

FF S4 Ep. 5.mp3

Caraline [00:00:00] Hello, everybody, and welcome back to season four, episode five of Fibro Friends, where we talk about all things Fibromyalgia chronic pain, chronic illness, all of the things chronicle, you know, anyway, you know what? I had planned a better opening and I did really strong at the start, and then I just petered out right at the end.

Skye [00:00:24] It happens.

Caraline [00:00:24] But anyway.

Mesha [00:00:25] It's okay.

Caraline [00:00:26] This happens every time we have a guest, we just get too excited that they're here and then we don't know what to say in the beginning, so we're just going to jump right into it. This is special because this is two guest interviews in the in a row. This is the first time you're getting two guest interviews, so you're welcome because we have someone fun here today. Her name Ana she is the founder of Glow Botanica, as well as the Hormone University. Hello, Ana.

Ana [00:00:50] Hello, hello and thank you so much.

Caraline [00:00:52] Welcome to the podcast!

Ana [00:00:54] Thanks. Thank you so much.

Mesha [00:00:55] Welcome!

Ana [00:00:55] For having me I'm very excited.

Caraline [00:00:58] We are super happy to have you. So we ask all our guests the same question to start off, and it's one of our favorite parts of our guest interviews because it just leads to the best conversations. So the question is what is the strangest piece of advice that you have been given by either a medical professional or random lady on the street?

Ana [00:01:22] Oh, wow. Okay. That is a great question.

Caraline [00:01:27] We love it.

Ana [00:01:29] Oh gosh, I really need to think about this. The strangest question or question or comment?

Caraline [00:01:38] Like piece of advice or like snide comment too. That always works.

Ana [00:01:43] Huh? That is a very interesting one, and I probably have a ton of different examples.

Caraline [00:01:51] Yeah.

Ana [00:01:51] But I think that in my case personally, I have gone through a condition called Endometriosis. I have had all sorts of different advice. I think that the one that I'm thinking about is when I went through my fifth surgery, they were like, Oh, look, we just

want to let you know that after you have that surgery, you're not going to have the same libido. So get ready, get ready and buy yourself some, some stuff to help you out. I was like, Okay, all right. Well, that's.

Caraline [00:02:37] Not quite what I'm thinking about right now.

Ana [00:02:39] Right, exactly.

Mesha [00:02:41] Right?!

Ana [00:02:41] Really.

Caraline [00:02:43] Oh my gosh, that's funny. And how soon after you had just had that surgery? Was that brought up to you?

Ana [00:02:51] That was just before the surgery, so.

Caraline [00:02:52] Oh, okay.

Ana [00:02:54] Definitely not.

Mesha [00:02:54] Oh wow.

Ana [00:02:54] Something I wanted to hear at that point in time, but.

Caraline [00:02:57] Right.

Skye [00:02:57] Right.

Ana [00:02:58] You know.

Caraline [00:02:59] You're probably thinking about like, how can I best heal from this surgery and not do that?

Mesha [00:03:05] Exactly.

Ana [00:03:05] I think it's the last thing you think about. Oh, great, OK, sex, right no.

Caraline [00:03:10] Let's do it. Oh my goodness.

Skye [00:03:16] They couldn't read the room on that one.

Mesha [00:03:17] Right?

Caraline [00:03:18] That's a good one.

Skye [00:03:21] That's a very good one. So like I mentioned, Ana is the founder of a company called Glow Botanica. So I definitely want to hear the story about how this all came to be. So if you want to share your Endometriosis story or your chronic illness story, go right ahead. We'd love to hear.

Ana [00:03:38] Thank you so much. Thank you. Yes. So gosh, chronic pain. Don't we all know about that right?

Caraline [00:03:46] Yeah.

Ana [00:03:48] It all started. I was 21 years old and I was diagnosed with a very, very common thing, which is Fibroids. That was the start of a very long journey of very chronic pain difficulties in my life. And and so after that point in time, I think it was maybe four or five years later, I was diagnosed with stage four Endometriosis. And so now for the audience who you know, if you haven't heard of Endometriosis, it's a condition that affects one in 10 women. And unfortunately, there is no cure at the moment. So I found myself in very, very tough pain every time I had my periods before and after, so I actually calculated it. It was around two weeks out of the month that I was in pain. So fifty percent of my time right for over 10 years.

Caraline [00:05:01] Yeah.

Ana [00:05:02] And you know, that meant that kind of series of consequences from chronic pain, of course, to other issues that were, you know, kind of digestive issues and bloating and nausea and all sorts of different things that were happening throughout the time. And then it came to a point where I wanted to have a family. And then I also discovered that I became infertile. So I went through a round of IVF. I was married at the time and I basically was told well, you know, you have very, very few follicles. I'm even going through IVF. My chance of conceiving was around 10 percent or so. So that was very, very tough to hear.

Caraline [00:05:56] Yeah.

Ana [00:05:56] And and then a series of surgeries. So every kind of two to three years I would go through a surgery, laparoscopy and then my last surgery was about a year to go where basically I just couldn't stand up anymore. I couldn't sleep. I was in very, very deep pain.

Caraline [00:06:20] Mm-Hmm.

Ana [00:06:20] And I then was told that the best way to get rid of that pain was to go through a full hysterectomy. And I want to pause with that word because the word hysterectomy should be erased from the dictionary.

Caraline [00:06:38] Hmm.

Ana [00:06:39] It's coming from a Greek and it means removing hysteria, hysteria. Yes.

Caraline [00:06:47] Oh!

Ana [00:06:48] Isn't that crazy, so.

Caraline [00:06:51] I would have never put two and two together.

Mesha [00:06:53] What?!

Ana [00:06:53] Right, so it's umm.

Mesha [00:06:54] Me either.

Ana [00:06:57] Yeah because you're getting your ovaries removed and your uterus removed. That comes from that time when men decided, Yeah, we're taking that hysteria out of women, and.

Caraline [00:07:07] Yeah.

Ana [00:07:08] We at Hormone University, we want to change that word, it's not fair, so.

Caraline [00:07:15] Yeah.

Ana [00:07:16] So yeah, so so that surgery also meant I had deep infiltration in my colon, so they had to perform also colon resection and it was a six hour surgery. Very difficult. So they had to open me up and I woke up with a huge, huge kind of scar. And so what what basically happened after that is that I realized that I had no idea about hormonal health and that I just couldn't believe it. You know, I was just kind of like, Wait a minute, why are they not teaching all of these things at school?

Caraline [00:07:58] Mmm-hmm.

Ana [00:08:00] I was trying to find information that was not too scientific that I could understand because I'm not a doctor, so.

Caraline [00:08:06] Right.

Ana [00:08:07] I'm like, I just want to know what's going on with my body, and I want to know also what to ask. And so that was like my my trigger and inspiration to start my first company, which is Hormone University.

Caraline [00:08:24] Mmm-hmm.

Ana [00:08:24] And that is a free platform with content and community to provide more tools for women to understand what's going on with their health.

Caraline [00:08:39] Yes.

Skye [00:08:40] Oh my goodness, I need that!

Mesha [00:08:41] Yep.

Ana [00:08:43] Our newsletter is called The Waiting Room.

Mesha [00:08:43] Dope.

Caraline [00:08:45] Oh, I like it.

Ana [00:08:46] Because that's, you know, that's kind of like that moment when you're sitting to see your doctor and you're like, What shall I ask? What should I know about so that I can get the right answers? So I'm very, very passionate about education. And then that also led me to think about, OK, I want to have products that do not interfere with my hormonal health that are natural.

Mesha [00:09:13] Yeah.

Caraline [00:09:15] Yeah.

Ana [00:09:15] You know, many of us are put on the pill when we're very young and I.

Caraline [00:09:20] Yep.

Ana [00:09:21] I want to, I see you Skye.

Skye [00:09:24] I was, yeah I was 13.

Ana [00:09:29] Oh my gosh.

Mesha [00:09:29] Oh no.

Skye [00:09:30] So I totally relate.

Mesha [00:09:31] Damn.

Ana [00:09:32] You know, and there are so many consequences to taking.

Caraline [00:09:36] Yeah.

Skye [00:09:36] Yeah.

Ana [00:09:37] So many consequences, so.

Skye [00:09:40] I feel like I'm going through that now like I am. I'm experiencing it now. And I saw something the other day not to cut you off, but it said something that there's a there's a whole generation of women around my age. I'm twenty four and we're all being diagnosed with PCOS and Endometriosis and all these issues, and we're also one of the first generations to be on the pill at such an early age. And, you know, correlation doesn't mean causation and all that. But for me, it can only make me think, OK, well, I know it can also cause depression, too. Is that why I was diagnosed depression at 17? Because I was already on it for four years at that point, and it just has made me reevaluate a lot of the things I've been through. And I've just kind of thought, Well, are these the consequences of taking the pill at such an early age because I was told by my doctor that it would help control the bleeding.

Caraline [00:10:37] Yeah.

Ana [00:10:38] Oh, my goodness. We just posted about that at Hormone University because effectively this is what's happening. There are so many women now going through PCOS or Endometriosis or infertility or many other issues and. We don't know the exact correlation, but we actually yes, we we shared that that information because it is important that we all understand not just the benefits, but also the consequences.

Caraline [00:11:12] Yeah.

Mesha [00:11:12] Yeah.

Skye [00:11:13] Right.

Ana [00:11:13] We we need to have that information at hand, so. So yeah, after after that five surgery, I was looking for products. I went into something called surgical menopause, which a lot of people are not aware of what it is. But it's basically takes a woman about seven years to go through perimenopause before reaching menopause. But when you have a surgery whereby you have your ovaries removed and your uterus removed, then you go straight into menopause like overnight. So that has also some, you know, psychological aspect.

Caraline [00:11:50] Yeah.

Ana [00:11:50] To it right?

Mesha [00:11:51] You bet.

Ana [00:11:51] Like oh my god, all my organs.

Caraline [00:11:54] Yeah.

Ana [00:11:55] They're being taken out of me. It's so strange. It's an odd kind of situation to to go through. And so.

Mesha [00:12:04] Yeah.

Ana [00:12:05] Yeah, that basically led me to think about what products are there that can help me balance my hormones in a natural way. And I always go back to plants and botanicals because.

Caraline [00:12:20] Yeah.

Ana [00:12:21] They are the the root of everything that's happening even in the pharmaceutical industry.

Caraline [00:12:27] Mm-Hmm.

Ana [00:12:27] So it's been two years of research and a lot of planning, and I have a background in personal care and beauty. So that was my my career for many, many years.

Caraline [00:12:39] Perfect.

Ana [00:12:40] And so I think so. So yeah, so I, you know, I I led brands, large brands, mid-size brands and I was always exposed to R&D and marketing and sales and so on. And I thought, OK, well, it's time for me to do something about this. So Hormone University was there and then I thought about creating a brand for every stage of a woman's life, regardless of their age. So it's not age, it's symptoms that matter. You can be a woman at twenty-five right and going through possibly depression. Or possibly maybe you have early menopause, you know, maybe you've had a full hysterectomy and you're going through surgical menopause and you can be a woman at 45 and have terrible cramps and PMS.

Caraline [00:13:36] Yeah.

Ana [00:13:37] So our philosophy is not to talk about age, but to talk about symptoms. And that is.

Mesha [00:13:43] Hallelujah.

Ana [00:13:44] Glow Botanica. So, yeah, we just launched a couple of months ago.

Caraline [00:13:50] Mm hmm.

Skye [00:13:50] Oh my goodness.

Ana [00:13:52] Really exciting. It's been so much work and we've got an awesome doctor who is based in New York and her name is Elizabeth Poyner. She has done a lot of work with ovarian cancer, breast cancer, and she's an OB-GYN. She's an oncologist. She's got a PhD in cell genetics, and she.

Caraline [00:14:17] She knows what she's doing.

Ana [00:14:18] She knows what she's doing!

Skye [00:14:19] I would say so.

Ana [00:14:20] Oh my God, yeah.

Mesha [00:14:21] That's dope.

Ana [00:14:22] I mean, the academic background, I'm like, what? Unbelievable.

Caraline [00:14:24] Yep.

Ana [00:14:25] So I was told by someone, You have got to go and see this doctor. She's incredible. And to my surprise, she was already following Hormone University and.

Caraline [00:14:36] Oh, cool.

Ana [00:14:37] Yeah.

Skye [00:14:39] Oh my goodness.

Ana [00:14:41] And she was like, OK, I presented Glow Botanica and she said, Wow, this is incredible, and I'm totally on board. So she's our lead scientific advisor.

Caraline [00:14:54] Awesome.

Ana [00:14:54] She reviews all the formulations, et cetera. So we just launched a product called Tummy Butter and Tummy Butter as the name states. You know, it's a topical supplement that you put on your tummy on a daily basis and helps balance your hormones.

Mesha [00:15:14] I need to buy this right now.

Caraline [00:15:16] That is cool.

Skye [00:15:17] Take my card.

Mesha [00:15:18] Take all my money, please.

Caraline [00:15:20] Here's my money.

Skye [00:15:20] Just take my card.

Mesha [00:15:21] Please. I've been waiting on you forever.

Ana [00:15:23] Yeah. So we really need something, and I do want to say that I didn't want to launch as most companies launch products just, you know, to the market. I wanted to test it. I wanted to look at our customers in the eye and say, we haven't just put this formula together and launched it, we.

Caraline [00:15:47] Yeah.

Ana [00:15:48] We tested it. It was a two month process with 100 women, and the results were incredible. So when I got the results, I cried that whole afternoon, I was.

Caraline [00:15:59] Oh my gosh.

Mesha [00:15:59] Wow.

Caraline [00:15:59] That's awesome.

Ana [00:16:01] So excited to see that it can help so many women. So just the beginning. I'm very, very excited about it.

Caraline [00:16:12] That is so cool.

Skye [00:16:14] I just feel like I was I was just supposed to experience this tonight.

Caraline [00:16:21] See! Ana, I told you, you were meant to be on because Skye needed this.

Mesha [00:16:24] We need you!

Caraline [00:16:25] And I feel like.

Skye [00:16:25] I needed this.

Caraline [00:16:27] So many of our listeners needed this. I mean, literally last episode, we focused mostly on Endometriosis. This was the first time we really talked in depth about it on the podcast. So I was like, we need to keep going. And now you're here and it's amazing.

Skye [00:16:42] It's just it's just so many women that I've talked to that have Fibro also have issues with their uterus or women who have issues with their uterus also have Fibro.

Mesha [00:16:52] Yeah.

Skye [00:16:54] They're so immensely connected. And, you know, I mean, obviously, I've said before I was recently diagnosed with Endometriosis after eight doctors and going through this for years. And you know, I was I was put on this medication called Orilissa.

Ana [00:17:11] Oh!

Skye [00:17:11] And it's a new medication. Yeah, I we can talk after this podcast, we will have many chats about it. But for the sake of this podcast right now, you know, it's something that could potentially put you in menopause. And I was on the full dose and it was absolutely terrible and I went down to the half dose and it has been helping my pain immensely. And it's like, I'm in a point in my life right now where like, I just started my career and I need to not be in pain and I'm learning, Oh, well, it can. It can ruin your bone density, and then you're never going to get your bone density back and then you're going to get osteoporosis, and it's just overall terrible for you. But it's helping my pain right now, and.

Caraline [00:17:58] You kind of do anything.

Skye [00:17:59] Even on it, right. Even on it sometimes. And this isn't just pain.

Caraline [00:18:03] Yeah.

Skye [00:18:03] Like this is. Oh, my goodness. Shoot me or take me to the hospital right now, like this is, I'm screaming in pain, it hurts so bad and you know, I have an ultrasound and they're like, Oh, everything looks fine!

Caraline [00:18:18] Yeah.

Skye [00:18:18] And there's nothing in there and it just makes no sense that I can be in this amount of pain and there's nothing there. And that's the one thing about Endometriosis, is it's so tiny, you know, it can these these life like pieces or cells of the Endometrium. They can be absolutely microscopic and you can't even see on an ultrasound, but they're there and they cause. A massive amount of problems. And like you said, you were diagnosed with stage four Endometriosis, my best friend was diagnosed with stage four Endometriosis and has been going through this for so long and I saw her scans of when they went in and it is one of the scariest things I've ever seen and. Like just. Just black like parts of her insides are just black. And this is such a real, real condition that people don't realize and it's. It has a lot to do with this stigma against women, like you said, a hysterectomy is about hysteria and how crazy we are, but we're not crazy and that is something that gynecologists want to tell you, you know, Oh, it's not that bad. Or before I was told, Oh, sex hurts, just taken Advil 30 minutes before. Ma'am that is not how that works. Have you ever, uhh, been with someone? Sorry oh, okay. Are we about to do this? OK.

Caraline [00:19:56] One moment.

Skye [00:19:56] We have to wait 30 minutes. Let me go, take my Advil and then wait 30 minutes. And then we can do it. That's not how that works. It's just so to end my rant. It is just so refreshing. To have somebody that wants to help in this matter, because I have seen eight gynecologists and all of them have put their hands inside me and all of them

don't know what's wrong with me just having like an alternative actually from somebody who has been suffering from this for so long. Like if you have any Endometriosis, you know, pain like you have experienced pain to the fullest, I'm trying to not get emotional and it just it breaks my heart that there are so many women with uterus out there that experience this and were seen as crazy. And it makes us feel unworthy of help, and it is impossible to live a life with this type of pain. Whatever coming to my TedTalk.

Ana [00:21:04] You're getting me teary right now.

Skye [00:21:06] I know, I'm like.

Mesha [00:21:07] Yeah.

Ana [00:21:08] And oh, okay.

Mesha [00:21:13] And can I just add to that too. Yeah really quick too because I kind of definitely relate. But I have the kind of inverse of Endometriosis, which is adenomyosis, which is something most people haven't heard of. Oh, sorry, I guess you familiar, no. Yeah, and then so that was.

Ana [00:21:33] Well, you just have to go to Hormone University and tons of material.

Mesha [00:21:38] Yeah, I do.

Caraline [00:21:39] Good.

Mesha [00:21:40] Yeah, because the only thing that.

Ana [00:21:42] I am so sorry.

Mesha [00:21:43] That works now is raspberry leaf tea. Thank you. And that doesn't even like do much is just kind of like, OK, I'm good for a half hour. And then. Now, what?

Caraline [00:21:54] A little bit, yeah.

Mesha [00:21:56] Yeah.

Caraline [00:21:59] Mm hmm.

Ana [00:22:00] Yeah. I hear you, I hear you both. It's heartbreaking. It's very frustrating. It's very it's just my, you know, it was very hard for me to start a company I do it with my own savings. I, I, I just. But I can. I just tell you it is the most fulfilling thing I've ever done in my life.

Caraline [00:22:26] Mm hmm.

Ana [00:22:27] Because when I hear people like you Mesha when I when I hear you Skye and all of these women, that can potentially be listening right now, I just want to say, don't ever settle for there is nothing wrong with you.

Caraline [00:22:44] One hundred percent.

Ana [00:22:45] Don't ever do that. You know, this morning I had another interview and they were asking, You know what? What did you do if you know, in my case, I have to be fair, in my case, I was very lucky. The first doctor that saw me listened to me for an hour. This doctor.

Caraline [00:23:07] Wow.

Ana [00:23:08] Was unbelievable and I was just so, so lucky. I was back in Spain. I'm from Spain and it's a different health system there, of course. And I was just very lucky that he he he, Mel. He just said, Oh my gosh, this is horrific and I am very sorry that you're going through this. And he explained the whole thing to me. But unfortunately, Skye what you just explained is like the norm, which is.

Caraline [00:23:41] Yeah.

Ana [00:23:41] Craziest thing. So many different doctors that just dismiss you. Oh, it must be your period. Oh, you must be going through just, you know, pain. It is not it is not normal to go through that pain I I have faith.

Caraline [00:23:55] Or any pain!

Ana [00:23:56] Or any pain.

Mesha [00:23:58] Nah.

Skye [00:23:58] Any pain.

Caraline [00:23:59] Yeah.

Ana [00:23:59] You have to be taken seriously. Yeah, I fainted so many times on my way to work so many times and was taking tons of ibuprofen and, you know, getting in the car and bending down in pain.

Mesha [00:24:13] Holding your stomach.

Ana [00:24:14] That was that was my norm. That was my life and. Yeah, pretty much. Exactly.

Caraline [00:24:23] Yeah.

Ana [00:24:24] Exactly.

Skye [00:24:26] Yeah, I mean, cramps, of course, when you get your period, you have cramps is a normal, but I should still be able to walk.

Caraline [00:24:34] Right?

Mesha [00:24:34] Dude!

Skye [00:24:36] I shouldn't be completely hunched over. Like involuntarily moaning.

Caraline [00:24:42] Yeah.

Mesha [00:24:44] Yeah. Right.

Skye [00:24:45] And that's when I'm like, this is not normal. I know this is not normal and being told that it is. It just it breaks my heart because it's like, well, that means you're telling every other person like myself that it's normal. And there's all of these people that are going through this and they're just they're suffering. I mean, what else can you do? And then being young, the the amount of doctor, if I had a dollar for every time the doctor told me they're trying to protect my fertility, I could pay off my student loans. Because that's like their main focus.

Caraline [00:25:26] Yes.

Skye [00:25:27] And like I said this before, but the last doctor I, my current doctor now was the first person I said, Look, just give me a medical answer to this. What if I were to have a hysterectomy? You know, and she she is young, fresh out of school. So she gave me the answer like, well, your ovaries? Cause the flare ups, so you know, and you still on your ovaries because you're young, because you don't want to be on hormones for the rest of your life, so if you had a hysterectomy, there's there's no saying that it could work. And that's when I start crying. I was like thank you. I was like, Thank you for just answering my question. Instead of saying, Oh, well, you're only twenty four. You want babies. And I I was like, you're the first doctor that has just answered my question in a medical sense, and you find that a lot that these doctors are like imposing their own personal beliefs about babies on you. And it's like I. I have all these other medical issues, too, like I don't even know of carrying a baby would be safe for me.

Caraline [00:26:34] Right.

Skye [00:26:35] Not just because my uterus, because for the rest of my body, you know, and even what if I didn't want kids? It's none of your business anyway. Like I'm paying you as a medical professional to give me medical advice, not oh, well, what if you want six kids one day and have a big house and a white picket fence.

Caraline [00:26:54] Not important right now.

Skye [00:26:55] Right in order to do that, I need to be healthy.

Caraline [00:26:59] Yeah.

Skye [00:27:00] I know as a mom or as someone who would like to be a mom, if that happens for me and I want to be healthy before that happens so that I can show up my kids. I can't even take care of myself right now. How am I?

Mesha [00:27:13] Yeah.

Skye [00:27:13] How am I gonn have a kid? Like I'm here crying to you that I'm in pain and you want me to have a child? That's the worst medical advice.

Caraline [00:27:21] That does not sound like a fun time right now.

Mesha [00:27:23] Nah, not at all.

Skye [00:27:23] Exactly.

Ana [00:27:25] Yeah, I look, I would say. I would say that, you know, that I completely believe me, I get it, but I do have to say that, you know, going through menopause at a very, very early age has major consequences too, right? So.

Skye [00:27:47] Sure.

Caraline [00:27:48] Yeah.

Ana [00:27:48] Well, it's about having your hormonal health right or as long as possible, rather than depend on sympathetic hormones, hormonal treatments, etc. So I, you know, I'm I'm trying to kind of put a positive spin on the advice I give because. The intention should be, OK, let's try and keep her with ovaries because they are so important.

Skye [00:28:18] Right.

Ana [00:28:18] Hormones are crucial and I want to stay here.

Skye [00:28:22] Yes.

Ana [00:28:22] That hormones is not just about reproduction.

Caraline [00:28:26] Yeah.

Mesha [00:28:27] Right.

Ana [00:28:28] They regulate so many different functions of our bodies, from stress to sleep to blood sugar to so many different things. And by the way, it's not just women, right? Also men.

Mesha [00:28:40] Right.

Ana [00:28:43] And it's something that we want to say, too. It's like it's men might go through difficult situations, including depression, because maybe they have a problem with testosterone or their testosterone levels are very low or we have this issue going on at this point in time whereby sperm count is a disaster. You know, for many, many men, so 50 percent of couples that couples that cannot conceive is because of the man, not the woman, so.

Caraline [00:29:16] Wow.

Ana [00:29:16] So there are so many different aspects, and I just wanna say that, most importantly, is try to find a doctor that fits with your values, right? And if you are looking for a doctor that is very much you know Western medicine kind of like the classic style. That's fine if that works for you. I would say try to look for a doctor that suits your values and your lifestyle. Right?

Caraline [00:29:45] Yeah.

Ana [00:29:45] To focus on nutrition to focus on lifestyle. On stress management.

Caraline [00:29:51] Yeah.

Ana [00:29:51] There are so many aspects that affect inflammation, and that is also a major cause for hormonal imbalance, so.

Caraline [00:29:59] Yeah, I'm excited to share Hormone University as a resource for everyone, but most of myself, because as I have mentioned in previous episodes in my health class, I only learned about what, like the inside of a woman's body looks like. I had no idea what was going on in the front. So I had to learn that from like the internet and on my own, which is scary and all, like literally all that hormones is that I have them. I don't know what they are. I don't really know what they do. Like, that's never been brought up in high school health class. When you're experiencing most of the hormones like can you prepare us for some of this, please and like then as you get older, like, I don't know what's going on. And so like, I've had someone suggest to, like, have my hormones tested. And so of course, we all know when you go into your doctor and they you suggest something and they're like, Well, who told you that, Dr. Google? And they just think your request is like, so unfounded. But it's like, OK, well, over 10 years of having Fibromyalgia, no one's looked at my hormone. So maybe do you think it's a possibility something's going wrong there? And still have yet to have that looked at.

Skye [00:31:20] I think that should be a study.

Ana [00:31:21] It's important!

Mesha [00:31:22] Everything leads to it.

Ana [00:31:23] Really important. Oh my gosh, we have a whole section about hormone testing eating it is so important. Many people don't know there is. There are so many great at home tests. You need it perscribed but it's it's a urine test and you do it at different times of the day over the course of a couple of days and it measures so many things. Cortisol levels, cortisol levels change in the morning and in the afternoon, right? And so only that can have so many different consequences.

Caraline [00:31:56] Yeah.

Ana [00:31:58] When you have progesterone and then you have, you know, there's so many estrogen is a major one. And so, yeah, very important. Hormone testing, super important. And I would also say to all of you, when you're going through whatever you're going through, don't force yourself. Don't force yourself. I made that big mistake and I would, you know, job responsibility and my corporate job and, come on, you know, like just get up and take a bunch of ibuprofen and go to work and show up. And sometimes you just need to stay in bed and it's OK. Right?

Caraline [00:32:38] Amen.

Ana [00:32:39] The world is not going to you know collapse because you don't go to work.

Caraline [00:32:44] Absolutely.

Ana [00:32:45] And yeah, for me personally at the time, I was working, you know? Three male partners. I was kind of embarrassed to talk about it. And I was kind of like, Oh, they're going to be thinking, I'm on my period and, you know, I was at the company, so it

was, you know, I don't know why we have this. This shame. This embarrassment that has to stop. Says the one that went through it and did it wrong, and.

Caraline [00:33:17] Yeah.

Ana [00:33:18] One day I was like, OK, I have to tell them what I'm going through. And there was a, it was on the front page of a national newspaper. And it talked about Endometriosis. I'm like, OK, my chance.

Caraline [00:33:33] Bringing this to work.

Ana [00:33:34] To send that link. And I told one of them and I sent an email, him an email and said, This is what I'm going through. Just read it. Right?

Caraline [00:33:47] Yeah.

Ana [00:33:47] And I never got an answer.

Caraline [00:33:49] Eww.

Ana [00:33:51] Right? I never got an answer.

Skye [00:33:53] No.

Ana [00:33:53] Are you going through this?

Skye [00:33:54] No.

Ana [00:33:55] Nothing. Zero, nothing at all. And so that's why we have to advocate for ourselves.

Caraline [00:34:02] Yeah, absolutely.

Skye [00:34:03] Oh my goodness.

Caraline [00:34:04] Yeah.

Skye [00:34:05] I do. I'm the opposite. I straight tell my boss that my uterus is hurting he and he knows, yeah.

Mesha [00:34:17] I love that for you.

Skye [00:34:18] I have always had zero shame and stuff like that. I don't know if it's like once you just seen so many doctors and so many people have poked and prodded you, it just doesn't bother you anymore. I mean, he is very aware about my medical condition, but some days I'll just be standing there and he's like are you OK? And some days I'm like, ehh my intestines hurt. But sometimes I'm like, No, my uterus is trying to kill me. Like, so he knows. Like, All right.

Mesha [00:34:47] Oh.

Skye [00:34:48] Sit down curl up into a ball on the couch if you have to.

Caraline [00:34:50] Yeah.

Skye [00:34:51] Like.

Mesha [00:34:52] Yeah.

Skye [00:34:53] Yeah, I just have I have no shame when it comes to that and like because for me, it's like, well you're going to believe me or you're not?

Mesha [00:35:02] Yeah.

Skye [00:35:03] You know, and if you think I'm full of shit? Well, that's not my problem, because this is something that I know is so real to me that I'm like, All right, like, just be glad that you don't know what this pain is like. You know, like, I would not wish it on anybody. And I think that's why I'm just so open about it because I'm like, you don't even know. Like you don't even know.

Ana [00:35:30] Yeah. So I'm talking about your first question about advice. This was not a piece of advice. This was one of the best comments I've ever heard from a male gynecologist. He said. You know, if men had to go through having a period once a month, the world would be a very different place.

Caraline [00:35:57] A hundred percent.

Skye [00:35:57] It's so true.

Ana [00:35:59] Right? I mean, we're going through a horrible war right now. And you know, to the I don't want to get into politics or anything like that, but I kind of wish these guys went through a nice. Horrible period.

Caraline [00:36:17] Yeah, with the poops and all the sweating. Everything.

Mesha [00:36:23] All of it.

Ana [00:36:24] You know.

Skye [00:36:26] Not the period poops.

Ana [00:36:28] Oh, yeah, exactly.

Mesha [00:36:29] Those. Or the butt cramps as we've talked about before.

Ana [00:36:33] Yeah, maybe they would have a little bit more empathy.

Caraline [00:36:36] Yeah.

Ana [00:36:37] About.

Skye [00:36:38] I so agree.

Caraline [00:36:40] Yeah.

Mesha [00:36:40] Yes.

Caraline [00:36:41] For sure. And Ana, you said something earlier that stuck with me this entire time that you said symptoms over age. And can we just make the motto for every chronic illness that that would be great because the amount of times all three of us and probably every young person with Fibromyalgia has been told, Oh, you're a little young to have Fibromyalgia, you're a little young to have Ehlers Danlos Syndrome. There is no age limit. There has never been an age limit on any illness ever.

Mesha [00:37:13] Ever.

Skye [00:37:13] I tell them babies are too young to have cancer and it shocks them, and I'm like, Well?

Caraline [00:37:17] Yep. Don't tell me that. '.

Skye [00:37:21] Babies get sick too. Right, babies come out of the womb and they're like three minutes old and there's something wrong, like.

Mesha [00:37:27] Poor babies.

Skye [00:37:28] It doesn't matter, and it shouldn't matter. The treatment you receive based on how old you are and I will die on that hill.

Caraline [00:37:37] Yeah.

Ana [00:37:37] Yeah, that's a really, really important message. You know, we so many people have asked us about that because the reaction we usually get from from people when we say it's not about age, it's about symptoms. It's exactly the same reaction I've just seen on your faces. It's like, thank god, you know, and it's it's almost like because you don't feel heard, right? You just don't feel heard. And we all want to feel heard. And if someone tells you you're too young or you're too old. I'm sorry, it's is its goes. It just comes down to the point of why are you not listening to what I'm telling you?

Caraline [00:38:29] Right.

Ana [00:38:30] That's why, you know, from Glow Botanica, we were working on our kind of like brand foundations and we are on our personality as a brand. You know, I was saying, we want to be that that trusted girlfriend, right, that you know, that you go to for advice and you're not going to be judged. And that's so important that you're not going to be judged because we're going through a very, you know, it's very hard. It's very hard.

Caraline [00:39:02] Yeah. Absolutely. That's why we're called Fibro Friends, we're building a.

Ana [00:39:08] I love that.

Caraline [00:39:09] Old friendship party of people with chronic illness and chronic pain, and while yes our our literal name is Fibro Friends, you know, you're welcome, everybody's welcome.

Mesha [00:39:22] Oh yeah.

Caraline [00:39:23] That's why we love people that don't have Fibromyalgia because it's so interesting and important to hear everybody's story. Chronic pain or not about their struggle with chronic illness. And I think building a bigger support community is something that has always been needed in the chronic illness community, and it's gotten a lot stronger over the years. But we're just happy to be a part of it, honestly.

Ana [00:39:49] Yeah, and you're doing such an amazing job. And I love the name.

Caraline [00:39:54] Thank you.

Ana [00:39:54] I love the name.

Caraline [00:39:55] Thank you.

Ana [00:39:56] So, so much.

Caraline [00:39:57] It's literally what we called each other anyways, any time we referenced each other.

Skye [00:40:01] Yes.

Mesha [00:40:01] Yeah.

Caraline [00:40:01] My Fibro friends Mesha and Skye like, that's just how we like, talk about each other because it's how we we bond over Fibro.

Skye [00:40:10] It's how we met.

Caraline [00:40:11] Yeah. That's how we met.

Mesha [00:40:12] Yes, literally.

Caraline [00:40:13] So it's fitting. Yeah, we want anyone who feels comfortable joining our our little chronic illness party. Come on over. Sorry, you're in the boat, but hop on in and grab a paddle.

Ana [00:40:25] Well, there you go.

Mesha [00:40:29] Yeah. Oh my god.

Skye [00:40:30] I love that I. I need that as a sticker.

Caraline [00:40:33] Put it on a t-shirt.

Skye [00:40:34] That has to be a sticker, yes.

Ana [00:40:34] We're all on the same boat.

Mesha [00:40:38] Brilliant.

Caraline [00:40:38] Yeah.

Skye [00:40:39] Yeah.

Caraline [00:40:40] For sure.

Ana [00:40:42] Absolutely.

Caraline [00:40:42] I wanted to ask more about the product itself, though, because I'm very intrigued of like different products, especially the ones that aren't pills that we have to shove in our mouth three times a day. So I'm intrigued to, like, know what's what goes into it.

Ana [00:40:59] Yeah, of course. And yeah, one of the things that I thought about when I was doing all the research and I was looking at ingredients, I'm like, Oh my God, I take pills, you know, like, I mean, I don't even want to go into that into that subject, and then I go, Oh my God, how many supplements we also have to take, right? And you know, there were two reasons here. One is I, I know and understand very well that when you use a topical, it goes into your bloodstream in a much slower way. So it's the easy it's much. Let's say it's kinder to your body. And also because we take so many different things, I I think it's important to be careful with your liver and your gut. And so that was another reason as to why I wanted to do something topical. So when I spoke to Dr. Poyner about it she's like, Oh, finally, someone is doing this, this is great and we so for Tummy Butter. We have three key ingredients. One of them is called wild yam roots. I don't know if you've heard of that ingredient, but wild yam roots is actually an ingredient in Native America and there is an extract coming from there, it's called diosgenin. In that extract is what the pharma industry converts into hormonal treatments. But of course they do it in a kind of synthetic way, right, so what we do is we use the plant, we use the actual root, and that helps with so many different things when it comes to your hormonal health. And it's it's really it's been used for centuries, by the way, for centuries, and it helps with hormonal imbalance. So that's that's one. And then because I'm kind of obsessed with symptoms, I'm like, OK, let's think about other plants that can help with bloating and mood and digestion and even libido. And so we added two other ingredients that are pretty important. So one of them is called marshmallow root, which is a really, really good ingredient for digestion, and therefore it helps with your bloating. Vitex is the other ingredient that that is really excellent ingredient as well. So. So of course, you have other ingredients to create a formula, and we worked with derma pharmacologist and our doctor. And that's that's basically Tummy Butter. So, yeah, you put it on every day, there is a little calendar inside, inside the product. You put it every day.

Mesha [00:44:00] Fancy.

Ana [00:44:00] I think after about. After about 30 days or so, although something I mean, I heard someone telling me yesterday, she emailed me, said, I don't know this weird, but after putting it on one day, my cramps are better. I'm like, Wow, this is incredible.

Caraline [00:44:17] Magic.

Ana [00:44:18] Yeah. So, you know, but I don't want to overpromise it. You have to be consistent. You have got it. You have to think of it as a supplement, but it's topical. It's kinder to your to your system. And yeah, you have to be persistent. And that's important. Yeah, we have other great products coming up. We have umm.

Caraline [00:44:41] Ooh!

Ana [00:44:42] Yeah, well, we have the second one, which I'm going to show you here that your audience is not going to see, but it's.

Caraline [00:44:49] Ha ha we see it you don't.

Ana [00:44:52] It's a really nice when we have our period. And instead of having the hot water, a plastic bottle, we want it to be eco-friendly. So this smells like heaven. It's just two ingredients and it's lavender and flaxseed.

Caraline [00:45:11] Ooh.

Ana [00:45:14] It's a heating pad. Put it in the microwave for two minutes, and the oils of flax seeds actually keep the warmth, so.

Caraline [00:45:23] Oh!

Ana [00:45:24] It's nice. It's long enough to cover your kidneys, which we know was a, you know, an important one. It smells of lavender. It's beautiful. So you can just put it when you're in bed and it's it comes with a very cute canvas bag.

Caraline [00:45:43] Awe.

Mesha [00:45:43] Ooh, very nice. I like that.

Caraline [00:45:45] Love it!

Ana [00:45:45] Breathe, this shall pass.

Caraline [00:45:50] I love it.

Skye [00:45:52] Awe.

Caraline [00:45:53] That's cute.

Ana [00:45:54] It's very giftable. I wanted to do it in a way that again, thinking about girlfriends, thinking about traveling together, as girlfriends. And yeah, bringing this wonderful heating pad which, by the way, you can also put in the freezer if you have inflammation also. Yeah.

Caraline [00:46:13] That's cool, because a lot of them aren't versatile like that. Because if I think I'd try to put my rice in the freezer, I don't think that would go well.

Ana [00:46:22] Oh, right.

Mesha [00:46:22] Oh my goodness.

Caraline [00:46:24] My little rice sock that I have.

Mesha [00:46:27] Yeah.

Skye [00:46:28] I get paid on Friday, so.

Mesha [00:46:29] Same!

Skye [00:46:31] That's the first thing I'm buying on Friday.

Mesha [00:46:33] Yeah.

Ana [00:46:35] I will. I will give you guys a friends code.

Caraline [00:46:40] Yeah!

Ana [00:46:41] You can use it and it will.

Skye [00:46:43] That would be amazing.

Ana [00:46:44] Be a 20 percent discount. So I'll make sure that I send that to you Caraline and or anybody listening to the podcast. We we want to offer that.

Caraline [00:46:54] It's our first discount code! We made it!

Ana [00:46:57] Yay!

Caraline [00:47:03] We're a real podcast now.

Skye [00:47:04] Oh my god, wow.

Ana [00:47:04] I'm so happy to hear that.

Caraline [00:47:07] Yay, that's exciting, Ana this was.

Skye [00:47:09] On our happy one year anniversary to us.

Caraline [00:47:11] So amazing. This was like the best Wednesdays I've had in a long time.

Skye [00:47:17] Same.

Mesha [00:47:17] Right.

Caraline [00:47:18] We have loved having you on and I knew it was meant to be. When we emailed that, I was like, This has to happen and we've truly enjoyed getting to speak to you. It's been amazing.

Ana [00:47:30] Well.

Skye [00:47:31] Thank you so much.

Ana [00:47:32] I can't tell you how grateful I am and thank you so much for your time, your evening.

Caraline [00:47:38] To end our podcast. We do something called Visible Victories and Tender Point, so a Visible Victory would be something from your week. That was amazing, fun, wonderful. And then a Tender Point could be something that was like, not super great. So if you want to share yours, you could go first.

Ana [00:47:55] OK. Oh my gosh. I think. The victory was being on TV.

Caraline [00:48:03] Ooh, that's exciting.

Skye [00:48:06] Ooh so fun.

Ana [00:48:06] Yes, they. I was so happy and two hours, two hours before I was supposed to do a prerecorded session there like, we have a storm. Do you mind coming live? I'm like, ahh, so.

Caraline [00:48:19] Okay.

Mesha [00:48:20] Oh my goodness.

Caraline [00:48:22] That's amazing.

Ana [00:48:23] A live interview. It was so, such a great feeling because it's been so, such hard work. And when we start seeing how things are happening and things are flowing. It's a I get a little bit emotional because it's been such a hard work.

Caraline [00:48:41] Yeah, I bet. I bet it's absolutely worth it.

Ana [00:48:47] Oh, oh my gosh. And then. Oh, the challenge. The challenge?

Caraline [00:48:56] Yeah the tender Point.

Ana [00:48:58] Oh.

Caraline [00:49:00] We call them that because that's how they diagnose you with Fibromyalgia. They poke you in the 18 most sensitive spots on your body.

Mesha [00:49:10] Poke you. Yeah.

Ana [00:49:12] I have to tell you that this war that's happening is really affecting me, and.

Caraline [00:49:20] Yeah.

Ana [00:49:20] It's a Tender Point. And it also, you know, on the flip side of that is that. Every morning I wake up, and I think, my goodness, aren't we lucky, you know? Aren't we lucky, so.

Caraline [00:49:34] Absolutely.

Ana [00:49:35] I think I just wanna say you know, a prayer for everyone that's you know is going through hell right now.

Caraline [00:49:44] Absolutely. Yeah.

Mesha [00:49:46] Yeah.

Caraline [00:49:49] Skye, do you want to go next?

Skye [00:49:51] Sure, I will say my Tender Point is I'm frickin tired.

Caraline [00:49:57] That's a good one.

Skye [00:49:57] I'm just I'm just so exhausted and I've been taking over a little bit more responsibility at work, which is nice. I love doing it, but at the same time, I just there's just not enough hours in the day for me to lay on my couch and do nothing now. And it's something that my body just needs. So how and Ana said, don't feel bad about taking up where it was. Like last Thursday, I took off work because I was like, I can't, I can't move and I'm not moving today. I'm going to stay home and I'm going to sleep. And I did that. My Visible Victory. I think would also be that I'm taking over more responsibility.

Caraline [00:50:44] Yeah.

Skye [00:50:45] I never thought I'd be able to work 40 hours a week.

Caraline [00:50:47] Yeah, that's amazing.

Skye [00:50:48] And the fact that I'm doing it and I have a great podcast with you guys.

Caraline [00:50:57] Yeah.

Mesha [00:50:58] Yeah.

Skye [00:50:58] Starting another podcast.

Caraline [00:51:01] Woo hoo.

Mesha [00:51:01] Ooh!

Skye [00:51:01] Yes, starting YouTube again. So there's so many things that I'm doing and I'm very thankful, but I want to sleep.

Caraline [00:51:09] Yeah.

Mesha [00:51:10] Feel that.

Caraline [00:51:12] Sounds good. Mesha, what about you?

Mesha [00:51:15] Aye mine or one in the same, my Tender Point and. Visible Victory, it is that I had to take on part time work more part time work pretty much technically have five jobs now, not so great in practicality wise, but.

Caraline [00:51:37] That's crazy.

Mesha [00:51:38] Because, yeah, I I'm just like financially stuck and struggling in debt, and I desperately needed to find work that was very flexible in part time. But of course,

everything came together, literally at the same time and like everyone wanted. It was like the things I needed more hired me later and the one jobs that were like, kind of. I'm just doing this out of desperation. Got back to me first. Of course, I was like, Yeah, I'll work with you guys than the ones I wanted later I'm like. Oh, yes, it's a question mark.

Caraline [00:52:14] Too many jobs.

Mesha [00:52:17] Too many jobs, too many things happening and that played out today. I just had a very chaotic day and surprisingly like, I'm not crashing, so it will. Luckily, tomorrow I have nothing to do, so I'm going to relax tomorrow. But um yeah, so I'm glad I will eventually have more income, but I'm sad that. I have to really think hard about reorganizing my every single day now.

Caraline [00:52:45] Yeah, awe man.

Mesha [00:52:48] Yeah that's it.

Caraline [00:52:50] My Tender Point would be that my brain fog is like the worst it's ever been. And the funny part is it like, I don't notice until it's like, where did I put the thing that I'm looking for? And I have to look in the most dumb places. I'm like, Where would silly Caraline put this item that I'm looking for and I still can't find it. There's a basket of space exploration stuff at work that I have no idea where it is. It went, it went to space like.

Mesha [00:53:23] Up to space.

Caraline [00:53:24] It's gone and I don't know where it is. Maybe I'll find it next year when we do it again, but it's gone.

Mesha [00:53:28] Right.

Caraline [00:53:30] And then I Visible Victory would be that I just planned well, not planned. One was already in motion, but like I booked my trip going to Disney with my grandma after.

Mesha [00:53:42] Yay!

Skye [00:53:42] Yay!

Caraline [00:53:43] How I was supposed to go in March of 2020 and then Disney closed. So we're finally going,.

Skye [00:53:50] Yeah.

Caraline [00:53:51] And then I also booked me and Andy's first camping trip. We got a tent for our wedding present. We haven't used it yet since last June, so we're going in May.

Skye [00:54:02] That's a great wedding present.

Caraline [00:54:03] We're excited.

Skye [00:54:05] That's a good wedding present.

Caraline [00:54:07] Yeah, just like planning trips is like a nice feeling. Like knowing that you're going to have something to look forward to is always nice, but that's me. But Ana, thank you again for joining us. We will make sure to put every link possible to find her and Glow Botanica and Hormone University because you all need to get on this as we do. Apparently, as we were all dumbfounded at half this episode, so definitely look in the description for that. We'll put the promo code discount code that Ana gives us as well. Always, our email is there fibrofriendspod at g. Nope. Fibro.org I always think it's Gmail and it's not it's fibrofriendspod@fibro.org. You can also leave us a voicemail. Do what you want with that. It's a fun time. Make sure you rate and review and subscribe on Apple Podcasts and listen to our Fibromyalgia playlist on Spotify. Because that's a good time, too. But until next time, we love you and goodbye.

Ana [00:55:13] Thanks.

Skye [00:55:13] Bye.

Mesha [00:55:14] Goodbye.