



## Reverse Autoimmune Disease Summit

### Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Ari Whitten

**Dr. Keesha:** Welcome to the reverse autoimmune disease summit. I'm Dr. Keesha Ewers, and I'm so delighted to bring to you Ari Whitten who is a bestselling author and nutrition and lifestyle expert and the founder of the energy blueprint. He's been studying and teaching health science for over 20 years. He has a bachelor of science and kinesiology and recently completed the coursework for his PhD in clinical psychology for the last five years. He's teamed up with world renowned scientists and physicians to develop the energy blueprint system, which is a powerful evidence-based system for overcoming fatigue and increasing energy levels. To learn more about his work at [theenergyblueprint.com](http://theenergyblueprint.com) and we'll have a link below this interview for connecting with you. Ari, welcome to the summit.

**Ari Whitten:** Thanks so much for having me. It's a pleasure.

**Dr. Keesha:** You know, I actually titled your talk, Getting the Perfectionist Monkey off Your Back, which when you think about energy and perfectionism, people don't automatically make that link. That what I've just discovered in working with thousands of people with autoimmune disease, since it's our latest pandemic in our culture, is that there are three Ps in place. People pleasing, the poison from past pain and trauma, and perfectionism. And I notice that all three of those are actually very big energy drains. You know, people are always looking to match the supplement to their energy level. Let's fix those adrenals, let's fix my hormones, let's do all these things and not realize that there's this very subtle root cause that's underneath all of that. What you could say is neruo-ception and perception. You know, our view of ourselves and our view of ourselves in our world and that actually sucks our energy if it's not healthy. So I just really appreciate you coming on and talking about the energy blueprint, about your work, and about how this is actually a big problem that isn't really being talked about in the autoimmune community. So welcome.

**Ari Whitten:** Well, thank you. I think it definitely is an important contributor to fatigue and it's a big drain on energy. I think the framing around this issue is kind of important to understand. There's a few layers to it that I like to build out. So one layer is the research looking specifically at fatigue conditions and personality types. So this shows up in the research on chronic fatigue syndrome. It shows up in the research on other fatigue syndromes, so like burnout syndrome, stress-related exhaustion disorder, or things like that, where we are, there's just this

body of literature that just clearly keeps showing this link between perfectionism, what's often called in the literature, self-critical perfectionism and this classic stereotypical type a workaholic, perfectionist personality. And if we think about it, there's a link between that and an increased tendency to end up with fatigue.

Ari Whitten: Now why is that? There's a few different layers to the story. So one layer to the story could be just very simply, if somebody is a workaholic and a perfectionist. I'll give you an example. There was a woman in my program recently who would, when she first joined, within the first modules that people go through in my energy blueprint program is circadian rhythm and sleep. And she was posting in the Facebook group that she's really struggling to implement this advice because it's totally at odds with her desire to, you know, this kind of mental program that says, I'll sleep when I'm dead because I need to go, go, go work, work, work get things done and sleep. If I sleep too much. If I sleep, for example, like let's say for eight hours a night then I'm not being productive enough and I'm wasting too many hours of the day sleeping that I could otherwise be using to accomplish things.

Ari Whitten: Okay. So if you're operated by a mental program that says that, you're basically setting up a tug of war or an internal fight between one of the most critical factors for your health and energy levels. And brain function and mood and cognitive performance and immune functions. Since you know this is the autoimmune summit, we'll also throw immune function in there, which obviously relates to sleep. You're sabotaging that for the sake of this program. That's saying I've got to get things done and work, work, work. Okay. So just you know, this is one very simple explanation for why this can be an energy drain on people. They end up not sleeping enough and not honoring their body's natural circadian rhythm because of this personality type and these mental programs that are driving them to be more productive and work more.

Ari Whitten: Another explanation or layer to this story is negative thought patterns. So again in the literature this often shows up as self-critical perfectionism and that term self-critical or being self-critical is often paired with and comes with the territory. For the most part when somebody is a perfectionist, part of the activity of being a perfectionist involves almost always a lot of self criticism. Now what is self criticism? It's basically negative self talk. It's having thoughts going through your head saying, Oh, that's not good enough. Or variations on that theme, which are basically a form of stress. If you think about it, it really is a form of stress. You're basically operated by a mental program that is chronically communicating these thoughts to you that are basically stressful thoughts that result in stressful emotional states. And ultimately those stressful thoughts and emotional states trickle down, since the mind and body are connected, they trickle down into all kinds of biochemical, hormonal neurotransmitter effects in the long term.

Ari Whitten: And we also see things like increased neuro-inflammation. We know that there's the whole field called mitochondrial psychobiology where we know that psychological and emotional stressors directly affect the functioning of our mitochondria. So there's this very direct connection. We don't have to go through even 10 different biochemical mechanisms. There's a direct connection between being in a stress state and your mitochondria, which are your cellular energy generators, not pumping out energy as well. So that's another layer to the story. Certainly stress has all kinds of other effects on it, a direct effect on gut permeability, which can then, as of course, you know, and probably lots of listeners know, if you start to negatively affect the gut permeability, you're going to have things like lipopolysaccharides leaking into your bloodstream, you're gonna have undigested food particles leaking in there. It's going to cause chronic inflammation.

Ari Whitten: Chronic immune dysfunction can be a direct contributor to autoimmune disease and the lipid polysaccharide, this endotoxin leaking into the bloodstream can also directly poison mitochondria through this other past pathway. So you have this immediate effect on mitochondrial function, longer term effects by breaking down gut function. We know there's a gut brain access. We know there's direct effects of chronic stress on brain function and mood. There's another layer to the story. The last one I'll mention is I would just say the autonomic nervous system and people listening might be familiar with Stephen Porges work around the polyvagal theory. And the gist of it is it's basically a more complex version of the old school way of conceptualizing. You're either in fight-or-flight or rest-and-digest, relaxation mode, stressed or relaxed. And it's a more sophisticated version of that where it also acknowledges that basically that there's a relaxed state that is also involved with interpersonal connection.

Ari Whitten: So we have this what's called the social portal where being relaxed also involves interpersonal interaction. And then you can have a sort of typical stereotypical fight-or-flight state or you can be in, in what he calls a dorsal vagal dominance, which is more of a freeze state, which is more associated with, for example, apathy and fatigue and depression and just being emotionally flat and disconnected, socially disconnected, interpersonally disconnected. And basically this self-critical perfectionism creates this chronic stress on the system that takes us out of a joyful state of presence where we're smiling and we're capable of feeling joy and happiness and relating to other human beings and makes us either more stressed, fight or flight, sort of typical tense stress mode or more of this emotionally flat, socially disconnected, socially uninterested, fatigued type of depressed state.

Dr. Keesha: I call it the potato bug. The potato bug all rolled up.

Ari Whitten: Yes, exactly. Exactly. So, this is kind of, you know, my vision of certainly not all, but a number of the different layers of biochemical effects of being in a chronically stressed state of which this self-critical perfectionism is basically a

chronic psychological stressor that is having all these chronic negative effects on so many different layers of the system that ultimately result almost invariably in some level of fatigue and mood and brain dysfunction. Okay.

Dr. Keesha: So you mean taking glutathione is not going to fix all that? (Laughs.)

Ari Whitten: Yeah. You know, as you were saying earlier, I forget if it was before we started recording the podcast or after, but you said something to the effect of there's this kind of tendency of thinking, whatever the specific area of dysfunction is, then we need a supplement to fix that. So if it's your adrenals, you fix that. If it's your thyroid, you fix that with a different supplement. Well, you know what, what if it's literally 10 or 15 different layers of biochemical abnormalities that are going on? And I would argue, because I'm very much a systems thinker and a big picture thinker, it almost always is that many levels of things going wrong. It's, it's pretty much never just one thing that's going wrong.

Dr. Keesha: I agree. And so you know, a lot of times people are hearing some, there are several hi-profile figures are saying things like Epstein BARR, you know, causes everything. And 95% of Americans have Epstein BARR virus and so you know, it's like it's never the one smoking gun. Or lime or any of these co-infections that can occur are, they definitely are energy drainers, and they can definitely instigate and trigger an autoimmune issue. They don't sit in there all by themselves doing this activity. There's this stuff that happens before that that makes us have a hospital environment. And so much of what I'm trying to convey, and talk to people who are doing this systems work like you are, is, we have to actually look at the entire picture, instead of the, you know, what we do in our standard American model, I don't want to create green allopathy, right?

Dr. Keesha: Where we just, instead of matching a pill to an ill with a medication, that we do it with a supplement and maybe it's 20 supplements, you know, and if you are in that dorsal vagal, everything's cold, your digestion is not firing. You know, when you're a potato bug and you're overdriven into parasympathetic, then actually taking 20 supplements is not going to do a lot of good cause you're not going to be able to break them down and assimilate and absorb. So it's very important that we get a hold of the way that we perceive ourselves and ourselves in our environment. So that as we send the biochemical relay down from the brain and the mind that we can actually have a system that can work when we're going in and making our tweaks. Something that you were saying struck me when you were talking about the self-critical perfectionism. Usually, when I will say there are these three Ps and perfectionism, one of them, most people really push back on that. "I'm Not a perfectionist. Do you know how imperfect I am?" You know, I'm always laughing inside going, yeah. That understanding and self-awareness that you're so far from your own bar actually is perfectionism.

Ari Whitten: Yeah, that's what I was going to say. The irony of it is that they've got a big blind spot there.

- Dr. Keesha: I know. And so we would actually, if we saw a parent saying that's not good enough, do a butter, you should, you know, and, and shooting all over, we would actually call that a form of emotional abuse. Yeah. And so I just want to listeners to be aware of that as you described, that you know, that are you emotionally abusing yourself?
- Ari Whitten: Yeah. And, and that's actually a really important point to emphasize because so many people have a tendency to almost brag about their perfectionism. They, they see it as a positive quality. And I should be clear, there is most definitely a positive element to it, which is that it does make you an obsessive hard worker with very high standards and drives you to produce very high quality work. So there is this objectively a really great element to having a personality this way. And that's almost certainly the reason why it evolved in the first place. Right? But there's a price to be paid for it, right? In all these layers that I just described of physiological dysfunction and ultimately fatigue and ultimately in really long term, you know, increased rates of disease. Certainly chronic fatigue syndrome and burnout syndrome are among those. But that's, you know, the co-morbidities of that with all kinds of other much more serious diseases. Not that chronic fatigue, chronic fatigue syndrome is a very serious condition as well. But many other diseases are potentials here as well.
- Dr. Keesha: Well, the woman that you described in your Facebook group that's in your program, I was saying to myself, he was following me around when I was 30. You know what I mean? That was me, right? Yeah. Sleep was definitely secondary. I was raising four small children. I worked in the intensive care unit. I had this sort of high adrenaline junky lifestyle that I love. Very productivity oriented. I ran marathons and I would be like timing my personal record, driving myself from inside, you know, and just always all about productivity and achievement. Until 30 I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and my friends called me the Energizer bunny, which I actually wore as a badge of honor. And then it was like someone had taken the batteries out of the Energizer bunny and thrown them away.
- Dr. Keesha: I was flattened and I had to start looking at all of this. And what I realized is the self driver that I had internally, it didn't come from my current decade of life. It started a lot earlier. And so physics is now telling us that time is not as linear as we believe, and that actually we can coexist with these small children aspects of ourselves in our older, wiser selves, all in the same space. And you can kind of go back to that, that age of innocence before you believed you had to do everything perfectly. When you really still understood that getting dirty was part of a learning process. You know, that you had to put it in your mouth and really understand what it was like and to grok it, and being able to give your little self that permission. Once again in this age and stage that you get to get dirty, you get to mess up, you get to break it, so that you can see how it goes back together and reclaim your innocence really.

- Dr. Keesha: And you know, just permit yourself to, to listen to your body. You know, we were very exploratory in that stage of life. And so I'm always like, what did you look like at that age? What was it like? Can you remember your pudgy little hands and sticking everything in your mouth? Are there family photos that show that? Trying to really make friends with yourself in that way, that part of you, and bring it forward to now. You weren't in a space where you felt like caregiving everybody else. Cause sometimes this isn't workaholism. Sometimes it's caregiving-aholism, right? Sometimes it's putting everybody else on the burner before you and you're on the back burner. And so you stay up late at night. I mean, sometimes parents are up late at night doing their kids' homework for them for heaven's sakes, you know; thereby cutting them off at the knees too, you know? Yeah.
- Ari Whitten: Yeah. I think certain positive and negative aspects of certain ways of operating is really important to understand. You know, as far as, what I was saying about perfectionism; having this positive side of leading you to produce high quality work. But this other negative side I think there's many other aspects of the way we're wired. You know, humans are prediction-making machines and we're always kind of fast forwarding in our head about what's going to happen in the future. And from an evolutionary perspective, this is hugely advantageous to be doing this. Going back in time to let's say hunter-gatherer times, you're constantly looking around going there's a rock there or a bush there; there could be a snake behind that or there could be a lion behind that. You need to be able to process your environment and fast forward in your head about potential consequences because they could be life-ending consequences or life-ending consequences for people you love or severely injurious life-altering consequences.
- Ari Whitten: Right? So this is extremely adaptive to have that mental capacity and to be wired into that mode most of the time. However, if you're just too much in that direction, what is it? We call it anxiety, you know, that's when you're constantly in your head thinking, ruminating about all these things that could possibly happen. So it's an adaptive trait that is highly beneficial and adaptive, but that goes wrong when we just do too much of it. And then if on the other hand there are the people who couldn't do any of it and were just sort of in the moment at every moment, enjoying life in the central experience of the beauty of life and the joy of it, you know, they wouldn't be making that prediction about, Hey, that lion could be around the corner or wouldn't notice that snake on the ground right in front of him.
- Ari Whitten: So they were kind of weeded out of the gene pool. Yet ironically, we're now... So many people in the modern world are suffering from the consequences of this evolutionary heritage. And we're now in need. We have all this billion dollar, trillion dollar industry. I don't know how big it is, but of people trying to learn more mindfulness and presence to get out of constant anxiety mode because we're suffering the negative effects in the same way we just described

with all these physiological consequences, self-critical perfectionism. The same is true from the chronic stressor of anxiety that also causes a massive amount of harm and dysfunction in our physiology due to this chronic stress.

Dr. Keesha: And going backwards in time, anxiety I always say is a lack of information for the future. It's just the lack of information, right? And then depression is ruminating on past events that didn't turn out the way you wanted them to, you know, that there was a hurt or a pain or trauma there and that hasn't been really cleaned up and healed and your brain rewired yet. And so you'll bring that into your present moment. And that's depression. So it's like ruminating on the past, this depression, ruminating on the future and anxiety and just bringing in that present moment is really important. But with some eye into the feed, like you said, you can't just go step on the snake, right?

Ari Whitten: Yeah. But even the rumination on the past is evolutionarily advantageous because we can not only learn from experiences, but we can rewind in our head and we actually have memories. A lot of evolutionary biologists believe this is actually the primary purpose of memories. It's not so we can like reminisce on the past and you know, think happy thoughts about the past. That is a nice way to use our memories. But the main adaptive evolutionary reason for it is it allows us to actually learn after the fact from our experiences and we can go through and replay things in our head and go, Oh, I could've done this differently. I could have done that differently. It's very much intertwined with that prediction making that I was talking about.

Dr. Keesha: Or just very simply, the stove is hot. Don't touch the stove again. Right. You know the memory that, that leaf right there is poisonous. So the heart-shaped leaf is one we need to avoid. So it's definitely important. And I always tell people, you want your medical provider, you want me to be a perfectionist; there's nothing that we want to accept less than perfection when we're working on your health. But my kids don't want a perfectionist parenting them, and my husband doesn't want a perfectionist wife. So it's being able to use this as a skill set that you can turn on when you want it and down-regulate it when you don't need it. And that's back to this vegal piece too. This 10th cranial nerve of the vegas nerve--we haven't actually talked about this on the summit--so I'll just explain: this is your wandering nerve in Latin. It connects your brain to your body and enervates most organ systems, and what Ari was talking about, this dorsal potato bug one right over parasympathetic. There's also the ventralvegal, which is the high anxiety, you know, overstimulated heat, right? And you can actually move like a slide rule clip.

Ari Whitten: I think you meant to say that the sympathetic, the ventral vagal is more like relaxed, joyful.

Dr. Keesha: Yeah it's joyful, but you can actually overstimulate it so that you can get into the heat, right? So you can go either direction on cold or hot on it. And what we

want is that Goldilocks place, right? You want joy and you want relaxation in your digestion, but you don't want to go too far in either direction. And we actually have control over that. So that's the beauty of this: we can actually learn a skillset to make us move back and forth between the two and get into a nice little compromise, you know, a place that fits what we're in in the moment. And what you were talking about earlier, this is stimulating the neocortex in the front of the brain where we actually get to go, "okay, how can we do that?" Gratitude. Gratitude, right? Such an easy thing to do.

Ari Whitten: Yeah. I mean, yeah, gratitude is incredibly powerful. It's the antidote to so much of these stressful states to so much of you know, both the, the ruminating on the past and the ruminating and prediction-making on the future. Both the depression and anxiety sides of this and the self-critical perfectionism. I mean, if you think about it, gratitude is almost like a universal antidote to all of these. If you can bring your awareness in the moment to things that you're grateful for, it completely pattern interrupts all of the anxiety, all of the ruminating on the depression, the past, and regret and shame and embarrassment and self-critical thoughts about what you're doing what you're working on and things like that. If you can take a few moments throughout the day and interrupt with gratitude, it's really probably the single most powerful antidote.

Ari Whitten: And I'll give people a recommendation, a cool little simple way of integrating that, which is a mindfulness bell. And they have apps that you can use on your phone that you can set to go off every, I recommend every 20 or 30 minutes, and it'll go off. It'll be like a little gong sort of bell. And that's your way of cueing yourself because you don't want to rely on consciously trying to remember to do this. You want to have an external trigger that goes off and is automated and you don't have to think about it and it interrupts your tendencies. These various kinds of psychological stressors that we're often wired with and allows you to go (takes deep relaxing breath).

Ari Whitten: And so you can take a deep breath, you can relax the physical tension. You can consciously let go of the mental tension. You can bring your awareness into the present moment. That in itself is an important layer. And then you can integrate, you know, every time your bell goes off, you think of two things, you know, one thing, two things, three things in that moment that you can be grateful for. And they can be really simple things. They can be really profound things or it could be like you're in the middle of some, some work project and you're beating yourself up over, it's not good enough and you're editing it and you know, whatever. And you're in this kind of full-blown self-critical perfectionism and then you think, you know, wow, it's pretty, I'll speak for myself. Like it's pretty, pretty darn cool that I'm in my home right now.

Ari Whitten: I get to work from home. I'm not stuck in an office in a little cubicle under fluorescent lighting. That's a pretty awesome thing I can be grateful for. What's another one? Oh, okay. I'm working on writing an article on something health-



related and Oh, as luck would have it, health has been my passion for 25 years now. And how awesome is it that I'm part of the, whatever it is, 3% or 5% of the population that actually ends up in a career that is what I'm really passionate about instead of being stuck working some job to make ends meet that I don't actually love. And so on. Or I could be grateful for the fact that I'm standing up right now as I'm doing this interview and I have functional legs and I could be in a wheelchair; you know, things that you normally take for granted.

Ari Whitten: And you know, as you start to do this, this practice, you realize there are endless things for you to be grateful for that you realize, you completely take for granted and ignore your consciousness. They're not in your awareness. 99.9% of the time as you are, for example, anxious about the future or ruminating about negative events of the past, criticizing yourself for work you're doing, you know, all these different stressors. You can consciously train yourself to interrupt those processes through a practice like gratitude. And I will add there's a neuroscience expert named Mark Waldmann. He's an author of numerous books, brain-related books, and he's actually done formal research on the use of this mindfulness bell to interrupt periods of work or study and things like that every half an hour. And they've shown profound effects on the brain.

Ari Whitten: Profound improvements in performance in mood, decreases in stress levels and intention, increases in energy levels, improvements in actual performance and productivity. Just simple little practice like that. So I mean there's two dozen other strategies we could talk about to distress or activate the Vagus nerve and things like that. But honestly I would just say take that one and actually implement it rather than me trying to impress you with listing off 20 strategies, which I could do. Just take that one, we'll leave it at that because if you actually implement it, it's incredibly powerful.

Dr. Keesha: It really is. And I always tell people, start with those, those really easy ones. Like, Oh, I can actually see what's in front of me. I have teeth I can brush. You know, when I go home at night, before I go to bed and Oh, I actually have opposable thumb and finger, you know, it's just like this works. And if it doesn't work for you, there are a zillion other things that you've got that you can actually be grateful for, I have the sense of smell I can hear and maybe that's not accurate, but what other things are there? And so whatever you focus on, it gets you into that nice space where you've got vagal tone and that's of course going to keep you in a good immune function.

Ari Whitten: Yes. And the one other layer to this that's important to emphasize, I kind of alluded to it, but I should say it, you reminded me of it as you were speaking there. Which is of course neurons that fire together wire together. So the more you practice this, the easier it becomes to be in a state of presence, mindful presence, to be in a state of gratitude, the easier it is to feel genuine gratitude. And the more it will start popping up on its own without you having to force it and conjure it. And the more that that happens, the more you'll move away

from the tendency towards anxiety and rumination on negative things and depression, and self-criticism and things like that. The more you will be engaged in joyful presence and happiness and gratitude.

Ari Whitten: And it works in both ways. So keep in mind that the other, the reverse is also true, that if you are a self-critical perfectionist, if you are ruminating on negative stuff and, and worrying about the future all the time, those pathways are becoming ingrained and reinforced, and it becomes a vicious cycle where it becomes easier and easier and easier to operate in those modes. So we need to be very careful about how we operate our brains because we need to understand it in the same frame that we understand exercise, which is whatever form of exercise you do, your body will make adaptations to get stronger and more efficient and better at. And the same thing happens with the way we operate our mind. So if you, if you understand that you really want to be conscious and make good decisions about how you are operating your brain throughout the day,

Dr. Keesha: That's such a good point. In my doctoral research, in 2013 I did a study on healing unresolved trauma, and one of the implementations that I was looking at as the intervention was forgiveness--not lip service forgiveness, but a deep detailed program for it. And one of the barriers to forgiveness is a personality trait called neuroticism. And the more we ruminate on these automatic negative thoughts, the more that we are in that neuroticism space. And that's, that's going to increase our desire to blame outside forces for our life experience instead of living into the possibilities and the potentiality of shifting whatever it is that you don't like into something that you love. And so, you know, as long as you stay in that space, it creates those neuronal synapsing firing mechanisms that will just stay there like a hamster on the wheel.

Dr. Keesha: So this is vitally important what you're talking about. I'd like to have you talk about the energy blueprint. This is something that of course people with autoimmune disease, it's usually the first wake up call. You know, people will say, well, what are symptoms of autoimmunity? How do I know I have it? Because I've heard you say that it takes 10 to 30 years to develop a full-blown autoimmune disease and that people that are listening to you could very well be working on one. How do I know if I'm working on an autoimmune illness? And I would say probably the number one thing that people come to me for in the very beginning is fatigue, you know, fatigue and brain fog. So let's talk about fatigue because everyone with autoimmunity experiences fatigue.

Ari Whitten: Yeah. So I feel like everything we've talked about up till now is basically within my paradigm of the causes of fatigue and how to fix it. This is one

Ari Whitten: This is one portion of the module of my program on the brain, which also covers things like the vagal activation and how that's tied into the endocannabinoid system, neuroinflammation, mitochondrial dysfunction in the brain,

neurotransmitter levels. So even within just the topic of the brain and how that relates to our energy levels, there's a whole bunch more layers to how the brain is involved with this story. From there, kind of that whole topic of the brain is just one sub topic within the causes of fatigue as well. So we've spent most of this podcast talking about a sub topic of a sub topic, which is a very important layer to the story for many people. I mean for many people that is actually maybe even the single most important driver of their fatigue. Now for many people it's not they're not self-critical perfectionists or workaholics or type A personalities.

Ari Whitten: But it is definitely a big factor for many people, and probably the people who it is a big factor for know that it applies to them, or maybe not, to your point as you brought up earlier. Some people have a blind spot around this. So another big layer, the story is circadian rhythm and sleep. Absolutely huge factor. We could talk about any of these, I mean just that topic alone is, you know, five hours worth of discussion. Another layer to the story is of course nutrition. Another layer to the story is light exposure. Again, each one of these are hours and hours worth of discussion. Gut health of course, environmental toxicants or toxins and detoxification strategies. Then the other one is which is a big one that I feel is often really neglected is hormesis and how that interplays with mitochondrial health.

Ari Whitten: Hormesis is basically transient metabolic stress and how that ties into how big and strong your mitochondria are and how capable they are of two things. One thing is how capable they are of producing lots of energy. And the other thing, which is the other side of the coin of why mitochondria are really important in this side of the coin that most people are not very well educated on, which is that in mitochondria are environmental sensors and they're critical as far as our resilience to the stressors that we're exposed to in life. So if you have big, strong powerful mitochondria, at the cellular level, your body is going to be extremely resilient in the face of lots of different kinds of stressors. If you have weak, fragile, atrophied, dysfunctional, damaged mitochondria and very few of them, you are going to be much more easily overwhelmed by the stressors of life, the stressors we're all exposed to cause stressors are ubiquitous in the modern world. And if once you overwhelm what I call this resilience threshold of the mitochondria, that's when you start to get into symptoms and you start to get into uncontrolled pathology and biochemical pathology and oxidative stress and oxidative damage at the cellular level and chronic inflammation. And all sorts of dysfunction that starts to emerge once you've exceeded your mitochondrial capacity to deal with the stress load upon it.

Dr. Keesha: So we're going to have a free gift from you for our audience that they can actually access because this is the multilayered approach that I'm always talking about in Ayurvedic medicine. There are five layers to us. There's the physical, the energetic, the emotional, the mental, and spiritual--and all of that has to be

dealt with. And your energy blueprint is dealing with all of it. So I really want people to have access to your work. So do you want to talk about your free gift?

Ari Whitten: Yeah. So the free gift is a basically a free masterclass training where I go in depth on a lot of the strategies--some of the ones that we've talked about here but many, many, many others. About how to increase your energy levels and overcome fatigue through this paradigm that I just explained. And using that framework to go specific on, here's the strategies to, for example, to optimize circadian rhythm. Here's nutrition strategies to optimize mitochondrial health and energy production at the cellular level. Light strategies. Here's hormetic strategies to actually increase the number of mitochondria in your cells. So things like that. So we're attacking this problem from multiple layers, from the brain level to the mitochondrial level and everything in between, to optimize the entire system, then all the nodes of the network to be able to pump out, as much energy as possible.

Ari Whitten: And you know, one of the things that happens with human physiology, as we were talking about earlier, as far as systems thinking and how everything is interconnected, just as there's negative cycles and vicious cycles of more and more biochemical distress, biochemical abnormalities and pathologies that result in more and more symptoms, and then it kind of feeds into more pathology and more symptoms and ultimately disease. I want people to understand that the opposite is also true. The more you optimize multiple nodes of the network, the more that you reverse the downward cycles of pathology and disease into upward spirals of improved cellular and metabolic hormonal and neurotransmitter health. And the more that you do that, the more nodes of that network that you optimize, the more that you can actually create positive upward spirals of improved health, improved energy levels, improved immune function, improved brain health, improved mood, improved cognitive function, all of these things start to improve.

Ari Whitten: So there are a lot of people out there doing very targeted, you know, trying to do, find the one thing, or the two things wrong with a person. And then, I would say taking more of a green allopthy approach to it. Trying to do very specific targeted interventions. I personally believe that while sometimes that's important, I think with 99 people out of a hundred, you will actually get way further by just focusing on what is the blueprint of optimal habits and then, and then coaching a person to actually implement these ways of optimizing the different nodes of the network. As, as much as possible to create these upward spirals rather than just saying, Oh, you know, we did this test. You've got this biochemical abnormality. So we're going to do this supplement and based on your stool analysis, right? You've got too much of this bacteria. We need to put you on this supplement, right? So I'm a big picture kind of systems guy, and I am a firm believer that the vast majority of people will get dramatically better results that way.

Dr. Keesha: Beautiful. Couldn't agree with you more. Thank you, Ari, and I appreciate your time sharing your wisdom done with us. And until next time, everybody.