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**DR. KEESHA EWERS:** Welcome back to the Woman's Vitality Summit: Caring for Yourself, Body and Soul. This is Dr. Keesha Ewers and I'm very excited to be interviewing Leanne Ely today.

Her media experience includes multi-city book tours, satellite media tours, QVC several times, as well as guesting on several national television shows including HGTV's *Simple Solutions*, ABC Family's *Living the Life*, Ivanhoe's *Smart Woman*, and many others.

She's also taught cooking classes all over the country for Bloomingdale's.

She's a seasoned radio personality. Her own radio show *Heart of a Woman* aired during drive time in two major California markets. Her current show *Saving Dinner with the Dinner Diva* airs each Wednesday afternoon on BlogTalkRadio.com and is one of the top 10 shows on that channel.

Leanne's weekly syndicated newspaper column *The Dinner Diva* goes out to over 250 newspapers nationwide and in Canada. Welcome to the Summit Leanne.

**LEANNE ELY:** Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be here Keesha.

**DR. KEESHA:** You know, I always start the interview, with all the experts that have been on this Summit, with kind of a reminder to ourselves that vitality means our life force, our juice, our passion, our energy.

I see - and this is what drove me to do the Summit in the first place - a lot of women that are lacking vitality in our era right now. I always start by asking my guests, what do you see as one of the primary drainers of women's vitality today?

**LEANNE ELY:** Well, I think there are several things, but stress and sleep would be a couple of them. I think sleep is something that we do not give enough credit to, getting good, quality sleep. That's the restorative time that we have for both body and soul, I think, and our minds. Being able to really get into some quality sleep is critical.

**DR. KEESHA:** In this frenetic time that we live in - I always say we're trying to bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan, and look hot at the same time – who doesn't take that 10:00pm to 2:00am time to finish up a project on the computer?

We think that we can get away with that, but we can't, and that's what's so fascinating; people think that they can catch up on sleep later, and that's actually not true. You really need to have that regenerative time every single night.



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**LEANNE ELY:** I totally agree.

**DR. KEESHA:** One of the things that you do is you are talking to women of the world about taking back dinner, right? Really having that time around the table again. I would love to hear your story about what brought you to this.

**LEANNE ELY:** Well, it was kind of a long story, but it's so funny how when you look back, you can see the stepping stones that brought you to this one place.

Saving dinner was my big idea - nobody was in the menu planning space before I started it - so it was my big idea. It just seemed like such a solution. I started with both parents who cooked. My mother was a great home cook. My father was an Englishman who thought that he was the next Galloping Gourmet and he loved to blow up the kitchen with all kinds of exotic spices and foods, and what have you, but I do give him a lot of credit for my palette, because I would eat anything because of his crazy cooking.

Later on, when I was going to college and I was a waitress on the side, together with another waitress we started a catering business. It blew up; it was very large and very busy in Southern California.

I learned how to cook. When I didn't know how to do something, I'd ask chefs that I knew "Show me how to do a pan reduction, show me how to make hollandaise, show me how to do all these different things." So I learned elbow to elbow with some of the best chefs in Southern California teaching me when I'd ask them questions.

It's funny, people love to be recognized for their expertise, and they're happy to show you if you're willing to learn. I learned that lesson very efficiently in a kitchen in Southern California.

Then I got married, had children, sold my business, and decided I wanted to write about food.

Once you start feeding children, all bets are off, everything's different. I knew that I wanted to have children that were good, healthy eaters and not picky like I was as a kid. I was picky about vegetables; I wouldn't eat them. I'd eat frogs' legs that my dad would make, but I wouldn't eat vegetables because they were often overcooked.

So the vegetable thing was really important; that they would be good veggie eaters. I managed to raise them to eat vegetables and, of course, I ate them in pregnancy and what have you, because it was part of my goal to raise kids that would eat vegetables. They were such fantastic eaters.

I wrote a little book called *Healthy Foods Your Kids Will Love* and sold it out of the back of my car to all these health food stores all over Southern California; taking my expertise in cooking



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and translating that for family meals and getting children to eat vegetables. That little book was bought by a small publisher and that started my whole publishing career.

Later I got an agent, I got an advance and got real books published with a real publisher. My journey was just going crazy. So that's how it started.

**DR. KEESHA:** That's a great story, and of course, wherever we are today, we've had many steps to get here.

I love the fact that you said there's a problem: kids are not really prone to vegetables in our culture, so here's a way that I can help other parents do that. Now you're doing it in this big way with FlyLady.net, you do a food for thought column for that. You're in many, many magazines and newspapers around the country and you do keynote addresses talking about this.

Isn't it interesting that we have to talk about eating healthy, that we have to talk about joining together around the dinner table again? We need to talk about the fact that food doesn't come out of packages, it comes from your garden, right? Hunting. I think that this is a really fascinating conversation to be having in an age when microwaves and fast food became more of the norm.

**LEANNE ELY:** Agreed.

**DR. KEESHA:** One of the things that you say is that we need to be more in touch with our food. I think that's really important from a lot of different perspectives. I'd love to have you talk a little bit about that.

**LEANNE ELY:** We do need to be more in touch with our food. We need to understand that eggs don't just come from cartons, they actually come from chickens, and a happy chicken produces a good, clean egg.

We need to understand about agricultural practices. We need to understand about animal husbandry; all of these things go together so that we can understand what good, clean food is about. I think it's really important that children know that especially.

It was really interesting, I'm sure you saw it, but Jamie Oliver did a food revolution thing and he went into a classroom full of kindergarteners, held up the tomato and asked the kids "What is this?" And they didn't know. They knew what ketchup was. They knew what chicken fingers were. They knew all this other stuff.

So when I say we need to get in touch with food, not only do we have to get in touch with the origins of our food and understand the big picture analysis of where it all comes from and how it fits in and why we, as omnivores, need to be eating all these different things, we also need to be



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looking at clean practices so that we're eating clean and feeding our bodies, and our little people - that we're blessed enough to have in our lives - that we're feeding them well.

The other thing is there's a whole disconnect with cooking and family life, and sitting at the table, that I think is really damaging. Not only to our bodies because we're not getting the nutrition that we should be getting, but damaging to our psyches.

Because of that disconnect, we don't have the security that we should have as families. Maybe security's the wrong word. My family had its issues - I think we all come from dysfunctional families, we're all dysfunctional, aren't we? - and I had some insecurities along the way when I was growing up.

I felt secure though, when I was sitting at the family dinner table. I sat in my place. That was my chair and I belonged there. That sense of belonging is so important and it says so much.

The family stops, the phones are down, the TV, hopefully, is off, and the faces that you're staring at are each other's and not the face of the telephone and not the screen of a TV. When you do this and you have this regular connection, and it's a ritual and a tradition in your home to do these different things, then I think the world starts to change a little bit and things just naturally become upheld: nutrition, nurture, kindness, manners, just everything.

To me, it's just such a remarkable thing to get the family back to the dinner table. There are so many good components.

**DR. KEESHA:** I learned something when my children were very small. I have four children that are ranging now in ages 19 to 27. When they were young, I had read that the Kennedys used to have these great dinner table discussions and they had to bring some political issue to the table to debate. I thought what a great idea to really engage your family in this way.

When I looked back at my own upbringing, a lot of the things that I learned that were real life learning - not memorizing fractions, elemental tables, conjugating verbs, like I was learning in school - a lot of my real life learning happened at my dinner table when I was growing up because we would have those kinds of discussions.

I went through different phases with my children where they needed to learn a poem; they would recite it at the table and then we'd talk about it and pull it apart and really examine it. We'd have these great discussions.

I remember my youngest daughter would sometimes be lost by some of the political discussions that would happen at the table. One day - she had just started her senior year of high school or her freshman year of college - and she was contributing in a really intelligent way to the

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conversation, and I looked at her and I said "Well, welcome to the dinner table." She was so excited.

I think there's a youngest syndrome that happens anyway. When the whole family goes to a theme park and you have to measure up to the yardstick to see if you can get on the ride, she was always the one that couldn't go and everyone else could. So she had a syndrome anyway. But it was like the dinner table was her coming of age. It was the arrival into adulthood in our family, for her.

We have a family book club, we really have these great discussions, and it's where we talk about humanity and we talk about animal husbandry and we talk about where our food comes from and what's going on in the world, and I think where else can you find that in your family? There's no other room in the house besides the dining room with a table where everyone gathers around it; it's like King Arthur and the Round Table. You can really bring yourself and show up as a member of a tribe in that way, in a family, and I just love what you're doing with that.

**LEANNE ELY:** I think, too, one of my goals is for families to see their dinner table as sort of a sacred place. Not just to throw the book bags and the mail and everything on it, but keep it beautiful. Put some flowers or a bowl of fruit in the middle of the table and honor it because this is where we sit as a family.

If you think about it, it's the only time that we're really all together. Otherwise, everybody's scattered all over the place. And this is the point of recognizing the tribe. I like that you said that, that's really important. Anyway, that's my soapbox about the family dinner table.

**DR. KEESHA:** I just love it, and I have to tell a funny story that was dinner table awkwardness once when my kids were younger. You could ask any question at our dinner table, everything was discussed at our dinner table. Being a sexologist, you can imagine that some of the discussions were discussing human sexuality. And I'm in medicine too, so poop is discussed - what a normal bowel movement looks like - when we're eating! All these things are just open game at the dinner table in my household.

So, my youngest that I was just talking about, she was in third grade and she had a little friend over and we were all at the dinner table. My son, who's the oldest, he's got Asperger's Syndrome, which is on the autism spectrum, and he's not able to socially read things very well. He's used to open season, he's got the family norm going on, and he says "Mom, how come sometimes when people have orgasms, they like to be hit over the head with a hammer?" And I just looked at him and I thought "I love this guy."

I love that our family can actually have that kind of discussion and I can start talking about fetishes, and when people get wounded in their love-mapping as they're growing up, and things that happen. But I said "Cameron, this isn't really the time that we can talk about this. I



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understand that normally this is, but let's shelve this and I'll talk to you about it later tonight, okay?" It was just very funny.

I start thinking of this friend of my daughter's and the discussion on the playground the next day at the elementary school. That's how comfortable the dinner table was in my house.

One of the other things I love right now is that biodynamic farming is becoming a known word in our culture. In the 1930s it was known that this is how you have good, diverse flora in the soil. It means you have better mineralization of your produce. There's crop rotation and the animals go and rotate through those fields also. Now we're starting to talk about that again, and that's another really fantastic way, I think, of helping our children.

Like you said, there are kids that don't even know what a tomato is. So find a biodynamic farm, if you're lucky enough to have one near you. I'm in the Seattle area, so I'm going to do a shout-out to Jubilee Farms; they do tours. I drove out there and said "Tell me about your farm."

I heard about this at an IFM conference, a speaker mentioned this farm. It's a few miles away from me, it took a little drive, but it was so worth it to go and see this farmer who started out as an engineer and decided that he really wanted to engineer in a way that was natural and get healthier produce. So he went back to the 1930s way of animal husbandry and farming. Do you have anything like that around you, Leanne?

**LEANNE ELY:** Oh yeah. We have tons of stuff like that. There's farming everywhere. One of my favorite places is LocalHarvest.org. You can go there and find out what's close by to you so you can always find something that's honoring the planet.

I was in France last October - it was a wonderful trip. I went to the South of France and Provence and the wine country and Burgundy, and everything out there. One of the tours that I went on explained basically how they do it. It's all biodynamic farming; it's law in France. They rotate crops. They're going toward more and more organic. It's not 100% yet, but they're going there.

There are other countries that have done it as well. When we were on a Sun-Tour going past all these beautiful fields, I made a comment to the tour guide, and I said "All these gorgeous fields" and she said "Next year it will be a different crop." They rotate the crops. That's law.

They also rest the fields every third year and do a cover crop, which is the way it's supposed to be done, and that's how you keep the soil rich and the minerals in there. Standard agriculture strips our food of its minerals.

Years ago, I saw an agricultural magazine that showed a difference between a tomato in the 1950s and a tomato in the 1990s. In the 1990s the nutrient values were so different; much more nutritious in the 50s than in the 90s, so there you go. That just explains it.



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I was going to say all things are not created equal, but especially when you're looking at historical data like that. It just blows me away.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yes, that and the fact that our serving size has changed. You can look at the 50s and you can look at today and what's plated in a restaurant and what's plated in dining room tables across America - so much larger.

Then, of course, our sugar uptake; it's no wonder we have more autoimmune disease, more cardiovascular disease, more cancer, more autism, more ADHD with all these preservatives that are being pumped into our food.

Really being in touch with your food, I think, is a call to action that I really applaud you for getting out there, because it's on so many different levels that this is relevant.

People will ask me in my clinical practice "Why do you say that I need to take a mineral supplement for the rest of my life?" I give them this information that we just talked about. The fact of the matter is our soil is stripped of minerals, so even though I'm telling you to eat 9-12 cups of vegetables of different colors a day, you're not getting the kind of nutritional support from those vegetables that you're supposed to be getting. That's so unfortunate.

**LEANNE ELY:** It really is. One of the things that I do, of course, is take supplements. We have a product ourselves called Just Juiced Greens and I use that religiously every single day. While my nutrition is excellent, I don't trust that it's enough, and I need to take those supplements.

What our bodies require so we can have not just good health - not just standard 'blood test is right on the verge of being abnormal' - but really substantially optimal health requires not just the good nutrition, but management of stress and sleep and all the rest of it.

I just really believe that we have to take things into our own hands. Most doctors - you, of course, are not considered most doctors - but most doctors are just not going to look at the quality of nutrition and deem you as being sick; borderline healthy is just fine. That's basically the standard of practice.

**DR. KEESHA:** Well, we're looking to make sure you don't have disease and then calling it good without realizing that there's a huge space between thriving and being in a state of a diagnosable disease. It's crazy.

I want to bring one more perspective into getting in touch with your food from an Ayurvedic medicine perspective, which is another framework that I use in my own world for myself and in





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my clinical practice. Ayurveda is the sister science of yoga. It's 10,000 years old, and one of the things they say is that digestion starts the minute you look at your food.

Think about that when you cut a lemon or a lime; you can even think about a lemon and your digestion starts with that salivary release in your mouth, and you start getting ready for it. I had to swallow as I was talking about it. That's something that we also don't think about, that as you look at your food, you're getting ready for digestion.

But if you're looking at your computer screen or you're looking at the road because you're driving and you're eating, you're actually missing out on first step right there, and I think that that's also something that we really miss out on when we're not completely present and in touch with our food.

The other thing they say - and they eat with their hands - is that sensory relationship with your food is the second part of getting ready for digestion; when you touch your food. When we pull our food out of a package, or we order it in a restaurant, it comes to us in a Styrofoam container. We're missing out on the second part.

Our digestive system is the root of all health and all disease and we're not priming it properly with these very simple things. It seems so extraordinarily easy to think about looking at your food and being present with it, but we just really are not in touch with our food on so many levels.

**LEANNE ELY:** It's so true. It's one of the reasons that I so enjoy going to the local farmer's market. This year I haven't done it, but usually every year I'll have something growing that I'm growing myself. Being in touch with food on that level and supporting a local community, a local farmer, especially a local farmer that's doing things right and honoring to the planet and to our bodies, that kind of thing, I think, takes it even a step further. We have an opportunity to procure the food or maybe grow it ourselves.

So we procure the food, then we bring it home and then we have the opportunity to cook it and to prepare something lovely for our family, and put all the love and the spices and the herbs and everything into it. There is a whole ritual involved, there's a big strain of continuity there. All of that, I think, is what brings us to the place of great acceptance for our family and gratitude, and you really are feeding souls as well as filling their little tummies, you know?

**DR. KEESHA:** Right. The spiritual aspect of food I don't think can be over-emphasized. That's another thing in India. Right now we have some kitchen herbs on my deck that I love to plant every spring and I walk out every day and I snip them.

In India when they plant them, they have a mantra that's called the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra. It's just the fact that there's this thought process that when I plant my food, I bless it. I ask for God to



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generate the seed into something that will have the harvest. I ask for the earth to be fed by whatever it is that I'm doing. You're putting yourself there, being very present.

You don't have to chant the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra if you're not from India and you don't know it. But what about just being very thoughtful and very present with that idea of bringing in this spiritual aspect of food as life and the planet that we live on, being in touch with the cosmos and this whole great circle of interdependence, this web of life that we live in, and acknowledging and honoring it.

When I take groups to Peru, they're taught that Pachamama is the earth and is to be held as sacred and thanked for every meal. A little bit of drink is poured out onto the ground before you drink as you say thank you to the earth for providing for you. It's like this constant state of gratitude and appreciation and knowing that this is a sacred circle of life.

Again, when you're not completely present with everything you do, then we miss out on that, and I think that's a huge part of what's going on right now in our culture. In functional medicine, we call a lot of food 'bad' instead of this very sacred feeding of our bodies and nourishing ourselves in very unique and individual ways. Maybe your food doesn't react well with you, but it's not bad, right?

**LEANNE ELY:** Yeah, I agree. I agree with you whole-heartedly.

**DR. KEESHA:** Let's go back to your story. You said that you were helping people feed their children well. How do you help picky eaters eat in a really well nourished way?

**LEANNE ELY:** The thing is, with us, it comes back to the whole attitude of we tried it, it didn't work. We can't be so willing to give up on something so important as training a child's palette, because that's really what it is.

We're born with a distinct inclination toward sweet - breast milk is sweet - but we also need to train for other things. We need to train for sour and salty and different flavors, different textures, and all of that. Children don't just naturally come to that place, they need to be trained in that way and shown: "This is zucchini. We're going to be eating zucchini tonight."

I'm not a believer in forcing children to eat, I mean, I know I was one of the kids that sat at the table with the cold cauliflower until about 9:00pm trying to hide it in my glass of milk, or give it to the dog, or hide it in a napkin. That was child rearing back in the day, not like that anymore. But I believe that children need to be exposed many, many different times. As a matter of fact, studies have shown it takes sometimes six to eight exposures before the child will finally like something or even try it.

We don't need to be jerks about it, but at the same time, we also need to be understanding of how important this is. I consider being a good eater and being a healthy eater - which means consuming a lot of vegetables and eating them without crying - to be as important as teaching your child to floss their teeth. If you want to keep your teeth, you floss them. If you want to keep your health, you have to eat good, healthy food. You can't do that with dumbed-down food like dinosaur chicken nuggets, French fries, hotdogs and corndogs and all the other crap that's out there.

Kids will eat what you give them. You can't expect that suddenly one day, they're just going to wake up and say "You know what, I'm going to eat salmon" or "I want that spinach." That's not going to happen. They're going to be eating chicken nuggets at their prom and they're going to be crummy eaters, and it's a huge disservice to them.

Honestly, you've seen it. We have such a huge problem with children and obesity and the situation is that they're just starving. When I see a child who is obese, I see a child who is starving; they haven't had any nutrition.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yes, the over-fed, under-nourished health problem of the standard American diet. What you say is so true and we can see this in other cultures.

Again, I'm going to return to Ayurveda. There are six tastes: bitter, sour, astringent, salty, sweet and pungent. I see children when I travel to India, Peru, Bali, just recently, Sri Lanka - kids are eating their greens because it's part of what they're raised on. They had breast milk too, and it was sweet, but mom was eating bitters. Bitters are a normal part of these cultures that I just mentioned. Mom was eating those things and so it turns out that those are the foods that are being introduced after breast milk is done, and they get their palette tuned at that time.

When we're feeding them pureed sweet potatoes and pureed meat, and that's all that they're getting, if they spit out the green beans - and I'm only telling you my own experience with my own children - then you try it again.

That's great advice, what you just said. Don't just give up and say "Well, they hate this, so I'm not going to fight with them about it." Just offer it and put it away if they don't like it. Then offer it again and put it away if they don't like it. And offer it again

**LEANNE ELY:** Eventually they will give in. A long time ago, I used to be a nutritional counselor, and families were my specialties. I would hear this from the mom "I'm just absolutely frustrated beyond belief." I remember one mom in particular. We were talking about it and the little boy who was there said "She just screams at me about it." And I thought for a long time that we can turn them off to vegetables on so many different levels, and that's one more way.

When we, as the mom, come about that and teach them this is what we do and this is how we eat, and say "Okay, if you're not going to eat it this time, I understand. But you're five years old, so five little bites. Let's just go ahead with that." We can make some kind of negotiation a little bit with them.

We have to remember too, that we are the parent. We're the older one. We're the ones with the wisdom and the knowledge, and we can't let these little people boss us around and tell us what they're not going to do. Their health is at stake.

They are making building blocks for their body and what are the materials that they're using to do it? Is it a Happy Meal or are they learning to eat their greens like the kids in India are? That sounds a little dramatic, but honestly, it's not.

Kids' diseases like cancer and all kinds of things are on the rise. I have a girlfriend in her 60s and she was an RN forever. She said in the 1970s there were no children's hospitals. They didn't have children's hospitals; they didn't know how to deal with children's things. There was the occasional child getting cancer here and there, but now it's epidemic. Now there are gigantic children's hospitals.

What is going on? We have to look, obviously, at our environment. We also have to look at what is going into their bodies. If you go into a grocery store, we know what's going into their bodies. We know what people are buying because they keep making the same crap over and over again, this dumbed-down food. We think that they're not capable of having an expanded palette. We are doing them a disservice. We are not honoring our children, I think, by continuing to do this.

There's another soapbox, there you go.

**DR. KEESHA:** Well, I think it's an important one. I'm going to return back to the very first thing that we talked about with vitality, and you know how I asked you that question about what you see is one of the biggest drainers of women's vitality today, a lot of people have answered that question by saying that we're overscheduled.

Dr. Elisa Song, who's on this Summit - she's a functional medicine and integrative medicine pediatrician - answered that way and said our children are also overscheduled. So we don't have the patience that it takes to do what you were just talking about: offering it again, having a negotiation, talking about why, talking about how. Saying "I'm going to make sure that you have a healthy body and you and I are a team in this. I love you and this is your life. I want you to have the very best life that you can and here's how we start. This is the foundation building block: a healthy body and a healthy mind, because food and mood go together."

If you've overscheduled your kid and you're overscheduled, then you don't have the space for that negotiation. You don't have time to have patience, and so what do you do? You give in and



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do the drive-thru on the way to the soccer game, along with the crappy food that you pulled out of a package after the soccer game; food that came from Costco, which isn't real food.

So our kids are eating a lot in the car, or they're being told "Hurry, hurry, hurry, we have to get to here. Hurry and finish." I've been watching this and thinking this is madness. What are we teaching our little people about their food intake? Then I'll have moms in my clinic that say "I don't have time to be in the kitchen all the time - you're making me cook." So can you address that, Leanne, about the importance of cooking?

**LEANNE ELY:** Cooking is how we feed ourselves. We can't trust that to somebody else. We can't give that to a restaurant and ask them to do it.

I'm going to tell you that cooking, not only is it not brain surgery, it's quite simple; there are some quick and easy ways to be able to understand how to cook quickly and get things done. If you haven't been taught to cook, I'd be happy to teach you. It really isn't that difficult. It's very satisfying too, as a matter of fact.

When people say "I don't have time to cook" that's like saying "I don't have time to be healthy" because it is the very food that you put in your body that is the first cornerstone to health; building your healthy body by the food that you eat. You just have to know how to cook. You have to know how to pick food and prepare it so that you can feed the people that you're blessed to have in your life. It is just that simple.

**DR. KEESHA:** And yourself?

**LEANNE ELY:** There are times when we're all pushed, but there are so many different things that you can do. You just have to start looking at the colors of the rainbow when it comes to the greens and the oranges and the reds and the purples and all the other beautiful colors that you find in produce, mix that all up.

Cook that all separately, keep it in your refrigerator, bring it out, heat it up - Boom! You've got a good, easy meal that you can go to.

Cooking, in and of itself, is the one place where we are going to be able to turn our health around. Without cooking, we're asking somebody else, a complete stranger, to cook for us and to feed our family and to give them that nutrition.

I'm going to tell you right now: I don't care what restaurant it is under the sun, whether you go to a farm-to-table restaurant every single day, they are most likely not going to have the quality of ingredients that you will have. By the way, if you are doing that, you are one rich person because that's expensive!

They're not going to have that good olive oil. They're not going to have the grass-fed butter. They're not going to have the things that you would have for your family. So the only way I know how to do it, unless you're extremely wealthy, is to learn how to cook. End of story. It's important.

**DR. KEESHA:** It really is. It doesn't have to be difficult, that's the thing. As we're talking, I'm nursing down my green drink that I have in the mornings; tons of vegetables.

I want my patients and myself to have between 9-12 cups of vegetables a day. I have about six of those in the morning to start my day, and it's fantastic, because I can juice some of the greens, and I get a lot of those, and I make that as a base for a smoothie. I put some more in there and some ginger, and I can do it that way really fast.

If I have the time to do a big brunch for my family, then I do that, but I can make a smoothie this way. Or I can take a whole bunch of vegetables, all these wonderful root vegetables or cauliflower and broccoli and an onion, chop them up and put them on a roasting pan with olive oil and sea salt. I can roast those in a matter of minutes and have roasted vegetables with a very easy meat dish that I put in my crockpot for the day.

It doesn't have to take a ton of time, but it does take some planning, some intention and some value placed on it as you are worthy and deserving of this kind of love and nutrition. That's what's important. You need to know that you're deserving of that and then put your effort toward it.

**LEANNE ELY:** It's the ultimate self-care, I think. It is.

**DR. KEESHA:** This is the Caring for Yourself, Body and Soul part of the Summit. I always ask my experts what do you do to care for yourself? What are your daily self-care things Leanne? We're going to put food at the top of the list. What else do you do?

**LEANNE ELY:** I do several things. I have an autoimmune disease, I have Hashimoto's. It is now in remission, maybe I'm cured, I don't know, but it certainly took its toll on my life and my health. The quality of everything was just in the pits.

But coming back from that, the things that I do: I have a green smoothie every single morning with so many things. I put turmeric root in there, I put a little organic lemon rind in there, fiber, chia seeds, frozen pineapple and frozen berries. I love the pineapple for the digestive stuff, that's really helpful, and a big handful of greens with some coconut milk. That's my smoothie. I'm sure I've missed something else, because it takes a village to make my smoothie - I'm serious - because there's so much in there. I do that every single morning.

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Occasionally, if I'm out somewhere and it's breakfast or it's some big brunch thing, sure, I'll go do that, but usually, every day, it's a great smoothie.

Then I go to do some physical exercise - barre is one my favorites that I do. I also like to do some burst training out in the driveway or whatever, lift little weights, some kind of exercise is important.

I get ready for bed at 9:00pm and by 9:30pm I'm winding down usually. Every once in a while I'm up, but my regular routine, my good routine, is that I'm in bed by 10:00pm, lights out. And I really like that. I feel like I get a really good night's sleep when I do that.

I drink a lot of water. I go to Massage Envy. I'm big on that. I have a massage once a month, sometimes twice a month if I feel like I need it. I'm really careful about the stress in my life.

The other thing is - even if I don't think I am in the leaky gut part of my life - I always act like I do have a leaky gut, so L-Glutamine is really important. So is the massage because stress helps to produce a leaky gut, as you well know.

So I'm really very, very careful about that and making sure that I get the proper amount of rest, that I'm well nourished with my friends and family and community, and it's just that simple. If I feel like something's off, I'll say I'm just going to take the rest of the afternoon off and go fix it: go and have a massage, go take a nap, do whatever it is that I need to do, because I'm guarding my health vigilantly to take care of myself.

**DR. KEESHA:** Now, some 20 years ago I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, and I had that cured within a year. I'm not saying remission because it's been 20 years since I had any sign of autoimmunity. My husband got his Hashimoto's cured also, many, many years ago.

For our listeners who are out there, autoimmune disease does not mean you have to have it for the rest of your life, unlike what conventional medicine says. It means you have to turn off this process.

Your immune system is attacking you, it's not a disease. Hashimoto's is not a disease of the thyroid at all. It's a disease of your gut. That's where your immune system is actually the most active, and so everyone with autoimmunity has leaky gut. Once you've had autoimmunity, you need to just say "I've got leaky gut for the rest of my life because it's fragile."

I call this the misery to motivation ratio. People have to get diagnosed with something before they'll actually guard their health. Like what you said "I guard my health vigilantly." Is that what you said? Did I hear that?

**LEANNE ELY:** Yes, you did.



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**DR. KEESHA:** I got goosebumps when I heard you say that because I would give a lot of money to hear every one of the people that I am in community with say that: I guard my health vigilantly. And not because I've had it taken away and now I understand it just from the front end.

It seems like we have to actually get to that point where we have Joseph Campbell's awakening, where we're knocked on the head harshly and we have to wake up and say "Okay, this is important. I'm going to heed the call."

**LEANNE ELY:** Yes. It's so funny because I have a little group of women in the *Saving Dinner* community, it's called Take Back Your Body. One of the things that I've noticed in there is that these are women who want to step up, who really want to make that declaration: "I'm going to take back my body!"

Taking back your body doesn't just mean you want to get into some size six jeans. It means you also want to take back your health. You take back your power and not just give it away to the world or give it away to crappy food, give it away to not exercising and everything.

The one thing that I have noticed, even in that group, which I would consider a high-level group, is that there is this propensity - and I think it's a human problem - of seeing how close to the line can we go? You know?

**DR. KEESHA:** Yeah.

**LEANNE ELY:** How much can I deal with?

**DR. KEESHA:** Flirting with it.

**LEANNE ELY:** Yeah. There's usually sugar involved - and we're all sugar addicts too. That's the other thing: we are all sugar addicts, whether we're practicing or not. I think one of the things we need to look at is the problem with sugar and what it does to our bodies and how it destroys our health and how it feeds disease.

**DR. KEESHA:** Couldn't agree more. Speaking as a recovering sugar addict who hasn't had it in years now, but definitely, it ran my life and I didn't even know it. I ran marathons to keep my weight under control so I could eat a brownie. Seems a little silly as I look back on it now, but you know.

**LEANNE ELY:** I did the same thing. I knew that I had a food sensitivity to dairy, and I knew that I had Hashimoto's and yet I was unwilling to give up cheese until I had this raging





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case of rosacea. So guess what? I lost the cheese, and guess what happened to my face? Clear. Bingo. The connection's there.

**DR. KEESHA:** You've lost a lot of weight too.

**LEANNE ELY:** Yeah, I have. I've lost 45 pounds.

**DR. KEESHA:** Congratulations.

**LEANNE ELY:** Thank you.

**DR. KEESHA:** Of course, this is not a vanity thing. This is where you take 45 pounds, stick it in a backpack and go hiking. You're going to see this is a weight thing on your body. This is not a vanity thing about the size of your jeans. This is actually what your body has to carry around with it as extra padding that it doesn't need. Extra fat holds toxins and hormones and all kinds of problems emerge from that. So I applaud you.

**LEANNE ELY:** Thank you. I feel like a new woman, and I look better than I did 10 years ago.

It's interesting too. You know how it is: women over 50, we get crazy about "Oh my gosh, here I am." But I'm thinking "Hey, here I am. I'm pretty proud of what I've accomplished and that's all due to the fact that I declared that I was going to take back my body, take back my health, and that I'm not going to allow anybody or anything to take it away from me."

**DR. KEESHA:** Amen, sister.

**LEANNE ELY:** That's cool.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yeah, I'm 51 and I look better and I have more energy and I feel like I'm living my life potential in a way that did not happen when I was 30, when I had rheumatoid arthritis.

I was headed fast towards a wheelchair and being an old lady at the age of 30. It's not about your chronological age. It's about how you're feeding yourself, how you're nourishing yourself, on all these levels: heart, mind, body and spirit.

**LEANNE ELY:** Amen.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yeah. Alright, I think that's a good place to end. Have you got one last pearl of wisdom that you would like to share with our listeners?



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**LEANNE ELY:** Yeah. I guess my last pearl would be just to appreciate and love your body and understand that most of us treat our cars better than we treat ourselves. We give our cars the proper fuel, we take it in for the proper maintenance, and we're really diligent to make sure that we're doing exactly right. We feed our animals well, we get the expensive food and we weigh and measure.

Yet with ourselves, we act like we're garbage pails sometimes. So I just want people to see the correlation: the fact that you can get another car, but you're never going to get another body. So take good care of yourself, and love yourself in a way that shows.

**DR. KEESHA:** Beautiful. So Leanne, we have got your contact information and bonus material on your speaker's page on [WomansVitalitySummit.com](http://WomansVitalitySummit.com), and I so deeply appreciate you sharing even just this tiny bit of wisdom in the short period of time that we've gotten to visit. Thank you so much.

**LEANNE ELY:** It's so great.

**DR. KEESHA:** Remember, everybody, to live, love, laugh, keep on learning, and be the most fabulous version of yourself, and until next time.