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DR. KEESHA EWERS: Welcome to the Women's Vitality Summit: Caring For Yourself, Body And Soul. This is your host, Dr. Keesha Ewers, and I'm very blessed and excited to be interviewing Dr. Deanna Minich today for the Summit.

She's an internationally recognized health expert with more than 20 years of experience in nutrition, mind/body health and functional medicine. Dr. Minich holds a Masters and Doctorate degree in nutrition and has lectured extensively throughout the world on health topics, teaching both patients and health professionals about nutrition.

Currently, she is Faculty for the Institute for Functional Medicine and the University of Western States. Her passion is bringing forth a whole-self approach to nourishment and bridging the gap between science, soul, and the art of medicine. She's written several books. Her latest is Whole Detox: A 21 Day Personalized Program to Break Through Barriers in Every Area Of Your Life. Welcome to the Summit Dr. Minich.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Hi, thank you for having me as part of this incredible themed Women's Vitality Summit. This is really a fantastic endeavor. So thanks. Glad to be here.

DR. KEESHA : I'm excited. Your wisdom is a powerful asset to all the information that our listeners are hearing. Fifty people around the Summit, coming from heart, mind, spirit, body, and their story. Of course, you and I both know how important it is not to try and separate those like we do in Western medicine.

I always start with the word vitality and remind people that, of course, this is your life juice, it's your passion, it's your joy, it's the life force that runs through you, your motivation, your desires for doing what you love. If you're lacking in vitality, then all of that drains out. I think of it as like the plug being pulled out of the bottom of a bathtub.

I've seen a lot of women in my office over the last 30 years that I've been in medicine who are lacking vitality. I always start with this question to all of our experts, Dr. Minich, and that is what do you see as one of the primary drainers of vitality in women of our era?

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Not being who we are. Truly, not being who we are, not being authentic and true in our choices. When we start signing up for things that we don't really want to do, we do things half-heartedly. We say yes when we should have said no. We are doing depleting tasks rather than nourishing ones. I think that strips away at our vitality.

If we were really congruent, and if we were really authentically aligned to who we are at our core, we would actually feel revitalized and invigorated by that. That's why we're here. Every soul has its true

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calling, right? When we tap into that, it provides the electricity to really do what we need to do in our everyday lives.

I feel like when people are doing things that they really shouldn't be doing, or don't want to be doing, this just drains them. It's almost like a vampire. All of these things are just taking away one's life force.

DR. KEESHA : I couldn't agree more. I think so often we compare ourselves to each other as women and say "She's doing this, so I ought to be able to do this" instead of really saying "I am my own unique being. My own genetics. My own life purpose. My own set of body parts. My own story from what's gone on in my life."

We just don't take into account that we're not supposed to be reflections of men, and we're not supposed to be reflections of other women. We are our own unique gift to this world. I love how you put that, about being authentic to that gift that you are to the world.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: It's so true. It actually aligns in the chakra system to the throat chakra which is all about truth. Another feature of this system, which very much aligns to what we were just talking about, is being unique and really embracing one's uniqueness. Knowing that there's abundance of uniqueness on the planet. It's all for a good reason and great purpose.

When we look at something and when we start getting into the comparison mode, this really chisels away at the brilliance of our own uniqueness. It's almost like we get into this game of another depletion activity. Somebody was just telling me this story a couple of days ago about a swimmer. You think you're doing a good job. You're under the water, you're swimming, you're doing your twists and going back and forth. All of a sudden you see the person next to you is out pacing you. You've got to stay in your lane.

I believe Brene Brown had told that story, or somebody had mentioned that you stay with your own energy. Otherwise, essentially back to the theme of vitality, every time we get into that mode of competition or comparison, it's taking away from our vitality. It's taking away from our authentic, unique self. That's really what we're here to celebrate.

I think that there's this theme in the 21st century of being vulnerable, being who we are, and I think that the more that people step out onto that river and just put their toe in, and get a little bit wet, and feel the essence of the movement of what it feels like to be authentic, it will just bring back so much energy. It's very liberating for many people.

DR. KEESHA : That's very beautifully put. Your new book is Whole Detox, and I'm also certified in functional medicine, so I know your approach is from that same space where there's no separation

between heart, mind, body, spirit, story, and how our body is going to digest everything. I think we often approach digestion from a standpoint of just food. Food's so important. Food and spirit is something you've been linking for years. We'll talk about that.

I love the framework of understanding digestion as everything. That you don't just get exposed to BPA and plastic as a toxic exposure or mercury and fish from the ocean as a toxic exposure. That you're also digesting your thoughts, your beliefs, your feelings, your experiences. Of course, this is an Ayurvedic perspective too. I think it's very powerful.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: It's so interesting because one of the trending topics these days is the gut. We're hearing so much about the microbiome and leaky gut and everywhere I turn I feel like we've entered the age of the gut. Symbolically to me, because I always like to read things symbolically, and on a more of a metaphorical level, this certainly does tell me that we're in this seat of the solar plexus in terms of society.

We're really looking at digestion in the mechanical sense of the body, in the physical sense, but we're also looking at the alchemical transformation of the things that we're taking in to our psyche. This could be thoughts, it could be conversations, it could be a movie that we just saw. It's almost like the question that you just asked: how am I digesting my life, my thoughts, all of these things?

When somebody comes to me and complains of indigestion, bloating or any type of gastrointestinal complaint, at the underbelly of all of that, I'm also going to be asking questions about stress and overwhelm. Where are you taxing your reserves? For many people, I think that they lose their vitality because they're so on overdrive. They're so into perfectionism. They're so into their opinions. All of this stuff takes energy.

I can remember from years ago Carolyn Mase talked about how we have 100 coins of energy. What are you going to do with that energy? Are you going to put some of those coins into the past and have your mind be really captured by thoughts of what happened to you back then? Or are you going to have some of your coins in the future? How many of your coins are you going to have in the present moment?

Right before we jumped on this webinar and started this conversation, I was writing a whole piece about the mind and how we're so sucked into these negative thoughts that we have. This is consuming us. These thoughts, they tend to recycle. They tend to block us. I have seen so many people eat a really healthy diet. They're doing all the right things because mentally, they've digested these different dietary approaches, and they decided to embark upon them. They started eating all of these different foods, really good, healthy foods. Maybe they improved somewhat, but they don't improve 100%.

So then we have to ask the question, back to your original point, of what are we not digesting? What is there left to transform? I think we really do need to look at that symbolically.

DR. KEESHA : I couldn't agree more. I've spoken a little bit on this Summit about Ayurvedic medicine, the sister science of yoga, and how they talk about disease progression coming in six stages. We don't really notice an imbalance has progressed that far into our tissue until we're around stage 3 or 4. Western medicine will start to identify the imbalance at around stage 5 when there's an actual disease diagnostic code that goes with it.

If we think about that, then we have this understanding that each of those tissue layers that the imbalance is moving into – there are seven different tissue layers – and as it moves deeper and deeper, is all about the digestion of your thoughts, your experiences, and your food. If that digestion happens in a healthy way, the next tissue layer grows in a healthy way. There's no imbalance and so it has to be in all of the different areas, all the way throughout those seven tissue layers. You break down the way you see all of this in seven systems, that you call full spectrum health. I'd love for you to talk a little bit about that. I love frameworks that help people really understand information that's kind of complicated in a very simple way.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: There is something about this magic number seven, right? Seven tissues.

I work with the seven systems of health which is based on the chakra system. Essentially it is a framework. It's an operating system for trying to figure out where one has imbalances. Where are they losing their energy? Speaking about digestion, when you eat a meal, do you feel energized or depleted? Even paying attention and being aware in those moments.

The seven systems are all color coded. Just very simply, I'll just take them in a very basic level, and then you can ask me questions if you want to go deeper into them. I do think that we're much more complex than mind, body, spirit. I think that we talk about mind, body, spirit within functional medicine as kind of a catch-all, but that needs some delineation, and so my interpretation and my delineation, what I've chosen as my framework, is this seven system framework.

The first system is what I call the root. It's the color red and it aligns to the physical body and physical existence. The second system is what I call the flow, and it aligns to the color orange. It's everything emotional about us; our creative expression. We can get into more of these, but let's just go through them all quickly. The third one is what I call the fire. It's the color yellow, and it's all about thoughts and transformation. The fourth one is what I call the love, and it's the color green. It aligns to how we give and receive love. The fifth one is what I call the truth. It's the color aquamarine, and it is how we speak our truth in the world. It's one of my favorites. We already spoke about it, actually. The sixth one is the color indigo, and it's what I call the insight. This is about intellect and intuition. The last one is

the seventh, and it is the color white, or in some cases I use lavender, because white doesn't always show when I'm showing these concepts. So it's white-lavender, and called the spirit. It's all about our spiritual selves; our non-physical selves.

In the book that I wrote called Whole Detox is a questionnaire where people can assess where they net out on each of these because, we're a complex being, often times we need some navigation map to tell us what needs improvement. Maybe it's not just the diet. Maybe there's something underneath that is really changing us at the physical level. It could be something like our intuition that needs to be looked at, or how are we giving and receiving love? Are we giving ourselves enough love? There could be some things, again as I say, in the underbelly of all of the activity, the root of why certain things percolate on up and manifest.

DR. KEESHA : I think this is really important because your answers to the questionnaire will change maybe from month to month, depending on what's going on in your life and what you're working with and maybe stressed out about or excited about or where your integration process is.

I think that as we move through the seven different systems, doing so fluidly, now the anti-aging rhetoric is all about resilience. I say resiliency is really where true health comes from; being able to navigate those with ease and flexibility. Sometimes that doesn't happen. We get stuck in some area, don't we?

DR. DEANNA MINICH: We do! I'm actually glad that you mentioned that. I'd like to talk a little bit about that successful aging idea and resilience, if you're willing to go into that. I think that that's something important.

DR. KEESHA : I brought it up because I think that it's very interesting.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Okay. I have some neurons going in my mind. Back then, I think it was 2011, I did a whole speaking circuit on what I called Successful Aging. I thought about the patients that I had who I would consider successful agers. Then I also looked at the scientific literature on what makes people age successfully. What I found was that it was the element of fluidity. When I looked at the brain, what I would see would be literature on what they call neuronal plasticity. This is the idea that our neurons are plastic, they're communicating, and the more that we get them communicating together, and those synapses firing, the better off our cognition.

The second system I was looking at was the heart. What I found was that there was this concept of heart rate variability; that the heart beats like a metronome, going back and forth, back and forth. With every beat, there are actually these beat to beat variations that occur based on the resilience of the heart.

Heart Math: this is a company and also educational institute that has done a lot of this research on the heart. They have found this word, coherence, where our heart is synced up with our brain and then our gut. Everything is all connected. When we look at the gut, back to where we started off, talking about digestion, there is this term, metabolic flexibility. As we get older, what tends to happen is our metabolic cycles may shift, where we're very efficient at burning certain macronutrients and not so efficient at burning others. Typically what happens is we lose the capacity to burn carbohydrates. Our carbohydrate fat switching mechanism starts to change. I think in general we have a deluge of carbohydrates. Our body becomes less and less resilient in that way.

The essence of aging – and I choose to refrain from using anti-aging and to talk about successful aging – is to really look at how much flow and fluidity do we have within our brain, within our heart, within our guts, even when things happen to us, because one of the signs that we know that we're aging is being prone to stress. Quite honestly, it's just a fact. The more that we come up against things, and the more apt we are to change, and not really knowing what to do with stressful events, this tosses us into a tizzy and we become very chaotic in our thinking and all of that stress cascades. This is something that we really want to be in the flow on. It's so important but it's so hard to master something like that. We're in such a structured environment.

DR. KEESHA : It's interesting to talk about heart rate variability and coherence with Heart Math. They're an amazing company. Heart Math is a great book, *The Heart Math Solution*, for learning how your perceptions of your stress actually instigate the whole neurotransmitter cascade that comes from your messenger chemicals in your brain and tells the body what to do next.

The idea behind that being if you feel like you're a zebra being chased by a lion, and you're about to be dinner, then your hormones will respond accordingly. Danger mode or survival mode – which means you're not going to have anything left over for sex, no sexual desire. You're not going to have anything left over to actually stop and have a bowel movement. You won't be able to digest anything: your experiences, your feelings, your beliefs, or your food, because everything is put on hold that has to do with the feed and breathe side of the nervous system, the parasympathetic. Everything is in survival mode or fight-or-flight.

So often in our culture, that achievement orientation is what is celebrated. We're rewarded for being in this kind of high alert at all times.

Robert Sapolsky actually talked about this in *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*. He says a zebra will run like mad from a lion. Then after the lioness takes down the weakest and the slowest in the herd and starts eating the zebra, the rest of the herd will go a few hundred yards away. Then their heart rate comes back to normal and they are able to feed again. They're totally fine because they biologically

know that this lioness and her pride are actually going to be pretty good for about a week. There is this understanding that they're not in danger anymore.

We don't have that anymore. It seems like that's where we're not coherent, or we're not resilient. Our stress response system turns on and it stays on. It's harder to navigate these seven systems that you talked about when you're in that fight-or-flight space.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: The base system is the root. That's where the adrenal glands live within this framework. It's very suiting that that is the first system to address because I do believe that there is a sequence, a flow of how things need to be stacked up. Of course, that can be personalized to the patient, but I think in general there's a way of establishing certain things in the body in relationship to health.

One of the things with stress, I'm glad that you're bringing this up, because this really robs us of our vitality. I often refer to stress when I'm doing the whole detox programs as the big hairy monster toxin. Nobody thinks of stress as a toxin. We think of heavy metals or persistent organic pollutants, or Round Up. It's always out there. We're not focused on the inside and all of the internally generated toxins that we're creating.

This, first and foremost, is really essential because we can become a completely different person under the face of stress. Our body is going to function differently, our mind is going to think differently, we're going to be emoting differently, we're going to make different decisions. These choices can ultimately fuel our future outcome and just create more stress.

Within the root system of health, it's really important to focus on the adrenals. In fact, I've done this questionnaire that I have in the book with over, I think we're at about 2,500 people now. Just looking at the research on where are people most imbalanced, the root to the fire, this root system of the adrenals tends to come out time and time again. People are just not comfortable in their bodies for various reasons. Whether there are safety concerns, or they don't feel supported by their communities and tribes and they feel like they've been criticized or traumatized in some way.

I just recently went to a practitioner, just out of curiosity. He does interpretive body work. I really feel like the body needs to speak. A lot of what his work is around is looking at how you hold your body. How you walk. How you talk. What do you look like. Your body is constantly speaking. If we were connected into our bodies and really got grounded in them in the way of being really present, really centered, it's so much easier, I think, to deal with what's coming to us in the moment. Then we don't get as wired and stressed. We actually retain our vitality much greater.

DR. KEESHA : I couldn't agree more. It's so true.

I've also met a lot of people that are working on their spirituality. Yogis or meditators come and see me, people from the Ayurvedic medicine world, a lot of people that are really focused on that upper layer, the crown chakra, and working on receiving information from the divine, and keeping themselves centered with that. They're so ungrounded. It's almost as if there's this huge vortex of energy up at the top of their system and no anchoring at the bottom.

It can be the opposite, too, right? Where they're so parasympathetic toned. A lot of times we're very toned in our sympathetic nervous system, but we haven't really learned how to take our parasympathetic nervous system to the gym. These people, that's what they do all day. They spend all their time in that space and aren't that motivated, and are very, very ungrounded. So this balance becomes so important.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: It does. In fact, I remember having a spiritual teacher some time ago who talked about all the spiritual type of people who aren't very grounded. They have difficulty manifesting, this is living on a physical plane. There are certain principles and laws of this world that we live in. Your body is a gift. It's a vehicle to help you to do what you need to do, and we learn through the body. I've actually been that kind of spiritual person you're describing.

DR. KEESHA : Me too.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Daydreaming, out of my body. Not giving attention to my body. Not really caring about it, and almost despising it. Really going through a lot of body hatred.

I remember when I was a teenager having eating disorders. Binging and overeating, and just really being out of touch with my body. As I've gotten older, really realizing the wisdom of the body, I feel like the body takes a backseat in medicine. It's just the receiver. The brain gets all this attention, right?

If you look at some of the really interesting new literature coming out, there's this term called symbolic disease. It's not just the mind that has influence over our being, it's what our body is doing. Our body is such a great messenger in so many ways that it's picking up at the symbolic level what's happening for us. This is in medical case reports, talking about feeling protection, and creating more tissue.

There are so many different correlates here that we can go by, but I'm so glad that you mentioned this idea of the body with vitality because I think some people think that they can just go on a mountaintop and just meditate themselves into vitality. Perhaps a certain percentage of them can, where they feel really vital, connected, and spiritually inclined.

I think that we're missing out on this physical existence, you know? Sure, we're physical, but we're spiritual beings. We've got this physical body. So it's the marriage of the two that I think really brings us into that place of personal power.

DR. KEESHA : I agree. When I see a disconnect from any of the systems with one another, the whole idea is to then create a collaborative partnership between all your parts and all your systems, because you are meant to be an integrated being. Not separate systems. Whether it's your spirit, or one chakra over another, or anything like that. I see people reach their true potential in all aspects of their life when they're fully integrated. That means you can't have your brain bopping your body over the head and pulling it around behind you by the hair. It can't be the bully. You have to be in collaborative partnership with your body. That means loving your body, appreciating your body. Every morning, waking up and saying "Wow! I'm so grateful. I get to use these feet to stand up on. I get to brush these teeth. I have these eyes and I get to see the world" and really having that deep gratitude and appreciation brings you more fully and presently into your life with your body.

I see it as a sex therapist too. You would know this, how disconnected people can get from their bodies, and that word you used, despised – "I even despised my body" you said. I see that with women that are not in touch with their sensuality and their sexuality. That always causes a great deal of sadness in me. I'm always all about "Okay, let's bring that in. Bring that forward, because this is a gift of your body. You are a spirit having a human experience, but have the human experience, right? Be in your body, and have it. You're here to do it."

DR. DEANNA MINICH: I agree. I think that there's a lot of guilt and shame around that, and that's why for many people, it could be connected to trauma and a lot of rude issues.

It's so funny that it's actually a learning process to be the sensory beings that we are. For me personally, I have a little bit of a story around this for myself, and what has happened just in my own health journey.

For several years, especially in my 20s, I was really into the mind. I was going to school. I did one degree after another non-stop. I valued so much the mind and logic and rational thinking and science. I also recognized that there was this right brain spiritual side to myself, and I did cultivate that a bit with spiritual teachers.

When it came time to deal with some of my own health issues that were coming up, I took a very left brain approach. I was very logical. I did nutrition. I did all of these things. In a way, it was such a methodical, out-of-my-body experience in order to help me heal. It only went so far.

I noticed that when I did get into the more goopy, chaotic, flowing, sensual aspects of my being, I started painting. I started painting when I was in my late 20s and I don't know what it was fueled by. I think a number of different things: mental/emotional things, some physical complaints I had, I don't know. For me it was just an escape, I couldn't even intellectualize it. I started painting all of these wildly, vividly colored paintings. I started even seeing people as colors. I would meet people and I'm like "Oh that person's such a blue." For some people who really inspired me, I went and I painted them. I painted them in these colors.

There is this element of creativity that I think keeps us in the flow and does keep us vital. I always feel like when I am engaged in that creative pursuit of, it's almost like no mind, no thought. When I'm painting, I'm really messy. I'm not my structured, organized self. I'm wearing torn-up clothing. I'm getting paint all over the place. I'm in the moment and there's something so juicy about that. To me, it's such a very sense-oriented experience. Oftentimes what I'll do is I'll just put the paint brush down and I'll use my fingers. I have a couple of paintings where I just felt so in touch with the paint and with the image and what I was doing. I'm not a trained artist. I'm not a person that does any kind of detailed sketches. My paintings are really raw, and spiraled, and organic, and very vivid. I would use my hands when I would paint. I felt like that painting was me and I was the painting. It was this really great exchange.

I love what you're saying about the sensual worlds, that we've got an amazing set of senses. It's like this palette that we can choose from at any time. Lately, my thing has been smells. I'm just really tapped into smells. I'm a very visual person, but I really do think that our vitality speaks to us through these different conduits of our senses. So it's fun.

DR. KEESHA : What you're speaking to is the last half of what the Summit title is. Women's Vitality: Caring For Yourself, Body and Soul. You're actually bridging that right and that left side of the brain. What are some self-care activities that you can do to achieve that? Painting is a great one that you're saying: it feeds me, I can become the painting, the painting is me. That's a full bodied, full sensual, full everything experience. Of course it regenerates you. It would be a battery recharge to be able to experience it in that way. What are some other ways you use, Deanna, to recharge yourself?

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Me personally, or just for people?

DR. KEESHA : Self-care for you.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Being that I am a foodie, making a good meal. I just did this last night. When I have the time to be expansive, and really create a meal, to me it's like artistry. I really do get into it. I know a number of people probably listening probably get into that one too. It's almost like "Okay, I've got these things to work with. What can I create?"

I love the food side of it. In fact, I'll take this food theme a little bit further. I got into this thing of mandalas. I have mandalas all over the house. I had this insight about making some food mandalas, and then in the true mandala way of where you destroy the mandala and you let it go, you're eating it. You make something out of it.

I'm going to see my niece, who's only two and a half in a couple of weeks, and I thought I'm going to make a really fun food mandala with her. Then we're going to put it all in the blender and make a rainbow smoothie. It's the colors. It's the tactile sensations of making a mandala. It gets pretty messy when you're using food, or paint.

Other things that I would do, like last night, I'm even thinking about what I do in my downtime, I listen to music. I get really transported into other places when I'm listening to music that I really like. It's like it opens up. In fact there's been research on it showing that music unifies the right and the left hemispheres of the brain. The creative meets the logical. Music is very great for people that are very logical, because it's so systems and structure based. Yet it's threaded with creative flow. It's such a beautiful gift that we've been given to voice and sing and dance and play music. If that speaks to anybody, that's definitely one that could just be a short burst.

I think a lot of moms that I've worked with get in this mindset of thinking they have to do self-care in a certain way. "If I can't do it 100% then I'm not going to do it at all. My kids require the time from me. My husband does. Everybody else does." No! You could be in your car listening to a three minute Duran Duran song that you loved. Whatever it is: just really tapping into that and being in it when you're there, I think that's really the key, whatever it is.

DR. KEESHA : That's mine too, music. I think it's really, really powerful.

In Ayurveda there are seven different layers in your pulse. I was in India one year and it was stinking hot. It was so hot. Me, the body type that I am, doesn't do so well with heat. I shaved off my hair at that time to get rid of attachment to anything external. So I was bald. I was white. I was in the hot sun. My pulse was telling me that my heat internally was rising. So I thought "Okay, I'm going to treat myself like a science fair experiment" which is what I tell all my students in my Academy for Integrated Medicine Health Coaching Program Video. Treat yourself like a science experiment.

I took my composition journal out and started to write. I checked my pulse for everything. Everything I ate. I used all of the knowledge I knew for what was cooling and what was soothing. You know, Deanna, music was the thing that got me balanced faster than anything. It was a very specific piece of music that was on my iPod. I would put it on and my pulse would instantly go into complete and total balance. That was Nadam Kaur's album called Grace. For me, that was it. It was the thing.

It's been over 10 years ago since I did this little science fair project of myself. Now I still use it if I can feel myself starting to get imbalanced. I'll put that music on and faster than you can say snap, it's back in balance again. It's amazing. Music is powerful.

Different kinds of music will actually affect your pulse differently. It's fascinating if you just check in with yourself and listen. I have this mantra about life now: if you listen, breathe and love, you've got it figured out. Listening to your body is really important. Just check in and ask "What are all my systems saying right now to this music? What is my response to it?" Use it. Music is the same as eating wonderful food, as medicine. I love that you said that. It's such a powerful tool.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: It's so healing to so many. Absolutely.

DR. KEESHA : It's easy.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Yeah, it's easy. It's so accessible, especially in this day and age. For others, it might be comedy too, things to make them laugh.

DR. KEESHA : Right.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: I was walking in this city not too long ago, just noticing people's expressions. I feel like people are just so tense about so many things. It shows in their face. You try smiling and there's no return. No reciprocation. If they would just let themselves be in the moment, just be in that spirit of laughter. It's almost like vitality is really becoming our childlike selves, without the naiveté and perhaps all the shadow of a child, but really the gentleness, the play factor.

DR. KEESHA : Curiosity.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Curiosity! Yeah. Imagination. I think is so important for that. I grew up in a very strict household. I grew up in Chicago, in the city. My dad was a police officer. My mom was a health nut who was really strict about her eating and what we did. She was very faith oriented, very strong in her faith. I went to Catholic school, I wore a uniform, and there was all this strictness. There was this tone of seriousness as I was growing up, this serious strictness around even food.

I think that in part, I believe that everything unfolds in the way that it needs to in order for one to grow. I'm glad that everything happened as it did. Looking back now, it's like, maybe I needed more giggling. We have to make up for all those giggles and get in my play mode as an adult. I think that's really important. We lose our sense of play which is why I love being with my two and a half year old niece because she reminds me of what's important. Being in the moment, being a bit messy.

My sister will even send me pictures of her now playing with her food. We were always told "Don't play with your food at the table." Now she's doing just the opposite. She lets her play with her food. It's so fun. We can experience this in a way that nourishes us.

DR. KEESHA : Yes. I was just looking at a saying that I had on a t-shirt in my clinic for a long time, and it says 'God does not subtract from your life the time spent loving'. I couldn't agree with you more. That is one of the most healing things that you can do. Of course, there's a ton of science to support that. Laughing is really, really important. I went and saw Captain Fantastic last night.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Oh my gosh, I did too! I love that movie!

DR. KEESHA : Such a good movie!

DR. DEANNA MINICH: I love that. I'm exploding right now. I absolutely love it. My husband and I are still talking about it and it's been a week since I've seen it.

DR. KEESHA : We just saw it last night and it moved us so deeply. Of course, it illustrates extremes on health and the school system, and society in general, and our cultural expression of our stories.

Also, I was the only one in the theater laughing for most of the time. I just think, let yourself laugh. Let yourself go. This is a really important part of your daily routine. If you feel that it's funny, don't worry about what other people are thinking around you. I have four children and they'll always say "Mom, I can find you anywhere in a crowded building because you'll laugh and I'll know right where you are." I think, well that's a good thing.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Yeah. That's lovely. I can see why you would laugh at that movie. There were many outrageous, fun things.

DR. KEESHA : It's just very ironic, and the very awkward moments that came up are when one culture meets another and how funny it was to watch that unfold. Great movie, by the way. I know we're not doing a movie review summit, but for everybody listening, great movie. Great conversations are given from that movie.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: If you do want to laugh, or just look at life in a different way, especially when everything just gets so heavy in the political season. I almost have to refrain from being on Facebook and other social media, just to kind of move away from the seriousness, the heaviness, a lot of the emotional tension that's out there.

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My husband's an acupuncturist. I'm not so good at this, but he is so good at getting people to laugh at what's going on for them. Just to see it in more of a lighthearted way and not to get too stuck into the seriousness. I like to go the symbolic route which may or may not be funny. That's usually my approach. He takes the laughter and the lighthearted and turns it on its head, whatever might be happening.

Maybe just one of the takeaways from this is really about bringing in more joy. If it's hard for you to do that, I have found that two things help bring me into more of a playful mode. Number one is kids, number two is animals.

DR. KEESHA : Go to the dog park.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Take a minute to watch a crazy cat video on YouTube. If that doesn't get you to laugh, then we'd better think of some other strategies! My sister even sent one this morning. I thought of you; all these crazy things with dogs and cats. It was hilarious. That stuff has me chuckling all the time.

DR. KEESHA : You're right. I have a intake form that is about 15 pages long. It's very complete. At the end of it, I have some essay type of questions, and one of the things I ask is what brings you joy. I had a guy write "Going to the dog park." I thought that's such a great strategy for finding joy. Go see the unconditional, boundless, endless joy that dogs bring to this planet.

Alright, well we are running out of time. We have your bonus material on your speaker's page, on the Women's Vitality Summit website. Your information is there for people to reach out to you and find what you're up to. I would love for you to share one last pearl of wisdom that you'd like all of our listeners to know?

DR. DEANNA MINICH: I associate vitality with color. Being that I'm so tapped into the rainbow colors, what I would say is look at color throughout your life, symbolically and literally. Look at the colors you're wearing.

One of the fun things that I've done is segmented my wardrobe in rainbow colors so I can see what I have too few of, too much of. Bringing in colors into your home space is another great way to do it if you're feeling like you need to get juiced and back into the groove of living life and feeling really motivated.

Changing the color of a room can really change psychology. There have been studies showing that even healing rates have changed based on the surroundings that we have. The colors on the wall, if we have a window or not. What I would say to you in closing is to live a colorful life. That means bringing in more color. Do that in whatever way feels right for you. Really connect into that as much as you can.

DR. KEESHA : Beautiful. The ancient system that is a sister science of Ayurveda and yoga called Vastu actually talks about the impact of color on all of your energy systems and how to arrange it in your house. V-A-S-T-U – if anyone wants to look deeply into that, about where to put different colors in your house to affect different outcomes. It's science. There's a science behind it. It's very neat. It's thousands of years old. It's kind of fun. My husband and I studied it a long time ago, and by darn, it works. Quite impactful. Thank you Dr. Minich.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: They had time back then, didn't they?

DR. KEESHA : Yeah, they had time. They had time to sit around and watch and observe the interactions of humans in their environment and with each other, the stars, the planets. They wrote about it over a period of several hundred years. They didn't have asphalt, they didn't have EMF, and cell towers, and the kind of schedule we hold today. There's a lot to be said of that time to quietly observe, that we don't give ourselves, which is another self-care activity right there.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: You've got it.

DR. KEESHA : Thank you so much for sharing just a partial bit of your wisdom with us over this time for the Summit, Dr. Minich.

DR. DEANNA MINICH: Oh, it's been my pleasure. Again, this is such a great, juicy topic, so I hope that people have some things to take away and put into motion and start living more colorfully. Thank you.

DR. KEESHA : Me too. Remember everybody to live, love, laugh, keep on learning, and be the most fabulous version of yourself. Have a great day, until next time.