending on what time you wake up, that's an indication of what's going on with your body. Because different times of the night would indicate that there's a different system that is struggling, which might cause you to wake up,

Dr. Keesha: Especially Ayurvedic medicine. But the same issue actually, depending on your Dosha, you need to get up at different times and go to bed at different times, which is fascinating because we always say like 10 to six, but actually it's different for each of the Dosha types.

Suzie: Oh, tell me, I haven't heard that before.

Dr. Keesha: Kapha people need to get up before six o'clock in the morning. And so it's Vata, Pitta, and Kapha; Vata is more air and space, and they're usually the thin, reedy, you know, either very tall or very short. You're very Vata and have thinner lips, thinner hair, and very creative. And actually Vata people need a bit more sleep to be grounded, you know, and Vata time of day is going to be between 2:00 and 6:00 AM and PM. And so if you have a Vata imbalance, you'll wake up in the middle of the night between two and six, before you really wanted to. So that's the person that gets up at three o'clock in the morning and can't get back to sleep often have had that happen.

Dr. Keesha: That's a Vata and they're are a lot of things you can do to bring that down. And then Pitta is between 10:00 and 2:00. And so if you don't go to bed by 10, a Pitta person is

going to get that second wind and they're going to be like, oh, I can wallpaper the kitchen. It's like, oh, you get all this done, my children are in bed, and that's the candle. But then Pitta people tend to do that and go into adrenal burnout and have hormone imbalances and wind up having trouble with irritability and hormone burnout and some employees. Kapha is more of the Pitta is water and fire. And so they're the kind of fiery personalities type A and then Kapha is water and earth and they tend to, they can look at sweets and gain weight.

Dr. Keesha: They tend to hold onto fluids. And so they'll wind up like if you eat a lot of like ice cream is the worst choice for a Kapha person if they eat sweet. If they eat a lot of coconut milk or coconut oil or fat, then it makes them hold on to a lot of mucus, a lot of water, and they tend toward diabetes more frequently that way. And so they actually can be, become quite the couch potato and feel very lethargic and sedentary if they don't get up before 6:00 AM. So Kapha time is between 6:00 and 10:00. And so oftentimes the common person on the weekend will not want to get up at six o'clock in the morning and will stay in bed until 10, you know? And so that makes them actually more lethargic and have a harder time to get on that good balance.

Suzie: I love that. I've never heard that before and it makes perfect sense for me and my family members. That's one thing to say is that in addition to vitamin D, which I think is so crucial, making sure that you have a consistent routine with sleep is so important. And I've seen that in my own life. Even if I go out for one night, because there's a special event and I'm up after 10:00, forget about it. I have just absolutely destroyed my sleep for the night.

Dr. Keesha: The worst it gets. And the more children of course, when we're young, our bodies are a lot more forgiving. As we get older, yeah. We have covered different things that you wanted to talk about that were barriers and solutions. Is there anything else you want to talk about with that?

Suzie: I think the only other thing that comes to mind for me is the mental game associated with not much sleep. That's because unfortunately it's kind of like something that feeds on itself, you know? So if you're not able to sleep, you can start feeling anxious about it and then you can start to dread even having to go to sleep because you know that you're not going to be able to sleep well. So it's also really, really important to address the anxiety that can come from just being so scared of not being able to sleep. And the repercussions of that. And there's lots of different things that you can do. I just did an interview with a woman who does tapping in order to retrain the brain and to calm down the nervous system for that. And I think that that's a really great technique. Also just, you know, when a person does actually heal their body, it will get better. It's not even if it's been going on for years. If you really do take the steps to figure out what the root causes are, you're going to get better. And so just having that peace of mind that this isn't, it doesn't have to be a death sentence and you really can truly heal yourself and get back to a place where you feel great every day and you're happy waking up. And

Dr. Keesha: You know, you bring up a really good point because I've actually given prescription medications to people on occasion, probably once every two years I'll hand someone a prescription because they're so panicked about not being able to sleep. And they know and they're always Vata people and they know how they feel when they get depleted and they can just feel themselves disintegrating. Then like you said, it feeds on itself. My PhD is actually in sexology and one of the things that I talk about is you can't try to fall asleep. You can't try to have an orgasm. They're the same mechanism. You have to just like be able to relax enough to surrender to it. And when you're in a panic state in that fight or flight, am I going to sleep? Getting into that, we know that the actual function is interfered with when you get into that space, but so is sleep. You can't try to fall asleep. So being able to, that mental game I think is a really important point and I'm glad you brought it up.

Suzie: It's really just about finding a way to let go and even if you just can feel the weight of your body on your bed and focus on your physical sensations instead of the all the, Oh my God, what's going to happen if I don't sleep? That really is an important piece for people.

Dr. Keesha: We use what I call the stress busting toolkit and it's autogenic training and it's a recording that I did that I have people do before sleep where they can train themselves to go from fight or flight and then we call your parasympathetic nervous system, rest and digest, like that's what it is instead of fight or flee. So it's important to be able to have that control where you can shift your nervous system back and forth and you actually can, it's just mastering a new skill. One of the things that makes me also bonkers is that people just assume that after they leave home at whatever age they left home, they should have all their skills accurate. We're learning until we die. And then also giving yourself that grace and compassion and patience space to master any skill where you actually practice, like we know that if we're going to get really good at tennis, we have to go out and we have to hit a bunch of balls and we have to practice. But when it comes to these kinds of things, we don't have any patience for practicing it and it's essential. The whole mind part around that. There are tools you can use, but you do have to practice them. So you have a free gift for our audience. Would you like to tell them about that?

Suzie: Yes. It's going to be a kind of like a cheat sheet that will allow people to look at the different aspects of what might be getting in the way of their sleep as it relates to autoimmunity.

Dr. Keesha: Oh, thank you. Thank you. We'll have that link along with Suzie's interview. Thank you so much for being here and sharing your wisdom about those all-important subjects because again, like you said, you are not reversing your autoimmune disease if you're not sleeping.

Suzie: Oh, that's right. Well, thank you for having me. It certainly hits home and you know, anything that I can do to help anybody feel better, especially if they're struggling with an

autoimmune condition, because I know how scary and horrible it is, and you can absolutely get better and feel better. It's not the end of the road.

Dr. Keesha: Beautiful. Thank you Suzie, for all the work you're doing.

Suzie: Thank you. Take care.