

Wynne Leon (00:03)

Welcome to How to Share, a podcast that celebrates the art of teaching, learning, giving, and growing.

I'm Wynne Leon and in this episode, I'm with my co-host Vicki Atkinson and we are talking with licensed dietitian nutritionist and author Meg Bowman. Meg's newly released book, This Is Your Body on Trauma is incredible. It is a fantastic resource for learning how nutrition is interconnected with our other systems. Meg tells us why safety is the most important nutrient.

for our bodies.

Meg explains why how you eat is as important as what you eat. She encourages us to understand that there are two strategies at play. One is the toolkit we build for when we are underwater. And the second is for when we are feeling safe. We talk about digestive hygiene, a topic that I need to be reminded of to practice mindful eating. Meg tells us to meet our bodies with more care and less judgment.

We talk about how this extends to others, especially in the food season we are in with the holidays ahead. This is a fantastic conversation about a topic that affects us all. As Meg says, when we are well nourished, it lessens our experience of stress at any age. This is an episode that will leave you feeling satisfied. We know you'll love it.

Meg Bowman (01:35)

you

you

Vicki Atkinson (01:38)

Meg Bowman

Meg Bowman (01:40)

Hey, I'm so excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

Vicki Atkinson (01:43)

my gosh, Wynne and I are thrilled to have an opportunity to get an advance copy of a book that really, as we read so much wonderful, applicable, accessible wellness advice. And the name of your book is This Is Your Body on Trauma. But Wynne and I were comparing notes. There's so many things that we love about the book because there are

layers of actionable advice throughout and so well-timed because the landscape right now regarding nutrition and wellness is, it's really difficult for people to plod their way through.

Wynne Leon (02:25)

Right? And I love thinking that you said layers, because it's, sorry, we're going to do all the talking here. But when I was a kid, I had this book that had like, it had the body, it had the skeleton, and then it had these, you know, layers that you could add on. You'd add on the organs and then an overlay that had the muscles and the overlay that had the face. And this feels like this overlay of nutrition, but in relation to all that other stuff.

of wellness and our trauma, big T or a little T.

Vicki Atkinson (03:03)

Yeah.

Yeah. And it reflects your background. mean, for our listeners and viewers, Meg, have, you're a licensed nutritionist. You have your own practice. You have a master's degree in nutrition and integrative medicine. And your focus is really about wellness and gastrointestinal health. And so you have created something that I think pulling all those pieces together and

the things that you know about supporting overall health and wellness from the gut. there just were so many things about the book that we love. before we run away with the train here, right? I know we will. And so for those who haven't had the opportunity yet, your book comes out on Tuesday, October 28th. So it is hot off the press. It will be available everywhere.

Wynne Leon (03:45)

do think we should let Meg talk?

Vicki Atkinson (03:59)

and we'll make sure that in the show notes that we've linked all the places where people can get it and how to connect with you. But you will do a much better job than Wynne and I have in pitching the book. But we would love to hear from your heart and mind. What's the sketch of the book? What's it about? And sometimes we call that the elevator pitch, but how would you encapsulate it?

Meg Bowman (04:23)

Yeah. So I think there's like, there's the short version and then there's the slightly longer and more accurate version. But the short version of it is that really safety is the most important nutrient for the nervous system. That's, that's the most important. And it also is the one in nutrition land that we ignore the most, know, a slightly longer version of it would be something like,

you know, being well nourished really lessens the perception of stress. And it really gives you the scaffolding for nervous system resilience and recovery. And I think, you you can

see a perfect example of this every January. I will admit to having this personal rule that I try not to take clients the first three weeks of January.

Because generally speaking, the people that come in right after the new year are people who have made these huge New Year's resolutions that often are not doable. They're trying to kind of force their way into it. I think nutrition just ignores what the reality of safety for a lot of people.

Vicki Atkinson (05:33)
Way up here. Yeah.

Wynne Leon (05:43)
And that reminds me of a quote from your book, which is the goal isn't to force yourself into better food habits by sheer willpower. It's to create more moments of ventral regulation. Right. And what you're talking about that January 1st thing is just like, ~ we're going to power this thing in. Right. Yeah.

Meg Bowman (05:54)
Yeah.

Yeah,

there's a lot of people feeling a lot of energy around, you know, around change then. But in reality, the only time that we have the most access to be able to choose is when we feel safe. Yeah. When we don't feel safe, that's when we're responsive, that's when we're reactive. And so, you know, having safety be that first most critical ingredient.

in any plan feels really important.

Vicki Atkinson (06:34)
Well, and you talk about the importance of tending to the kaleidoscope of all this and intending to those messages that we carry that could be shame laden about food. And I respect you for your decision making about January, because I think I already know what you do best is get to know the person. And it is, I think, some unpacking about all of that.

And I think understanding motivation really matters. And we love the subtitle of your book, which is How to Nourish Safety, Resilience, and Connection. That makes so much sense. But then you throw a term that may be new for some people about polyvagal informed nutrition. And what I love about the book is that although you lead with that, you break it down beautifully so that

folks can understand, you know, all the connections and the importance, but tell us more about that. Why did you choose to highlight that in that way?

Meg Bowman (07:37)

Yeah, it's because I think that how you eat is just as if not more important than what you eat. Yeah. And so polyvagal comes from researcher Stephen Porges's polyvagal theory. So this idea that our autonomic nervous system is constantly scanning for cues of danger and safety. And this

incredibly informs not only our physiology, like how our body is functioning, but also the lens through which we see the world. And so that's why it's really important if you're seeing the world as a dangerous place, if you're feeling super activated or shut down, you're going to see food through that lens of danger. no, I better not eat that. I am a bad person if I do this.

And I really wanted to try and lean toward, ~ let's lean toward a lens of food as safety and food as nourishment.

Wynne Leon (08:47)

So when you say how you eat is as important as what you eat, mean how is, as in, in what state, whether we're in ventral or, or, or is it, the environment or how we approach it? What, do mean by how in that?

Meg Bowman (09:04)

would take any of those answers.

Vicki Atkinson (09:07)

All of the above. Yes. All of the above.

Meg Bowman (09:11)

what is really what we see on social media. So it's like eat this, don't eat that. That's what. It's not that I don't care about that. I just think that it's not super helpful. Somebody's in a protective nervous system state. So I focus on the how, not only like we need to have a plan for when we are in a survival state and it is gonna be different than when we were feeling regulated.

Also how in terms of what are those messages that we are hearing, you know, that may come from family of origin, they may come from social media, they may come from wherever and really noticing and naming where those messages put our nervous system. Because that helps us care for ourselves.

You know, and we're rocking right now into like the food holidays. We're in the midst of the food holidays. know, every nutrition provider on the planet is like, we are in it to win it. The last quarter of the year, the food holidays. And so so many people have so much history of a lot of activation, shutdown, a lot of...

other people who are very willing to share opinions on what you're eating or not eating. Yeah. And it just has such an impact. And so being able to notice and name your own where I'm at, this is where I'm at and how do I eat in this state? Really important.

Vicki Atkinson (10:45)

Well, you say this so well on page 200. It's one of the things I have my typical cornucopia of like Vicki you know, notes everywhere. But one of the things on that point that you say that it's just you have a degree in English and it comes through. And how you've put this book together, you knew the audience, you are.

writing for all of us. You there's not a lot of nutrition speak in you break things down. But to add to what you just said Meg on page 200, you story follows state. So to Wynne's point about, know, what, do you mean about state? And really, I think what you were talking about there is that, you know, the stress, the safety, your nervous system is setting the tone.

But then your brain, your emotional state, we add all of this storytelling about food and life and family and all of that. But I think that idea that story follows state, is that what you were trying to convey when you wrote about that?

Meg Bowman (11:48)

Yeah, it's definitely a phrase that I stole from therapist Deb Dana. Definitely, I am a Deb fan girl. But that concept, I think we see this so frequently, a great place to look at this is in GI nutrition. Great place to look at this, Because so frequently, like somebody feels a GI symptom, a little twinge, we got a little something. ~

And because they are in a more activated state or a shutdown state, because they're in a survival state, all of a sudden we start catastrophizing. no, what is going to happen? Does that mean? And the story that we tell ourselves really comes from what nervous system state we're in. If we had had that experience of that GI twinge when we're feeling safe, the story would not be the same.

And the real challenge of it is that it's a feedback loop. The second that we're up there and we're catastrophizing and, no, I'm gonna have disaster pants and I'm gonna, know, this or that. Then all of a sudden that message goes back to the gut and we got a feedback loop and around around the merry-go-round we go. So it really, that concept of story follows state helps us to, helps us to regulate. And I want to be careful like I'm,

I'm realizing I have to be really careful when I say regulate, because sometimes people in the nutrition world are interpreting regulate to mean like, let me regulate my food. I'm usually meaning let me, because let me find safety really. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (13:17)

It's not restriction, right? ~

Well, and think the fact that you bring that forward about what happens in the gut has rippling effects throughout being aware and protective and thoughtful. And do that for yourself as opposed to absorbing intel from other people. Kind of know your body. Yeah.

Meg Bowman (13:46)

Yeah,

because not, you know, even foods that are supposed to be healthy, they may not be healthy for you. It was actually quite a challenge for me to write this book. I had a lot of conversations with colleagues about this because so much of nutrition is so very personal and something that works for me is not going to work for you. And so it was really difficult to kind of conceptualize how can I make it broad, but also personal at the same time.

And especially when we're considering gut stuff, I think that is super true.

Wynne Leon (14:19)

And that reminds me of something that you wrote nutrition requires nuance. It's personal.

Meg Bowman (14:29)

see

that. Yeah, we don't see that in social media, right? It's just this like, this is what everyone should do. Yeah. And I think that's really unfortunate that that is the landscape. And so that, know, when we talk about, you know, how do we keep up with the landscape, because there's new stuff every day, there's new understanding since I wrote the book, there studies that have come out that I've gone, ~ okay, that's interesting. You know, to a certain extent, it's

don't try and keep up because I think sometimes when we try and keep up it really keeps us in that let me fix it let me make it better it keeps us in that understanding of like ourselves as a project that we need to fix.

Wynne Leon (15:14)

Well, and that is just something that you wrote, which was many things I was taught in school 10 years ago, have since been proven incorrect. Some of the absolute truths presented at a conference I recently attended will likely be debunked in the next decade. you you're saying that's okay. We can, we don't have to necessarily keep up with that. I mean, I'm sure you do as a nutritionist.

Meg Bowman (15:39)

Yeah, I kind of have to.

Vicki Atkinson (15:41)

Yeah.

Meg Bowman (15:43)

But I still think a really good tactic that I've seen some clients use really well is when they encounter kind of new nutrition information, really the question is, does this study or this new piece of information lead me, does it give me additional information that allows me to take care of myself? Or does it tell me that there's something wrong with me?

And if it's giving you information that's going to allow you to better take care of yourself, like let's engage with it. If it's telling you that you should feel shame or blame or, you know, feel unsafe, you know, think about the wear and tear that has on your nervous system. That also is creating problems. So I would just continue to try and nudge toward how can we care for ourselves?

Vicki Atkinson (16:41)

Yeah.

Wynne Leon (16:41)

love what you say

in the book. Sorry, Vicki. Where you talk about sort of that surface self care, ~ not really being effective unless we look at the regulation or dysregulation underneath.

Vicki Atkinson (16:45)

~ no, I'm, no.

Meg Bowman (16:51)

Yeah.

I really fought with the term self care for years. I kind of hate that term and I don't hate the term. don't hate the concept of it. I really dislike how it is frequently used. It's so frequently used as a like things we need to buy.

Vicki Atkinson (17:17)

Yeah, it's the marketing of wellness.

Meg Bowman (17:21)

It totally is versus like, what can we do to center our own needs? I mean, that is a, that is a radical concept. think sometimes, especially for women, what can we do to center our own needs? And what does it really look like for me to nourish myself in, in any way? And it's hard in this landscape.

Vicki Atkinson (17:49)

You, yes. And yes, and we loved, yeah. We loved a blog post that you did recently wrote on a Sub stack and I, you know, we loved it because it is, you tell some stories in the book about, you know, some kind of like wonky ideas about wellness and nutrition and self care. And, you know, I think probably what makes you such a good colleague and practitioner and human.

Meg Bowman (17:52)
Good to see you.

Vicki Atkinson (18:19)
and mom and partner and all that stuff is, you know, having respect for the place that the individual in front of you is in and listening to them say crazy things about strawberries, you know, being a fix for all kinds of things, ~ but giving them the space to say it, but then adding to it or directing. And so the, posts that you wrote, you know, with the yes and kind of cornerstone, I think is such an,

important philosophical place for you to be as a practitioner and an author. Because it gives you a gentle way then of talking about, yeah, proteins having a moment and yeah, let's talk about keto because people are drawn into those like one track things. are there other tips or suggestions that you can share with folks about how to persevere when it seems like you get bombed with information about this? This is the thing. I hold the key.

Meg Bowman (19:16)
Yeah. You know, I think the thing that I would say is keep going back to noticing and naming what your nervous system state is, right? When you engage with that kind of material, is it creating safety in your nervous system? If so, let's explore a little bit. Is it creating a sense of play, like a little bit of a blend of ventral and sympathetic energy where we actually get to play and we get to experiment? ~ Or is it

driving too much or too little energy. And in that case, maybe not that. And it's really hard, especially for people who've experienced trauma, because I think sometimes we get in this, I've seen a lot of clients get in this scenario where, because we have that felt sense of trauma and we really struggle with the felt sense of safety, we scan the environment.

Wynne Leon (19:52)
Yeah.

Meg Bowman (20:12)
all the time for danger, right? These are the clients who come in and they tell me, I've looked up so many studies and I've, know, this supplement keeps landing in my inbox. That happened twice this week, you know? And it's yes and, right? Yes, this may work for people. And let's see if this works for you. Yes, those emotions are valid.

And let's see if this particular thing is right for you right now. Yeah. Yeah.

Wynne Leon (20:49)

We about the food season and big T trauma. Yeah, we talked about this, you you talk about big T trauma and families and the complicated relationships we have, not with just food, but with people too. And as we enter into this very social eating, what can you, how can you...

Vicki Atkinson (20:55)

Here we ~

Wynne Leon (21:17)

guide us

Meg Bowman (21:18)

Yeah. ~ that's a big question. We spent a lot of time here. So I think the thing that I would say is let's be aware that kind of our nervous system encounters danger or safety in three areas. encounter it inside ourselves, right? So if you notice that your breathing is going faster, if you notice that your heart rate is increasing, you might sweat, like that is definitely a sign.

Wynne Leon (21:22)

Bye, people.

Meg Bowman (21:47)

that your nervous system is experiencing something. So we experience it inside, we experience it outside. So I was at a fundraising gala on Friday and it was so loud in that room, like the sound, just there were delightful people. I loved the people there. I had to leave after a half hour. It was so loud. My nervous system could not handle it. And then we also experienced safety and danger signals.

in between relationships. So inside, outside, and in between relationships. And so the thing that I would say is when we're going into kind of a holiday situation with people where, you know, there might be a little conflict, there might be a little something there, remember that safety comes inside, outside, and in between. So if we're in a moment where there's some danger signals coming in between,

How could we find safety inside? How could we find safety outside? So could we eat a well-balanced meal before we go so that we're not hungry and we're not hangnished and we don't have anxiety? Is there anything we could do about our clothes so that we feel comfortable when we're there? And just looking at the whole landscape and saying, where can I send myself safety cues?

if this one area doesn't feel possible right now.

Wynne Leon (23:17)

I think every time I cook Thanksgiving, because I love cooking Thanksgiving, I've learned to have, you know, wear short sleeves because by the time I'm getting the meal on the table, I'm sweating. And you're sort of talking to this, which is it's hot in the kitchen. There's hot boiling and the things coming out and I'm sweating. And so it's like, if I can at least cool down a little bit, it helps.

Meg Bowman (23:38)

Yeah. How can you find that message, you know, even if it's just really quick? Yeah. Because our nervous systems are set up to scan for danger. So if we're not, you know, even a little bit, a little bit intentional, hopefully not with effort, but if we, you know, if we're looking for how do I survive this thing, how do I get through it? Let's find places that there can messages of safety.

Wynne Leon (24:04)

Mm.

Vicki Atkinson (24:04)

What

I love about that and your example, Wynne is so good. You're so encouraging, Meg in the book and just spending time with you here. But I think people need to have the encouragement, the liberty, and then the license to wear the short sleeves, wear the comfortable shoes. So I think the thing that you're doing is pulling all those pieces together. It's not just about what you eat or

who you're with or the intensity of the noise. It's that milieu, it's the whole of it and everything you can do to create comfort. And the other message that I think comes through because you're so sincere about all of it and loving and kind, but serious too is it might be work, but it's worth it.

Meg Bowman (24:56)

Absolutely it is finding, know, if it is going to a place where there's nothing there that you feel comfortable eating for a variety of reasons, like my kiddo has severe food allergies. So like we travel with food, right? Or maybe you did skip that dish that you don't like, but you have been pressured for years and years and years to eat because it's grandma's favorite. Let's find safety somehow. Yeah. In that environment for you. Yeah. Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (25:26)

And I love the idea that exiting from a place where you just knew you were overstimulated, I think that applies also to family gatherings and people really having their exit strategies, right? And just knowing that you don't need to push yourself to the point where you become volcanic, and it could be a mix of all of those things, the food, the emotion, the history, all of that. But quiet exits are a great form of self-care without.

any fanfare just you know and if you want a burger on the way home go get it right if that's right.

Meg Bowman (25:59)

Absolutely. Yeah, there is no right or wrong here. There's just I mean, I'm sure there probably is a right or wrong, but I don't have it. There is there is how do we want to show up in that moment is our nervous system serving us in that moment and then absolutely do do what I did go leave after half hour.

Wynne Leon (26:20)

I love what you just said there about right or wrong because I mean what you there's a whole section on your book where you said this section of the book is about how trauma shows up physically and how gently we can start to meet the body's needs with more care and less judgment. ~ it's just what you just said there. It's not right or wrong. It's personal. It's nuanced. We're just using our awareness to help.

Meg Bowman (26:38)

Yeah.

Wynne Leon (26:49)

along with all the great nutrition information that you give us.

Meg Bowman (26:53)

Yeah, it's really shocking how you can turn down the intensity of something when people understand the etiology of it, where it's coming from. You you talk with somebody who has diabetes and they on paper, they're doing everything fricking right. They're doing everything right. And you talk to them a little bit and you're like, ~ that was a lot of childhood trauma. Like there, there was a lot.

going on there. And if we can share some of that data and really help people understand how these things outside our control have influenced us and then and then how we can modify risk factors, it feels possible. It just takes the shame and blame out of it for so many people.

Vicki Atkinson (27:40)

When you talk a little bit about one of the things I really appreciated, and I don't think I wrote down where it was in the book, but you talk maybe in more than one place about decision fatigue. And I think, you know, that's a thing for people on so many levels. And if, if you can find what works for you, you know, that's kind of golden.

you then then don't mess with it until there's a need to look at that again. But I think that like constant experimentation or falling into old habits. Yeah. You know, I really appreciated that you mentioned that. And you also said so we could do like quick takes

about things that Wynne and I personally went, ~ hello. Right. But, you made a point on page 289 about just like also

being practical about good digestive hygiene. Like actually, feel like everyone I know is moving too fast, you know, and eating on the run. And just the simple reminder about actually chewing food, you know?

Wynne Leon (28:44)
I need that one.

Vicki Atkinson (28:46)
Yeah, and my gosh, right? And so when I'm not looking at you, I promise. But I mean, we all do it in between Zoom meetings and other things. I know this isn't exactly following the script of questions. But given what we're talking about, why would you know that every ink and paper is really important to publishers? But why did you spend time talking about that? Why was that important?

Meg Bowman (29:11)
Digestive hygiene. Yeah. Yeah. Cause nobody talks about it. Yeah. That's not a thing. Again, it's the how, not the what it's the how, not the what. I have right at the moment, a lot of post-graduate interns that I have the amazing privilege to work with as they're getting your nutrition certification. And so frequently.

You know, we are trained in school to focus on what, what, what, what, Yeah. Nobody has bothered to ask, you know, are you eating at the kitchen sink every night? Are you going to eat and then laying down immediately? And that's what's giving you the reflux. No, but we, are not trained to ask about, do you feel like you have time to eat when you're eating? Does that feel like enough of a switch? Yeah.

to give your nervous system the ability to digest your food. You know, or are you trying to do 10,000 things while you're doing that? So it's again back, and I'm not a rock star at this. Let's all acknowledge that I ate dinner on the couch last night in five minutes, because I had therapy, right? But there is a balance between, you know, when that is exclusively the experience of food that you get.

Versus when that is a strategy to get through the minute. Yeah. Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (30:36)
Well, and we love that because, you know, I could say this may be another way, and I don't want to disparage anyone who's written lovely books about nutrition and tried to do the integrative part that you've done so well, but you don't put yourself on a pedestal in any way, you know, and so, you know, readers and listeners should, you know, buy the book for all kinds of reasons, not least of which is the taco recipe, right? It's like, you know,

we're joking before we hit record, you know, some nights are taco Tuesdays, right? And we, yeah.

And there's no shame in any of that. But you also included a mention to Leanne Brown's cookbook. And just the whole category, Wynne and I are often thinking about emergency snacks, food on the fly. She's a parent of two small ones. But you have to think about your own nutrition. And I love that idea about emergency snacks and simple meals and all of that. Just don't make it too complicated. Is that the message?

Meg Bowman (31:31)

doesn't have to be that complicated but but it becomes that complicated because our nervous systems are so taxed. Yeah. That's why I really feel like there are two separate approaches and one is building that toolkit for when we are underwater and the other is like let's look at what it would look like if we were to have the space and bandwidth to

actually eat in the way that we might choose. And those are two different things. had a client come in this week who life is really lifeing right now. Like it is, it is really lifeing on a lot of different fronts. And we went back to what do you have in your kitchen? How can we make meals from that? What are your emergency door dash orders? Do we have an order in your...

meal delivery, like your grocery delivery stuff that's ready to go. What are you going to eat tonight? What are you going to eat tomorrow morning? Like it just has to become very different because the goal when we're not feeling safe, the goal is to feel safe, not to be perfect.

Wynne Leon (32:41)

Mm-hmm.

Vicki Atkinson (32:43)

Right.

And safe is just a big hug, right? It's just a big hug.

Wynne Leon (32:47)

We provide so much research resources information and encouragement in this book. One of the things is your figs protocol. Food, inflammation, gut stress figs. Can you tell us about that protocol and.

Meg Bowman (33:04)

Yeah, so I want to make sure people understand when I say protocol, I am not talking about, know, everybody that has depression gets the same protocol. Everybody who has trauma gets the same protocol. When I talk about a protocol, I'm really talking about the way that I teach my postgraduate interns to analyze and assess what they need to do. So

what are some of the factors that might affect somebody's mental health based on the food they have access to?

Vicki Atkinson (33:23)

Yeah.

Meg Bowman (33:32)

What are some of the factors based on their inflammatory load, which is highly influenced by the trauma they've experienced and are experiencing? Like, is there anything that we can do in the gut to send more messages of safety? Because in a lot of ways, the gut is the canary in the coal mine. You see so many kids who, ~ I have a tummy ache. That's anxiety.

Vicki Atkinson (33:56)

Yeah.

Meg Bowman (33:57)

And then the stress piece, what can we do to that? Where are our opportunities? And so that kind of protocol gave me a way to help interns understand, know, when we look at the landscape, how can we choose an approach for somebody? And I'm hoping that it'll resonate with people because it's not a prescriptive for four weeks, you're going to eat this way. It's like, we're going to build a toolkit.

Wynne Leon (34:24)

It's just a framework.

Vicki Atkinson (34:25)

Yeah. Yeah. Well, it really jumped out at when and I both, because it's just, you can wrap your arms around it. Like you said, as a parent, I was thinking about it immediately for a couple that I'm assisting with some elder care issues, right? It's just, it's across the lifespan, you know, it's very applicable. Wow. Well, Meg.

One of the concluding things that you wrote among many things that will isolate on this, wrote toward the end of the book on page 298. I, you know, I might sniff a little and get a little bit of a tear even now. It's just super powerful, but it speaks to, I think you'll have to tell us, but Wynne and I felt like it spoke to what your goals were, right? And kind of your heart coming through, but you wrote, you're not broken. You're not behind. You're already on your way home to yourself.

like, that's so beautiful, right? And that the journey is the reader's journey. It's, you know, it, yeah, but tell us, you know, now that you're on the other side of this, what has all of this, you know, meant to you? And how are you doing with all the promotion? And yeah, we're just excited for you. What comes next?

Meg Bowman (35:40)

Yeah, it has been a really, really interesting process as I step back kind of as the observer, right? And I think about how I really wanted to create some openness, you know, in my writing for people to encounter this in a new way. And in a lot of ways that has also created openness for me. I've, once the writing process got done, I started taking storytelling classes. I started taking

creative writing classes, which I've never taken. I was an English major, it was like, you know, let's analyze Jane Eyre. It wasn't creative writing. I made an Etsy shop for t-shirts that's called Regulate This. So it's all the funny sayings that I come across, you know? So I'm just having, in a lot of ways, it kind of cracked open that creative spark in me having the best time.

Vicki Atkinson (36:36)

Is that spawned from bravery? you think is that where it comes that now you realize, you know that accomplishment because it had to be hard to pick and choose what to put in the book and make it true to you.

Meg Bowman (36:48)

It was so hard. went through three complete drafts that were completely different. What? It was incredibly difficult. And I really started in a place that was very kind of what do people want to hear? And then the second one, I was pretty angry. ~ my gosh. The third one, I finally was like, you know what? I kind of don't care. I'm going to say what I want to say. And I think this season of life has really

opened that up for me and made it possible in ways that I haven't felt possible in previous decades. Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (37:25)

that. When that is like talk about, you know, burying the lead we did there, we should have asked you that question at the beginning that that's such a resonant thought about, you know, you were writing what you thought the reader wanted to hear. And you pulled back and then you're honked off at yourself, right? Why did I do that? But maybe you had to get there to create, you know,

Meg Bowman (37:49)

This 100 % it was in many ways kind of, didn't share a lot of my own trauma stories in the book. Yeah. Having to go through and rewrite and rewrite people's experiences. You know, the clients that I've been in the trenches with, and we've been kind of going through it together. Not that I'm experiencing it, but I'm experiencing it through them and with them. You know, it has definitely been this process of just kind of processing my own stuff on a very different

level than I've ever had the opportunity to do before. Yeah.

Wynne Leon (38:23)

Well, Vicki and I are huge fans of writing for wellness. So you've just really talked about that. But the other thing that really struck me in this book was what not to do is about how we can be kind with other people and not shaming them in their, yeah, but they should be eating journey. you have a great example from your cousin, And Sam was dying from cancer and people would say,

Meg Bowman (38:48)

Thank

Vicki Atkinson (38:48)

Yeah.

Wynne Leon (38:53)

you shouldn't eat that because he has cancer and... It's just... That's just not what we should need to do.

Meg Bowman (39:00)

It was really, it was shocking and it happened even before this was years before I went back to school and did this career change. So I was still working in marketing at that time, but it struck me when somebody mentioned like they were going, he, his cancer had come back. He was in remission. came, it came back. He was 11, I think at this point. And, so they were saying that they were going out to his favorite fast food restaurant to eat.

And somebody was somebody said something about you shouldn't do that. That's why he's not healing. I mean, it was it was not great. And I had such a visceral reaction to that. And it really when I started, you know, doing this as a career, that was a huge cornerstone for me about the different

roles that food plays in people's lives. I think Abby just summed it up brilliantly. So I was pleased to use her words. But really just, we have to remove the shame about it. That's a cornerstone. And it's not something I see super frequently.

Wynne Leon (40:10)

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That's what's so good about this book is that it not only helps us think about our trauma and food and nutrition, but also about that ability to be kind in how other people are doing this. It isn't just a one size fit all experience. And I love what you say, which is food is never just about food. It's often a reflection of a deeper need for safety, stability and ventilate regulation.

And we do that in relationship and we can provide that to other people as well.

Meg Bowman (40:44)

Absolutely. Yeah, that neutrality, you know, every once in a while, I, I will lose my poker face in a client session. Yeah, you get some good ones. ~ But but really, it is about it is about the story that the nervous system is telling, right? It's it's about the emotion. It's not about the food. So if we can just kind of get to that place, I think it's a

better, kinder place for all of us.

Vicki Atkinson (41:16)

Well, and we know so many people that are really interested in mindfulness, you know, and like when said wellness overall, but I think one of the things that you're doing to really put a spotlight on the importance of nutrition and gut health and really understanding the nervous system is that there isn't really a particular audience for this book. If you're human, you ought read it. You're really ought read it, right? Because there will be takeaways, I think, for people.

whether you're in a caregiving mode or you're just trying to live your best life or shed some things from the past maybe that haven't worked well. So we're so grateful to you and we're so excited. October 28th, it'll be available. Pre-orders are available in all the right places right now.

Wynne Leon (42:02)

Do

Vicki Atkinson (42:02)

But would you like to have a last word, Meg?

Meg Bowman (42:04)

Well, I just thank you both. think you both are just stunning at projecting ventral regulation. I really appreciate that about you both. What would be the last word? I think it would be just an invitation to think that maybe food and your relationship with food can be a little bit different than it is right now.

And see how that feels like there's there's an invite to shaking it up a little bit and playing a little bit with it and seeing how that feels both physically and kind of emotionally. Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (42:42)

There you go again, accessible. Thank you.

Wynne Leon (42:48)

rich and wonderful conversation. Thank you.

Vicki Atkinson (42:51)

Thank much.

Thank you.

Wynne Leon (42:53)

Thank you for listening. Our music was written for us by the incredible duo of Jack Canfora and Rob Koenig. For show notes and more great inspiration see avitiva.com A-V-I-T-I-V-A.com.

Meg Bowman (43:08)

you