



Transcript: #483 Top Tips to Improve Your Adrenals with Izabella Wentz

Dr. Wendy Myers: Hello, everyone. Welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. I am Dr. Wendy Myers, and today we have a great interview for you with Dr. Isabella Wentz. And she's talking about her new book, *The Adrenal Transformation Protocol*. And we're going to be talking about a lot of issues related to the adrenals. Why, if you have thyroid issues, you also are going to have adrenal issues typically. And we talk about the different symptoms that are signs you have adrenal issues.

All the different kinds of stress that promote adrenal issues and why if you have that tired but wired feeling, you might want to check your adrenals and give your adrenals some love. And we talk about why a lot of people have low cortisol in the morning, as cortisol is that get up and go hormone. Why do people have it low in the morning and then high at night? That then keeps them awake, and then they don't get enough sleep, and they're tired, and they produce more cortisol the next day, which messes up with their blood sugar and just all these different issues related to the adrenals.

And we talk about adaptogenic herbs. Yes or no on those. We talk about a lot of different things, like the pros and cons of taking DHEA, which is very commonly recommended by integrative or functional medicine practitioners. And also why conventional doctors just kind of write off adrenal fatigue as not really a credible diagnosis and what the problem with that is, and why people can miss this very common issue, which is adrenal dysfunction. So, all that and more is coming up, so tune in.

So I know you guys listening to the show, you're concerned about heavy metal toxicity, your heavy metal body burden of toxins, which is a legitimate concern. There are 100,000 chemicals, and there are dozens of heavy metals, and we're exposed to them every single day, and they build up in your body every single year. So I created a quiz. It's called heavymetalsquiz.com.

Just takes a couple of minutes to take it. You get your results, you have low, medium, or high levels of toxins in your body, and a free video series following that educates you and answers all of your frequently asked questions about detoxification. So check it out, take it at heavymetalsquiz.com. So our guest, Isabella Wentz, is a pharmacist, and she's an internationally acclaimed thyroid specialist and a licensed pharmacist who has dedicated her career to addressing the root causes of autoimmune thyroid disease after being diagnosed with Hashimotos in 2009.

She's the author of three books on Hashimoto's, *Hashimoto's Thyroiditis: Lifestyle Interventions for Finding and Treating the Root Cause*, *Hashimoto's Food Pharmacology*, and *Hashimoto's Protocol*, which became a number one New York Times bestseller. And you can learn more about Dr. Isabella Wentz and her work at thyroidpharmacist.com, where you can also learn about her new book, *Adrenal Transformation Protocol*.

Isabella, thank you so much for joining the show.

Dr. Isabella Wentz: Hi, Wendy. Thank you so much for having me on again.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yes. Yeah, I've had you on before. We were talking about thyroid and thyroid health, and that's your area of expertise. And so, you wrote a book about the thyroid called *The Root Cause Protocol*, and you're known as the thyroid pharmacist. How did you get so interested in thyroid health?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: Well, in full disclosure, it definitely wasn't in pharmacy school. In pharmacy school, I thought thyroid conditions were boring. There was only one drug that I learned about to give people with hypothyroidism. It was like if somebody has hypothyroidism, give them levothyroxine. And sometimes, you might need to keep them on the brand of medication known as Synthroid. And so there are older medications out there like Armour, but most people don't need to take them. Maybe if they've been on them for a while, you could keep them on.

And that was really just everything that I learned about thyroid disease and in addition to some of the symptoms when I was in pharmacy school. And so, this just was something that I'm like, okay, this is not that interesting. And I was personally expecting that maybe when I got older and was in my 70s, my thyroid hormone production would slow down, but I was diagnosed with Hashimotos and hypothyroidism in my 20s after almost 10 years of fatigue, panic attacks, anxiety, hair loss, carpal tunnel in both arms.

I have a super long list of symptoms. And that's when I really became interested in the thyroid, and in Hashimotos when I got my own diagnosis, and I was like, I want to feel better. And I found thyroid medications only helped a little bit. So it wasn't like the promised land of what I learned about in pharmacy school that if somebody has this condition, you gave them this drug, and that's it.

I took thyroid medications, and I felt a little bit better, but I still struggled with 95% of the symptoms I had before I started the medications. And that's how I became Hashimoto's thyroid expert/human guinea pig. I just really was trying to get myself to feel better, and I just kept unraveling the different layers of the onion to get myself to go from feeling like 10% of myself to 100%.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. I mean, so many people struggle with thyroid issues, and I've talked at length about how heavy metals promote thyroid issues and mercury and things like that. But the adrenals are also very important in thyroid health because the adrenals and thyroid, there's a major connection there. When the thyroid's low, then the adrenals have to take over. And so, what's that connection? And you write about this in your new book, *The Adrenal Transformation Protocol*, which I'm so glad that you wrote that compliments your work with the thyroid. Tell us about it.

Dr. Isabella Wentz: Sure. So what I've learned over the years, and definitely I was my first guinea pig, so I saw this firsthand in myself, is oftentimes you can't just support the thyroid gland without supporting the adrenals. And people who may need thyroid medications, they'll get on them, and they think, this is going to be great. I'm going to feel so much better. But within a few weeks, they actually start coming back to some of the symptoms that they had, such as fatigue, brain fog, trouble losing weight, trouble with having unrefreshed sleep, libido issues, and so on and so forth. And they're like, okay, well, what's going on? Do I need more thyroid medication?

And they'll check their thyroid labs, and their thyroid labs will be fine, and their doctors will be like, no, you don't need any more medication. We don't want to overmedicate you. But they'll still have these symptoms. And part of the missing piece here is that adrenal function. So, as you mentioned, the thyroid gland and the adrenal glands and the hormones they produce, there's a feedback loop there. So it's not like we have these hormones that they just live in a vacuum in separate compartments of our bodies, right.

They talk to each other with respect to stress hormones. Whenever we have put out too many stress hormones like cortisol, that can lead our bodies to produce more of something known as Reverse T3, which is a type of thyroid hormone that essentially binds thyroid hormone receptors. And rather than turning them on, it just kind of sits there and blocks them. So you can have enough "thyroid hormone" and not even have a thyroid condition, no thyroid illness, and nothing wrong with your thyroid gland, but it's just that stress that could be impacting how your body utilizes your thyroid hormone.

So that's kind of one pathway. The other pathway is, as you said when somebody's hypothyroid, their adrenals take over. And so, the body has this beautiful mechanism that when you're hypothyroid, it will hold onto its cortisol for longer. So rather than clearing out cortisol in a normal rhythmic fashion, it'll

say, let's hold onto that cortisol. Cortisol, people think it's bad. They're like, cortisol's bad, cholesterol's bad, all these things are bad.

But cortisol in just the right amounts can have anti-inflammatory benefits. It helps us produce energy. It helps us wake up. It balances our immune system. And so, what happens is people will have more cortisol circulating when they're hypothyroid. Now comes the doctor and modern medicine, and they'll be feeling off because cortisol gives us energy, but it's more like anxious energy. So you're like, you have that energy like you just drank seven red bulls, and it's not exactly the best energy.

And a lot of times, people feel like, ah, I'm anxious. I'm feeling off. Something's going on. And they'll see their doctors, they'll get their thyroid tested, and the doctor might say, okay, you're hypothyroid. Let's get you on thyroid meds. And you're like, eureka, this is great. I'm going to get better. But you get on the thyroid meds, and then the cortisol clearance stabilizes. So rather than having a slowed cortisol clearance, your body's like, okay, we're going to clear out that cortisol that we have, and getting on thyroid hormones can actually unmask advanced cases of HPA axis dysfunction where her body's not producing enough cortisol.

And so when we don't have enough of that cortisol on board, that's when we could have a lot of these symptoms of hypothyroidism as well when we're not actually hypothyroid.

Dr. Wendy Myers:

And it's tough, it's tough. We are so complex hormonally, especially as women. And I talk at length on this podcast about how toxins interfere with our thyroid. They interfere with our sex hormones, our stress hormones. There's a lot more research coming out about that. And I think for so many people, their cortisol production is switched. It's supposed to be high in the morning that gets your butt out of bed but it's low in the morning and then high at night. So people have this kind of consistent tired but wired feeling. And that was my experience for so many years. What is going on there exactly?

Dr. Isabella Wentz:

Yeah, so many people experience that with hypothyroidism, with chronic fatigue syndrome, with a lot of autoimmune cases, and even people who don't have a "diagnosis" where you have what's called a flipped cortisol curve. And normally, you're supposed to produce good cortisol in the morning and kind of go on a gradual slide, and then in the evenings, you have just a little bit of it, and that helps you make sure that you're producing enough melatonin.

Now, when that's flipped, we're going to have trouble waking up in the morning. We feel sluggish all day. It takes us a while to get going. We go through our day, and in the evenings, we start getting wired but tired. We might get a second wind where you're like, I'm so tired, but I can't fall asleep. You just have a racing mind. You feel like you just drank too much coffee, caffeine pills are something crazy like that, and your sleep is unrefreshed.

And part of why that happens is it can happen over time. When we're exposed initially to stress, there's an acute stress response where our body's like, ooh, a tiger, let me get away from it. So I'm going to help you. Let's produce a whole bunch of cortisol at once, and that's going to help us. We're not going to focus on digestion; we're not going to focus on repairing the body. I just want to give you enough energy so you can run as fast as you can and get away from that threat.

And it's known as our fight or flight response. Now that's fine and dandy with acute stressors, and we kind of go through that. We save ourselves, and then we sleep it off or shake it off, and then we kind of get back into balance when our body goes into that repair mode and digestion and rest. What happens in modern times when we don't have these bears walking around, and we don't necessarily have as many acute threats, some of us still do. You're in a car accident, you have something traumatic happen to you that is life-threatening.

But for a lot of us, our bodies are sensing the daily stressors. And so, as you said, toxins that are overwhelming our bodies can be a source of stress for us. There could be things like psychological stress, there could be inflammation from various sources, sleep deprivation, and watching really negative news. All of these different things kind of build-up, and then our body gets overwhelmed with too much stress response. And eventually, I feel like what I've described as the boy that cried wolf syndrome, where the body starts to make adaptations because you can't have that much cortisol at all times. It's not good for us.

So when we have this prolonged stress response, eventually what will happen is people's cortisol production will get disconnected from their brain where their brain and their adrenal glands will have a bit of a feedback loop where they have stress, or they're still sensing stress, but they're just not having that same cortisol response and their body essentially gets disconnected from the circadian rhythm and from a normal life pattern. And this is a consequence of being under chronic stress.

Dr. Wendy Myers:

Yeah. So many people today are under so many different types of stress, not to mention not sleeping; their circadian rhythm is off. They're not getting the light that they need at the right times. And you got EMF and emotional stress, financial stress, and emotional trauma. Staring at the screens all the time and so many things are just adding up and compounding that cause adrenal fatigue or adrenal dysfunction. So can you talk a little bit more about what is the underlying root cause of adrenal dysfunction? And maybe some signs that people have it, maybe they need to do something about it.

Dr. Isabella Wentz:

Sure. And I know people. I've talked to so many people over the years and various brilliant professionals, and people will say, well, I don't think this person has adrenal fatigue or adrenal dysfunction. I think they actually have mitochondrial issues, and they're right. And another person will say this person doesn't have adrenal fatigue; they have mold exposure. And I'm like, you're

right, yes, and you're right, and you're wrong. So, there's a whole host of things that can cause adrenal dysfunction to develop.

This is how our body responds when it's overwhelmed by stress. And so stress could be like we said, sleep deprivation. We could have nutritional stress, such as overeating or undereating, not getting enough nutrients, having blood sugar swings, and having foods that are inflammatory to us. And then, there's the whole can of worms of inflammation from our body. So you can have parasites, you can have actual worms that are contributing to your inflammation.

You can have toxins like mold toxins or heavy metals that contribute to inflammation. And then there's the whole lifestyle piece of over-exercising and maybe pushing yourself too hard and not sleeping enough, not having time for self-care. Then, there is the whole big psychological aspect of it, so current stress, past history of stress.

And essentially, what happens whenever our body senses stress and we have this compounding effect, the body shifts into survival mode. It's like, okay, we're getting all these danger signals, so we need to get into survival mode. We need to slow down our metabolism. We need to help you get through this really, really tough time. And you shift into this survival mode. And some of the symptoms include brain fog, fatigue, waking up super, super tired, or having trouble waking up in the morning, feeling overwhelmed with life. Everything just feels like such a chore.

People call you, and you're irritable. You might feel anxious. You might feel hungry. You might have blood sugar swings. You might have light sensitivity. You feel like a vampire, you go outside, and it's like the lights are blinding. You might have salt cravings. You might have sugar cravings. You might have wine cravings. You might have a caffeine addiction, especially in the morning time to try to get yourself going. You might have, I think, libido issues, trouble falling asleep, trouble getting to sleep, trouble with waking up throughout the night, and having an unrefreshed sleep.

So there is kind of a plethora of symptoms where I think the natural medical clinicians will have put it into a category and have called it adrenal fatigue. It's also been known as burnout syndrome or adrenal dysfunction. The scientific term is HPA axis dysfunction, hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis dysfunction. It doesn't like rolling off a tongue. But essentially, it's the body's adaptation to stress.

Dr. Wendy Myers:

Yeah. And now, so many people are dealing with this. I mean, I don't see how there's anyone that doesn't have adrenal dysfunction of some kind because of all the different types of stressors that people are faced with. So, one of the features of adrenal dysfunction is too much cortisol, or they can have really low cortisol levels over time. Correct. I guess in the beginning stages, it's really high, and then the body's not able to keep up with the demand and can go low. So, is

that too much cortisol? Is that the cause of the adrenal issues, or what's going on there?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: So the cause is essentially too much stress. So we initially start off with the way that our body perceives stress. So there's a lot of stress perceived by the body. And again, it could be any of the things we mentioned that are inside of our bodies, outside of our bodies, in our environment. And initially, we'll produce a lot of cortisol, and this is how the body responds to stress. But we can't have a lot of cortisol production over time.

So as you said, the body begins to adapt. And eventually, people go through what I call the stages of adrenal dysfunction. So in the initial stage, they'll have high cortisol, then they'll be on a cortisol roller coaster where maybe they have high cortisol in the morning, and then they drift down low, and they'll have that 3:00 PM crash, and then their cortisol will rise again when it's time to go to bed.

And then, as time goes on, they'll have that flipped cortisol curve, trouble waking up in the morning, trouble falling asleep at night, and this is kind of that stereotypical night owl person. And then the last, and this is probably the one I see most commonly, is an advanced adaptation to stress where you've just had so much stress on your plate that your body's currently perceiving or has perceived in the past that your cortisol output is super low all day long.

And so, these are people that I see with chronic fatigue and hypothyroidism and Hashimotos and autoimmunity. And this is kind of the stage where people say like, oh, everybody that's stressed has too much cortisol. You just need to reduce your cortisol. And that's not necessarily the answer. For some people, yes, you do need to do things that reduce your cortisol if you're in those early stages. But if you're in that chronic fatigue stage where you're just exhausted all day, you need to actually work on building up your cortisol.

Now the good news is whether you have too much cortisol or not enough cortisol, the cause is the same. It's like your body is in a stress survival mode. And most of the strategies for whether you have cortisol that's too low or too high that I've come up with shift you into that healthy pattern. So we go from that survival mode into a thriving mode.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Okay, great. And then, what kind of testing do you recommend to find out if you have adrenal dysfunction and cortisol issues?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: A lot of times, people will go to their doctor, and they'll ask a conventional doctor to test them for adrenal issues, and doctors will test them for Addison's disease and will say, you don't have Addison's disease. Now, this is a condition that is rare, and it's an autoimmune condition against the adrenal glands where 90% of the adrenal glands will be destroyed. And then a person will have issues with cortisol production. Their adrenals physically can't make cortisol. Now, this is a very real and serious life-threatening condition. This is not the same as

adrenal fatigue or adrenal dysfunction. Adrenal dysfunction isn't necessarily like a disease. It's an adaptive process that the body does.

And the most conventional doctors will not test for it. So typically, you would want to work with a functional medicine doctor or an integrative doctor or somebody that's a health coach or a nutritionist that specializes in functional nutrition that has these ordering privileges. Or you can self-order on your own, but it's maybe tricky to interpret. Doing adrenal saliva tests can be helpful, as well as a urine test like the Dutch test.

Now, this is something that if I had my little way, I'd make sure everybody got these tests, and they'd have access to the right kind of practitioners, and it would be covered on insurance. Now, I do live in a world, I do live in reality, so I know it's not possible for everybody to get that kind of test done and let alone find somebody that can interpret that test.

So I often just recommend for people within my community to really focus on their symptoms. And if they have those symptoms that we talked about, there's a really good chance that their body is in survival mode. And so, the old protocols I used to use really focused on hormones and things like that, whereas the protocols I'm excited to share more about now really focused on that stress component so you can utilize them safely on your own, and you don't necessarily need to have testing done to get rid of your symptoms.

Dr. Wendy Myers: There are so many of us that have lived very stressful lives and continue to; as I said, I think I'd be very surprised to find people without adrenal dysfunction to some degree. And there are people that are resilient out there, but I think most of us are living under a lot of different types of stress. And I know that 3:00 PM crashed very, very well. So can you have adrenal issues even if you don't have thyroid issues?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: I think you're kind of a unicorn if you don't have adrenal issues. So whether or not you have a thyroid condition, there are so many people with various degrees of adrenal issues. These are people that are diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome, people diagnosed with fibromyalgia, and people diagnosed with depression. All of these people have been shown to have some degree of HPA axis dysfunction. But also people that are just living in our modern life that are experiencing symptoms like depression, anxiety, brain fog, fatigue.

I really have had a lot of people reach out to me over the years that don't have thyroid issues, and they'll say, hey, I have all these symptoms, and my thyroid gland is normal; what's going on? And I'm always like, it's the adrenals. It's the adrenals. It's the adrenals. And addressing your adrenals now can help you to feel better within a short time period. And it'll prevent you from getting some kind of a crazy diagnosis.

So I know people look for answers, and a lot of people may go from doctor to doctor, and they can't really get a diagnosis, and they can't get an answer, but they feel like complete crap. There's a chance you have adrenal dysfunction if you're feeling burned out if you're feeling wired but tired, edgy, anxious, all of these things. It's like your body's stuck in survival mode. Let's get it out.

Dr. Wendy Myers: And also, in your book, you mentioned that a lot of conventional doctors don't really consider adrenal dysfunction like a legitimate diagnosis. And why is that?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: It's such a good point, and there's such an argument about this. And part of it is that they don't necessarily recognize stress adaptation, and they only will test for Addison's disease, which is a type of adrenal condition that is present when the adrenals physically are damaged, and they cannot produce cortisol. And then that person has low levels of cortisol throughout the day just because their body can't produce it. They usually need some sort of cortisol and some kind of stress hormone replacement, sometimes mineralocorticoids as well, oftentimes.

And in that case, the person will come in with those symptoms, and the doctor will be like, well, you don't have Addison's because they're not utilizing adrenal saliva testing. They're not utilizing urine testing because those tests are considered experimental, and they're not part of the whole insurance reimbursement blood testing paradigm that most doctors are focused on.

And then, there's also this argument about the naming convention. So, the person that first coined the term adrenal fatigue was a brilliant naturopathic doctor named James Wilson. And he wrote a book about this that was fabulous. And Keith was talking about how the adrenal glands actually become fatigued. So he had a theory that the reason people were experiencing these symptoms was because they had a mild form of Addison's, and their adrenal glands weren't able to produce those hormones.

Now, looking through the physiology and how things work and the science behind it, we've learned that that's not necessarily the case. It's more of an adaptive physiology. So, in adrenal dysfunction, which is kind of more of the accurate term, I believe the adrenals are capable of producing hormones at the right times and in the right amounts. But there's a communication breakdown between the brain and the adrenal glands because of all this stress accumulation.

And so, that's what's actually happening. And it's funny because I'll see people say adrenal fatigue doesn't exist. And even people in the natural community, and then you look into PubMed and the published research, and it'll be like hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis dysfunction, and guess what? The symptoms are exactly the same as adrenal fatigue.

And it's, to me, one of the things that makes me scratch my head why there's so much controversy and drama about this because the symptoms are very real,

and we understand the mechanism behind it. Maybe it's not convenient to say hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis dysfunction every time. So I feel like the term adrenal fatigue just kind of sticks a little bit better.

Dr. Wendy Myers: And I think that doctors, they're looking for other things that have a drug that. Because people, when they go to the doctor, they want to get a pill to just fix them. And even with integrative doctors, they may go into them and get diagnosed with adrenal fatigue, and they're typically going to say, try to get more sleep, quit caffeine, maybe take some hormones like DHEA. Is that an approach that you recommend as a solution?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: I used to recommend that as an approach, and I've used it myself personally to get myself to feel better. And I've worked with lots of women utilizing that approach to help them feel better. This approach can work very well if you're working with a practitioner that's trained in it. It typically takes about three months to two years to fully feel better with this approach. And there are some drawbacks to it. So some of the hormones, like pregnenolone and DHEA, some women might have trouble with metabolizing them, and they might have side effects from them.

DHEA can kind of convert to something that is really nasty that can make you grow chin hair and have cystic acne. I have had that experience personally, as have other women, so I know that's not a desirable thing for everybody. DHEA can over convert to estrogen, which is not so good. If you have estrogen dominance, if you have a history of estrogen-sensitive cancers or a family history of it, you may not want to utilize that.

And then there's the kind of logistics of Can you sleep for 12 hours a night, 10 to 12 hours? And can you quit the coffee? Can you quit caffeine? I know I've had some people that are like you're not going to take that coffee out of my pulled dead hands. This is the last thing I'm doing. This is the only thing that's keeping me half alive.

Dr. Wendy Myers: That's me. I don't care if I have my adrenal tea or not. I'm having my coffee because I did have adrenal fatigue at one point in my life, for absolutely. But I was like, I can't quit the coffee. Sorry.

Dr. Isabella Wentz: And you know what? I get it. And honestly, I didn't get it until I became a new mom. I know I had some clients before, they were like, I'm tired throughout the day, and I can't sleep at night. I'm waking up having to go pee at night, and I am just having a really hard time sleeping. And I'd be like, okay, let me look at your food and diet log. You drink six cups of coffee a day. Oh, my goodness. Well, that's something we're going to have to solve.

And I feel like I know the cause of all of your problems. Just quit your coffee and sleep more. And they were like, well, I quit coffee, and now I'm tired. I have no joy in my life, and I'm even more tired than I was, and I'm still having trouble

sleeping, and I'm still waking up and going pee. Maybe something's got better. I know one particular client was like, okay, I don't have as many headaches. So that's good. But at the same time, it's like coffee isn't necessarily the cause of adrenal issues. Being addicted to coffee in the mornings is actually a symptom of adrenal issues, is what I came to realize.

And being addicted to something like wine or a drink in the evening is another kind of symptom. And this is kind of how we try to self-medicate. So, if you have morning fatigue you can't get out of bed in the morning, what are you going to do? You're going to crawl to your coffee machine and try to wake yourself up. If you have trouble falling asleep at night and you have that crazy monkey mind in the evenings, you're going to go pour yourself a glass of wine, and that's going to help you relax and unwind just a little bit.

And so, I fully was able to appreciate that there was another path that was needed for healing. So, perhaps some more protocols. I always feel like there's more than one way to peel a potato where there are so many different paths to healing and so many beautiful protocols out there. And when I was a new mom, I was eight months postpartum. I had this beautiful baby, and I was nursing my baby. I really wanted to nurse. And also, my baby kept waking up every two to three hours.

From the time he was about four months old, they went through that four-month sleep progression. And I was like, I need to test my adrenals because I'm not feeling too good. And sure enough, I was like flatlined adrenals where my cortisol was really low throughout the day. And I felt like that. I woke up exhausted. I could barely do anything. I definitely wasn't doing interviews like this that required my brain to work. And I was just going to bed and exhausted and then waking up the next morning kind of exhausted.

And so I was like, okay, if I wasn't breastfeeding, I could take these hormones, but I'm not comfortable taking these hormones and passing them onto my baby. And if I didn't have a baby, I could sleep 12 hours a night, but I have a baby, so I can't do that. And most of my clients with kids were like, yeah, sleep 10 to 12 hours. That's not going to happen with young kids. And the other part of it was I had just started drinking coffee for the first time in my adult life on a regular basis. And this was what was getting me through that time. I needed that coffee to take care of my son and to function.

So, I was like, okay, none of these things that I used to use, I can't do most of them now. So how am I going to come up with something else that works? And I had always had this theory about safety. And when we are getting a lot of danger signals from our bodies, we can shift our bodies into a healing state by focusing on safety signals. So, I just went deeper in on various safety signals that I could send to myself that didn't require me to quit coffee or sleep a lot so I could build my energy from within and get the most rest out of the sleep that I was getting.

And so I came up with this adrenal transformation protocol, which worked really well for me. Within three weeks, I was like, okay, I can do this. My brain's working again. I can function again. I was still sleep-deprived. And so, that was still affecting me, but it wasn't to the same degree as it was before I started doing these things. And then, I ended up having enough energy to pilot with a group of a few hundred women in my community. And it worked so well for them.

None of them were breastfeeding moms or anything. They were just women with thyroid issues, chronic fatigue, and so on and so forth. It worked really, really well for them. And then, we've gone through over about 3,500 people going through the program with 93% reduction in brain fog, 80% reduction in things like fatigue, and all of the adrenal symptoms within three weeks where my old protocols used to take months to see even marginal benefits.

So, this is why I'm here and talking about it because this is a new path to healing or an underutilized path to healing that I want to share more about.

Dr. Wendy Myers:

And it's so important because, I mean, some of my most popular podcasts are on stress and stress resiliency, which is the adrenals and caring for your adrenals. And it's something that I think so many people do, they either don't know what's going on with them or they think they have some serious medical issue or they think they're getting older. And people, they can't burn the candle at both ends. I think people eventually learn when their body starts reducing in function, or they have all these different symptoms that they're going to have to slow down.

Our bodies just aren't equipped to deal with our modern lifestyle. And so, when it comes to coffee, I think people, they can have one or two cups, but maybe four to eight, they need to maybe wean down. But I've heard Dave Asprey talk about this, and when you put fats in the coffee, that will not whip the adrenals as hard. Do you agree with that?

Dr. Isabella Wentz:

So definitely, one of the strategies that I utilize is making sure that you're getting plenty of protein and fat every few hours. Because whenever we do things like carbs or coffee, that actually can send us on this blood sugar roller coaster, and combining that with some protein and fat would be helpful. So doing things like putting butter or, if you're sensitive to butter, something like coconut oil, MCT oil, or even coconut cream into your coffee can be extremely helpful for dampening that effect that you would get from just the pure caffeine.

And so, when I have my people go through the program, I first focus on creating energy in their bodies. So we focus on mitochondrial support and adrenal support, and getting them aligned with the circadian rhythm really, really well. And then, they find that they can get off of the caffeine naturally versus forcing it like you're going to quit caffeine, you're going to have headaches and

withdrawal, and you're going to feel miserable. Where, like, let's make you feel really, really good first, and by week three or four, when you're on the plan, and you're producing your own energy, holy cow, you're not going to be as dependent on caffeine throughout the day. You're not going to be as dependent on the wine in the evenings.

I mean, it would be amazing if you could just snap your fingers and not need these things. But there's a reason why you're self-medicating, so I want to give you different kinds of medicine that you can utilize to build up your energy levels naturally so that perhaps, you can still enjoy your coffee and you can enjoy maybe one or two cups a day, but you're not addicted. And if you decide not to drink it, you won't feel horrific.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Like you're going to die.

Dr. Isabella Wentz: Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Wendy Myers: You have no joy; you're just gray. So what about adaptogens? So can people ashwagandha and adaptogen their way out of adrenal dysfunction?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: Adaptogens are such a great tool for working our way out of adrenal dysfunction. So I love ashwagandha, I love holy basil, I love graviola. There are so many different adaptogens and options out there that can be really life-changing. So they give us a little bit more resiliency. So I typically will say to people, when you start adaptogens, everybody around you all of a sudden becomes less annoying.

Part of being in that fight or flight mode is you're very irritable, you're kind of edgy, and you're almost ready to receive something negative from the world around you. And just shifting your stress response, even with just taking an adaptogen, you're like, oh, maybe that person wasn't giving me dirty looks. They were just scratching their eyes. And it gives you more of a lens into reality and takes you away from that stressed-out lens.

I do love utilizing them. They're part of the healing plan. You can't necessarily be doing everything, burning yourself out and having all these other toxic habits, and taking adaptogens. It's putting a bandaid over a leaky fish bowl without really addressing the whole. So part of my plan is, yes, we do adaptogens to help you build resiliency through that way. But there are also 14 specific safety signals that we're going to be utilizing throughout the process to help you from various directions to get to the root cause of the stress issue.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Can you talk more about the safety signals and what exactly those are that you talk about in your adrenal transformation protocol?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: Sure. So when I mentioned safety signals are kind of counter to what the body perceives as stress. When you're thinking about being a cave woman with your

cave woman jeans, what are the habits and daily things that you're doing in your life? How are they affecting you? We live in this modern world, but we still have these cavewoman jeans. And if you were to be a cavewoman that was skipping meals and running on a treadmill, that would be a signal to you as a cavewoman that you are either in a famine or you're being chased by a lot of bears every single day at a specific time if you have a workout routine.

And that would be just setting off your metabolism and sending you into that survival mode. And we do that in our modern day. We exercise, and sometimes it's too much for us, and we skip food. I know a lot of women with thyroid issues or just women in midlife are like, oh my gosh, I'm putting on some weight. I'm just going to cut out calories, and I'm going to do more aerobic exercise. And then our body is like, ah, we're in a famine. Okay, let's slow down our metabolism. Let's help you survive.

And so part of that is figuring out what is sending you those danger signals and seeing how you can modify it. Sometimes the danger signals are there. If you have a newborn and you're sleep-deprived, I mean, you can hire a nanny. There are different ways out of that, but there are certain things that we can't necessarily modify. And so we have to keep those stressors on board. And so we want to just stack the safety component and send our body signals that we're safe and that it's a safe time to thrive.

And so, we can shift into that thriving safety mode. And one of the really big safety signals that I like to focus on is nutrition. And so, we're eating plentiful foods. We're not starving ourselves; we're not restricting calories. We're eating enough food so that we feel satisfied. We're eating nourishing and nutrient-dense foods. We're not eating foods that are inflammatory to us. We're making sure we're getting enough protein and fat. And this can send the body a really, really powerful signal of, hey, we're safe. We're not in a famine. We're not in a famine. We're not in a famine. It's okay to relax. It's okay to digest. It's okay not to store fat.

And it's remarkable how well this safety signal works. I'll have so many women that are like, I do all this exercise, and I have so many low calories. I'm trying to lose weight. And they're scared to try this. But then they will try it reluctantly, and they'll be like, I did less exercise, and I eat more food. It was very nourishing food. But I lost 5 pounds or 10 pounds. That's kind of the average of what women who want to lose weight will lose throughout that four-week process.

And so that's kind of one of the big safety signals that I focus on. And then we also focus on proper hydration, not just water. We add electrolytes. And I don't mean Gatorade. We focus on aligning with the circadian rhythm. We also really focus on one particular safety signal that I don't think gets enough credit in the natural community because we're always telling people to restrict this and do this exercise and do this other thing that maybe doesn't taste so good and take all these pills and so on and so forth.

But the one kind of big thing that most people say made a really, really big transformation in their symptoms is adding pleasurable activities throughout your day. Being like, okay, part of what I'm doing today is focusing on doing things that I love and things that I enjoy. And that can really shift us into that safety zone really quickly.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. For me, that's eating. And one thing, the safety signal for me is not fasting because whenever I have extended fasting, my cortisol goes way up, and I'm like, oh, timers and protein. So I just never quite make it towards the end of the day for fasting. Not for me. So tell us a little bit more about what we'll learn in your book, the *Adrenal Transformation Protocol*, and where we can get it.

Dr. Isabella Wentz: So the Adrenal Transformation Protocol is a four-week plan to help people go from surviving to thriving and letting go of their stress symptoms. And, really, it will show you how to take care of yourself properly, how to send your body all these safety signals. I do focus on nutrition and hydration, balancing your circadian rhythm. We utilize supplements as well throughout the program, a very limited amount of supplements for four weeks, but they're kind of multipurpose supplements that can be really game-changing, so like adaptogens and some of the nutrients that are depleted during a stress response, like B-vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium, electrolytes. And that really helps our body recover and regenerate faster from stress.

And then, we also focus on transformational work. So a lot of it is building pleasure and getting the spark back and getting the vitality back into your life by shifting from, I have to do this, I have to do this, I have to do this to let me create some pleasure in my life and let me talk to my body in a very positive way so that I feel good and I feel happy. And it really does shift in just three weeks when we do all of these habits.

The other thing we also focus on is building resilience. So I know for a while I think there was this trend of anything being stressful, just getting rid of it. But we live in the modern world, so you can't just live in a monastery and meditate all day and not have any stress in your life. And you don't actually want to not have stress; those stress can be part of growing. So there can be positive stressors, but we really focus on how do you build resilience for the person?

And so, we focus on what types of exercise could be breaking your body further down? What kind of exercises could build you back up? And we also focus on things that I feel like are going to weigh us down. So things like past traumas, how to clear those properly, setting boundaries. And so, more of the personal transformation methods because we can take all the adaptogens that we want and we can use all the positive affirmations in the world, but if there's still some messaging within our brains that we're not enough or we could never get well, or that it's not good to take care of yourself, or whatever these messages we maybe grew up with and are kind of planted in our subconscious, we're not going to be able to sustain getting better.

So it really is a comprehensive plan to help people feel so much better, like brain fog fatigue, like all of the symptoms within just three days when we shift into that thriving state.

Dr. Wendy Myers: And it's so key. I just love that you're educating people about this because we have to find ways to reduce stress. We have to find ways to heal our adrenal glands because that can be, I think, for many people. One of the first health issues they encounter is having issues with their adrenals or their thyroid and the symptoms that come along with that. And so addressing those, then that can set you up for much better health in the future as well, because addressing your adrenal health and thyroid health, those same habits are good for your entire body, for all of your health as well.

So Isabella, thank you so much for joining us today on the Meyers Detox Podcast. So where can we learn more about you and your work?

Dr. Isabella Wentz: Oh, yes. So my website is thyroidpharmacist.com. My book can be found on Amazon and Barnes & Noble, wherever fine books are sold. What's that in the background here, you can see a little picture of it. And I have a guide for people at thyroidpharmacist.com/ABC that focuses on the basics and the foundations of getting and resetting your stress response. So a lot of those nutrients get depleted from the stress response and some de-stressing techniques as well.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. No stress that depletes minerals and so many other nutrients, and I don't think people will realize how much. Well, Isabella, thank you so much for joining us today. And everyone, thanks so much for tuning in to the Myers Detox Podcast. I'm Dr. Wendy Myers, and I love bringing health experts from around the world to help give you those little nuggets, those little pieces of the puzzle, to help you upgrade your health because you deserve to feel good. Talk to you soon.