

Lavina Mehta MBE: The Feel Good Fix

Mon, Feb 26, 2024 12:37PM • 47:31

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

exercise, snacks, people, menopause, feel, socials, women, lavina, joyce, working, talk, experience, started, love, book, years, pandemic, children, walking, life

SPEAKERS

Lavina Mehta, Joyce Harper

Joyce Harper 00:01

Welcome to my podcast. Why didn't anyone tell me this? With my guests, we are discussing health issues, questions you may have about your health and debunking some of the many myths around our health. And it is a great pleasure to welcome to date Lavina. Mehta MBE, we have been trying to organize this for many, many months. So it's absolutely brilliant that we're finally able to record this. And today we are talking about her work on the field good fix, which is also the title of her new book, which will be coming out in May. Now Lavina is an award winning personal trainer, wellness coach, mom of three, was awarded an MBE in 2020, for her work on health and fitness over the pandemic. And she is on a mission to help all ages feel good physically, and mentally. And her slogan is exercise for sanity, not vanity. She's also done a brilliant TED talk in a school. She's wants to encourage young people to exercise. And she's a patron of the Melbourne menopause mandate, and an ambassador for Diabetes UK, the outside of society and well being of women. Welcome Lavina.

Lavina Mehta 01:18

Thank you so much for having me, Joyce. I'm so glad we made this happen.

Joyce Harper 01:23

We did we did. It took a while, but we do. So I'm so excited to talk today about exercise. It's it's one of my big passions. And I think people have probably heard this before. But I I am a qualified aerobics teacher I used to teach almost 40 years ago now when I was in my 20s. But before we go into exercise too much, I really want to hear about your life. I know you've lived a really exciting life before you became a personal trainer, which was really quite recently. So you've got a love of art, and you've had a hugely successful career in the corporate world. So please tell us more about your journey.

Lavina Mehta 02:05

Or Thank you, Joyce, I feel humbled by your words, it's quite lovely to reflect as you've been saying all of this. I wasn't into exercise, as you've kindly pointed out, and I only qualified at the age of 40. I'm going to be 46 in a couple of weeks. So fairly recently, and it was in no means supposed to be a career. It was literally because I fell in love with what fitness had done for me in my mid 30s. But before that, I was born in London. My parents had come over in the 1960s from Kenya, and they're both Indian. They really heavily focused on

my education. I think that's, you know, quite a cultural thing. Which I'm very, very grateful for because I know how difficult it was for them to start off in the UK and literally start from scratch. And yes, I did art a level. I was absolutely besotted with art. And I wanted to actually go to Central School of St Maarten to do a foundation course, which I sometimes think I'm going to put on my bucket list, even if I'm 60. And I do that course for a year. And like typical of Indian culture. It wasn't frowned upon, but my parents just gently nudged me into a more traditional career. And they said, you know, why don't you go into becoming a pharmacist or a doctor or an accountant and law? And I was like, no, no, no. And then we settled on management, which is what I studied at university at you missed, where I had the time of my life and then buckled down in my final year. And yeah, it kind of went very quickly, I would say in terms of my career, I was very lucky to have some amazing opportunities. Even while I was at university, I got a placement and then straight off to university, I got a role in a very booming sort of industry of the .com era, which was in 99. And before people really got much experience. So I very quickly progressed from being a tester of this site. blue.com, which has its own story, you know, could have a whole podcast about my time there nine months, there was like a baby that went boom to bust. And then I became a project manager very quickly with that experience that was so sought after. And forwarding fast forwarding sort of almost a decade of 15 years, I worked as a global project manager eventually for BP, which is a very large corporate. And I was traveling the world I was you know, loving my role. I was Indian, I was probably younger, and probably the only female in the sort of space that I was in at the time, but it definitely added to my resilience. And I had then become a mother to amazing boys. I mean, they've all Growing up so quickly, and I tried to juggle it Joyce and the days where part time working was so unheard of. I tried to do a job share, but I was working, you know, five days in three. And eventually, when I had my youngest, which is 16 years ago, when I fell pregnant with him, I sort of had to make the decision to give up the corporate world. But with no regrets. I think that's what I feel happy about. And I really, really love being mum, to the boys, you know, totally embraced motherhood and taking them to all their activities. And, you know, I feel it's such a blessing to have been able to do that. And yeah, that's kind of like the the short story I guess,

Joyce Harper 05:42

of where I am now. Which is totally different, right? Yeah. So I think mom of three boys, I don't know about you. But for me, we just did lots of sports because for me, I always said they're like greyhounds they need running out. Who's reading? They've done football, rugby, swimming, athletics, everything everything. Was it? Was it your boys that stimulated your passion for exercise?

Lavina Mehta 06:13

Um, no, I was at the sidelines, freezing my butt off most of the time. Watching them, which is what I don't advise moms to do now. I'm like, all that time wasted. You know, now if I take my youngest, who still plays so much football and sport, I'm like the one walking around the pitch you know, getting people moving and having that sort of movement that exercise snacking during the games. But no, I guess it wasn't I was I love the fact that the boys are very into their sport. I think that's so important. And I encourage it, you know, they're now young men and my youngest is 16. But even he's doing sports science GCSE, which I absolutely am so proud of, because it's such a great mental release for him. But no, for me, actually, I actually put on a lot of weight. And I was typical, sort of in a joint family. So there were nine of us living in the household. At the time, I was living with my parents in law two sister in laws, it was a very busy household, I love my food. Because my mom is a, she became a cookery writer and a chef, and she wrote books as well. Very similar to my journey. Once my brother and I had got into secondary education, she just found her love for food. Being a biological scientist, so I've always eaten Lowe's. And I still do, I don't believe in restriction.

But at the time, I wasn't active. And I actually put on so much weight that I practically looked, I think double my size now. And although I don't say much about how I looked, I used to post a lot of transformation pictures on social media, and they'd get massive reactions. But now obviously, for me, it's more about how we feel and the importance of exercise and movement to our, you know, reducing chronic illnesses and our mental health. But yeah, I had put on lots of weight. And then I joined the gym after, you know, having my youngest it was about a year or two after I started off with just Pilates because I wanted to really sort out my back and my call. And then I joined a local gym and I jumped around classes, like a lot of women do not have young mums, we were just having coffee mornings more than exercising. And it was really the turning point was when I actually got my own personal trainer and I was thinking things aren't working. And I was starting to feel, you know, a little bit down and myself, you lose your self esteem. My confidence clothes weren't fitting at four. And I thought I'd better try and sort my life out a little bit. And he got me into strength training. I mean, he was quite militant, he was from ex military and I'd never ever lifted weights choice. It was kind of nothing that I imagined I'd be doing. And obviously now you must see, you know, I sometimes post me lifting my heavy barbells I'm the happiest, you know, lifting weights now. But it transformed my body but most importantly got me through some of the hardest challenges as we go get older and you know, like losing my father in law, who I talk about probably in every interview because I was so close to him. He unfortunately died very quickly from a brain tumor and it was really the gym. That spurred on my slogan you know that to exercise for sanity, not vanity, because that was the space that gave me sort of that time and that strength when we were going through such hard times with him and you know when you see a loved one obviously going through all of that yes, it really makes you think about your the importance of your health. So yeah, it's kind of it's not been a it wasn't something I grew up with, but it's something that I hope now you know, I'm so passionate about getting all ages moving from the young to the And it's absolutely never too late.

Joyce Harper 10:03

It's brilliant. And that's so inspiring. And your your TED lecture, it was about what was in a school. And you talk about the one in six children who are suffering from mental health issues. And so many of these will not go to their GP. And they are there so many children now experiencing mental health issues. Tell us more about how you think getting young people to exercise would really help them. Yeah, I mean, I guess you know, as children and probably things like exercise I just in the curriculum, but what I kind of feel is that once they go into their A levels, and I've seen it with my older two boys, it then becomes less of a priority. And the way I twisted the TED talk was more about you know, the things I think that they can relate to, like when they're sitting exams, and when they're under stressful situations in life, just the power of movement to keep our brains fit. And I literally had slides saying exercise will make you smarter. And obviously, I tried to demonstrate in the TED talk, I got them very interactive, which was very interesting. You know, my, my boys actually told me, that's probably the hardest ever audience, you're going to have to do a talk in front of because they were teenage boys, you know, quite boisterous. And then I was trying to get them to do some of my breathing techniques, my breath snacks, I was getting them up doing their sports. But you know what the energy in that audience, it changes when you start getting people move in. And you know, that's what I get so motivated about even when we've done exercise snacks together.

Lavina Mehta 11:44

You know, in your last event, it was seeing that with children, and I guess trying to make it quite relatable, where obviously now social media plays such a huge role in children's lives. And when you think about the government guidance, or physical activity being two and a half hours a week, and then I kind of you know,

did the research that it's showing that most young children and adults is probably spending two and a half hours a day on our phones, just scrolling. I really want us to try and reframe, you know, what we're doing with our time. And it's these easy, accessible tools, things that we can do, that can not only help with our mental health, but obviously all the other benefits. But I don't know about you, you know, anytime I go outside for a walk, or anytime I do any type of movement, I know that it's going to help me feel better. And that's what I want children to understand, especially after the COVID pandemic and where we know, you know, mental health is such an epidemic of its own. So I tried to make it as fun as possible. And it's online, obviously, have a look and get involved if you're watching obviously do some snacking with me.

Joyce Harper 12:59

Oh, yeah, it was a great experience. Yes, thanks. Stay with those kids for a moment. So my, my, I've got twins who are 18. And there's they're about a level stage. And I must say that their schools brilliant. But in the last two years for us, 12 and 13. They really have not done any exercise. So Mike, one of my sons who's doing a levels, the only way he's been exercising is he does rugby outside school. He's literally done nothing in school. And then the my other twin actually is doing a lot of sport because he's off to America in August on a football scholarship. But I just can't believe it, they they're at level 16 to 18 year old stage, it really falls off in schools. And I think that's something I'm obviously doing lots of work on reproductive health education in schools. But that exercise is part of that. And it worries me that that happens that 16 to 18. And we've really got to be encouraging schools to keep that going, haven't we?

Lavina Mehta 14:02

Oh, gosh, choice, we need to launch something here. And I because I'm so passionate about it as well, I just feel like, you know, sitting is the new smoking, unfortunately. And if you think about our children, constantly sitting from the age of, you know, probably 16 where their physical activity does tend to dip to them, you know, going maybe straight into employment at a desk job, which we know, again is such a huge challenge. And that's why, you know, I bring back my experience in the workplace. I go in and I do all these sort of active workshops to show people how important it is to keep moving and things like just back health, you know, the fact that our bodies are all now starting to look so rounded. And when I grew up, you know, I would see older people in their 80s 90s or hundreds Yeah, I'm gonna do my little desk reset snack in a minute. But you know, it used to be an old people sort of that looks at hunchback and now I look around and because of the phone And then laptops and TV and just sitting. It worries me so much when I look around and I see children hunched over their screens, and the damage it's doing, obviously to their spinal health, the fact that, you know, muscle mass is so important, keeping our bones and our muscles strong to help us future proof our bodies that we need to really try and work on keeping children more active, for sure. For sure, I totally agree. Let's, let's move on to adults. So I've been passionate about teaching the need to exercise. I'm an ambassador for this girl, Karen, actually, and

Joyce Harper 15:42

I've exercised my whole life. But when I talk to women, they say, We don't have the time. And as you said, people are spending hours on their phone. And then we've got people now since locked down working more at home, and they're sitting at home and they're not moving, they're hardly moving at all, they're not even moving to go out. They're just moving between the lounge and the kitchen and their office space. And I think it's so bad. So for me at the beginning of lockdown, my I hurt my back from just sitting, I hurt my knees. So I'm just sitting and really realized that we've we've just got to keep moving. And so you have this brilliant idea. You've mentioned a few times about exercise snacking and your feel good toolkit. So tell us more, how

can we encourage people to bind that time and make even a 10 minute time in their day to do some exercise?

Lavina Mehta 16:43

You're so right. So I mean, I want to make it as easy as even a minute. Like in my new book, you know that you've mentioned the feelgood fix, I've bought studies that show that even a couple of seconds of activity are beneficial to our health. So here is where I'm trying, you know, to break down all the barriers, and we do know that time is probably the biggest barrier. So it's called SOS motivation. And, you know, everything in the book and everything that I put out on socials will probably see is for free, in the sense that I don't want there to be any of these barriers. And I think one of the best things that we can do is actually realize that so don't beat yourself up if you can't get to the typical gym. And if we don't have that hour and a half in our lives, which most of us know to be honest, don't even me. So we're the way I like to look at it is that it's scientifically proven. And obviously, there's so much research, it's all scientifically backed in my book about the power of this small bite size amount. So these exercise snacks, as I call them, that we can sprinkle into our days, and they are as effective if not more effective for our health than that hour or 90 minute workout that we can't fit in. So I think one of the easiest ways is to maybe tie onto existing habits. So things as simple as you know, I've been talking a lot about things that people neglect, like balance. And we know that how many people as they age, you know, that risk of falls of fractures of osteoporosis, it just goes up and up and up. And it's very scary, especially for women. But what we could do is just, you know, like I do every day, and my balance has got very good because I was commented on by a tennis coach recently when I was standing on one leg in the gym, you know, in the line for a coffee and he was like, Oh, you've got amazing balance. And I was like he said, I'm a tennis coach. And I've not seen anyone been able to balance like this because I've been watching you. And I said all I do is I brush my teeth every day on one leg. And I've been doing that for about six months. And you know, it's a bit wobbly at first, but now I time that I add in some pelvic floor snacks I get in my pelvic floor. You know, my Kegel exercises if I can at the same time. When I'm making coffee or tea. I think I posted something this morning on my socials. Basically say I've got such a busy day that is going to be full of meetings but I try and find the two ways I can keep that movement through the day and I feel good toolkit is not just about one type of exercise I feel like any form of boom is going to be beneficial. But it kind of covers everything from what I call mobility which is you know stuff that we can do even C to just to keep our joints nice and supple and the synovial fluid around the joints moving to prevent things like the back and neck pain and the technic to cardio snacks which don't have to be high impact like it doesn't mean that we have to be doing burpees or crazy jumps but just raising our heart heart rate for our cardiovascular health by even doing you know simple things like seated star jumps or seated boxing while we're on conference calls if you're working at your desk To these little strength snacks, which you know, strength training is definitely something I'm extremely passionate about, to even things like stretching. So stretch snacks, things that you can treat yourself to as a form of self care, maybe in the evenings before you go to bed or while you're watching TV. And the book has basically got snacks from a minute to 10 minutes that you can pick and mix. And it's given lots and lots of variety, like it's gone into so many different areas of how we can piggyback that into our lifestyles, how you can then maybe stack on snacks that you enjoy. And make you know, as I say more of a meal of it, you know, with the Pong. But it is about trying to find things that fit in with your lifestyle, and everyone is so different and things that you enjoy. I think that is the most important thing to me is that we're all

Joyce Harper 20:54

going to find different things that we enjoy. And once you find it and once you feel that, you know those feel good endorphins that rush after a bit of movement. I think that will all help with motivation as well. Oh, such wise words. Lavina honestly, today, I was just interviewing someone for my book, I'm interviewing 50 women over 50 about good health and happiness. And we're talking about exercise. And the person said that six months ago, they started Pilates. And they didn't enjoy it at the beginning. They knew that they had you know, they knew that you should be doing it. And they kept looking at the clock and they said now they've turned the corner and they love it. So you have to keep going, don't you?

Lavina Mehta 21:37

Yeah, yeah, keep persevering. You know, if you don't enjoy something and have a little break, come back to it. Find things that you love and make you feel good. But yeah, that's a lovely story, I think. You know, people just sort of underrate movement that it has to be intense, and it has to be long. But I think the beauty of it, my message is that it can be accessible and it can be free. And it can just slot into little moments that we get, you know, even when you're cooking like you'll see if I'm like boiling pasta for the kids or boiling steaming broccoli or whatever. I'll get in some press ups or go into workplaces and I really want it to become normal that at that coffee machine. You will see people squatting or you will be seeing people doing their press UPS against the countertop and it just becomes something that's encouraged. You know, it's not something embarrassing. Um, my crazy visions.

Joyce Harper 22:31

Yeah, have a kitchen disco. You know, when you're cooking your broccoli, put put some music on hopefully no one's watching and dance like, like dance like no one's watching and that you don't care. You know, I often do that. So that's a good one. I wanted to talk about perimenopause. You've been very open about your journey. And we're so pleased that you've been helping us with our UK menopause education and support program. And I've heard you say that you look on menopause as a new beginning. And one of my students recently, I asked my young students what they thought about menopause and one of them said, you will be past your prime. And I totally disagree. I think many of us feel that we are having a new beginning and we're entering another wonderful stage of our lives. So what would you say it for the pre menopause women in relation to exercise?

Lavina Mehta 23:31

Well, personally, exercise has been an absolute savior for my perimenopause. So when I qualified as a personal trainer, I was 40 I obviously soon we hit the COVID pandemic. So I was training women, one to one for about a year and a half in my private school gym space that I had. And it was a brilliant experience because I got to see women from the age of 30 up until I think mine was 71 at the time one of my clients. And even at that point, I had clients that were in menopause, but we didn't quite talk about it properly, like they were a bit unsure about it. And, you know, I sort of saw transformations happening not just the physical, you know, the pictures, but things that were changing in them. So I had great experience from that. But then the COVID pandemic hit and I kicked off this whole news or unplanned part of doing the twice daily live with my husband and son. And we were doing like a lunchtime exercise snack which then developed into a full blown program over the seven days of the week targeting different types of movement, different body parts, and obviously then expanded like I never imagined it would you know, I was so not on social media now. I think my whole life was out there on socials. And what I didn't realize Joyce was that I was actually experiencing Peri menopausal symptoms at the same time. There's all of this and I just put it down like a lot of women due to the busyness of life, you know, I've kicked off something new. And I've got anxiety, which I

had never had got before. And I started sailing in front of lives because I've always been very open on social media, I want it to be, like totally relatable. There's no filters, and I used to say, in front of some of the lives, you know, actually, I didn't feel like coming on today, but I'm so glad I did. But I was feeling anxiety. And I remember a few friends, you know, stop me from my sort of Asian community and say, you know, you're talking about anxiety, like, what is everything, okay. And I was thinking, everything's fine. Like I'm loving the journey. But yeah, I've getting bouts of irrational anxiety. Joyce, the worst was when I was like, you know, doing radio stints and TV interviews, and then I would suddenly get these moments of brain fog. Before the interview, I'd start panicking a little bit. Because the kids were telling me my husband was telling me oh, I've told you this a million times, like how could you forget? Can you start writing things down and when your brain is, I guess, like my superpower in life, like that's one thing that I really want to count on. I started doubting myself and I started getting a bit worried because my grandmother had Alzheimer's really badly for the last decade of her life, which, you know, is another whole conversation and which is why I'm so passionate about talking about dementia, especially in my communities, which was another taboo subject that was never really talked about as I grew up. And I'm now an ambassador from outside the society in the hope of raising awareness, but obviously, it's linked with menopause where I do feel a lot of women like me, were starting to worry about early onset dementia. I was getting you know, issues with my sleep. I was also really struggling with my periods and being a personal trainer and having to put you know, the leggings on and the brave face and then doing a workout in public or like online on socials and not knowing whether I'm you know, going to have another lead at some point that's totally off track. So there was a lot of signs but the only time the penny dropped because when I watched the Davina McCall documentary, and this is like coming up into it sort of as around 43. So I really struggled for a few years not knowing what it point was. And when I watched that documentary, you've probably heard me say that I literally burst into tears to the point where my husband and youngest son were downstairs watching football and that is you know, when footballs on nothing can stop them. But they heard me cry. And they both came up. And they literally held my hand and they were really concerned. But they watched the documentary with me. And it was a turning point. It was like when the penny dropped. And then obviously since then I've been I've met you know, Mariella Frostrup and Alice smelly and their book launch, I said to them, you know, I've very publicly gone on my social media, and said, You know, I was 43 or 44 at the time, and then I'm in perimenopause, and I had such an influx choice of women, especially South Asian women who had probably never even heard of the word, let alone seeing someone you know, like me just sort of declaring it out there. And it was it was heartbreaking. Some of the stories, I got back of women suffering and that was really what fuels my mission, even now that I don't want women to suffer in silence. I want women to know that there's help out there, there's so much we can do around exercise and lifestyle changes, obviously, whether you're on HRT or not, and you know, being part of like menopause mandate and being able to hopefully, amplify the message that also that South Asian women are going to probably go through menopause five or six years early. And that's, you know, the small research that we have, we know that women's health is so underrepresented in health research and studies, but it is showing that we could potentially go through it from like the age of 45 to 46. When you hit menopause, perimenopause could be up to a decade before that. And that kind of falls in line with where I was in my late 30s, early 40s. So, you know, there's a lot to say about this topic. But I do try and be as open about it just because I want to help as many people as I possibly can.

Joyce Harper 29:25

Yeah, we have to do that. And I, I must say a few things picking up from what you said, I exercise through my menopause as well. I've always exercised but I, I as I started getting symptoms, I did a lot more. And I was aware I was lucky that I'm working in the field. So I was totally aware of all the symptoms, but our

education and supporting women to be sure that they do understand this before and that you know, you had to watch a documentary for the penny to drop and we don't want that to happen. So it's really important. We're all getting together and helping with mean, be educated? And I think, what's what's really great for me, I just wanted to say, before we get on to the last few questions, I know that you started getting interested in the cold water dipping and swimming. And I just want to say that, you know, I really feel that for, for me this for all women of everyone for everyone, not just women. But for me, I want to encourage people to exercise, exercise number one, but exercise outside exercise with a community, just being out in that nature helps our mental health so much. And I was taught recently and a psychologist said during his lecture that for mental health, a one hour walk in nature can be as effective as some drug treatments and that there's research on this. And then many people tell me that water makes them very happy. It's a very soothing and calming effect on them. So the cold water swimming as well, you're, you're near water, you're engulfed in water. And then there also is an absolute benefit of the coldness of the water that releases. As you've said, when you exhale, you're those endorphins and enkephalins. And just gives you a really good feeling about about yourself. So I'm looking forward to us very soon to go cold water swimming together and out, tell us how your journey has been with this form of exercise.

Lavina Mehta 31:30

Yeah, so I guess, you know, I've been writing my book is only actually been six months. And I am really fascinated, I guess, like, my mom was around the food that I want everything to be, have some science behind it, I want some evidence. So I started researching cold therapy and heat therapy actually, for the book. And it's all in there, you know, I've called them called cold water snacks. And, again, it's about accessibility. So I know, you know, Joyce, I can't wait for us to go to a lake or somewhere outdoors in nature, because that'd be ticking all the boxes for me. But unfortunately, I don't have anywhere that close to me where I can practice this every day. So the way you know, the some of the methods that I've mentioned in the book are probably little bit more accessible, like having cold showers. So I started off with that. And if you had met me, just about a year ago, I have the cold as I have Raynaud's, and I hate shaking people's hands, because it's like embarrassing for me to be so cold. It has literally transformed my reign as I've got warm hands most of the time now, which is quite a debilitating symptom because I would love to go for my feel good walks outdoors, but my hands and feet would be ice cold. I couldn't go skiing, you know, nothing, no type of blog would keep them warm. But more than that, it's been transformative in terms of my mood and my energy and my sleep. And my focus like punishing brain fog, you know, like I always used to say just go out step out in the fresh air. Sometimes just the cold birth being in nature. This is like one of the other little feel good fixes, like part of this toolkit that's in the book. Because it's not just exercise I've written about I've talked about, you know, all the things that I call mind snacks, I've actually covered things around nature around brain around like mindfulness around journaling. This is just such a big, I want it to be a very holistic approach to lifestyle. But yeah, cold water has been transformative, I'm now able to access a plunge pool at my gym, which is great. So I built up from 10 seconds of being the coldest person on the planet to now getting to 11 minutes, which I don't know how I've done but I love it. I absolutely love it. And I would recommend it to everyone and you know, just like you say even a body of water. So obviously whenever I go on holiday, I've really embraced swimming outside even if it's in the sea or in a pool and it's something that I never grew up with. Again, I think it was maybe a cultural thing that you know, on the holidays that I did have, you know, as a child with my parents, I was like, I'm just sitting on a sun bed in the shade like trying not to get tanned. Trying not to expose my body I guess maybe and never having that confidence just go out and get swim, but I would recommend it to everyone. It's so exhilarating and so freeing and I guess I'm a Piscean so maybe that's why I love being by the sea as well. It

Joyce Harper 34:38

is I'm not a very addictive person but this is really addictive. I actually feel like I am addicted and if I don't go I go and I go at least once a week people think I go every day I haven't. I'm not that near some water but I on a good week I've done three swims. But I do I do feel it if I miss it. It I mean, exercise is addictive anyway. But yeah, so we're gonna we're going we'll have a swim together this year. I'm looking forward to it. And my way I got my final questions to my guests are, have you heard people say, Why didn't anyone tell me this? And if you have, what did they ask?

Lavina Mehta 35:24

So I guess I was putting in more like, you know, why didn't anyone tell me this and I wish when I was younger, I had the awareness and the education, especially in my culture, that exercise and lifestyle changes are just so important for us, for our, from everything from, you know, reversing things like type two diabetes and pre diabetes, to helping us reduce risks of osteoporosis, for independence, for longevity, for the importance of muscle mass, I could never realize that from the age of 13, we start losing our bone density and our muscle mass and what that actually means like your How do I want to age like, do I want to be able to get up out of a chair easily myself? Do I want to be an active grandparent, you know, and be independent and not be a burden to my family for as long as I possibly can. So I do feel I just wish, I want everyone to know now how easy it is to fit things like movement and all the other, you know, feel good toolkit into your life and that it doesn't have to cost anything. And it really doesn't have to be that hard or too time consuming either.

Joyce Harper 36:41

And I've also heard you mentioned it's never too late. And I know you love exercising with your 74 year old mother in law, she might be a bit older now. So that but you know, it's never too late, is it?

Lavina Mehta 36:54

Oh my gosh, she's 76. Now and again, this was something you know, when I say mother in law, most people think, Oh, she must be your mom, how can you get on with your mother in law, but it is been such an amazing experience getting her on board. You know, through the pandemic, I felt like the elderly and the less mobile was so neglected, I just had this wild idea to get her on board. She was very camera shy. And she now obviously we do our free feelgood workout every Friday, which is all saved on my YouTube channel from the last four or five years. But just the fact that I have her or sometimes even my mom who is oh my gosh, how old is my mom 78 77 78 I'm losing track of time now. Both of them are incredible thing to inspire people. And it's simple chair based exercises that you know I do in workplaces that sometimes we can't get up or sometimes less mobile aren't able to to low impact standing exercises, I give a quite a variety of things. And it covers the whole, you know, feel good fitness prescription, all the different areas. But I've had up to the age of 100 Joyce joined me during the pandemic from a care home and she had outsiders bless her. And you know, I know from what my grandmother went through that that was where I just thought I need to get these workouts, you know, my goal is still to get them into every care home in the country or around the world. I want everyone to be able to do something and know that even a minute counts. And studies are showing us that it's literally never too late. Like for older people even to be able to use the bait being tin cans and things that I've got on the floor behind me. You know, laundry bottles of water bottles and the community I have online on Zoom and on YouTube are amazing because they are showing how this is literally true that it's never too late and just seeing their smiles and their the social community I feel like that

is such an important part that I've also written about in my book, this whole, you know, point around social connection and how important it's you know, it's shown by studies to lead to healthier, happier, longer lives. And it's the feel good community that I want, you know, all of them to kind of inspire one another. So yeah, I mean, just you know, just seeing the move with me is absolutely incredible. And it motivates me right and it just keeps that passion alive. So yeah, I hope anyone listening you know, feel free to join our workouts, it's never too late.

Joyce Harper 39:28

Oh, thank you. I've got this wonderful vision now of, of people in an old people's home and all exercising to your YouTube channel. So please, if you're visiting a relative or you're you're working one please let's get Levinas videos on and get get the people there exercising. That's so wonderful.

Lavina Mehta 39:56

Yeah, it's amazing. I mean, you know, just if they've got their staff members I've seen the staff join in as well and you know, it's just such an incredible like sight. They've been quite a few care homes that regularly join us to like this children's schools with disabilities. Anyone, I guess even menopausal I always say like when you're really feeling demotivated if you've got joint pain and things are feeling harder for you to move, like just simple exercises from those workouts can help to anyone that may be you know, recovering from an injury or an operation or an illness, you know, through the COVID pandemic. I feel like exercise snacking is going to help because you just start off small and then you can build up but yeah, please Thank you Joyce for shouting out if any, this workout can help anyone. You know, that's my mission really to try and reach as many people as possible.

Joyce Harper 40:53

The Rena, you are so so inspiring. So I wanted to ask you what motivates you right? When you wake up in the morning? What motivates you to jump out of bed and do all this amazing work that's so motivating to everybody else?

Lavina Mehta 41:09

Oh, getting emotional for some reason, but it is the community Joyce, I think when we can use social media for a good purpose. And it's it's everyone, I have to thank everyone that has been part of this journey with me, whether it's on Instagram, or Facebook, on Twitter, or wherever it is LinkedIn, I am very blessed that I usually get a message from someone, or a DM or something on my story. You know, when I'm out on my posts, those feel good walks and acts daily. And I just get a message from someone saying, you know, I'm now going out for my walk because I saw you doing it or, you know, thank you so much my grandmother or my, you know, my uncle has stopped doing your workouts, or I was feeling so demotivated, but you've given me a great idea. Today, it's just so simple little gestures, I have to really thank everyone for believing in my crazy ideas. And for giving me that feedback. I think that feedback is the most important. Because then I feel like I've got a purpose and you know how passionate I am about it. To actually, you know, obviously I have these images of people in the care homes, I have images of where I've gone out and you know, we've done exercise snacking in, you know, in when we did our event for your menopause education program. And it's those sorts of moments that like fuel me with this motivation that you know, this can be life changing, this can help people. So yeah, thank you all for interacting with me and keeping me motivated.

Joyce Harper 42:49

Well, Levine, I want to thank you on behalf of everybody who you've helped, because, you know, we've been doing an event for International Women's Day week at UCL. And we're going to talk about the importance of health and fitness. And then we're going to do a bit of exercise snacking. While everyone's sitting in their chair, we're gonna get them up and just, you know, just standing there, we're gonna get them all to do some movement. So thank you for that inspiration and thank you for everyone who you've helped over the over the years and will continue to help it's it's brilliant. Can I ask you,

Lavina Mehta 43:25

thank you joy. Can I ask you? I was gonna say make sure

Joyce Harper 43:33

I'll do it I'll do a little video. Can I ask you what makes you happy? And where is your happy place? Oh,

Lavina Mehta 43:39

so I never realized that you know being outdoors like you in nature rain or shine and I started doing the walks you know even before we got a little puppy I never realized that would be so transformative for me it's like walking is my therapy I've written so much about nature snacks movement and walking in and my walk snacks in my new book but I guess I'm happy so I always call my happy place this lovely walk that I do it's like a bit of forest bathing and you know again, I talked about the science around this Japanese art of you know the trees I've got a tree snacks I've got grounding snacks, I think I've got so many different ways that we can incorporate it. But yeah, being out in the woods and we know all the benefits of being around trees and nature is definitely one of my Happy Places. And I guess if I could one day I would love to live by the sea. I feel like you know the water a bit like you that combined with the sunlight, the fresh air with you know, looking out into the horizon rather than just on the screen. And ideally I think joining all of that with the power of social connection so when I feel happiest is when I may be walking with one of my children or one of my good friends and that will Walking and talking. It's like therapy. You know, walking talk sort of therapy for me is a kind of win win on both fronts. So yeah, I just love it. I recommend it to anyone.

Joyce Harper 45:14

Beautiful words. And the very last question that I asked all my guests, what advice would you give your younger self?

Lavina Mehta 45:24

Oh, wow. That, you know, life is such a journey, there's been ups and downs, there's been mistakes that I've made. There's been times where I've failed. I would never, ever have thought I'd be doing what I'm doing now. And I don't think my parents would have ever thought that either. So I would just say, you know, don't ever rule things out. Follow your dreams, follow your passion, like believe in yourself. If I can do this, Joyce, I honestly feel like anyone can because it was so unplanned. And I always go with my gut, my gut tells me a lot. I always kind of go with my intuition. So do what makes you happy, do what feels right for you. And I think when you get to midlife, you almost kind of think you know, as we said, I want it to be a positive experience. I want this to inspire any women out there that may have maybe given up their careers like I had, maybe are feeling a little bit lost and demotivated. Try something new, follow your passion, and you'd have no idea where it can take you. Yeah, and

Joyce Harper 46:35

I've asked many people this question, and I'm definitely getting a common response is believe in yourself. I think that's something that probably all of us didn't do enough when we were younger. So that's, that's becoming really the most prominent message. So Lavina thank you so much. We finally did it. And I really recommend to everyone the feelgood fix is out on the 30th of May you can pre order it now. And thank you so much. I'm so glad we finally did it. I'm looking forward to us working together because we are so on the same page with everything we want to do and get get everyone leading the best, healthiest, happiest life they could ever lead. So thank you so much. Lavina

Lavina Mehta 47:23

it's been an honor Joyce, thank you for having me, and I can't wait to do more together. Thank you so much.

Joyce Harper 47:29

Thank you