

## **S4E60 10 mins with George - The importance of mindset and support**

Geoff Allix

Welcome to the third edition of 10 Minutes with George.

George Jelinek

Thanks for having me.

Geoff Allix

Hello, and welcome again, George Jelinek. So, we've got a few questions again. And the first one I want to ask is that there are lots of different ways that people might be changing their lifestyle when they follow the program. Why do you think that some people find the program restricting, whereas others seem to adopt it with it without any problems?

George Jelinek

I guess this relates to an earlier session we did Geoff, when we talk about cheating. I guess it's a really for me, it's around mindset. It's around the approach that people bring to it. And if people have a sense that someone is trying to force them or make them follow certain rules, or that sort of authoritarian approach, then I mean, my natural instinct is to rebel against that. And I find that a difficult thing. It's a very different mindset, to approach it in the way that we've always intended. At OMS, which is that: here's the science, this is what we make of it. Here are the recommendations which we offer as choices for you. Now, you choose what's going to suit your lifestyle best. And if it's framed in that way, and people approach it that way, then it's actually hard to imagine how that can be restrictive, because some people will say, "Well, look, I don't have time in my life and meditation I won't do that one. The diet I can manage, but I'm going to, you know, have some lean meat once a month" or something like that, that's a personal choice that a person makes, if they're if they feel there's pressure on them from some external authority, then I can understand why they'd say, "Well, actually, dammit, you know, no one's going to tell me what to do with with my food choices." So I think we've always tried to be clear about that, in the messaging in OMS, that this is a program of recommendations of choices that we're offering people, but they're all adults, they can all approach it in their own way and make the choices that they

feel best suit them. Of course, the science is the critical bit of that the science is to date, and it's not perfect yet. But the more of it you do the the more likely you are to have a good outcome. So you've got to always bear that in mind when you're making new choices.

Geoff Allix

Doing something is better than doing nothing.

George Jelinek

And the research backs that up. Exercise is a classic example really. So while we recommend three to five times a week, 30 minutes per session. The research of the HOLISM study and other studies shows that if you do, if you start from a base of not doing any exercise, then doing anything gives you enormous benefit straightaway. Even 10 minutes of walking a day compared to doing nothing, you're going to get significant benefit. So while the the optimal benefit seems to arise at around the level we recommend, people are still going to get benefit at lesser levels. And that's a choice they might make for all sorts of personal reasons that are unique to them.

Geoff Allix

And I realize some of these questions actually might be out of your field of expertise and maybe more aligned to a psychologist. But is there some ways that people might change their mindset to find the program liberating rather than constrict?

George Jelinek

It's interesting. It's in the sense that you say it's more in the realm of psychology and I would, if you're going through those kinds of struggles, I would really thoroughly recommend talking to someone like a psychologist. And personally, when I first was diagnosed with MS, I had quite a number of sessions with a psychologist to help me understand what I was going through what my emotions were about how that was playing out in the context of my life. I think a lot of those struggles that that people have do reflect an inner struggle around all sorts of things in their past or their present, some of which they may not be aware of, and psychologists obviously are very good at sorting that kind of thing out again. The other thing I'd say is peer support is great for people who are struggling Because let's face it all of us struggle with things at different times in our lives. And there's nothing more helpful in many ways than someone who's been on the same journey

and has worked out how to deal with it. And I think reaching out for some peer support is really helpful too.

Geoff Allix

Obviously, we don't have Overcoming MS retreats anymore, mostly due to the pandemic, the COVID pandemic. When you did have those retreats? What sort of mindset shift would you see in most people from the start to the end of the retreat, and sort of just as an idea of what people are aiming for and what they hope hoping to achieve? Because I think people who've been on retreats did find it a sort of life changing experience.

George Jelinek

It's always a very clear shift in the group, some people who are already a bit on board or even some completely on board, but there's always people who turn up, frequently partners who have a particular sort of skeptical or negative mindset before they walk through the door. And they're always, of course, the most fun to have on the retreat, because watching them learn to deal with that over the week, and changing over the week is one of the great joys of of facilitating those retreats. It's very unusual for the whole group not to leave with, without that sort of sense of wanting to embrace the program, embrace doing things for their own health. I mean, we've had wonderful anecdotes like a dairy farmer, who's come in with his wife, who also works on the farm with him, and she's got MS. And, and he's stopped at a restaurant on the way to the treat to have a T bone steak. And to order one for his wife, just in case, it's the last one they ever have, you know, so they really enjoy it. So there's that kind of mindset coming in. And to watch these people by the end of the week, number one, in his case, completely supporting his wife and the choices she's making. But also starting to question his own adherence to this kind of meat-heavy, meat-rich diet, when he's also got a history of type two diabetes and some cardiovascular disease that he actually now understands, will improve a lot if he changes his own diet. So a lot of that skepticism and negative viewpoint tends to dissipate, partly, I think, due to the credible science that's presented, but also partly because of that shared experience where everyone is struggling with some aspect, as they walk through the door, and they wouldn't be there, essentially, if they weren't. And there's that sort of combined group experience of starting to actually embrace health and embracing one's own health as a sort of key goal in your life, you know, at the risk of sort of going on too long. I know. I was into goal setting and things at the time that I was diagnosed that was at the age of 45. And I looked back through a number of my sort of goal setting

documents that I produced for myself, and I always left health blank. Now, what does that tell you? Everything else was filled in work, leisure, finance, you name it, but health was always blank. So it was an interesting wake up call for me to get a serious illness.

Geoff Allix

I think that's probably in terms of goal setting. I think that's almost everyone. I think if you if you put if you give someone in their 20s 30s 40s what goals they want to achieve in life, they will talk about their career, they'll talk about their family. I doubt anyone puts down be healthy.

George Jelinek

It's funny, because once you're challenged in that sphere, suddenly for many people, it becomes the critical issue. It becomes the most important thing in their lives and going from not even making it on the chart to suddenly being number one. It's a really it's an interesting change in one's life because suddenly everything else reorders around that that new hierarchy that you're setting up in your life and it's useful to have some sort of guide through that process and have a few other people who are on a similar journey that you can bounce off and that's what I think the retreats are at least partially why they're so helpful

Geoff Allix

Thank you very much for joining us again on 10 minutes with George