



#524 Master Relationship Triggers and Take back Your Emotional Power with **Dr. Julia DiGangi**

If I change in my relationship, it is physically impossible for the relationship to stay the same, right? You can imagine a relationship with people on two ends of an energetic string or an energetic seesaw. If I go up in my energetic value, like self-love, let's call it, as my weight changes, of course, it's going to change the structure and the function of the relationship.

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Dr. Wendy Myers

So Julia, welcome to the show.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

I'm really glad to be here. Thanks so much for having me.

Dr. Wendy Myers

So, why don't you tell us a little bit about your background and how you came to write your new book?

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Absolutely. So I am a neuropsychologist, which means I'm a clinical psychologist with specialized expertise of the brain. And my work really focuses on the intersection between our brain, our emotional pain, and our emotional power. So, you know, what I really am interested in is all of us have adversity in our life. And it's really about how do we use that adversity to empower ourselves. So I've worked in academic research for a long time, when I was getting my PhD, and even after I got my PhD, really well published in the scientific literature, so really looking at how the brain processes stressful and traumatic experiences, and then how we turn those painful things that have happened into our past into our empowerment.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yes, and I want to focus a little bit on relationships, and how we deal with adversity in our relationships, and then the series on relationships. So, talk to us about, what do couples misunderstand most about the role of their partner? Because, you know, we all have issues in our relationships with our partner, and we'll have adversity as well. So, what is going on there? What are our expectations, and, you know, they may not be realistic about our partner.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Oh, I mean, there are so many expectations about our partner that are unrealistic. So, you know, we all choose our partner, mostly unconsciously, to finish our unfinished childhood business. Anyone who... What my work... I do a lot of work with individuals, with couples, with parents, and then I do work in organizations, so with teams and with leaders. So, in my work with couples, you know, what happens so frequently is, we have a host of experiences in childhood. And hopefully, for most of us, there were some good things about our childhood. But regardless of how great our childhoods were, there was also pain. And a lot of times, that pain gets coded into the nervous system as these kind of really simple truths. So, some examples of this would be, "I can't get what I want," or "People leave me," or "No one listens to me," or "No one sees me," or "People don't validate me," or "I'm only good for what I can do." Right. So, I'm sure some of these are going to resonate with your listeners because they're pretty universal. So, the holy hope of the long-term romantic relationships is that you, my partner, are able to finally heal these unhealed childhood wounds, this unfinished childhood business. Now, in the early stages of the couple, this is often true, because we're so enamored, we feel the passion. You know, we're sort of like our bodies are being coated in adrenaline and oxytocin and sort of these really kind of feel-good chemicals. But what happens, and you know, it's really about the dissonance for so many of us, it's like, when the partner starts to see me, not as perfect. And when my partner starts to not hear me, when

my partner isn't exactly what I want, when my partner starts to not listen to me, I now have to contend with, "Oh, my God, I thought you were the way out of this." So, it can be utterly devastating. And even those of us who have functional marriages, those moments when we hit pain in our romantic relationships are incredibly profound. And so, the work really is, how do we take this pain and convert it into power?

Dr. Wendy Myers

And I love that, because I think for so many couples, you know, you start seeing the cracks in the veneer after the love chemicals wear off, up to, you know, 18 to 24 months, or even sooner for some couples. But we all have triggers, you know, we all have our patterns in relationships. And, you know, I think it's very easy to kind of look at the other person as having the problems and not looking at our own contribution. So, how do we kind of change that narrative where we're focusing blame on the other person? Because essentially, you chose that person, whether you like their behavior or not, whether you think they're a narcissist, or whatever, they're a doormat, or whatever you want to label them, you chose them, and you continue to choose them. So, you do have a role in that partner that you have right in front of you, and, you know, in their treatment of you, essentially.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

So, the first thing, and I don't think you were saying this at all, but of course, like if we're in abusive relationships, the work there is always to, if it's genuine abuse, it's absolutely to leave. But what I want people to think about, and I think this work, it comes to us very honestly, meaning, you know, what I tell people a lot of times is forget my credentials, forget the fact that I'm a PhD, forget all of the research and just listen, does the stuff really resonate? Like, does it feel like truth? So, one of the things I often ask my couples, and even when I do individual coaching or therapy, is I say, "Has demanding that someone else

change, demanding they change, insisting they change, blaming them for change, has it ever worked a single time in your life, meaningfully? A single time?" And I have yet to hear yes to that question. So, in other words, the very tool that we're trying to use to provoke the change that we desperately want, doesn't deliver us the redemption we seek. What's the definition of insanity again? Doing the same thing over and over and over and expecting a different result. So, part of the reason I think that we should leave blame isn't because we should, with kind of quotes around it, it's because why would I use a tool that wasn't working? And if, like, let's say I'm trying to, I don't know, screw a painting into my wall or something, and I have a hammer, and I'm just trying to screw the painting in but I'm using a hammer, it's like, this is frustrating. It's not working. I'm not accomplishing. So, it gets very easy for me to put the hammer down. When I've... Even part of the reason I'm willing to do podcasts like these. And this is the reason I wrote "Energy Rising," you know, is I sometimes will get approached to, like, be on talk shows or be the expert on a reality show. I could not say "no" fast enough. I like to say I'm a Midwest academic who likes to go to two good parties a year and I like to spend the rest of the time alone in my office. So, the reason I wrote "Energy Rising" was because I feel like when we understand how the brain is wired to move us through our emotions, and through our relationships, the entire world changes. And the entire world changes by understanding how we navigate our own relationships. If we don't understand how to navigate our experiences of fear, anxiety, overwhelm, agitation, frustration, we are going nowhere. Because I really want to make this point, because I think it's so... I think it's so holy. The only thing. The only thing that wrecks our lives. So, when we look at our life, you know, one of the things I think, if I had one word to describe my work, the word would be either counterintuitive or opposite. So, your brain is a pattern detector, your brain is going "Apple, Apple, Apple, Apple, fill in the blank." Well, it's gotta be apple. So, when we try to say, no today, it's not going to be an apple. It's going to be a pen, or it's going to be a banana, or it's going to be a papaya. I don't know why you'd want to be a papaya.

Papayas are terrible. But nonetheless, when I start to put "not Apple," it feels bad. Right? It feels very counterintuitive. It feels like the opposite of what it should be. So, a lot of times, we're out there in our lives, and we're saying all these situations are wrecking my life. So, the thing my partner did to me, the thing my partner didn't do to me, that thing on social media, that thing my boss did to me. So, we're focusing on situation after situation after situation after situation. There is absolutely no power in the level of the situation for most of us, most of the time. Okay, so then where's the power? Well, the power is in the emotional energy, because the way the brain makes meaning out of your life is always, it almost entirely through emotional circuits. So, I... No one doesn't want a good relationship. No one doesn't want to not feel competent on social media or in their careers. So, the question is, well, "What maxes me out of my power? And the only thing, the only thing, and part of that I always say, clarity is the foundation of all power. The only thing that knocks me out of connection in my relationship, that knocks me out of confidence, that knocks me out of innovation, and knocks me out of creativity, is my trigger. So, I actually think the trigger is the most misunderstood energy on the planet.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And that's the key, it's your trigger. It's your responsibility, correct. And you have to deal with it internally.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

You do, and I think, you know, people can be intimidated by this, but I actually think it's incredibly life-giving, joyful, redemptive work, when we do it intelligently.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yes, and that's the beauty of being in a relationship: your triggers come up to the surface to be dealt with. And it's a beautiful thing. And so, that's why I love being in a relationship, because I want to, I want to deal with all this stuff that comes up, that's kind of like a mirror to me, that helps me improve and helps me work through things. I don't want this baggage, you know, but it's just there, you have to deal with it at some point.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

You have to, right. One of my favorite quotes is "Everywhere you go, there you are." So the only person we cannot outrun on this planet is ourselves. So at some point, you know, we have to kind of take honest inventory. And again, I think, to do this work, we have to be incredibly merciful, we have to be gentle. And the second we bring shame into it, it just shuts down the nervous system, like, I don't know, like, the door just kind of slams on it. So, this idea of let me kind of look across my life and see like, what are the common denominator? Okay, I pretty regularly feel like people aren't listening to me. I've been in a lot of relationships, and in each relationship, I feel like the person is not paying me enough attention, or the person is too suffocating for me. So, you know, one of the things that I think is especially unique about the adult long-term romantic relationship, as I always say, the parent-child relationship is the most powerful relationship on the planet. This is just because of the neurobiology of it. But the most complex relationship on the planet is the long-term adult relationship. And that's because, exactly as you said, there's no more complex relationship. There's no one who we expect more from on the planet. And there's no relationship that requires the other person to be as many roles, especially in our marriages, right? We're asking our partners to be our lover, our co-parent, our financial advisor, our business partner, our housekeeper. And so, there's just so much room for... this might surprise people, I actually think the source of our long-term romantic relationships is confusion.

Dr. Wendy Myers

How do we deal with our triggers? So, you know, we all get triggered. And I think we have to learn to figure out what those are. Like, every time you're getting angry or anxious or having any sort of emotion that you don't want in the presence of your partner, is there something they are doing that just irritates you? How do we stop getting triggered? I mean, we've got to identify them, but how do we kind of deal with that within ourselves and stop getting triggered by our partners?

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Yeah, so I think once you're actively triggered, the only thing you can do is kind of wait for the storm to pass, right? When the nervous system hits that kind of inflection point of that much arousal, I think the best we can do is breathe. And I have a saying; I'll tell people, just don't back down. So, like, you know that feeling, like someone says something to you, and you just like, you can feel like the words come, you just kind of want to snap back. So, this idea of just like, let me just relax, relax my face, breathe, relax my jaw, don't back down. The work of our triggers, the really transformative, redemptive work of the triggers, really is before the storm. And I think the idea here is, first of all, what are they? And if you're saying, anytime you start to say, "My trigger is about when you do," that's fine, that's an okay place to start. So, my trigger is like, "You don't sit down with me and watch Netflix with me," or "You're, you know, you don't do the dishes," or "You don't..." I mean, we could go on and on, "You make me take care of the dog all the time." So, what is the feeling behind that? Well, the feeling is my insignificance. The feeling is my not being validated. The feeling of my aloneness. Okay, so I think, again, clarity is the foundation of all power, we got to simplify this. So, this sensation is, "I'm alone." Well, what happens? Because triggers are these ancient injuries, they're activated by our long-term relationships, but they're not entirely

caused by them. Okay. So, the idea then that I could only heal something in that moment, that really is an ancient injury, it often becomes like we're arguing with ghosts.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, yeah, I think it's so important to just not look at your partner and just want to, "Oh, it's all you, you're causing this in me." Like, for me, I'm so much about trying to take personal responsibility for what's going on inside of me, and not kind of trying to blame it on the other person, or that's the convenient hook to hang on. I think it's a very important distinction for people to make, that you are fighting with a ghost from your past.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

And so, the issue is, and I've seen this happen quite a bit, is a lot of times we'll say to our partner... So, let's say I am working with a couple and we'll say, "The problem is you never make dates for us. You don't, you don't put any time into romance." And so, let's say the partner says, "Alright, I hear you, I'm going to do it." Nine times out of 10, let's say that the partner does dates three times, five times, what I hear the other partner come back and say is, "It didn't really scratch the itch," and like, "I'm not saying it didn't make it a little bit better. And I didn't, I didn't appreciate going out on the date or going out for drinks or somebody, you know, him hiring a sitter, but... But I started to realize, or something exactly. To your point, there's something a lot deeper here." And I started to have this, this kind of, it can be this almost sort of restless or frustrating sense of like, "I thought that was gonna be this thing, and then I can feel almost like, 'Oh, that's not the thing. Shoot, what's the thing? I don't know what the thing is." So, a lot of times, I think this is a really, really key piece of the puzzle that I'm going to say here is, when couples come to me, they're sitting on my couch, and I'll say, "Hey, what's going on?" And unequivocally, this is always the universal cry: one person goes, "You don't love me," and the other person goes, "No, you don't love me." One person goes,

"You don't respect me." "No, you don't respect me." "You don't validate, you know, you don't validate me." So, I see this is very important. It's, of course, we must deal with this. Before we deal with this, though, because we want our partners to show this, this idea of unconditional love, right? Whether it exists or not, I think that should be debated and discussed, but we're all after this perfect, radical love, radical acceptance, radical attunement. Great. It's a good goal to have. So, I say, "We're going to get there in one second, I just have one question first. Can you list for me all the evidence, all the ways that you show yourself radical love? How do you show yourself radical respect? How do you show yourself radical attunement?" And almost without fail, that question, there is no answer to the question. People are almost confused. "Wait a minute, that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about how I need my partner to love me more." The idea that someone could love me into a healed relationship with myself is patently false. It cannot happen. It's like a lot of times I'll talk about in my work. And I talk about this in "Energy Rising." There's an emotional math to our life. Sometimes I'll call it an emotional physics. We can't get the math on that to work. So now, watch this. So, I'll say, "Well, you know, the problem here is like, this person doesn't do the dishes. Okay, so if they did the dishes, that would be a living form of evidence that they respected you." "Yes." Great. I'm not denying that. I think, I think when we live with people, especially, we have to learn how to be good, good partners in cohabitation together, but if I can identify in my partner a very explicit activity that, if you did this, if you scheduled the day, if you do the dishes, that shows me radical love, how could I not turn that question on myself and not have an equally concrete answer? In other words, the way I meditate every night, the way I don't just like rush out to Pilates. I really get myself. I talk a lot about energy. When I talk about energy, I'm not talking metaphysically, I'm not talking metaphorically. I'm saying the brain as a neuropsychologist and someone who's done a lot of neuroscience, emotions are a neural electrical energy, your brain is an electrical machine. So, if I'm going to Pilates, I'm not just like rushing out the door, grab my coffee, I'm really thinking to myself,

"Look at this beautiful cup of tea." And I'm smelling the tea and thinking about the way the tea is going to nourish my body. When I go to Pilates, I'm genuinely working to put myself in the energy of gratitude, right? This is such a way of showing self-reverence. This is such a beautiful thing. Like, I'm so grateful for my legs. I'm so grateful for the way my heart beats. I really cultivate this profound intimacy, this living intimacy with myself. When that relationship changes, the whole world looks different.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And people treat you differently. Your partner treats you differently.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Yeah, I mean, I think the world responds like, first of all, it's again, going back to this idea of emotional physics. If I change in my relationship, it is physically impossible for the relationship to stay the same, right? So, you can imagine a relationship is like, you know, people on two ends have an energetic string or an energetic seesaw. If I go up in my energetic value, my self-love, let's call it, as my weight changes, of course, it's going to change the structure and the function of the relationship.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, absolutely.

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I am thrilled to announce my new docu-series called "Heavy," and you can learn more about it at TheHeavyMovie.com and sign up for free. It's a totally free event. And in this landmark series, I interviewed 100 experts on the subject of detoxification, on the subject of toxins, and how these inescapable toxins in our environment are causing our chronic health

issues like brain fog, dementia, chronic fatigue, mitochondrial dysfunction, obesity, resistant weight loss, even diabetes. Our diabetes epidemic is caused by toxins. It's not just the food that you're eating. And we also talked about how toxins interfere in digestion, how toxins are aging you. So many important topics are going to be covered in The Heavy Docu-series. So again, go check it out at TheHeavyMovie.com.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Can we talk about some specific examples? So, a very common trigger in relationships is jealousy. And, can we speak a little bit about that? And, how people can overcome jealousy? I think that can come from, you know, a parent being absent, or a parent being just kind of emotionally absent, being neglectful, or even being abusive. How do you guide people to overcome jealousy?

Dr. Julia DiGangi

I think jealousy, so first of all, I think each of the emotions has their own energetic signal. And I think we don't pay enough attention to emotions in general, and especially difficult emotions. Understandably, difficult emotions, we want to get out of them as quickly as possible. So I think this explains why we have an underdeveloped intelligence about a lot of these difficult emotions. But I think each emotion is an energetic signal. You know, I'll just zoom out for a second and say, the way I tell people to think about their emotions is: emotions are the Google Maps of your life. They are these sacred neural electrical signals that are guiding your body, your behavior, your thoughts through your nervous system and saying at the next intersection, please turn right and immediately depart from this relationship. At the next intersection, please turn right and immediately find a new job because it's a very toxic environment for you to be in. And then what do we do? We just disregard and, you know, the emotions for a while or like, make a U-turn. In 500 feet, make a

U-turn. And we're just out there, totally disregarding this profound intelligence that's evolved through millions and millions of years to guide our behavior in intelligent ways.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Okay. So when jealousy flares up, I think what happens is, I call it a pain sandwich. We're jealous, and then we feel embarrassed or ashamed that we're jealous. So then we feel kind of humiliated because we're probably jealous of someone we think is better. So it's a mess. You can't get out of it like this. So what the frequency of jealousy is really about, and I think it's such a beautiful thing...Actually, I'd like to turn it on its head. Again, a lot of my work is about the counterintuitive. Jealousy is the sense of, "That is so cool what you have. I wish I could have it too." So I'll start with the office, and then I'm happy to take it to the romantic relationship. Someone in my office gets a promotion, or someone has tremendous success with a project that they're doing, or they launch a successful business, and I'm like, "Oh, gosh!" What I'm really saying is there's something about that that I recognize in me. Have you ever watched ...I am this this five-foot-one woman. So like I, when I watch, I come from a big sports family, I can really appreciate professional athletes, but never once had, I've been jealous that I'm not an NFL player. But I have profound like, well, that's amazing to have that capability. When we're jealous of something, what it's really saying is we recognize that we have that capability. You see, it's this emotional intelligence that's calling us home. So I start to say, "Oh, God, someone built this beautiful business or runs their house a certain way or takes care of their health, like, I want that. And I respect that. And I could do that, too." We have got it, we've got to get out of this thing of making jealousy some form of moral indictment. It's actually, and this is the premise of energy rising, and I think it's so beautiful, and this is the reason I was willing to do it. All of these horrible feelings that we try to spend our entire lives getting away from, stress, rage, jealousy, inadequacy, shame, humiliation, are not here to torment you. They are here to lead you home. And if we don't understand

that jealousy, fear, shame is not a punishment, it is a rite of passage, we will stay because our emotions are timeless. So, and I mean this quite neurologically, so emotions in your brain aren't processed in the same parts of the brain that processes linear time. This is why, for example, you can think of something that happened to you when you were 15 years old, either something really good or really bad, and it's almost like time disappears. I guarantee you have a memory like this that you can just access and you're like, no time has passed at all, for better or for worse. And yet, we can't think about what we had for lunch four days ago. It's because when we encode emotional memories, those memories are encoded differently than non-emotional memories. So my point here is just, the things we want, the things we feel, we could, if we don't allow the emotional experiences, we're gonna stay stuck in our life. And I think the thing human beings, well, more than anything is progress, growth, evolution.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, and that makes so much sense. And I always felt like a lot of... even a lot of emotions that people have are, you know, encoded evolutionarily, like survival mechanisms as well, like abandonment, loneliness, jealousy. You know, if you're a woman, and you're with a man who you have two small children with, went out and found another woman that he likes better than you, you and your children starve. And so there's this evolutionary thing, like with jealousy, perhaps, too. It's a survival instinct as well. It's not just, "Oh, you know, Daddy wasn't at home," or, you know, you can have these parental attachment issues as well that can cause jealousy or other emotions or fear of abandonment, but I think some of them can be evolutionary as well. There can even be survival instincts.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Sure. I think, though, you know, I would also I would get really clear about what I was jealous of. So first of all, I would add, if my husband of two small children went off with another woman, I wouldn't just say that jealousy alone. It's also betrayal, right? It's kind of traumatic betrayal. So what am I really jealous of? So first of all, I think my biggest emotion that I'm sitting with is I'm traumatized. And I'm traumatized because of betrayal trauma. The second thing is like, Am I really, is there really something there that I want? And what am I saying I want? So if my husband went off with this other woman, and was also cheating on her, that wouldn't be what I wanted. But what am I really saying I want?? I'm saying, again, I'm not saying I want a certain person, I'm not saying I want a certain situation, I'm saying I want a certain emotional experience. I want to be in a relationship with someone who is safe, who I feel like is attuned to me, someone that I can trust. So we got to get clear, because I think what happens a lot of time is when we don't understand especially our difficult emotions, we focus them on an outcome that even if we were to get that outcome, that outcome would continue to make us sick.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Let's talk about that. Let's explore that. Because you know, that's what a lot of people are looking for in their relationships with safety. They want to feel like they've come home, they want peace and so safety is vital for us. But when there's too much psychological safety, it becomes problematic.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

I don't know if true safety ever becomes problematic. I think what happens is we start to get obsessed with certainty. So we confuse, we start to say like, I need to know where you're at at all times. I need constant checking, I need constant reassurance. So most fundamentally, my expertise is in, academically, it's in end the brain and its relationship to internalizing

psychopathologies and a big thing internalizing psychopathology is anxiety. So you have OCD, PTSD, social anxiety, panic phobia. So the best definition I can give you for anxiety and this, this blows people's minds. Again, very counterintuitive. The best definition for anxiety is a disturbed relationship with certainty. So the more I aggressively pathologically seek certainty, and certainty, again, is like constant checking, obsessing compulsively, constant need for reassurance. And, you know, I work with people like this, and it's a miserable experience for them. So it's not just like, alright, I wish I could stop this. It's so great for me, but it's really bothering my partner. They feel miserable, which is why every, you know, five minutes, or they're sending texts, like constantly throughout the day, or I need to check your phone or give me your passwords, or I'm tracking you on what do you call that thing where you track people, you know, on their phones, it's a very punishing experience for everyone involved. The reason is, because if I don't understand, in neuroscience, we have a construct that we actually call uncertainty tolerance. So the you know, people have different native abilities to tolerate uncertainty. And uncertainty tolerance is a learned skill. But in order to be resilient, resilience isn't about how do I guarantee resilience is about how do I trust in the absence of a world... And the answer is no one, anyone who tells you their positive, their partner will never leave, then die on them cheat on them is not, it's not true. I have a caseload full of people whose husband or spouse or wives or whatever went to work one day, or, you know, and didn't come home because they they died, for example. So the idea that we would be obsessed with certainty in a world that refuses to give it to us, actually, very counterintuitive, but that is a very, very dangerous place to be. So to your question is like how, when does this idea of safety actually become a little bit to use your word dangerous, it's like, when we start saying, in order for me to hold my own emotional posture. In order for me to get through my day, in order for me, I need you to make it okay for me. Now, that's different than like, my partner makes my life easier. Sometimes it's nice to have a best friend to call and lean on. But we've got to be able to say to ourselves, if we want true

resilience, if we want true emotional power, that I have the resources, the optimism, the integrity, the courage to do things, even when they feel tough. I just I just ran, I wrote an essay, The Wall Street Journal, which ran over New Year. So it was a New Year's essay in the Wall Street Journal. And one of the big pieces that I wrote in there is we got to understand the difference between true danger and dislike. Just because I don't like the way something feels in my body. In other words, I'm a little bit anxious, or I'm a little bit stressed, or a little bit overwhelmed, does not mean it's actually dangerous. And if we if we can't introspect or get the help, we need to figure out that difference, we'll constantly feel like it's dangerous, that we'll be frozen and stuck in our own life. And to be stuck chronically, I think is spiritual death.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, it is really, really miserable when you have all of these anxious feelings, and you're expecting your partner to alleviate them or reassure you. And they have to do all these different behaviors XY and Z in order for you to feel okay. I mean, it's just like you're signing up for a losing battle. And so how do we get out of that? How do we kind of come to have awareness of this and our triggers and our own, you know, the things that we need to take responsibility for, and kind of get out of this having our brain compulsively seeking certainty, and creating more flexibility in our relationships?

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Yeah, that's a great question. So there's a million ways that could answer this energy rising. I think what it does really well is gives a lot of very concrete examples, exercise case studies. So it's the new year. So I'll give this is one example. And I'm happy to go into others as well. In order to really get this you I would encourage your listeners to just like, see if this makes sense, like, does it make sense that there is no goal in my life that matters at all if I don't have the feeling? In other words, if I have a marriage, but I feel constantly anxious, or I have

a million dollars, but I constantly feel stressed out, or I have a successful business, but I'm constantly overwhelmed. In other words, the goal means nothing without the feeling because the way the human nervous system works, is that meaning is infused by emotional energy. Okay, so if that makes sense, this next piece will then logically follow so...we've all had situations in our life where or one person, two people are in a marriage, one person loves the marriage and one person can't wait to get out of the marriage. So there's no situation that even means anything outside of the emotions that we ascribe to it. Okay? So, in the new year, I think people like to do stuff like this. So it's like this idea of pick what I call an energetic intention. So ask yourself, you know, in my relationship, what is, I would not just look at my relationship with my partner, I would say kind of across my life, my relationship with myself, I would pick like the top six domains. So my marriage, my kids, my job, my finances, my mental health, my physical health, I'm making these up. So I would take inventory of the domains in my life. And I would say, across all those domains, what's honestly my top intention? So maybe it's connection, or freedom, or spaciousness, or honor, or trust, okay. And then I would ask myself, you know, this conversation that I'm having with you is about emotional power. It's about who do we become in the resistance? Who do we become on the days when people won't make it easy for us? Right? Because on the days when everyone's making it easy for us, those are great. I hope we all have plenty of them. But we have to also understand that we're the leaders of our own lives. So if I say okay, my number one energetic intention for 2024 is trust. Or let's say it's joy, I'm gonna go with joy, I'm feeling in a joyful mood today. So I would say, what happens is people will say, I want this but they say I want it until dot, dot, dot.. I want Joy until my husband walks in, and he's in a bad mood. I want Joy until dot, dot, dot.. my kids will listen, I want Joy until dot, dot, dot, the people on social media don't do anything that piss me off. So we're living in this very conditional state of this emotional energy that we're saying we want in our life, what we have got to do if we want change is to say, joy, no matter what. So people are like, this is

impossible. It's not impossible. But you have to understand that in order to receive an energetic experience in our bodies, like joy, like trust, like freedom, like anything, we have got to prepare our nervous systems for it. And in the practice, this is probably the most massively counterintuitive thing on the planet. In the preparation of our nervous systems, for the feelings we want to experience: intimacy, courage, joy, freedom, it will trigger pain. So for example, if I, especially like any skill, like any skill that when we first start out, it's gonna be wobblier than if I continue to practice this until July, I'm still doing it in 2025. And then I'm doing it in 2029. My husband walks in the door, and he's in a bad mood. And I say, what do I need to do no matter what to choose joy right now? What I need to do right now is get in my car, put on some good music, go to Dunkin Donuts, get an iced coffee and come back home. What I need to do right now is go upstairs to my office and work. What I need to do right now is scoop up... Now the first few times I do this, I'm going to be shaking in the process of going to Dunkin Donuts, like I'm going to be, you know, ruminating about my husband and why he was in a bad mood and why does he go, but I'm still really committing to this energetic intention of joy. If you do this enough. Your entire reality shifts. I've seen it happened so many times. But the second we say, I'm going to choose, because we think we're choosing the 'You can't come in here in a bad mood', we're actually choosing another emotional experience, which is fear, which is frustration. So it really becomes this simple battle when you distill it down. It's not easy, but it is simple. Do I choose joy? Or do I choose fear? Do I choose freedom? Or do I choose shame? Because all of my reality is originating from this emotional energy. It's very clear, I always say clarity is the foundation of all power.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yes, absolutely. And I think like this year, it's a time for you to take control of your emotions take responsibility for how you show up, take responsibility for your joy. No one else has to affect it, no outside person, situation, job. You can take responsibility for yourself

emotionally. Why don't you outline some of the things in your book like some of the chapters and some of the takeaways that you think are really important for the listeners to hear?

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Oh my gosh, that's a great question. So I just want to reiterate like that the premise of the book just because I do, I feel it too. It's so counterintuitive we all wish it was different. I think one of the great existential questions is like, why is there pain, everything from traumatic pain to just every day hurt feelings, right? It's like, Why? I don't know, like, we're gonna have to have that conversation with God or whatever, right? Nobody knows. So it's this idea, though, that the feelings you keep avoiding. So in those moments when I bite down and I have the fight, because I think the fight like will somehow... the only reason I'm fighting is not because I like fighting. It's because I think that through the fight, I will get some resolution that will bring me to safety. So when I don't fight, I feel anxious. When I don't, when I don't go back and forth, but I don't gossip when I don't. In other words, these feelings that it's really evoking anxiety, fear, stress, overwhelm, inadequacy, loneliness, these feelings feel oppressive, I completely understand this. But the thing is, we have got to understand the difference between chronic pain and acute pain. So if I say for example, in couples therapy, we say the couple has the same fight for 50 years. This is true, it's just the brain is a pattern detector. And we're just out there over playing our patterns over and over and over. So if I have this fight for the gazillion time, it has not yet yielded the return I want, but I'm going to do it again, the kind of the holy hallucination, if you will. It's this idea that having this fight will somehow get the return I want. But it doesn't, and it goes on for years and years and years and years. But if I can come into a new relationship with my acute pain, my stress, my anxiety, my fear, my embarrassment, whatever and say, I'm going to meet this in a different way. What starts to happen is when I show myself, wait a second, I have the competence to

not have this fight. I can trust myself enough to say this doesn't feel good for me, I'm not going to have this conversation again. I can even though it's hard at first I can get through the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. If I don't ask for reassurance for the fifth time today. What starts to happen is my nervous system, paradoxically enough, really starts to calm down, I start to feel more peace, more confidence, more empowerment, just more stability. And the power play is the person that is producing the competence and the stability and the peace isn't all y'all out there. It's me. And that feeling of profound self trust, not that it's going to be okay. Not that, it's going to be okay, because no matter what happens, I'm going to help, I'm going to make it okay, I have the resourcefulness. I have different friends. I have different skills. There's lots of people on the planet. Like there's therapists, there's podcasts, we come into a new relationship with our own resourcefulness. And there's a tremendous amount of freedom there.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, and it's so important because the most successful people in relationships or business or what have you, they have mastered emotional regulation. And taking responsibility for themselves. This is an essential skill. It's even the most classic books on emotional IQ. And, you know, the most successful people have emotional intelligence and emotional regulation. So this is not just to benefit your relationships, but just to experience more happiness and joy and less emotional baggage in your life...

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Across your life. Yeah. So energy rising is broken down into eight, I call them eight neuro energetic codes. And each is like a blueprint for how to master your emotional energy and your relationships. The first five are really about your relationship with your own brain and your own nervous system. And then, you know, it's like how to build, you know, the brain is a

pattern detector. So one of the codes is called, for example, build your power pattern. So how do we really kind of calibrate our brains to build this very efficient pattern that leads us to more empowerment. And then the last three codes are about our relationship with others. So it's kind of this great roadmap. I think it really is an extraordinary resource for people who are interested in emotion and relationships. Yeah,

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, it's so easy for us to give our power away to other people, and kind of blame them for our emotions. And it's just like the most fundamental thing that people need clarity on I think that we need to remind ourselves of so much is if you give your... your saying this person is responsible for my bad mood or my jealousy or you're triggered by different things, then you're saying you don't have the power or the control to fix that. It belongs to this other person and this is just fundamentally wrong thinking.

Dr. Julia DiGangi

It's rooted in the external environment and then even when they agree, I still had this sense of oh my god, the other shoe is going to drop because they agree with me on Tuesday, but tomorrow, it's going to be Wednesday, and then what then, whereas if I'm like, I'm okay on Tuesday, I'm probably also going to be okay on Wednesday. To your point that you just raised, the fifth code in Energy Rising is called the source code. And it really, I think, does a beautiful job of in a non judgmental way of evaluating a lot of the lessons we got in early childhood. So our parent child relationship, our own childhood is the source code. In other words, it set the pattern, it set kind of the coding and set the parameters for how we understand the world. It's astounding what happens to the brain in early development. In year zero through three, more than a million neural connections are being made every single second. And what we don't have at this period of life is linear language. So a lot of

times people will say, I don't remember, well, what they really mean is I don't have a verbal memory store because the language centers weren't available yet. But the brain had many memory systems, somatic memory, procedural memory, you know, so this idea that, so we're learning from the second word born about the most important lessons in life! What does power mean? What does love mean? Who comes to me when I'm in need? who ignores me? How do I get attention? What's safe, what's not safe? So then we carry these codes, here's the ghosts. We carry these codes into our adult relationships, we carry it into, you know, our interactions on social media, we certainly carry it into our homes, in our jobs. So a lot of times we get tangled, and I talk a lot about leadership. And I don't mean leadership, like I'm running a 14,000 person company. I mean it in a very agnostic way. We're all leading our lives. And if we're doing it in an extraordinary way or a mediocre way. That's a that's a different question. But we're all leading our lives. So the most formative leadership lessons of our lives came from our parents. And so there's some really, I think, amazing examples, case studies in that code that sort of tell people how to work with their own source code to transform some of the patterns they don't think are serving them in 2024.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Fantastic. Well, Julia, thank you so much for joining us on the Myers Detox podcast, it was so good. I love talking to you. Such a good interview, so insightful. And so tell us where can we get your book and tell us about your website as well, where we can learn more about your work?

Dr. Julia DiGangi

Yeah, so I'm on this planet. If I had a million lifetimes to live, I would live it on this altar of human pain and human power. So I'm happy to connect. My book is called Energy Rising, it came out this September, you can get it anywhere you find your books, and I would love to

connect with people. My website is <https://drjuliadigangi.com/> And then I'm on all the social media at Dr. Julia DiGanji. Except Facebook, Facebook. I'm just Julia DiGanji

Dr. Wendy Myers

Okay, fantastic. Well, Julia, thanks so much for joining us on the show. And everyone, thanks so much again for tuning into the Myers Detox podcast where I bring experts from around the world talking about all kinds of different topics, including emotional detox, and emotionally detox your relationships and yourself too. So thanks so much for tuning in. And I'll talk to you next week.

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