

Ep #45: The Miracle of Health with Dr. Uche Odiatu



Full Episode Transcript

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Allison Watts, DDS

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Welcome to *Practicing with the Masters* for dentists with your host, Dr. Allison Watts. Allison believes that there are four pillars for a successful, fulfilling dental practice: clear leadership, sound business principles, well-developed communication skills, and clinical excellence. Allison enjoys helping dentists and teams excel in all of these areas. Each episode she brings you an inspiring conversation with another leading expert. If you desire to learn and grow and in the process take your practice to the next level, then this is the show for you. Now, here's your host, Dr. Allison Watts.

Allison: Welcome to *Practicing with the Masters* podcast. I'm your host, Allison Watts, and I'm dedicated to bringing you masters in the field of dentistry, leadership, and practice management to help you have a more fulfilling and successful practice and life.

Uche, we're excited to have you tonight. I'll just do a little formal introduction and then we'll just jump in. So, Uche is, he's a dentist and he's a certified personal trainer, a certified lifestyle coach, professional member of the American College of Sports Medicine, and a co-author of the books *The Miracle of Health* and *Fit for the Love of It!*

He's a lifelong athlete, practicing dentist, licensed Zumba instructor, and a dad of four. He's been an invited guest on 400 radio and TV shows including ABC's 20/20 and Canada AM. He's also done over 500 presentations in Canada, the US, England, Europe, and the Caribbean. You can learn more about him on www.FitDentist.com.

So what I've seen of Uche, I've seen him speak a couple of times, and it was super fun and interactive. I don't know what it's going to be like on the phone, Uche, if you're going to have us up and jumping around and stuff. [Laughs]

Uche: You never know, you never know. [Laughs]

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Allison: But I also know that your wife is quite fit and your team looks like they're quite fit. Like you inspire them to do some of these things at your work. Last time I saw you at Pankey, I was like, "I'll have whatever he's having." You just radiate energy and excitement about what you do. I'm really excited to have you here tonight.

Uche: I love sharing and I don't want to keep this a secret if I feel there's something I know or a skillset I do, naturally, or I've just honed over the last 38 years. I started working out when I was 14, certified as a trainer for the last 11 years. But my wife and I have been married 16 years and she's Miss Fitness Canada, Miss Fitness Universe. She's also a physical education teacher. So fitness, nutrition, just weaves its way through every part of our life.

We do a lot of these things almost naturally now, or unconsciously, like in Stephen Covey, you go from unconscious incompetence, to conscious incompetence, to conscious competence, to unconscious competence, which is the highest level. I'm sure a lot of your dentists and yourself are so good at what they do, it comes naturally. So when you get that kind of unconscious competence in an area, it becomes effortless, it just becomes natural.

Many times, sometimes the person who does things naturally has a hard time chunking it down to make it seem doable. My gift, the way I like to share and lecture and write, is to make it appear easy, which many times it is. But also to break it down into easy steps, so people can have success really early, and they can enjoy the benefits without having to wait until they get the six-pack, or they don't have to wait until they've run a marathon. They can do it the first meal that they decide to eat with all the food groups and multiple servings of vegetables. They can celebrate that rather than waiting for some far-off trophy to get.

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Allison: That's awesome. I've been on that before, where it's like you're working really hard, and feel like you're getting nowhere. I guess it depends on what your goals are.

Uche: True. It's like a dentist who just wants to have more and more new patients and more crowns. At some point, why can't you have some kind of maintenance area, where every now and then you plateau? Plateauing doesn't mean a bad thing, it just means—I wouldn't even say it's coasting, you're saying "I'm very happy with where I am, and I want to let this stay in a very steady fashion. I'm going to work on my other areas."

I was talking to a prosthodontist who comes into our office weekly about how many dentists, or how many health care providers aim to be excellent in that clinical area. They're also good in their community. They're also good parents, or a good son or brother or sister. They're also physically fit, they're also financially taken care of their debts and putting away things for their future. And they also read fiction and nonfiction books, and they have a spiritual component.

I guess that's what Pankey talks about, all the spheres, but it's something I guess to go for, that's why you can't always ... I believe even athletes, you can't improve every part of your game at once. You can almost work only on one area at a time, to really get proficient, before you move on to another area. The fitness, I guess, is some kind of esoteric ... and I think a lot of people who aren't fit really make it seem in their minds that it's something very hard to do, so they just postpone it for some other time. You don't want to be sidelined by an injury or a chronic disease, so being proactive is really a great way to go.

Allison: Yeah. There's kind of a buzzword now about sustainability of our food and everything, but I think dentists, I've found, because I'm 46 now ... Gosh, there could have been some things that I could have done earlier that would have made my

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career... Dentistry is hard, it's stressful physically—I mean, I'm sorry, stressful emotionally and all that—but it's also stressful physically.

Uche: I agree. If you had a good day, if you prepped a full mouth case so you've done multiple units or even a new patient exam. When you do a new patient exam, you're on your best behavior, you're putting your best foot forward. It's like having your in-laws over for the first time. The house is perfect, like everything is, you've got the music on, the apple pie scent is going through the house. So a new patient exam can be intense if you want everything to appear perfect at the same time.

I'm a big believer that dentistry is not only intellectually challenging, emotionally and physically, but my take on it, when you look at how much having a really strong physical foundation leaves you with. I love that JFK quote, John Kennedy, he said that physical fitness is the foundation of all excellence. Basically which is kind of annoying, when you think of, I thought, good perio was. I thought having good bone structure, and having good occlusion is the foundation. No, physical fitness is.

Because if you have a patient who is a shift worker, who works four nights in a row, and they eat a lot of refined carbohydrates, they sit at a desk the whole time. Let's say they're a telephone operator and they work nights. They sleep maybe four hours a day. Anyone who eats at nighttime, during the evening, has been shown that digestion slows at nighttime.

So if someone is eating throughout the night during their shift, digestion is poor, they're more likely to have reflux and acid. Which means it's going to create havoc with enamel. They're more likely to have dysfunctional breathing because of sitting when they should be sleeping. They have a thing called

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thoracic spinal dysfunction by leaning over so the brain's not getting oxygen.

They're not sleeping well during the day when they should be awake, because now it's the shift is to be in bed during the day when they should be up. The body is not getting oxygen, which means neurotransmitters don't get set right, and this is a patient now coming to you to get an implant or connective tissue graft. So they're not going to heal well. I always say, "Poor sleepers make poor healers."

At the same time, you have a dentist who's got a new baby at home. If you have a dentist who is just newly married. If you have a dentist who just came back from a week vacation in Kathmandu, Nepal, giving back to dentistry. So you have a dentist who's been burning a candle at both ends with being in a different time zone. You have a patient that's overtired, not sleeping well, and not eating well, those two together don't make for a good treatment, no matter how excellent the person's skills are and about how well-intentioned the patient is.

So physical fitness, being well-rested, well-fed, well-hydrated, no injuries, breathing deeply, stress-managed, definitely lays a good foundation for excellent dental work and also excellent treatment planning.

Allison: So the question for me then is, "Okay, that sounds great, Uche." And I know you're a dentist, so you know what it's like. Even drinking water, I'm not going to keep a bottle of water in the operatory because that's gross. So I find myself, and I know better, I know how much I should be drinking, and I know how good it is for me, and I still find myself many days in the practice not drinking enough water. I'd love for you—I mean, we have a good 45 minutes or whatever to tell us—is that something that's a reasonable question?

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Uche: I love to start with water, I was thinking I'd start with some kind of interval training, or compounds or multiple sets, and how do they work, and their heart rate maximum. So you know what, let's leave that for another day. We could talk about it today, but I think foundationally—when I think of the pillars of health, staying hydrated is definitely right up front.

You know, within four days of not drinking water, we die. So it's definitely very important. I think I described this on a Facebook post, and I invite any listener in the future, the ones live now, to friend me on Facebook, only because my wife and I, we share posts all the time. Little tidbits and strategies and insider information on how people can get fit really easily.

One of them being just to stay hydrated. Most people know they should drink six to eight glasses of water a day. And this is actually from research and a study done back in the 70s. They talked about how much moisture the body gives off in a day. Through breath, bowel movements, and how much saliva is made and urine. And basically it amounts to about two liters, or two quarts if you want, which is about eight to ten glasses.

Basically what happens though, if you're not putting fresh water into your body, the body is great at recycling. So when people say they don't drink water, I'll often say, "Yes you are." And they'll say, "Uche, how's that? I don't put any water in. I just eat boxed food, I eat some fruit." Obviously, there's some moisture-rich food that does count, but the health purists say it should be clear water.

Any liquid that's dark or has some color to it, has some solute. Which means the body, the liver and the stomach, has to digest it. So clear, filtered water is much easier for the body to clean and utilize and help digest and clean out the person better than any colored liquid, tea and coffee being included. A lot of medical doctors and experts will often say coffee and tea can

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be included in your water intake. It can be included in your fluid intake, but water as most high-end athletes know, it's a separate quality to think about.

But if the human body is not getting the water it needs, the body is very smart. It needs a certain amount of fluid in the body. So what it does, it lowers the urine flow, but at the same time though, there's one organ in the body where the body scavenges water from. I'm not sure if I shared that in the Pankey lecture, the keynote two months ago in September.

Allison: I don't remember that.

Uche: Okay, so most people when they're dehydrated, their eyelids feel dry, or their mouth feels kind of sticky, or their skin feels dry. But the number one place your body scavenges water from that's important for reabsorption, is the colon. I'll often get people looking at me with a blank stare, like, "So, big deal, colon." I'm thinking, what is in the colon? And then people think, "Oh." I say, "Yep. Fecal matter or poop, may you say."

While the body is very smart, the colon is actually for reabsorption of water. The body reabsorbs water from the fecal matter, believe it or not, Allison. So you can run for the glass of water right after I talk about this. The body is reabsorbing water from a dehydrated body.

If a dentist has had a cup of coffee first thing in the morning, hasn't had breakfast, has worked through lunch, and now it's two o'clock in the afternoon and they haven't had one glass of water, the human body is reabsorbing water from the fecal matter. And that water, that is as it squeezes out of the fecal matter, that water is filtered obviously and obviously it's very good filter.

However, think of that water as being reingested and reabsorbed into the body. What it does, it goes back into the

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body. And blood is 95 percent water, so blood is one of the first things the body sends it to, because blood is the river of life. Also that same filtered water that's in the fecal matter becomes your tears, your saliva.

What I'm trying to do now is create a picture so vile that people are thinking, after this call, I'm getting a glass of water because you can either drink water down the hatch up there, or you can take it from down there. So as much as I'm being a little graphic, the true physiological story, it makes almost every audience or every reader think, "Oh my god, if that had been explained to me in grade twelve, I would have been drinking two quarts or eight glasses of water a day every day since I first heard that story."

So my gift to the listeners now and in the future, if you visualize where that water is coming from, it's coming from your colon. If you're not drinking anywhere from six to ten glasses a day. Depends on your energy output, your body weight, obviously, and also if you live in a hot climate or a cold climate. But we need clear filtered water, so the fecal matter can stay moist and leave your body like it should one to two times a day. And you do not want your body scavenging water from your poop throughout the day to refurbish your saliva, your tears, your perspiration, and your blood.

Allison: No. That doesn't sound very good. It's for many reasons.

Uche: On many different levels it's gross.

Allison: Yeah it is. I don't want to totally talk about water the whole time, but I do have a question. What about all the stuff that's going on right now about the alkaline water? You know, supposedly we're drinking more water than we ever drank in our lives and we're more dehydrated than we've ever been. Like the quality of water, what about that?

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Uche: Good question, and I think a lot of times really smart people like dentists, multiple degrees, hygienists, college, multiple degrees, we overthink things. And we have a thing called “paralysis by analysis.” The minute a dentist gets his or her hands on a possible to-do list, right away they think of, “I’ve got to get some evidence-based information. I’ve got to look at some peer-reviewed journals. I’ve got to look at Google, I’ve got to ask my doctor, I’ve got to ask my trainer, I’ve got to ask my psychic, I’ve got to ask my spouse.”

By the time they’ve done their research, over six weeks of research, their fecal matter is like squeezed dry. So I say, stop being so intimately mired in the esoteric.

Allison: Just drink the water.

Uche: And just start drinking water. Flat water. I’m a big believer in keeping it simple. So, filtered is best. So, tap water is fine, I’m fine with fluoride in the water. I’m like the ADA, they talk about fluoride in water is totally fine.

I do get patients asking about fluoride in the water and all these other things. I’m thinking like, “Do you exercise?” They say, “No.” I say, “How much do you sleep a night?” They say, “Five hours.” I say, “It’s not enough.” I say, “Do you love your job?” They say, “No.” I say, “Do you eat fast food?” They say, “Four times a week.”

And I’ll say, “Do you like where you live?” They say, “I hate my street, where I’m living right on the corner.” “Do you have a pet that you stroke and increase your oxytocin at the nighttime?” “No, I don’t have any cats or dogs. And I hate my kid’s snake.” I said, “Well, fluoride is the least important thing for you to get healthy.” There are so many foundational things to get healthy, other than worrying about fluoride in water.

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I don't mean to disparage people who really want to get some answers about that. But when you think of exercise, posture, nutrition, sleep quality, stress management, and being happy. They've done studies where they've just shown that people who love their job and love their family and are content overall have less C-reactive protein in their body than someone who's perfectionistic, never good enough person. This is some research and that makes sense to me.

Because perfectionists are people—it might be a compliment when our patients call us a perfectionist—but a perfectionist means you're never happy. Never happy means you're at a chronic level frustrated to the psyche, or to emotions, being frustrated is a sign to your body that it has some slight uneasiness to it, or disease.

Anytime you're uneasy or frustrated or annoyed, our ancient bodies raise levels of cortisol. People who are chronically irritated, chronically irritated, chronically frustrated, chronically not happy, have higher levels of ambient cholesterol—sorry, cortisol. Cortisol is a breakdown hormone in the body. Anytime you have breakdown, you have inflammation, because the body needs to use inflammation as part of the demolition and the rebuilding process.

So people who are perfectionists or chronically annoyed, have higher levels of C-reactive protein in their body. And C-reactive protein, 80 percent of it's made in the liver. Anytime someone has heart disease, or has a cancer diagnosis, many times C-reactive protein is elevated. So mood and emotions have effect on our bodies. So being content and happy definitely has a part to play in living a long, happy life.

Allison: Interesting. I know that, that a different kind of work, works. Not like exercise. Although you said to me the other day, that exercise does also affects the brain. We know that, right, we all

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know that exercise affects our mood and our emotions. How does that work? Is that a pretty direct correlation, or are you a proponent of personal growth kind of stuff? Or, all of the above?

Uche: I like that. I'm glad you asked, because many times we think that exercise is strictly just for aesthetics, it's strictly just for looking great for your Facebook picture. It's strictly great for your 20th high school reunion, you want to get in shape to show all those people that you still got it. But I'm saying that exercise has a huge value added when it comes to your brain power.

There's a book called *Spark* by John Ratey, he's a Harvard-trained psychiatrist who is a professor at Harvard who wrote a book called *Spark* eight years ago. In it, it's called *Spark* because it's the new science of exercise revolution. What it basically comes down to, it says the people who exercise on a regular basis have more of this thing called BDNF, brain-derived neurotrophic factor. It's a neurotransmitter, or neurotrophic factor—so B, D in Dog, N in Norman, F as in Factor—so people who exercise have more of this neurotransmitters called BDNF. The analogy he made, he said it's like Miracle Grow. Miracle Grow, being if you have two plants of equal rain, sun, and food, the plant with the Miracle Grow fertilizer will grow thicker, bushier, and faster.

What happens is BDNF, brain-derived neurotrophic factor, increases the communication ability between neurons. There are studies that show, and scientists show that every neuron communicates with 10,000 other neurons in a complex web. The brain being the most complex computer in the known universe.

So people who have more of this BDNF from exercise, there's no other way to get it, you can't get it from a transplant, from a drug, from anything else, from food you can't get it from. What

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they've shown is exercisers have more of this Miracle Grow-like neurotrophic factor in it.

That's why when you do more studies you realize that 85 percent of CEOs are exercisers or forced to exercise. All the U.S. presidents exercise. The sad thing is, it's the complete reverse in the general population. In the general population, only less than 15 to 10 percent of people exercise. With the average household income in the United States being \$50,000, the average CEO compensation of a Fortune 500 company is anywhere from 1 to 70 million, if we look at some of the American Express CEO compensation.

When I look to increasing my productivity and my brain power, I don't think of eating more fish oil, which is a big part of having your brain work better, I'm thinking of exercising. I'm thinking of moving my body, getting oxygen to my brain, getting oxygen to my heart, and leveraging the power of exercise to increase my brain power. That's why I did a course in Washington, DC a few weeks ago, called Power Up Your Brain with Burpees. It was a little bit of old-school, because burpees was just a metaphor. But it was all about the power of exercise to increase productivity, increase your reaction time.

They've shown that men who are 55 have a slower reaction time than men in their 30s. Fighter pilots often choose a younger fighter pilot to fight the battles rather than the older ones. But a 55-year-old who exercises can have equal reaction time to someone 10 to 15 years younger.

So you can imagine now as a dentist, whether you're finishing a temporary crown and it's caught in your glove, and as the temporary flies up in the air, and the patient looks up at you with sheer horror, you're able to grab it with your ninja-like grasp. And not look so silly as when that temporary goes flying

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as it gets caught in the burr in your gloves and it goes flying into a plant on the windowsill and you've got to start all over again.

Having increased reaction time, having increased productivity, having increased Miracle Grow in your brain, can definitely sustain healthier conversations but also better treatment planning, better working on the fly with putting out fires in the office. At the same time, having genius in your conversations with your teenage son, or your spouse that wants 110 percent of you when you come home at nighttime.

Allison: What about the other chemicals that exercise ... like doesn't dopamine and serotonin, doesn't it affect a bunch of different chemicals too?

Uche: Oh yeah, there's one called phenylethylamine. Phenylethylamine is, PEA it's called, P-E-A. And that is elevated for about 30 to 45 minutes after a workout. So phenylethylamine is the hormone that raises when—and I'm not being sexist—but a woman eats chocolate or has chocolate, that so feel-good sensation that a woman will often get if they love chocolate. It's phenylethylamine that rises in the body. So after you exercise, a person who enjoys exercise, will have higher levels of phenylethylamine, PEA, P-E-A, in their body after.

The other hormone that increases during exercise is endorphins. Everyone's heard of endorphins and all the listeners and future listeners have heard of the word endorphins. Endorphins are feel-good hormones that surge through an exerciser's body.

I get that myself, like I'll think, "I don't want to go out for a walk, and I haven't been out all day, it's cold." And anytime I think of maybe I should exercise, this is my little tidbit, Allison, in terms of a tip for the listeners. The minute you think, "I wonder if I should go to the gym, I wonder if I should get outside the house

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to move,” the minute I think “maybe should I?” I start walking toward the door. And as I walk toward the door, I can’t go back at that point in my mind. I put the shoes on. And then I’m outside the door.

And then I think, “You know what, I’m outside the door with my shoes on, hopefully I have clothes on, okay. I’m going to start walking. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty minutes.” In the first few steps, thinking, “It’s cold, it’s late, why am I doing this? It’s 9:30 at night.” But about two minutes into the walk, endorphins start flooding through you. So it doesn’t just happen five miles into the run.

They actually have shown that endorphins start almost immediately. It’s feel-good hormones that flood your body. Those feel-good hormones basically also lessen your pain interpretation. They know this because people have endorphins flooded during a race when they’re really happy. They won’t feel the pain of the stitch in their side, or the cramp, just because they’re in their first marathon, they’re in front of 8,000 people and they’ll finish the race and then they’ll collapse after. The endorphins give you a chance to not feel the discomfort of running.

What they’ve shown is, and I just heard this just last week from Laura Pollock, she’s a dietitian and a master of science in nutrition. She said there was a study done where they had people lift weights and they had a dumbbell set up, and they had people lifting weights. They were measuring their endorphins inside them, and they acknowledged they had a certain amount of ... they were flooded with endorphins.

Then they had the same group, I’m not sure if it was done IV or injection or how they were taking it, but they had the chemical or the prescription medication called Nyloxin, which is an endorphin blocker in the body, an opioid blocker. So these

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people are exercising, the same people then who love their dumbbell curling.

When they had Nyloxin go through their body, Nyloxin blocks opioids, they actually blocks endorphins. Well the people who are lifting weights with Nyloxin inside them, four repetitions into the study, could not stand the pain of the muscles contracting and the weight coming up and touching their shoulder. They were floored at how quick lack of endorphins could make a person ache during their workout.

I lift weights. I was working out today, I had a 45-pound dumbbell in each hand and I'm doing dumbbell curls. Sure it hurts, but at the same time I'm feeling good. I see the muscles moving, I'm feeling good, it's about an hour and a half out from my first patient and I'm working out hard this morning, because it was my morning off. So if I had Nyloxin in my body, the endorphins would be blocked and at that point then, what I'm having doing is I'm going to feel every pang of that muscle being worked. And I would stop.

Endorphins are a huge part of that feel-good sensation that a regular exerciser will have. Even for the new exerciser. If someone doesn't walk every day, Allison, and they went out for a walk tonight, and they walked five minutes, it's really hard not to start feeling good just having moved four or five minutes, especially after being sitting all day or working chair-side and leaning over a patient. Even with your loupes on, the stress of not breathing deeply causes muscle adhesions and cramps in the body that are totally taken away when someone sits up straight or stands up and goes for a walk in the fresh nighttime air.

Allison: So that's the kind of stuff you're saying that's just simple little things that we can do. Just get up and move. Just take a walk. I know it's silly, because I've been through times when I made

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exercise part of my life, and whatever's important to you, you make it happen. And it has been important to me, but it's also been something where I was just so exhausted it's hard to make myself get up early in the morning.

I'm curious how you've been able to—I know it's a part of your life, but maybe not speaking from your perspective, but other people you've seen. I don't know, most of these people on this call are probably the healthy ones, we're probably preaching to the choir. I actually know several of them, and some of them are pretty healthy. I'm just thinking of day to day, how to, what about the different flexibility is one part and strength is another and cardio is another. Working all that in, if you could give us some pointers.

Uche: Great question. First, I think everyone who doesn't exercise or leads a sedentary life, or used to be an athlete when they were younger in college and no longer ... ten, twenty years later, and they have a belly, they have the skinny legs, they have rotator cuff problem or a knee replacement. They're thinking, "You know what, it takes too much time and I don't have an hour and a half every day. So why bother?" A lot of former athletes think unless I have ten guys or ten women with me, if I don't have an hour and a half, if I don't have my cleats on, if I don't have my stadium stairs to run, I'm not going to bother. I call it the all or nothing phenomenon.

A lot of dentists, because we're so intense, we so want to do the best thing for our patients, we also so want to have everything complete and perfect before we exercise. That all or nothing phenomenon will also lend itself to thinking, "Why bother? It's eight o'clock at night. All I have at the gym is 20 minutes." Or, "Why bother, there's construction at the end of the road, I can't ride my bike through it, I'm not going to bother."

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But I'm a big fan of less is more. The new research has shown that with interval training, five to seven minutes, as much as ten, is equivalent to 50 minutes of steady-state exercise. The neat thing about that is, that actually studies as far back as the 60s.

It was Professor Tabata, T-A-B-A-T-A, Professor Tabata, and it was a Japanese study. He took athletes and he had them exercise at interval training, which is high intensity, low intensity, high intensity, low intensity. They did it on a stationary bike or a treadmill, I think it was. They had them run on an incline, lots of resistance on the treadmill for 30 seconds, and then after 30 seconds they ran flat again with low resistance. And they did 30 with high intensity then 30 with low intensity. Back and forth for five minutes. And they had a whole other group that they trained 50 minutes. And they did also three to four times a week.

At the end of four months, they found out that the intensity, or the interval training group, had a better increase in VO2 max and cardiac output and stroke volume than the people who did steady state exercise. They've now shown that less is more. Meaning that, you don't have to work out for an hour to have the benefits that a lot of dentists think you do.

If you can't do an hour, trust me, five to seven minutes has equal ability to improve your heart, your VO2 max—VO2 max is a classic parameter or metric of how well your body consumes oxygen, distributes oxygen and utilizes oxygen in your body. And they've shown that people who have a good VO2 max have a better quality, longer life. So VO2 max is a classic metric to see.

If we took all the listeners, myself, and you included, Allison, and measured our VO2 max, all weight and age being put aside, they can predict the length and the quality of our lives

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simply from who had the highest VO2 max. Who has the ability to use oxygen and take it in and utilize it and give off CO2 more efficiently than the other person? That's why I mention it in my lectures. Oxygen, or your ability to intake air in a healthy manner, is one of the best ways to improve your health immediately. Just by taking a deep diaphragmatic breath in.

I'm a fan of interval training in terms of its ability to, especially for a busy person. We talk about 65 percent of us don't have time to exercise. Well, interval training takes that excuse away because as little as five to seven minutes as the research has shown is equivalent to 50 minutes of steady state cardio. You don't have to run on that treadmill for an hour anymore to increase your VO2 max. How does that sound?

Allison: Yeah, that's awesome. And I have the little Tabata app on my phone and it's really cool and I sometimes, actually pretty often, don't think about using it. But I do do some interval stuff. It's just a consistency thing too. I don't know about anybody else on the call, but for me it's...

Uche: If anyone wants to jump in and ask a question, I'm totally fine. I know sometimes we have some experts also too. Many times you'll have an expert but there's thousands of couch potatoes. Or you have an expert whose son is 300 pounds and fourteen years of age.

Many times being expert doesn't mean everyone in your life is also healthy. Many times being an expert almost creates a distance between your spouse or your brother or your son, and it's more challenging to get a 300-pound son or daughter healthy. Especially if dad is a marathon runner and mom is an Iron Man or triathlete. If someone has any questions they'd like to come in with, Allison, I'm totally willing to share at this point, if they like.

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Allison: Yeah. If you guys, I wanted to say that, if you guys have a question or comment, push *2. I guess really what I'm wondering is, like, developing healthy habits. You talked about the pillars too, that it's not just exercise and water. The breath I think is an interesting thing, I think a lot of people don't breathe well, right. I think we hold our breath or shallow breathe all day. I know I can speak for myself that I've done that. Especially doing dentistry and you're doing fine things with your hands. I would think breath, water, exercise, diet, sleep.

Uche: I'm going to leave you with seven. You've got a bunch in there. So air is number one. One time my daughter asked me, "What's the most valuable thing on the planet?" She asked if it was diamonds, I said no. She goes, "Is it oil?" I said, no. "Is it mama?" I said, "I've been away from mom for three days," I said, "but I can't be more than a minute without oxygen."

And my nine-year-old daughter looked with shock, she said, "You mean, air is more important than mom?" And I said, "Well, listen. If I don't have air for one minute, I'm dead." So she goes, "Okay, so oxygen's more important than mom." I said, "No, water. I've been away from mom for four days, I can't go more than four days without water." So she goes, "Air, water, what else, mom?" I said, "No, sleep. I can't go more than two nights without sleep."

So when it comes down to it, when people talk about they love their family, they love their car, they love their Lexus, they love their staff, they love their team. Oxygen is the most important thing on the planet. None of us on this call could be without it more than sixty seconds. Four minutes, we're brain dead. So how we breathe tells the body a lot of how we're going to feel. How we breathe is how much cortisol is going to run through our body.

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The minute we don't get the oxygen that we need in, the body starts setting up a low-grade fight or flight response. It stimulates the sympathetic nervous system, or your hypothalamus pituitary adrenal gland axis and starts spinning. Because the brain needs a constant supply of oxygen. Even though the brain only weighs three pounds, it takes 20 percent of the oxygen that comes into our body.

Which means also it has lots of free radicals in exhaust, which if you're not in a good posture, you also don't remove it well. Hence the big need for a sigh when you're leaning over or stressed out. The body's trying to get rid of the exhaust, and it's got to go [makes breathing sound]. You've got to do a big gasp as the body tries to get rid of the CO₂, or the carbon dioxide.

Just having poor posture—I've done crowns or I've been extracting a tooth, and I look over at my assistant, she's looking at me, like, "You look like Pee-wee Herman." As I look at some weird Gumby-like position I'm in and I realize I've held my breath, or I'm breathing shallow. I'm struggling why my wrist is so sore. Because my body starts shutting down and gets excited when it doesn't have enough oxygen.

So the minute I straighten up my back, and inhale through my nose—and we talked about inhaling through the nose increases nitric oxide, which is one of the best basal dilators in the body. It makes the endothelial lining, which is a single cell lining, in all the 60,000 miles of blood vessels, it makes those blood vessels more flexible.

So the minute you breathe in through your nose, your nitric oxide levels go from 97 to 100, and right away the brain is happier. A lot of times the aches and pains go away. You're better able to access the different parts of your brain which allow you to get that tooth out in four or five or six minutes compared to the hours struggling, holding your breath and

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breathing shallow. Definitely air is the number one pillar of health.

If everyone right now who's listening, if you're sitting, get your shoulders back and your chin tucked in, and take a big deep inhale. Or if you're sitting, the best way to get more air, good air into your body, is to stand. Standing and walking is one of the best ways to pump more oxygen into your body rather than sitting. Sitting stooped over is the worst, sitting with your shoulders back is better, standing up is better, then walking while standing with your head slightly, your eyes above the horizon is the best way to get oxygen into your body.

Not that you can walk around during your crown prep, but you can definitely—I know a lot of dentists can relate—you're having trouble getting a crown out, or a tooth out, so you have the person bite on gauze. Tell them to take a break. Then many times as a dentist, I'm not sure Allison has even done this, I'll get up from the seat, walk down the hall. Move my head around in a circle, give myself a minute, come back, and many times then, because I've got oxygen in, I've felt a different way I'm actually starting to luxate the ridge, I'm able to get the tooth out easier than if I struggled holding my breath for those few minutes in the chair.

Allison: That was a question I was going to ask you after we went through the seven pillars, but we also have a hand raised. I'm going to write myself a little note here so I don't forget that one. But it is about taking breaks. Taking breaks during the day. Building that into your schedule somehow. I will come back to that because Jill has a question. I'm going to unmute you, Jill. There you go.

Jill: Yoga. Yoga really has helped me, especially being a hygienist and being in the chair, working and things. When I lived back in Ohio, I used to teach yoga after work at the office. We would

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clear the reception area and we would do yoga. Then in between patients during the week, we would practice breathing in the middle of the hallway. Just bust out a sun salutation or something. Nothing, nobody's around, of course, but it was a lot about breathing.

Since I've always done yoga, I don't sit in the proper way when I'm working on patients sometimes I bend over weird. But I don't ever have any back problems, I don't have any neck problems. Everybody asks me, you kind of sit weird sometimes. I said, "Well, do yoga. Then you can get away with that." And the breathing, that's what yoga does. It concentrates on your breathing.

Uche: Exactly. Jill, you're awesome. You're obviously not the majority of dental health care professionals, because yoga, people look at you and think, "Yeah, it's something I saw my uncle do once, my sister do once." It's amazing, you have 600 muscles, 206 bones, and you know, weight training, cardio, they build the muscles, build the heart. But somehow yoga or Pilates, yoga in particular, has a way to all those 600 muscles and tendons and joints and 206 bones, it helps them coordinate. Almost like you become a better symphony and things work more harmoniously. It's definitely a good way to integrate muscle.

And men more than women, because women naturally are more flexible than men. I think many women would benefit from doing more weight training, because they are more likely to have sarcopenia, or muscle loss, but men, we do retain our muscle more, because we have 30 times more testosterone. So if a man was going to try yoga, or some way to integrate stretching and breathing into his workout, men benefit majorly by doing yoga. It can make a 60-year-old man who is stiff and tired feel like a 35-year-old again, because it's amazing yoga's ability to correct posture.

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You're right, Jill. Many times a really healthy body can be off balance longer than someone who has small legs and a big belly, or a rounded or kyphotic posture.

It's like having good flexibility and good muscle is like having three months of emergency money in your bank account. When you have three months of emergency money in your bank account, if there's a recession or a correction, or emergency, you don't feel so stressed out about it. Having good muscle tone and flexibility and being pain free is like having a huge reserve in your bank account.

What it does is, it allows you to weather the storm of missing a few days' workout, traveling overseas to Turkey to take a cosmetic course, or there's an emotional crisis in your family. Your body is better able to attenuate and not be so reactive when you're an exerciser.

They've shown that exercisers are better able, they're not as knee-jerk in their reactions to stress. Being a yogi and a breather and flexibility Jill, I'm sure you've found you feel more balance in your coordinated conversations with difficult patients. You're not thrown to the curb when a patient throws a question at you because you're thinking with all of your body. Like a beautiful orchestra rather than just like hammering with a cymbal or knocking them with a drumstick.

Jill: Right. It concentrates a lot more on your breathing, too. It is about flexibility, obviously, but the breathing is the most important thing that I've ever taught when I've taught yoga. Anytime you go to a yoga class, it's like you got to concentrate on your breathing to get through the stretches. To get into the stretches.

There are a lot of men that are doing it, so it's good. And no, they're not flexible, but yoga's not about a competition. It's about your own self.

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Uche: Right. That whole idea about it's all about, yeah, getting oxygen into the body, getting the person focusing, being mindful. When you're breathing deep, you're more mindful in your body. When you're holding your breath, right away the brain is on emergency fight or flight mode. So anytime someone is aware of their breath, or inhaling deeply, through their diaphragm, or through their abdomen sticking out like a baby does. Your body is in the zone where you're fully able to embrace the present, where all our joy is, in the present. You're not worried about the past, where people hold their breath, and anxious about the future.

They say 80 percent of people who are anxious have poor breathing. Anxiety and depression, depression over what happened in the past, or resentment, changes how you breathe also. When you're fully present, and you're breathing deep, the brain basically transcends time.

Like Eckhart Tolle in his book *A New Earth*, or *The Power of Now*, he says all our power, all our enjoyment, is simply slices of present moment time. So breathing deep puts us into our power position, which is being present. We can enjoy the conversation with our spouse, we can enjoy the new car scent. You get into that new car, "Oh, yeah, I got my new car months ago, it's worn off." Be present next time you sit down, still breathe in, that feeling of sit down, that smooth leather, that heated seat if you're in a cold climate.

I'm a big fan of breath as being definitely a way to change your emotion and be grateful and definitely harmonize your body's muscle. So Jill, that's a great comment and a great also addition, bringing yoga into the mix.

Jill: Thank you.

Allison: Thanks.

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Uche: Okay, you're welcome.

Allison: That kind of fits with where I was headed. I picture your office, Uche, kind of like that, where you guys probably stop during the day. I've been playing with this idea of... putting on dance music every hour and a half or something and just having everybody take a dance break.

Uche: Yeah, a bell goes off and we hand out kale and spinach salad, and people meditate, and we chant and we look at our life goals. No, that's that Shangri-La thinking, "Uche's life must be full of perfect posture, and I'm sure he's never sworn or all his crowns probably fit because he's so present. He gets the path of insertion properly." But let me tell you, I've realized, Albert Einstein said, "The best teacher is role modeling. It's not only the best teacher, it's the only teacher."

When I was 18, 19, 20, when I might have been working out five or six years, I used to tell people how to eat, I told people what I ate for breakfast, and I lost all my friends and alienated my family. So I've long since lost the need to tell people what they should eat or how many calories they have in their lunch or how much fiber they're missing eating that processed food. I want my friends, I want to have a good interaction with my family at Christmastime and everything else.

I now just role model it and I enjoy good health. And when people invite me into their lives by asking me a question, then it's easier to chat and share rather than telling people what to do. Even with my patients, you'd think every one of my patients meditates and they have a Vitamix, and they do weights, cardio, and flexibility, balance training.

I have patients who are smokers, I have one patient who is probably 350 pounds, he's 70 years old, diabetic, but he enjoys me telling him, "Don't you remember being an athlete?" He goes, "Yeah." I say, "Wouldn't you like to go back there one

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day?” And this guy, named Jack, says, “Maybe, but eh, I’m 70 now.” I said, “Jack, if you have diabetes and you’re 70 and you’re 310 pounds and you’re still standing, and you’re coming in for your tooth whitening, the chances are you’re going to live another two decades. Now’s the best time for you to recommit.” He says, “Yeah, Dr. Odiatu, I love coming here because you’re so optimistic.” But he goes, “It’s not my time yet.”

I try not to be judgmental with my patients, and I want to always let them think I’m not judging them for where they are. All I see is how they could be. In the same breath, in that moment then, let’s just get on with the tooth whitening and I’ll make a note in the chart, “Discussed lifestyle issues, patient not ready to commit. Will bring up the same topic next time.”

I really love that approach. It’s very volitional, it’s very I’m not pushy. If a patient wants to go to a natural path, if a patient wants to know more about Vitamin D and Omega 3s, if they want to know about hydration, etc. I’m there. But in the same breath, though, if they’re not ready, I’m not going to lose that patient or alienate them.

Because there will come a time like Walter Hailey said, if you keep a patient in recare long enough, eventually they’ll get everything they need done. So I’m a firm believer, if I keep these patients in my recare long enough, eventually they will turn their tide and possibly exercise one day and six to eight glasses of water. And sleep seven to nine hours a night and breathe deeply and with their shoulders back and their chin tucked in and in a perfect posture.

Allison Yeah. If they leave because you make them mad, then they’re going to go somewhere else where they’re probably not going to have that positive influence. They’re not going to have somebody who stands for them like that.

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Uche: Allison, I'm like you. You seem so positive and happy, my first impression of you is that you're smiling, which tells me that you like yourself. You came up and asked me this question at this Pankey keynote. And I thought, "Wow, what a happy, abundant, nice dentist you are." And I'm sure patients love not being judged. Who likes being judged?

I have friends that don't exercise. People think, "Oh, Uche, I bet all your friends exercise. I bet you don't like anyone who doesn't." Well, not really. Exercise is only one part of my life. I still want friends. I enjoy people.

I do find though, that exercisers definitely have an easier time hanging out with each other because we order very similar things on the menu. Instead of walking to a dessert coffee place—sorry, driving a car to a dessert coffee place, we'll walk to a coffee place and we'll spend more time talking and snacking on thousand-calorie dessert coffees. We don't express disdain at each other for not ordering the free-range chicken and "Why did you get the pork chop today?"

I do think, if you want to get in shape, I think you need to spend more time with healthy people. Part of that is finding out people who do exercise, maybe going for a walk at lunch hour. You may walk alone, but it's definitely more fun walking with someone.

Again, another way of spending time with healthy people is to read. I love reading about Jack LaLanne's history, I love Billy Blanks, I like Jillian Michaels' books. I like Tony Horton, P90X, I think he's done a great job with P90X. P90X is a definitely interval-style workout that's done with CDs. I'm sure people have seen it advertised on television.

I think if people friend me on Facebook, they can hang out with me and they can feel they know me just by commenting or liking posts and asking questions. Part of getting around

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healthy people these days is social media. You know, follow certain healthy people. Learn the language of fitness nutrition.

Be able to define glycemic index and know why having a good blender and mixing up a number of different servings of vegetables at one time is good for you. How blending fruit and vegetables is better than juicing, because juicing gets rid of all the fiber. When you blend in a Vitamix or some of these really good high-quality blenders. I like Vitamix because it's American-made and it's got blades in it that can probably, if you threw a car tire in it would probably chew it up and spit it into a glass.

Lately, I got a new Vitamix eight weeks ago—I'm not sponsored by Vitamix—but Vitamix, I can throw kale, celery, ginger, carrots, an apple, a banana, hemp seed, a little bit of olive oil, and some pea protein, and it's an amazing drink that I know I'm getting five or six servings of fruits and vegetables when I know the average American gets two. The average Canadian, three servings a day. So I'm doubling my vegetable intake simply by having my blended vegetable drink.

All those things help me stack up and feel I'm healthy rather than having washboard abs like I had at 20 or having the same amount of body fat I had in high school. To me, I like to celebrate every healthy decision along the way. Which makes me have ten reasons to celebrate today. Rather than just having, "The marathon is six months off. I guess I better wait to have my victory beer with my friend in October."

No, you can celebrate the fact that you have three different pairs of runners. One for sprints, one for marathon and one for lounging around the house. I really believe in anyone who wants to get started, they need to celebrate more often so they can feel better about going on their fitness or wellness journey.

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Allison: Oh, yeah. That's awesome. So I want to know your seven pillars. I am thinking that attitude or stress reduction or something about positive attitude...

Uche: Okay. I love that. Air first. Breathing is number one. You can't go anywhere without breath. Sleep is number two. If someone doesn't sleep well, it means their body is not having enough melatonin, their body does not have the growth hormone. The body only releases the growth hormone, 80 percent of the growth hormone we have is released during stage four sleep. If you had a sleep study done, or a polysomnography test, they'll tell you what the percentage of time you spend in deep sleep, which is stage four.

You need to at least be able to have about 25 percent of your sleep in a night in stage four. And as we get older, we spend less and less time in stage four. Less and less time, less and less growth hormone, which means flabby skin, loose muscles, cellulite, and droopy arms. Simply because we don't have as much growth hormone.

When you think we have a seven-month-old at home, he's tight, he's turgid, the guy, he feels so hydrated, because he has tons of growth hormone at seven months. A 65-year-old man, 70-year-old woman, much less growth hormone. Being a good sleeper means you have optimum levels of growth hormone. So it's really hard to be healthy and a poor sleeper.

If someone says they sleep poorly ... I had a dentist come up to me in Washington, DC, just after a talk. We did a talk called Exercise is Medicine, a few weeks ago. He said, "Doc, I've just been told I'm diabetic." I go, "What do you mean?" He goes, "Yeah, my A1C levels were out of whack over the last few months. The doctor said I have diabetes." I said, "You look lean, you're not overweight." He goes, "That surprised me." And I said, "How do you sleep?" And he goes, "Why do you ask?"

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He said he sleeps horribly. And I said, “You know what, people who do shift work, people who sleep horribly, you become 17 to 30 percent less insulin sensitive if you’re a poor sleeper.”

Your body literally becomes a poor sugar burner if you sleep poorly at nighttime. So people, they’ve done studies where they’ve shown after four nights of shift work, a person will have pre-diabetic blood sugar levels. If you’re a poor sleeper for months at a time, for a lifetime, you’re more likely to develop diabetes, which kills people ten to fifteen years earlier if they’re poorly maintained.

So air first, obviously oxygen. Two is good sleep. Third is hydration. Fourth is exercise. Fifth is nutrition. Sixth is stress management, how you manage stress. And seven is, I like the seven pillars, it’s oral hygiene. You really can’t be healthy with periodontal disease, gingivitis, brown tongue if you don’t drink coffee and loose teeth. Those are my seven pillars.

Allison: Great, great. So we have, gosh, only five minutes left. Is there anything I should have asked you that I didn’t? Or anything you want to share, or if anybody has a question, you can push *2.

Uche: Okay, I guess the biggest thing for me, is if someone has any kind of chronic disease or chronic condition, or an issue or a muscle sprain or strain, or having trouble with their memory, or a skin condition, or a joint pain, or a chronic condition like reflux or high cholesterol, look to the pillars first. You still use your doctor, obviously. But look to see what you can improve with your pillars first.

Any chronic condition is made better—not gone away completely—is made better by sleeping more. Any chronic condition is made better by breathing better. Having better posture. Any chronic condition is made better by a regular exercise habit, two to three times a week. Any chronic condition is made better by eating more vegetables and fruit. And if you

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love meat, I still love my meat, but I'd rather have free-range chicken, or free-range beef, which means grass fed. Grass in the summer on the range and hay in the wintertime.

Being happier, managing your stress better, will help every chronic condition. Now with the new body-mouth connection, they've shown how even diabetics can improve their diabetic condition by having better oral hygiene. And they've now, I saw a link the other day, there was some science done, I think it could have been in Europe, where they showed how they found *P. gingivalis* in the brain of people who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's during their lifetime during an autopsy.

It's amazing how often I'll think of my seven pillars if I'm not feeling well. If I have a headache, am I hydrated? How am I sitting? If my stomach is having butterflies or I feel like a little bit of heartburn, what did I just eat, and how rapidly did I eat? Who am I spending time with? If I have a knee injury, right now, my MCL is bugging me on the medial side of my right knee. It's getting better now through chiropractic and physical therapy. But I'm thinking, I'm sleeping better, I'm hydrating, I'm nutritionally being perfect because I want this to go away.

So I love looking at the seven pillars to help with any of my conditions that I might have, or any of the listeners or future listeners might have. Look to the seven pillars of health. Not first, but part of your health care team, whether you see a medical doctor, a naturopath, or osteopath, look to see what you can do yourself to get better and being part of the solution.

Allison: Wonderful, I love that. I'm going to make a little poster and post those things all over the place, make a little sticky note or something. So I can remember what they are. I know them sort of, but I don't think that I think that way when something's wrong. I'm like, "How can I get rid of this pain?"

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Uche: Give me an Advil, give me a Tylenol. I'm thinking of how am I breathing, am I hydrated, am I drinking from down the hatch here, or down the hatch there, you know?

But at the same time, though, if someone wants to get ahold of me, I know you probably posted it on your website, Allison. You're such a great resource yourself. I know you've talked to some of the best people in the industry, so you're getting people the best information and you're getting it firsthand.

If someone wanted to get ahold of me, my website is FitDentist.com and trust me, I used to be 225 pounds 20 years ago. My website now for fat dentists is called FatDentist.com. So I've been big before. I love being 180. I'm 52, I'm 5'8", 180 pounds. Body fat is ten percent. I'm lean, I'm as light as I was in grade eleven. And between the last ten and fifteen years, I eat and exercise and move a certain way.

I love to share how I do this, but join me online, on Facebook. I love, we have lots of friends on Facebook, lots of experts and trainers that we hang out with. People can lurk and just read posts, or they can comment anytime. They're more than welcome.

The other option is to directly email me. If they go to FitDentist.com, the other name that goes directly to that website is DrUche.com but fit dentist is much easier to spell. And they can go to the contact page and they can put their question in the contact page in the subject and send it to me. I'll be able to answer a direct question if they like. Or if I don't know the answer, I've got some resources and I know some really, some of the best trainers in the world, who are our friends and our colleagues in the training industry and nutrition industry. I could possibly give them a resource.

And also our book. I forgot to mention *The Miracle of Health*. HarperCollins bought the digital rights to it, so they can

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download it onto their e-reader or iPad or smartphone by going to harpercollins.ca or .com or Amazon.com. The book's name is *The Miracle of Health*.

Allison: Awesome. They can also, do you use Facebook messaging, if they send you a little message on Facebook?

Uche: Yes. The last name Odiatu. So if they do a search on Facebook for Odiatu, O-D-I-A-T-U they can message me directly, or they can friend me if they want. We have 3,800 friends on Facebook. My wife's on there posting all the time, she's amazing. She's 45 years of age, she's competed 20 times, eight times I think as a professional IFBB women's fitness athlete. This lady can do 22 chin-ups at 45 she's doing this. When you think of just to get into the Marines, you have to do minimum of three as an 18-year-old, this mother of four can do 22 chin-ups. She's a great resource too and she inspires and motivates me daily.

Allison: Aw. Yeah, she's beautiful. She's amazing. You guys are very inspiring. I do want to say, I had somebody email me before this call and they were trying to go to FitDentist.com and the host was down. Don't worry, guys, if you try to go to his website, there's nothing wrong with it. It works. Just try again. Sometimes the hosting goes down on mine.

Uche: The other option is, it's spelled the same way, if you go to DrUche, so D-R-U-C-H-E dot com, let me see if that's on right now. Server says, maybe the server is down. Okay.

Allison: Somebody emailed me and said they tried to go on your website and they couldn't get it. It's just a hosting thing I think, Uche, I think it comes right back. I've been on it, one time it did that, and one time it worked again. I think it's just Blue, Gator or whatever the hosting is.

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Uche: Okay, I just went to FitDentist.com now, so it's open. So FitDentist.com, it'll go there. They can go to the contact page and send me a direct question. They're more than welcome to friend me on Facebook. I have a Twitter following, it's called FitSpeakers.com. I tweet a couple times a day about random thoughts and facts and tips I have, and books that I've read. I answer people on there too.

I love to share, I really want to see everyone I know or in my circle of influence. I want them to get as healthy as possible. If there's a resource they need, a vitamin to take, or should I take an Omega 3? What kind of a whey protein do they need to take? I love sharing what I've found on my journey and I love helping people.

Allison: Well, thank you so much for taking the time to be with us tonight. I really appreciate it. You are a wealth of information and so fun and energetic and so I really appreciate it.

Thanks for listening to *Practicing with the Masters* for dentists, with your host, Dr. Allison Watts. For more about how Allison Watts and Transformational Practices can help you create a successful and fulfilling practice and life, visit transformationalpractices.com.