

Women's Vitality Summit

**Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Sherry Strong**

April 2017

**DR. KEESHA EWERS:** Welcome back to The Woman's Vitality Summit. You are here to care for yourself, body and soul. This is Dr. Keesha Ewers and today I have the pleasure of introducing you to Sherry Strong who 20 years ago was a sugar addict, twice her present size and she was sick and depressed and in pain and all of that changed when she got off of sugar. She's the author of *Return to Food: The Life-Changing Anti-Diet*, the founder of Return to Food Academy and Sweet Freedom Project.

Her most recent passion project is a summit that's going to run right after The Woman's Vitality Summit so you get to go from one incredible week of fantastic information from visionaries and thinkers around the world to another fantastic week. It's this week Freedom Summit and she also has an 8-week online program that helps people end sugar addiction for good. Welcome to the summit, Sherry. It's such a pleasure to have you here.

**SHERRY STRONG:** It's a pleasure to be here, Keesha.

**DR. KEESHA:** This subject is so important and I think it becomes very overwhelming to a lot of people when they start thinking about it. Sugar has so many different roles in people's lives, you always say, right reasons that we turn toward it and so I would love to hear first of all, I always start my summit interviews with what your definition of vitality is.

**SHERRY STRONG:** I think that vitality is the body's homeostasis, to be quite honest. A healthy body has lots of energy, it's alert. When you're vital you're thinking clearly, you're going to sleep easily, you're sleeping through the night, you're waking easily, you're waking refresh and you have a lot of energy to not just power through your workday but when your work day's done, you can still actually be present to make dinner, eat dinner and be present at the conversation and you have that. It's just I think it's about having all of your faculties and energy to live your best life.

**DR. KEESHA:** And so what do you think drains women's vitality in our era the most?

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**SHERRY STRONG:** Sorry.

**DR. KEESHA:** I love those background noises. Those are fantastic noises.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Can't believe it. That's a cat.

**DR. KEESHA:** Oh! I thought that was—yeah.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Sorry, that's an old cat.

**DR. KEESHA:** I thought it was a happy baby gurgling.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Oh, it's an old cat with arthritis waving.

**DR. KEESHA:** Oh, then that's not a happy thing.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Oh, I'm sorry I forgot the question.

**DR. KEESHA:** It's okay. So what do you think drains women's vitality?

**SHERRY STRONG:** Okay so the first thing I think is that in the 60s, we bought into this thing that we can do everything and we have to do everything and so what used to be the full-time job was taking care of the house and although that's not I'm not saying that's where we need to go back to. But there was a full-time person taking care of the house and the family and the food and all of that and then women went into the workforce and somehow, I don't know who sold them the idea whether it was themselves, their ego or the men's like okay, so this stuff still needs to be done and we thought we can do it all and there were commercials like, "I can bring home the bacon fried up in the pan and then I got lots of time for my man" and I'm like I don't know about you, but I think there's like 1 percent, less than 1 percent of women in the world who can do all of that and there are and they're happy. I've witnessed it but I think they're like a freak of nature.

So I think we're just trying to do too much and we're squeezing out that precious time of self-care which gives us our energy.

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**DR. KEESHA:** Good. I mean, I quote that all the time. I always we say women have painted themselves into a corner thinking that we can bring home the bacon fried up in a pan and look hot at the same time.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah.

**DR. KEESHA:** And that we put those expectations on ourselves. It's not they're outside influences that are doing that, it's us so I couldn't agree with you more and interestingly enough, I've done the summit twice now and I always ask this question of all of my experts and do you know that it's pretty much 99.9 percent of the time same answer.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Interesting.

**DR. KEESHA:** I think it is, too and we all are seeing it right. We all are witnessing at it for ourselves as women and then also the men that I've interviewed are seeing it in their partners and so it's everyone's aware of it now but it's the how, too and so what do we reach for when we're feeling low in vitality? We reach for caffeine and we reach for sugar and let's talk about how sugar drains your vitality.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Well, in nature it gave us energy but in nature if we had to work hard for it so there's always balance. We always work off what we got, it's how nature works and then as soon as we started to process sugar and make it cheap and readily available, we started eating it out of context of nature. So not only was it compositionalist; very different to anything you could get in nature, we had it in amounts we could never ever source ourselves in nature. So the combination of that basically sugar it floods the body and the organs can't deal with it. The pancreas is kind of the front defender of the body for sugar control and it just can't cope with it and now we're seeing that it's impacting every single organ in the body. So it's just it robs us of energy, it floods the system with something it can't cope, it makes the vital organs overwork, it creates what I call sugar erosion, it depletes nutrients from the systems, you don't even have the building blocks and working materials to help your body heal and it's highly addictive. So we go through this kind of slope and it's I often refer to it as an insatiable lover. That it's never enough, so you can have a small amount and it just increases the—

**DR. KEESHA:** The desire.

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**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah and then you can finish something that's particularly has refined sugar in it, you're just like okay, what's next and so your body is literally weakened on every physical level particularly by refined sugar.

**DR. KEESHA:** So in the 70s, we were told that fat was the enemy and so the food industry started taking fat out and replacing it with sugar and that of course, we see the outcome. That has not gone well over the last 40 years for our population as a whole, more obese, we have adult onset diabetes, it's being diagnosed in children. It's ridiculous out of control problem. We know now that sugar is 8 times more addictive than cocaine is, if it's offered to mice they will take sugar over cocaine even after they've been addicted to cocaine in the lab. So really, really insidious this problem. It's in our food supply in the form of high fructose corn syrup, beet sugar, cane sugar, brown rice syrup I mean, it's under so many names and then the food industry has got this really tricky way of labeling things now where you'll see the word sugar on the label, but then you're not looking at the word carbohydrate and so the formula we give to people is for every 4 grams of carbohydrate that's a teaspoon of sugar. You've got to do that math, right and so we have so much sugar that's coming into our systems in this day and age and as you said, it has all these ramifications. You get too much sugar, your insulin can't keep up with it you store as fat and so that's not the enemy. Sugar seems to be the thing that really after these 40 years of hindsight we can kind of go, "Oh, that was a mistake," right. So now we have all these sugar addicts on the planet and here you are and you were you said twice your size. I love to hear—I always like to hear the story of how people got to be where they are. So why don't you tell your story of how this came to be for you and then we're going to talk about some tips that we can give to our listeners about this issue that is so pervasive.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Cool. Well, I always like to clarify when I say I was twice my size, I wasn't 10 foot 4 and I haven't had a height reduction.

**DR. KEESHA:** Chopped off at the knees.

**SHERRY STRONG:** That's it, that's it. Yeah. And I remember the first time I realized I never had a problem being short, I'm 5 foot 2 and when I'm often interviewed people see me they're like, "Oh, where'd you go? I thought you were a

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tall person.” But I think I didn't have a height reduction and when I was 5 foot 2, it dawned on me in my 20s. If I was taller I could actually eat more and it would get distributed and I wouldn't have to. The weight thing wasn't a big of issue. But one of the good things I think about being 5 foot 2 is that I can't eat more because if I could I probably would and I've been worst health shape than I am.

So I grew up as a baby who was formula fed and I know this is a really emotional subject and I've been warned not to talk about this, but what a formula does because it's not natural and particularly in the 60s, it's refined oil, sugar, salt, grains and chemicals including MSG and there still are baby formulas that are made with these highly processed ingredients and it's completely different to breast milk.

**DR. KEESHA:** No, no, no, no. There are very few formulas that are not made with these ingredients. I mean I really want to clarify this. It's hard to find I just tried to find a commercial formula for a patient who had a baby that was just crawling with eczema and I could—she wanted a formula not a homemade one that we give out a recipe for in our clinic. But she wanted to be able to just take it—I don't know where there is one that doesn't have something or another that's not good for infant development. I want to clarify that and why were you warned not to talk about this? This is so important.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Well, I actually had one woman who said women will just attack you if you tell them that they're feeding their babies formula was not good for them.

**DR. KEESHA:** Well, okay so it's not. It's not good for them.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yes, it's not. I mean, in the 60s it was really bad and what it does, I believe baby formula does is set every child up for sugar addiction. You can get sugar addiction in the womb if your mother's a big sugar eater or is eating the white breads and stuff like that you could become addicted in the womb. But baby formula kind of cements that.

**DR. KEESHA:** We give them sugar water right after birth in the nursery, too. I used to work in the neonatal ICU and that's what we give them in a bottle in between feedings of sugar water.

**SHERRY STRONG:** It's crazy.

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**DR. KEESHA**

Oh my gosh!

**SHERRY STRONG:**

Yeah. So you start them off at the beginning as an addict and I was an addict right from birth and four children my mother had, I was the only sickly one and I was the only one that was bottle fed not breast fed. She was actually shamed by doctors and nurses in the hospital breastfeeding my sisters so when it came to me they had literally convinced her that this was far superior than breast milk and so she did that and I almost died like I was this really sickly child, colicky, cried constantly and it set me up for sugar addiction like right through my childhood.

I remember stealing things that had sugar in them and eating in secret that kind of thing. And although, I wasn't really a chunky child when I hit puberty it just all came out and I had massive sugar addiction. I had massive depression to the point of having suicidal thoughts. And I moved through that, moved through lots of different illnesses, always had terrible PMS and then I moved to Australia in 1989, went on a working holiday stayed 22 years and I was for the first time my life away from family and a support system of friends that I've grown up with and I started to eat sugar and then I became a chef.

So I had like this legal, professional reason for eating and I used to start off the morning with half a liter of Sara Lee chocolate ice cream and I didn't stop eating until I went to bed. And so I had those dark bags under my eyes like really, really dark and it wasn't like I was a chef and I was obese, twice my size but I was also a chef and I was seriously thin. So I was I would say I was borderline anorexic because sometimes when you get into the higher echelons of being a chef, it no longer becomes food and it plays a really kind of mind tricky game with you and I was eating a lot of sugar. Again same issue, same problem. The kind of the clincher for me was rolling over in bed one day and my stomach kind of followed, I was like okay, that's new. Two parts to me. And just reaching this threshold of feeling this is I have this amazing body. I knew I had an amazing body I was like I can feed it all this horrible food, drink and all these kinds of things and yet I'm still functioning. It's really it's quite extraordinary and I'm not doing it justice, I'm not honoring it and so over a long, slow period of time.

For me, it wasn't one thing it was not then I just turned my life around. It was a long slow process and I asked one of my best friends who's a psychologist, she has a PhD in psychology and I said, "Do you think people can really change?" and her observation from working with clients

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for many years is she said, "I do believe they can but it's a long series of painful decisions made over and over again." And I remember thinking okay, so for some people it's just that flick of the switch it's like that 1 percent of women who can do it all, fried up in the pan and have time for the man and be happy.

There are some people where it's just easy but I think for most of us and particularly if you've developed an emotional relationship with food and used it all of your life as a coping mechanism, it becomes a series of difficult decisions made easier each time you make it. I talk about strong choices for a strong life; you can spiral up walking up the hill making those traces to hike up the mountain. It becomes easier the more you get towards the top and weak choices for weak like you spiral down. It doesn't take much effort to make those choices like the easy choice I'll just go through the drive-thru but they actually make you weaker and it makes it harder to actually make those decisions that give you a strong life.

**DR. KEESHA**

That's really a great point and I do want to return back to formula. I was also a formula baby and bottle fed and had my own sugar addiction, but it wasn't I don't think from formula or sugar water. I mean, we get set up for that but it turns on a gene inside of us if you already are predisposed to addiction. So that's when it becomes a series of hard choices made minute after minute after minute is if it's an actual addiction pattern that is genetically pre-disposed. And my grandmother used to talk about making sure you eat your hot fudge sundae before you have dinner just in case you die before the dinner's served. Because chocolate thing in my family right so it's part of our cultural story and so when I got that as an adult, I went this is a family addiction that we have going here. Then now we have genetic testing you can actually do.

I did my own genetic testing I found that I don't do dopamine well. so dopamine is the neurotransmitter that helps you to be able to find society and motivation and contentment and sexual desire and not to have to look outside for all of those things which a lot of times we can find very temporarily with sugar before we crash. So that's a really interesting—I just don't want to set this up as if this happened then this is going to happen to you and this is going to be the outcome because everyone's so different. You and I have a very similar story and it's important that people understand that you can intervene in that at any second.



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**SHERRY STRONG:** Absolutely.

**DR. KEESHA:** It's absolutely possible, it doesn't matter your genetics, it doesn't matter anything. You get to make the choice to then switch that genetic down.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah.

**DR. KEESHA:** So that's really important.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Well, I often say to people that you are stronger than sugar but sugar trumps your physiology. In the sense that if you keep exposing yourself to it that the mental powers that you have to use to say no to it are greatly impaired.

**DR. KEESHA:** Well, there are all those little critters in your digestive system that if you get an overgrowth of yeast start small intestinal bacterial overgrowth or parasites, they like to eat sugar so and they outnumber us by 10 to 1. There are a hundred trillion of them and only one of ourselves and so of course, if they we'll eat now it's going to be a short change carbohydrate. And it's going to be very difficult for you to say no to them because they outnumber you so there's always that like what's your gut microbes doing and all those things. So it's such a complex thing and I just really appreciate that you're addressing that for women because this is a pervasive problem. So let's talk about what your 8-week program, I would really want to hear about that so people get an opportunity to investigate it.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Oh, thank you. I appreciate that. So the program is really about this dedicated to ending sugar addiction for good like the summit and I believe that sugar is made exactly like a drug. I noticed that when I was a chef in the early 90s and it impacts a body like a drug so it doesn't require a diet that's thousands of get over sugar programs that are diets that people are wondering why they're not successful with it. And a big part of that is because it requires a strategy and a big thing with drug addiction is most people aren't ready to give it up. I remember when I was confronted with it, I was like, "I don't have sugar addiction." I mean I like the idea of it, I don't like the reality of it and so the first part of the program is really to begin before you're ready.



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To start to set up the infrastructure that really helps you to get to the point where you're ready to give it up. And so it's part of that is recognizing how much sugar is actually in your system and in your life and start to identify it and it will blow you away, it will blow you away. I mean, a lot of people say, "Isn't it crazy they're putting sugar in savory items?" I think it's more crazy to put sugar into fruit. It is sugar, let's add some more sugar.

**DR. KEESHA:** Exactly.

**SHERRY STRONG:** They don't get it. So you need to identify where all that sugar is and then you need to start up to set up the infrastructure to enable you such it just becomes a very natural decision. Unlike alcohol or drugs where the decision to give up sugar is pretty obvious. It's like, "No, I'm going to wean myself off of it." You don't do that with sugar because it's everywhere and it's everything and it's a part of our social structure. I really believe in getting your system as strong as you can before you actually let go of that. Some people work really well with the cold turkey and I really encourage that because you must know yourself first of all. "To thine ownself be true," said Shakespearean. Eat nothing.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yeah.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Said is that we have to know ourselves and sometimes a system that's developed for one type of personality doesn't work for another personality. And so I like to work on concept of understanding yourself, understanding how sugar works in the body, understanding your physiology, how it interacts with that and then starting to engage in something I call hyper nourishment. And what I have discovered is I used the term hyper nourishment, I took it from the mathematical concept of hyper where it talks about four dimensions so I'm taking it and talking about the four quadrants of our life; the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical. And what I discovered with working with clients over many years is that I noticed there was always an underlying mental, emotional or spiritual kind of—

**DR. KEESHA:** Hallelujah! Yes, yes. That's my thinking, too. It has to be true.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah, that was driving the behaviors and what I noticed in each of those quadrants and some more than others as we needed to start to take

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stock of what toxic influences were wallowing in in our thoughts, our mental process, our relationships, those conversations, spiritually; where are we actually bringing in toxicity? We need to get rid of that and then we start to look at where are we just like malnourished in those areas and then how do we actually hyper nourish ourselves and that really kick it up a notch and find ways to eliminate the toxicity in those areas and bring in nourishing mental, emotional, spiritual experiences. And then what I found is that when I worked with people in that area, them taking the sugar out as well as nourishing themselves during that time became so much easier and they would walk into a pastry shop and go, "You know what I had tea with my girlfriend and the pastries it just wasn't talking to me, it was like I really don't want that because I don't want to feel that way. I know that feeling and I'm enjoying this feeling of really grounded, feeling vital" and "I know how that's going to impact that and the cascading effect that will come from that."

So yeah, we work on hyper nourishment and then we work on building community, the structure support system because a lot of times people will say, "Okay, I am giving up sugar and the whole family is going to give up sugar" and the whole family is like, "No, you're not taking my drugs away" and so they really need help and community. Because if your family's not into it and the other thing that can actually happen is you're like, "Okay, I'm giving up sugar and everyone's going to follow me" and you're so kind of almost this kind of fundamentalist religious approach to it that it puts people off.

**DR. KEESHA:** Right.

**SHERRY STRONG:** And so there's a way of actually doing it that really just inspires your family to do it and even if they're not kind of on board that, you have that community to kind of support, to definitely support you to go through it. And then we work on understanding food from a philosophical viewpoint. So I really believe that as brilliant and wonderful as all the science is around our food, I love it. I'm a geek but what I noticed when I was a Victorian chair of nutrition in Australia is that people are really confused with all the different messages and so I developed philosophy based on nature that are supported by science that help people relate to it naturally. So you're not having to count figures, you're not having to look at numbers and ratios, you get it intuitively. You understand and that's things like nature's principle, consumption concept, legal rescue,

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replaced principle so we cover those kinds of things and then it's about ongoing support and resources with food and recipes and getting to the kitchen and making it pleasurable and finding ways to resource all areas your life so you're really, it's set up to help you win around and win that sugar game.

**DR. KEESHA:** Are you familiar with Kathleen Desmaisons' book Potatoes Not Prosaic?

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yes, I am.

**DR. KEESHA:** So I read that back for the first time because I interviewed her on my radio show years ago. It's been at least 6 years ago and as I read that book, she had this little thing called the cookie test in it. Are you familiar with that?

**SHERRY STRONG:** I've forgotten. Tell me about it.

**DR. KEESHA:** Oh my gosh, it was so illuminating for me. So I read and she says okay, "Every time I give a talk in front of a large group of people I do this cookie test" and what it is that you think about for yourself, you're done with a hard day, you're leaving the office and you get in your car and you think, I just need a really lovely meal, a hot bath and bed and I can't wait, right. So on the way home you stop in to your favorite restaurant and you order your favorite meal. It's got all the wonderful things that you want clean protein, lots and lots of vegetables and you think oh, job well done, I feel great and I'm satisfied now I just need that bed. Pull into the driveway, get home, open the door and the smell of freshly-baked cookies wafts through the air and hits your senses. What do you do? And she said in that group of people that she's speaking to about half of them will laugh and the other half will look at the others and go, "What's so funny about that?" and she says those of you that are laughing know that the answer is it doesn't matter if you're full, you go have 6 cookies. They're fresh, they're out of the oven and boy, do they smell delicious and then the others are saying well, I'm just heading for bed. That's all I want and the cookies still doesn't even hardly do anything except register that they're cookies, right. So when I read that I of course laughed because it doesn't matter if you're full, you have a freshly-baked cookie. I mean, there's just nothing like it right and so I could even salivate thinking about it as I'm reading this passage in the book. So when I realized when I read through this

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book that I was an addict and that was, she goes on to talk about why I became a PhD in nutrition was because they had this drug and alcohol rehab program and all these people, she started looking to see if the recidivism rates were the same on a national average or better because she felt like their program was really, really good and that they could probably start saying that it's so much better than the national average. But when they looked it wasn't and the national average of keeping sober after a program like that is very dismal.

So she started calling people back in very curious about why they had come to this program and we're going back and then it started coming through in her interview process that they were replacing alcohol with sugar and so then she went back to school and started seeing that it was using these exact same pathways and so then she went oh, right.

So when I read that I said, "Oh my gosh, I'm a dry drunk" and I need to treat myself that way. So I went home and I told my kids if I were an alcoholic and I were coming home from work, you wouldn't have a chilled bottle of beer on the counter and I don't drink so ever wine, beer, nothing. My thing was sugar and so I always felt pretty good that I never had that whole alcohol urge, right. So I said, "You would never leave this open bottle of alcohol sitting there when I get home from work. You would honor and respect that mom's an alcoholic, we want to make sure that we support what's in the house," right. So I said, "How's this?" and I said, "Please treat it this way so no cookies cooling on the counter when I get home." My daughter loves to bake and I said, "Instead what I'll do is we can go out to a restaurant, you can order dessert if you wish and then I'll teach you all about what's going on when you order that dessert. I do assure you that will happen" and then it won't be in the house and we cleaned out our pantry and they agreed to that. And then we learned different ways of cooking that didn't require sugar so it was this evolution and my daughters and my sons came with me on. That was very neat so I think I didn't come home and start waving the flag and saying you have to follow me and I did say though please, I appealed to that idea that I'm an addict and I admit that I'm an addict and I will never be over my addiction like any alcoholic I'm always recovering. And it is true that now I can go into any place and I don't even see the sugary things and want them. So unlike maybe an alcoholic, I don't know but I only know my own experience and I know you can't get to that place where the pastries don't call your name anymore because your chemistry is balanced. I pay attention to my dopamine and I do things for it and all of that stuff like

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we've been talking about. You can get there but I think treating yourself like an alcoholic is actually a really great starting point.

**SHERRY STRONG:** I think you definitely have to acknowledge that you have that—well, I think depending on your physiology as some people are more addictive than others. But if you see it as a drug that's made in the same way as cocaine, you see that it lights up the brain's drug receptors. Consume a lot of cocaine and you start to see that it's in everything. I think there's two things going on like there's one to be that lead-in model as you were for your family, but also—I love there's a book by Kathie Lee, a parenting expert, who says who's in charge anyway. There's actually nothing wrong with not having sugar in your house.

**DR. KEESHA:** No, there's not and I actually feel good about that.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah and being a parent and saying, “Just say no,” It's a drug, right. There's alternative sweets as we all know, there's lovely things that we can have in our life but there's absolutely no need for any human body, no matter what your physiology is, for refined sugar. No need and I call high fructose corn syrup the crack cocaine of the sugar world. You can never make it in nature, it's completely unnatural and you can never make it in nature and yeah, this substance is destroying lives. So I call I've referred to it as part of the legal recipe and there's many foods that are refined in the same way sugar is refined so there are sugars, oils, salts, grains and many chemicals that are commonly used in our food are refined just like drugs. Just like you can take a natural substance but there's a point at which it's no longer natural and that point is where you cannot make it in nature and at that point if you consume it, it will create imbalance in the blood no matter what dosage you have it in. But even natural sugars can create imbalance if we're consuming them in amounts we could never actually consume in nature.

**DR. KEESHA:** Five servings of fruit a day is not good for you. I mean, I'll have patients that come in that say, “Oh no, I eat fruits and vegetables” and then I ask about the fruit consumption and then they say, “Oh, 4 or 5.” I say, “Okay, we need to chat about this” It's replacing a candy bar with three bananas is still more sugar than the candy bar had, it has some extra nutrients, yes but your pancreas can't tell the difference.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah.

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**DR. KEESHA:** And that's what I think people don't understand and so reserving fruit as the dessert is actually a really great methodology instead of having fruit as the main course. And making it the snack in the middle of the day, the way that a lot of times we've been taught from the food pyramid because food pyramid says however many, five to six servings of fruits or vegetables or/and vegetables and so you can actually just plug in fruit instead of vegetables right there and you've got sugar addiction.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah. I was on a radio show yesterday, a local radio here in Vancouver and the radio announcer she said so my smoothie that I had in the morning full of raspberries and fruit and things like that didn't balance out the chocolate croissant if there was kale in it? I was like even without the croissant, imagine trying to—you're summer trying to gather all the raspberries and the fruit that you're going to have for your smoothies throughout the year, what would your pantry look like, what would your freezer look like, how much work would you do actually gathering all of that? And so even even have one piece of fruit a day in a natural environment that in the years ago, nobility had that.

**DR. KEESHA:** Right.

**SHERRY STRONG:** That was not something that the everyday peasant had because they just didn't have the space or the physical capacity to preserve that when fruit wasn't actually growing and so it's we need to rethink our natural relationship with food and you can kind of sound like a bit of a party pooper when you do that and I haven't got it down perfectly. I'm certainly no poster girl for the, "I'm kind of perfect now." But what the philosophical approach to food has helped me understand is how would I actually eat in a natural environment because nature creates balance for us, right. We work hard for those luxury foods and even if you just look at in context of nature of what's most viable. If I give you a choice between a broccoli seed and an apple seed and you want to feed your family, what are you going to plant? You're going to plant the broccoli seed and you're going to get broccoli not only sooner within the seasons. So if I plant that apple seed it's going to take me years before I get apples but even if the apples from a tree is grown and mature, what happens is the broccoli grows first seasonally. It has a longer season and then the apple takes longer to actually grow and then grow to maturity but we

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don't even eat it at maturity. The broccoli's delicious and powerful when it's young but as it ages, it diminishes. It's nature's way of saying eat lots of this down here and then wait for this and so it's in the right process so nature says don't just eat it when it's matured. You ever made the mistake of eating an apple before it's ripened? So what it does is, is it rewards us for waiting and it produces not only all these beautiful sugars in the sweetness and that get converted, but we have the natural flood of chemicals, the color, flavor and aroma compounds that make the apple taste so good as the sweets the drug addictive space. But the fight of chemicals are the flavor piece, they're the piece where your body is just going mm, give me more.

I remember eating these beautiful apples on the train one time in Melbourne and I was actually starting to make that When Harry Met Sally noises. There are people moving away from me on a train.

**DR. KEESHA:** Well, the foodgasm happening over in the train.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yes, but how many of us have had an apple that's being kept in storage, it's picked before its matured, it's ripened with ethylene gases, you don't have those natural infusion of the fight of chemicals because that only happens during the ripening process, right and we're eating and thinking we're doing something really good for ourselves but it feels like punishment. It's like it's not enjoying it. Nature provides something and it says there's something really beautiful about having something seasonally in its season and there's something beautiful about waiting and I remember when I actually realized that cauliflower had a season and when I started to eat it in season and I made certain dishes. It was so much more delicious not just because the absence, but because when it's grown in season and it's grown organically and naturally in nature cycles, it has so many more rapports not just flavor wise that it gives your body. And so a natural approach understanding nature tells us what to eat the quantities to eat it in by how easily it's attained in nature. So that which is most abundant we're meant to have the most of. Harder to obtain in nature meant to have less of it and nature makes us work harder for it and if you cannot get it in nature not only do you not need it, it's harmful to the planet and the body and so unfortunately, it's that third area where most people are actually eating now that's creating a huge burden on the planet. It's creating a huge burden on our bodies and the medical system and it's only by actually returning to those foods that are most



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abundant in nature, we are actually going to tap in to that natural vitality that your body's always craving us to live towards.

**DR. KEESHA:** And this is such a great concept that you're bringing forth, this philosophy of how to be in rhythm with nature. Smoothies are one of the biggest black holes for sugar people don't have—in Ayurvedic medicine, we talk about the six tastes and they are bitter and astringent and sour and pungent and sweet and salty and sweet is only one sixth of that palate. One sixth and yet if we look at our plate meat is actually considered sweet and so is bread and so is wine and so like think about how much of your plate is sweet then instead of just fruit or are just dessert things we classified as sweet. A lot of people are stretching to think of fruit of sweet. But in reality, it's actually your grain and your protein are also sweet and so it's important to think about that and then to understand that this translates emotionally. If you're reaching for a lot of sweet on your plate then that means that you're deficient in your head in sweetness somewhere else and you're not tolerant to bitter and astringent experiences in your life which actually are exactly what help us maintain a good body weight, the bitter and the astringent. So this is a really important concept I think and this is from Ayurvedic medicine 10,000 years ago. They do this.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah, great wisdom. Yeah.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yeah, this is one of the things that I always tell a story of this hitting me when I was grabbing a bag of frozen blueberries out of the frozen food section in the middle of the winter going like I could just it all clicked in about how this translates to the emotional and mental fear of things and then I looked in my car and I thought okay, I've got a ton of those are astringent, pungent and things in there. And I'm kind of down to this idea of fruit, I don't eat grains and I don't need a lot of other things and so and I thought okay, I can work even a little bit, another layer at this and I think that that's important that we just keep understanding ourselves more inside and then we integrate it and then we become wiser and stronger. So this is a really important thing that you're bringing to the world, this philosophy of food rather than the diet of it.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Yeah and yesterday with the radio announcer thinking, too. She said, “One of the things I just can't give up is my glass of wine at night” and she's been under fire as journalists, our public figures can be at times and

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I said, "Well, sometimes what we really need what we think we want to wine, what we really want is to whine with a w." We just want someone to have a good wine with not to overindulge. It's not like I need a whole bottle of whiny.

**DR. KEESHA:** Right, right.

**SHERRY STRONG:** But I need someone that I need to actually work through the stuff with and I think that we're becoming more isolated as communities and our computers we have this one-dimensional kind of social media presence that we're meant to, expected to put out to the world and so it gives people, "I can't tell her because her life's perfect," like "She doesn't want to hear from me: and not that I'm saying we have to just always be there. But we do need to have these conversations where we reflect back to one another and say this is what I'm going through, really needing some perspective and help to.

**DR. KEESHA:** And I feel sad I mean, you're allowed to have your feelings and so often this is masking, not giving yourself permission to our feeling. I mean, I tell my husband that all the time. "I get to have my feelings, I feel sad, I feel angry, I feel frustrated" that it's not judging those feelings. They're not good, they're not bad, they're not negative, they're positive; you get to acknowledge your feelings and if you don't, you reach for sweet and so that's the thing is you're intolerant of bitter and astringent and you've got to be able to have that tolerance level increased. A great way of doing it is having a smoothie in the morning, it doesn't have any fruit in it.

**SHERRY STRONG:** That's right.

**DR. KEESHA:** Start training your palate. I mean, when I think about—I have a reputation for very gnarly smoothies. My husband says it's like probably cause cancer because it tastes terrible. To me, they don't know, my palate has changed so much and I'm an Ayurveda woman as far as my Dosha is and Ayurveda and so with my Dosha, I have to have that really lovely, bitter in each of my meals so that it will help for me not to hold on to extra fat. And so I think this is a really important concept for all of us to understand.

**SHERRY STRONG:** It is, it is and I like yoga for that purpose as well is I'm not an adrenaline junkie, I'm a serotonin seeker. So I like the hiking and I like the yoga and

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at first it took me a long time. I had had so much discomfort and trauma in my younger life that I was seeking to avoid it when I made this incorrect correlation that discomfort is bad. And so I was never sporty, all that kind of thing and it was in yoga where I realized oh, oh, it's by tolerating this level of discomfort that I can actually use that in all areas of my life and that will help me grow and stretch become more flexible and healthier and happier, more vital.

**DR. KEESHA:** I think that's so important what you just said. A lot of humans run around the planet thinking that discomfort is bad and should be avoided at all costs and I mean, I can't tell you how many people that come to me that just their automatic expectation and assumption is that if you're unhappy then that must mean something bad. No, that's not bad and where did you get the expectation that life is going to be comfortable all the time? You don't grow and you don't challenge yourself and you can't stress this is what you're capable of if you don't have discomfort and you don't have unhappiness and you're not challenged. So this is really important you're saying. I really appreciate it.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Awesome.

**DR. KEESHA:** So what else—we're to the end of our time but I want to give you an opportunity to give last words of wisdom for our listeners.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Well, I did an illustration. I wrote an illustrated a book called Return to Food and the illustrations reinforce the philosophies in it and the thing that I've learned most studying around nutrition and food and the pieces that really make a big difference in our life, the principle of love and kindness can never be underestimated and the power that they have for healing and there's a philosophy I teach which what's good for the body's good for the planet, what's good for the planet is good for the body and there is no exception.  
So if you start to make kind decisions based on what is good for your body and good for the planet, you make loving decisions which is good for the body and is good for the planet. It's not always the easiest choice, but it always creates, it's always going to lead more to balance mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically.

**DR. KEESHA:** Not only will hopefully not be the easiest but then not the most convenient, right.

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**SHERRY STRONG:** No, it's rarely the most convenient.

**DR. KEESHA:** Right.

**SHERRY STRONG:** Our culture that's killing ourselves with convenience.

**DR. KEESHA:** Exactly that's what I wanted to bring out. That's a really good point, very good. All right well, Sherry you have got—your information is on the speakers' area of the [womansvitalitysummit.com](http://womansvitalitysummit.com) and again, I just want to say that you've got the Sweet Freedom summit coming up right after The Women's Vitality summit and another, how many speakers?

**SHERRY STRONG:** 30 including yourself.

**DR. KEESHA:** Including yours truly. Yes, so an opportunity to really extend this summit so that's very wonderful, empowering people to get control of their own lives in all these amazing ways. So thank you so much for taking the time to share even a little bit of your wisdom with all of us.

**SHERRY STRONG:** My pleasure, Keesha and thank you so much for all the amazing work that you're doing in the world.

**DR. KEESHA:** Thank you.