

David

Hey, Maren. How are you today?

Maren

Hey, David. I'm pretty good. How are you?

David

I'm good with my hair. Does not look as good as yours. I mean, this is all audio, but you have this fantastic mane and I don't.

Maren

Oh, I don't know. I was working in the Midwest and I left my hair dryer in the hotel room, so I'm waiting for Amazon to deliver another one. So that's what's behind this. This wild love.

David

That's awesome.

Maren

Thank you.

David

So I want to give people a little background here. So you way back were an actress and you were on a show called Battlestar Galactica.

Maren

I wasn't.

David

Read what was that like in the 80s, mid 80s.

Maren

Or late 70s going into. Well, I'll tell you about the early 80s later. Yeah. It was in the mid late 70s when I was first cast on that show. And, you know, it was coming in the wake of Star Wars. So

the network NBC was already anticipating, you know, quite a viewership because it was the most expensive show per hour that had ever been produced for TV.

Maren

So I was kind of a young, naive 21 year old who really didn't understand how lucky I was to be in that position, especially back then when there were really only three TV channels. So it was a lot to take on. I definitely was at a young age.

David

I want to get to your health challenge before we do that. And once you describe a little bit what life on set is like, I had some experience around that. It's not the most healthful sort of lifestyle.

Maren

Definitely not. It was an entertaining set because we had some excellent actors, venerable actors, and guest stars like, John Calico, Jane Seymour, people that were sort of a big deal at that point in time. And I costarred with Lauren Green. If any of your listeners can remember Bonanza, it was my father, etc.. but no, the the food is terrible on set.

Maren

And, I think it takes an awful lot of discipline to make sure that you're taking care of your body, bringing food from home, stretching, working out, keeping yourself calm so that you, you know, deliver a decent performance and that your mind is not taken up with other, other concerns. So but it was entertaining because we also had, you know, things like there was a chimpanzee who played a robot.

Maren

I don't know if they would even allow it now, but I would do scenes with that chimp in a robot costume that suddenly he would start making his chimp noises in the middle of the scene. he wasn't very friendly. I stayed away from him. He intimidated me. So, yeah, it was it was an interesting experience. It definitely was.

David

And then you had some health issues.

Maren

Well, I did, at that point in time, I had you know, we're consistently I guest starred on I think there is not a single show on TV at that time. That is not a cliche that I didn't guest star on. I mean, I did The Love Boat, I did Fantasy Island, I did The Hardy Boys, Hollywood Squares, Dinah Shore, Merv Griffin, all of those.

Maren

but there was an actor strike for around nine months. And of course, I was a little concerned about the lack of income coming in because I had bought my first house. so once we started up again, I was offered the lead in a film. So I shall not name them the film because it was such a painful experience, because I got deathly ill while working on that production.

Maren

The hours were long, we were doing an awful lot of night shooting, so my hours were reversed. And then once I did get a virus, I wasn't able to rest and fully recover. I was in so many scenes in the film, so by the time the film wrapped, I was really in a desperate state and basically had what could be, you know, referred to as a Post-viral syndrome, like long Covid.

Maren

So I had the predecessor to long Covid, which, you know, some people call chronic fatigue syndrome.

David

with this syndrome that you had described to me your life, what could you do or not do or.

Maren

Well, I used to, say, oh, I can get ready to go out or I can go out and sit in a restaurant, but I can't do both. I can't do ready and then go out and just sit in a restaurant. So this sort of shoots my shots. It was very painful and difficult. I can't even describe the level of exhaustion that I experienced in my life was really completely put on hold.

Maren

at the age of 23, 24. And I spent most of my 20s in a pretty poor state.

David

And what was your process understanding what happened to you? And then? And then how did you get better?

Maren

Initially, I went to a number of physicians, and I actually went to a renowned clinic out of state, a famous one. They ran me through every diagnostic that they had and then told me to exercise. So that was discouraging because I was pretty athletic. I knew that I couldn't exercise otherwise. I would just get worse and worse. So it took about a year into it before I could find an integrative physician who was also an internist, who was able to give me a diagnosis and start to, you know, give me treatments.

Maren

I was very lucky to find him in Los Angeles, and I think he's still practicing. Great guy.

David

And what was the diagnosis and what were the treatments chronicled?

Maren

Teeth syndrome or it's now known as myalgic encephalomyelitis. That's a little mouthful. And he used Eastern and Western modalities. I would say herbs, different herbs, homoeopathy, acupuncture, vitamin infusions and, you know, traditional allopathic medicine. We had a lot of different things in his arsenal, and he had studied each different modality quite intently. So I would I would even looking back now, consider him an expert in many of those modalities.

Maren

And it's surprising to me how many of those treatments that he gave me still help me to this day.

David

Let's talk about this. So you claim to be 67. I don't believe this to be true.

Maren

I don't claim to be. I have. Thanks, David. It's clear.

David

As we discussed earlier, I think you're a vampire, but.

Maren

So let's call my friends might tell me.

David

So this is some time ago where this is we're talking almost 40 years ago.

Maren

We are. You're right. It's actually more than 40 years. When I was stricken down, I had to really learn a new way of life. And that experience taught me to a profound level the importance of safeguarding one's health. I learned that lesson early. I think I was privileged, even though it was a painful one.

David

Tell me about this new way of life. What's Maren's life look like today?

Maren

Well, today, I mean, after many decades of experimentation today, I would say the most important component of my life is my inner peace. I really take my state of mind seriously, and I've cultivated both a meditation practice and a spiritual practice of spirituality. I pray every day. but meditation, when I start my day with it, it makes all the difference in the world as to the kind of day that I'm going to have and helps me be less reactive and to take time before, you know, jumping on something, I am excitable.

Maren

I will say I do get enthusiastic about things, and so sometimes I get a little, as I would say, Chihuahua eager. But when I do meditate, I'm much better at paying attention to my thoughts and not attaching so much to all that garbage that, you know, floats in and out of our mind. 24 seven so.

David

Could you tell us a little bit about your meditation practice, what you're doing?

Maren

Cheryl? Well, I actually took a course. It's the John Kabat-Zinn meditation format, and it's called mindfulness based Stress Reduction Meditation. So what I do is upon awakening, I immediately pay attention to my thoughts and I open up my ears to sound. That's the first step in this practice, is just to open it to sound, and it's kind of removes you from your thoughts, even though you're kind of watching them.

Maren

And if you find that suddenly you have some thoughts circulating in your brain, you can use your breath as an anchor. You know, some people use mantra as an anchor. This is breath. So I'll usually stay in that state anywhere from I mean, if it's a quickie and I have to rush out of bed, it's five minutes, but I can stay up to 45 minutes.

Maren

That I'd say on average is about 20 minutes.

David

For how long have you been doing this?

Maren

Probably close to 20 years.

David

Right? Okay.

Maren

Yeah. Long term. Long term.

David

I'm very curious. You told me your father was a physician.

Maren

Yeah, my father was an M.D..

David

He was. And I think when we last met, you told me you have a longevity doctor. You have a you have a lot of doctors.

Maren

Well, I have I have, you know, sort of my circle of influence, I should say. And one of the one is my doctor who helps me deal with these chronic viruses. And she's an infectious disease specialist and an internist, and she's wonderful. So she kind of does general stuff because, you know, I am mindful about, you know, keeping my immune system optimized.

Maren

So she's really helpful in that way. And I also see a longevity doctor here in Manhattan. And what he does is he he has a lot of biomarkers that he tracks so that I'm able to, you know, monitor my progression and hopefully see any problems that are going to be coming around the bend. There's something I read and it made a big impact on me.

Maren

it's that you're as strong as your weakest link, so you can be and you know, robust health and yet have one serious problem and that could be your downfall, even though, you know, 95% of you is fantastic. And we've all seen this happen. I mean, certainly during this Covid outbreak, I.

David

Also understand that you're a big fan of supplements. Well, actually, before we get to the supplements, let's get to the basic stuff. Okay.

Maren

So all right.

David

What are you eating?

Maren

I would say I went basically pescatarian. I'm not anti meat per se. I will have it for occasionally, but I would prefer clean fish. I would prefer or, you know, organic meats, organic chicken. I do

believe that as one ages that having sufficient protein intake is really important. And it's been downplayed in terms of, you know, a lot of people pursuing veganism, which I'm all for, if you do it in a careful manner and you make certain that your, you know, getting sufficient protein and also the minerals and vitamins that say, certain meats provide, like B12 and say, iron.

Maren

So, yeah, I make sure that I have enough protein every day. Yeah. At least once.

David

I find it. You know, the question of diet food is very divisive. And I and I think the reason it is, is because.

Maren

I think.

David

We're all quite specific. Right? I've had Brian Johnson on this podcast and Brian's a vegan.

Maren

Exactly. And I'm sure it's.

David

Great for him. It doesn't work for me. Yeah.

Maren

Doesn't work for me either. I mean, I, you know, lose weight and follow. Yeah. I really that push that I sustained energy that I get from sufficient protein. And of course I eat the rainbow, I eat vegetables, I eat fruit, I eat my daily fallbacks are always blueberries. avocados, spinach. I mean, those are a daily thing. And the way that I really chow down on blueberries is I'll put them on the stove and, cook them for like, 2 or 3 minutes until they sort of start to get a little tender.

Maren

And the juice comes out, and then it keeps in the refrigerator, and you can really pile it on oatmeal you're consuming on the raw. They're really a little harder to eat so much, but.



David

I've never tried to eat so many. I don't like a whole lot of blueberries. You're taking an American.

Maren

I really love them, you know? And I know they're great. So.

David

I have you.

Maren

Do you ever follow Peter Attia?

David

I think Mr. Attia is probably the best communicator out there in the space.

Maren

I have very.

David

Tremendous admiration for the rigor of his science and his ability to communicate this knowledge best in class.

Maren

No doubt he gets as granular as you would ever want to get. I mean, that's the other thing. You can either do a little superficial dive on. He does this little qualities, which are the seven eight minute snippets, but then he has two hours on all sorts of systems in the body to the level of, you know, the, the, the signals of travel between cells and, and the chemical reactions.

Maren

It's so technical. Makes me wish I had pursued science. But I didn't find it so interesting. When I was young.

David

Now I just him ran a Patrick review. There are a couple of people that are pretty good. They're a few people that are, I would say less good. Yeah. But I, I, I just sort of find myself I, I've like dialed back most of this is pretty basic.

Maren

It really, truly is. I mean, if, if you've read enough articles, if you followed certain, you know, authors, usually physicians who are authors or nutritionists, so forth. Yeah, it's pretty nice. It's easy to read.

David

Exactly.

Maren

Well, need a lot of, you know, don't eat smoked meat. Stonie. Processed foods. Super important. Yeah. So if you just do those things, you're going to be in pretty good health.

David

Now it's all the like, go to sleep. Don't eat. Don't eat dumb stuff. Take care of your stress like exercise. Be engaged with other people. Like that's 99% of it.

Maren

Don't you miss donuts though? Sometimes I just I want to.

David

Oh, yeah. Donuts are really good.

Maren

Yeah.

David

Krispy Kreme I haven't had a donut in, I don't know, 30 years.

David

Yeah. Donuts were good.

Maren

You're better than them. But it's been a number of years because.

David

You know, you're being you're still being monitored for the virus. I'm guessing it still in your body and you're managing well.

Maren

Kind of what happens is when you're stricken with all these ubiquitous viruses that we all carry kind of act up like Epstein-Barr virus or cytomegalovirus. CMV. These are all human herpes viruses. They're all in the same family and everybody has them. If you get them late in life, you can get very sick. So you usually get them when we're young.

Maren

and so if your immune system has been a bit suppressed, those that can get unruly, and want to, you know, start smoldering somewhere right there.

David

So you look amazing. And even for a vampire. Extraordinary. So you were in the beauty industry earlier. You had a company steal it, right? Steal a car, steal cosmetics.

Maren

Correct? Yes.

David

So that which is great. And now you have a new endeavor. Tell us a little bit about that.

Maren

Well, I found the beauty space to be oversaturate it, but I still have this, you know, desire to take what I've learned about supplements and create something with it that would be different and useful. I don't want to have a product that's just, you know, for the sake of creating products. So I

got the idea to put beauty supplements into protein bars so that, you know, you could have a functional snack.

Maren

And it took a number of years for myself. And I work with a lovely woman named Laura Shoemaker, who's my partner in this endeavor. And we developed these really delicious beauty protein bars. And they contain four different beauty supplements to benefit skin, hair and nails. So that's what that's about. It's called Glow Beauty Fuel. And we're just now gearing up to roll out, I don't know about \$60 in metro New York, and we're doing a test here to see how it goes.

Maren

And then once we figure out what works best in terms of, you know, where to spend our marketing and promotional dollars, and we'll roll out the rest of the country, you know, sort of area by area. That's the plan.

David

Okay. If it's for skin and hair and nails.

Maren

A lot of hair.

David

But what.

Maren

I.

David

Yeah, tell me a little bit about some of the things that you're looking because you have access to a lot. You know, you have a longevity physician and other.

Maren

I do are so lucky, so, so lucky because, you know, you're able to watch it stuff unfold basically in slow motion. You know, you don't have to be surprised. And you can take action and change your, you know, the course of where your health is.

David

Based on the testing they're doing.

Maren

There. It's preventative. And he's pretty, pretty smart guy. He stays on top of what's going on and as do I.

David

Tell me about the other things you're doing for your health. You know, I understand there's still these viruses that have been activated inside you. Are you exercising vigorously? Are you what are you doing?

Maren

Well, you know, my viral load is is manageable is pretty low right now. So I would say the basis of my exercise is Pilates. So I have a Pilates reformer in my home. And I also do some Pilates mat movements and yoga stretches, and I do some weightlifting. And I walk a lot of steps in New York City.

Maren

I love walking in this town. I love living here. To me, every block is an adventure and I just love being able to run my life and exercise at the same time. It just it works for me. I, I grew up in Los Angeles, which is a car culture, and you get in a car to go to blocks.

Maren

So this is very refreshing. And I, a proud non car owner I just take a public transportation. All right. You know Uber.

David

And what is your weakest link that you're working on.

Maren

Oh my weakest links I would say you know I have a I have like a small structural issue. So I'm working on strengthening my core because I've got a little lower back little tweaks, which I was told by my doctor come from, you know, sitting down while I work and I have done that a lot, like so many people do.

Maren

I'm working on my core so that I alleviate that pain. And I switched up a lot of my exercises because some of them were aggravating that. So that's one challenge I'm working on. I'm not trying to run a marathon. I'm not trying. I'm not doing what you're doing with your astonishing downhill skiing racer. I mean, that's that's really some are happy to work and hopefully have another successful venture here.

Maren

And I'm also a parent, so I have two adult children and my youngest, my daughter lives at home. She's still in college, so that's a lot of fun. We went and saw Neil Young last night out in the Forest Hills.

David

Oh God, I saw Neil Young in some funny little town, rural California like five years ago. It was fantastic.

Maren

Oh, he's just astonishing. He sounds so good. And he was spreading it. He was phenomenal. And my daughter is a huge fan. And you know, she's in her early 20s, so it's kind of a fun evening for us.

David

Yeah. O'Neill.

Maren

Yeah. O'Neill. So yeah, that is kind of my my exercise practice. I do probably like 45 minutes a day on average. Maybe not counting the walking. Some days I do an hour and a half. Some days I do half an hour.

David

But, Meredith, it's so nice to chat with you.

Maren

Good. I so enjoyed meeting you. It was. I had a really great time.

David

I think before we leave, one of the things I would like you to help my people out with is a number of people have had undiagnosed or non diagnosable issues, and it's a real challenge. It's very frustrating and it is hard for people. What would you suggest for people who are having some kind of a health issue and they're having trouble getting a handle on even like what it is.

Maren

Well, I, I would say don't neglect your state of mind because being challenged with your health and especially being undiagnosed is quite stressful. And you can become stressed out and consumed with circular, fearful thoughts around that. It sounds trite, but I think that was a big part of my wellness was. And for me, meditation works. Maybe for someone else it's listening to music, but it's really getting rid of as much negative self-talk and hopelessness as you can.

Maren

And that's not to minimize any dire conditions that someone can be in. And I know some awfully sick people, so I would say that's number one. I'm a big believer in, you know, crowd sourcing and that there are so many resources online. It's not to say that, you know, one pretends to become a doctor if you read it online.

Maren

I don't go that far. But finding a community of people who kind of sit in a slot of the problems you're having is so important, and I can't tell you how many great suggestions or pointers and direction I got from reading the comments section and like, say, a blog. Like in my situation there is a blog called Health rising.com and even the doctors follow this.

Maren

The journalist is also a patient, but he has an astounding ability to write about these solutions, and then also put it in a way that you know, is comprehensible, you know, to us laypeople. Yeah, I think really getting in those communities, not being in denial about bad habits like smoking or,

you know, drinking or imbibing drugs might feel good in the moment, but that we all know aren't good for you.

Maren

I think it's so important to foster a community, people who you trust, and you can, you know, share your feelings with, whether it's in a romantic relationship or friendships. I just see so many older people, especially who isolate so much, and it's a real problem. So I have cultivated, you know, really good friends and people who I can, you know, ask their advice.

Maren

It's about having a belief in yourself and a belief that you're going to get well. It may not come when you want it to. I know that I was impatient, and, you know, certainly you can be impatient after years of having, you know, a restricted life and a lot of pain or ongoing health challenges. But if you can accept on a certain level things the way they are and still have an optimistic mindset about, you know, how you can see yourself better, it does really help.

Maren

Again, not minimizing. You know, people aren't accidents. I'm not a believer in something like blaming the patient. I find that really offensive. You do have to sort of muster whatever strength you have and really focus on how you can think better. What's your plan of attack, whether it's online or what you can do better?

David

Wise words and agency. We all have agency and.

Maren

We do have agency. And I will say a lot of people will tell you it's in your head or whatever. Just don't let it get too. Yeah.

David

Wonderful. Maren, thank you so much for your time today. One more opportunity. What's your business?

Maren



Blow beauty, fuel. If you live in the Manhattan, you'll see us in your specialty grocer, hopefully within the next four weeks.

David

Wonderful. Thank you. Thank you so much for your time today, Maren. Good luck with everything.

Maren

Take care. Bye.