



Essential Alchemy

The Ancient Art of Healing Naturally

Season 1, Episode 9: Reset Your Nervous System with Alex Howard

Jodi: Hi, I'm Jodi Cohen, and I'm excited to have Alex Howard as my guest today. Alex is the founder and CEO of Optimum Health Clinic, one of the world's leading integrative medicine clinics, specializing in fatigue and related conditions. He's also the host of the Super Fatigue Conference, and Trauma and Mind Body Super Conference, and the creator of a 12-week reset program, and the creator of Therapeutic Coaching methodology.

His first book, *Why Me?* was published in 2003 and he's published theoretical papers in journals such as the *British Medical Journal Open*, and *Psychology and Health*. And I'm just really excited to have you here to talk about how to reset your nervous system and support healing. And I would love it if you could just share a little bit about how you got interested in this. How did you get involved?

Alex: Brilliant. Well, Jody, thank you for having me. My childhood dream was not to become a sort of health expert. I think my parents' dream was I'd become a chartered accountant. My dream was to play guitar in a punk rock band. So I think neither of us got what we wanted. But I ended up, like many people who work in this field, I ended up with my own personal experience.

So around the age of 16, I started developing what I now know in hindsight to be symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome. So I woke up one morning and if there was a plug of energy into my body, it was just sort of like someone had ripped that out. And initially I went to the doctors and did the usual things that one would do in those situations. And I remember being told, "This could be three to six months before you recover." And when you're 16 years old, three to six months sort of sounds like a life sentence. Little did I know that it was going to be a seven year journey. A couple of years into that, I reached a point of severe desperation. And I think, often people suffering from chronic health conditions, people can say, "Well, it's just depression, or it's just anxiety. You just need to go, and get out, and be active, and do more, and you'll start to feel better."

The problem is that I tried that a number of times and each time I did, it made things worse, not better. So there was a sort of sense of feeling incredibly isolated, feeling utterly stuck. Like it just felt like there was no known path out of what's happening. And I reached a point of total desperation. It wasn't that I wanted to end my life, I just didn't want to live the life that I was living. And I had a conversation with my uncle, who was a sort of mentor and sort of guide at that time. And he really helped me realize that if I wanted the circumstances of my life to be different, then I was going to have to be the one to change them.

Alex: And at the time I had all kinds of sort of limiting beliefs. I was 18 years old. I knew nothing about medicine. I knew nothing about research. I wasn't particularly interested in either anyway. And it became the beginning of a five-year healing journey from that point, of reading hundreds and hundreds of books, of practicing very consistently daily meditation, yoga, trying every different nutrition program you can imagine. At one point, I was taking over 60 supplements a day. I spent an entire student loan on supplements and kind of practitioners and things. But I found a way to recover, and there wasn't one miracle. My career would be quite simple if I could sit here and say, "Jodi, it was this one thing that I did, and that's the answer."

Jodi: Yeah. There are no magic bullets. It's additive and cumulative.

Alex: Yeah, that's right. And that realization became the foundation for the organization that I set up about 16 years ago, the Optimum Health Clinic, where we now have a team of 20 full-time practitioners specializing in working with fatigue and related conditions. But it's really about trying to map and understand the complexity, and the nuance, and everyone's different, but there are shared patterns within these conditions.

We have a functional medicine informed nutrition team, but we also have a team of psychology practitioners. A big part of that is understanding the impact of our mind and our emotions upon our body. And initially I was incredibly cynical. I mean, one of the few things that would have given me a temporary injection of energy was someone telling me it was all in my mind.

Because I would want to fight you, and tell you all the reasons why you were wrong. But I couldn't deny along the way that it played a role in my healing journey. And certainly having worked with many, many thousands of people over the years, I'm sure we'll get into some of this today, learning to switch off and reset the nervous system has an enormous impact upon our body's ability to heal. And that's been a sort of critical part of my life's work over the years, since then.

Jodi: You said so many valuable things. And the one I really want to land on is this idea of mindset, and emotions, and thoughts, and how that activates the nervous system in kind of the stress response. And how if you can shift gears, so be it, into that calming state, it's almost like the director that's in charge of the body. Can you talk a little bit about how your nervous system played into some of your symptoms and some of the work that you're doing now?

Alex: Yeah. One of the things that I noticed at the time was when I was under significant stress, particularly when I was doing exams, and my A-levels, and then at university, my symptoms got worse. And it's not that when I had no stress, I'm actually recovered. There was still an underlying reality of what was going on, but there was a fluctuating nature of the symptoms, and what was happening in my nervous system was having an impact on that. And of course we have enormous amounts of research these days that show, particularly actually around exam time, because students are easily recruited into research studies and exam times are sort of times of predictable stress where you can take samples before, during and after.

But one of the things that we know to be the case, is when students do exams, their immunity is affected. Things like natural killer cell count goes down dramatically, quite often. There's been some fascinating research that's been done, looking at things like the body's ability to heal wounds. And there's one particular study that I think it's really interesting, where they did biopsies on people on the non-dominant arm, and they were looking at how quickly did that biopsy heal. And they had a control group, and intervention group. And the control group was just a sort of average sort of person.

The intervention group was people that were caregivers, people in a role of caring for and supporting others. For example, a parent with Alzheimer's, or a child with a disability, or a spouse that had a back injury, or whatever it may be. And those caregivers took 24% longer to heal that wound than those in the control group. So we can see that when we're under ongoing stress, it directly impacts upon our immunity, it impacts upon our body's ability to heal. There's countless research showing the impact of stress upon things like our digestion, on things like our sleep, upon our kind of mood. We can get into some of the mechanisms of how this works. Those of us that work as clinicians, we all have those patients that are sort of those turning points in our clinical career, where something happens that impacts upon the client, but it actually changes the practitioner more than it changes the client.

I remember one of those, where I had a patient who was one of the first people I worked with, with chronic fatigue/ME. And he came in to see me and I did my sort of usual spiel, and my usual thing at that time around learning to calm the nervous system, taught him some techniques. It sort of went away and it was just another patient that day. I wasn't giving it so much thought afterwards. And then a week or so later, I think he had his second appointment two weeks later, he sends me an email and says, "I've really appreciated the consultation, but I'm feeling terrible. I'm really struggling. Is it possible for us to have a quick conversation before our session in a week's time?" So we spoke on the phone later that day.

Alex: And one of the areas that my training is on, my background's more in traditional psychology, but also having trained in many sort of the brief therapeutic techniques like NLP, and EFT, and hypnotherapy, and coaching, and these things. There's a frame in NLP, which is called the "As if" frame, this idea that you act as though something is true. And sometimes by acting as though something is true, it sort of becomes true. It changes somewhat our experience. So I found myself saying to this patient, because it was so clear that the sort of endless questioning that was bubbling up around this symptom, and that symptom, of why is this happening, why is that happening, that he was in what I would later come to call a maladaptive stress response.

A healthy stress response in our body, you and I are walking down the street and suddenly we don't see the enormous bus coming, flying towards us. It's entirely appropriate. We get this hit of adrenaline and cortisol so we can get out of the way. But a maladaptive stress response is when our nervous system is responding to something in a way that's maladaptive, that it's not a helpful response.

Jodi: I call it amygdala hijack.

Alex: Exactly. That's a great, great, great phrase for it. So he was in this response and I said to him, "What would happen if, for the next week, you acted as though there was nothing wrong with you? I'm not saying you ignore your symptoms. I'm not saying that you pretend that you're not ill, but all of these questions about what's wrong, you just stop running those?" And I taught him some techniques, a particular technique the week before, of learning to catch thought patterns and stop those, and sort of shift the focus in the body. So I said, "Just use that technique for the next week, on every time your mind starts thinking about symptom, and worrying about symptom, and going on to Dr. Google and researching a symptom, and all of those that focus on symptoms."

So he did. And I didn't think again so much of it. He came back a week later, and opened the door at the clinic where I was working at the time, and he just looked like a totally different person. His shoulders were relaxed, his color was back in his skin. He just kind of walked in with a little bit of a swagger. It was a miracle. His recovery journey, I think, was another couple of years after that point of working on various pieces from different perspectives. But that shift in his nervous system was dramatic. He'd gone from being almost housebound that week previously, to going into work a couple of times. He had a recording studio, to going to the studio in the evenings.

Alex: And a number of experiences like that, which made me realize that what's happening in our mind and our emotions, it's not that it miraculously fixes physical symptoms. What it does is it puts the body in one of two states. It could be in a state of stress, or it can be in a state of healing. When the body is in a healing state, our natural capacity to heal is unlocked. It's like we cut our skin. And if we keep the cut clean, and we leave it alone, and we let it breathe, it will naturally heal. Perhaps if the cut's deep, and we don't stitch it together, it keeps getting torn apart, and it gets infected, and then it gets dirt in it. The body has a natural ability to heal, but we have to get out of its way to allow it to happen.

And that's a big part of this work around the nervous system, that we go into this maladaptive stress response, sometimes in response to medically unexplained symptoms, to the fluctuating nature of chronic health conditions, or being overly triggered and activated by stresses in life. We go into a stress state, and in that state it can be a cause of symptoms, it can perpetuate symptoms, but it can also inhibit the body's ability to heal symptoms.

Jodi: This is so timely for what's going on right now. And I know we're going to cover kind of some of your strategies, but I'm wondering if you could just teach us that? Especially for people, with Covid going on, you know, my goodness, if you sneeze, everyone thinks they're going to die. We're all kind of stuck in that state. So anything that could help us ease out of that would be so helpful. Is that something you're willing to share?

Alex: I mean, I think one of the things which is really important to understand, is that if you can see it, you don't have to be it. If we have awareness of the patterns that are happening, that awareness alone gives us a level of ability to step back and get perspective. Now, sometimes we can see something and we still need to have strategies to break a habit, or to change conditioning, but we don't even get that choice when we're consumed by a pattern that's happening.

And I think it's very interesting, in the context of what's happening with Covid, because one of the things that I've noticed over the years is when we're under stress, it magnifies our patterns. And it's an odd word to use, and I appreciate it may not be the right word for some people, but sometimes the gift of going through traumatic and difficult experiences is by magnifying those patterns, it almost becomes like a mirror, which gives us new perspective.

So when people, particularly when the pandemic first started happening, it's really helpful for people to look back, like, "How did you respond? Did you respond in anxiety? Was it a kind of constant, almost like trying to think your way to a feeling of safety? Like thinking of all the things that could go wrong, all the ways you deal with it, and you were trying to feel safe by this constant thinking in anxiety and worrying?"

Jodi: I think a lot of people do that, or they somehow like sterilize the entire world. It's almost like they become OCD and they have these patterns that are going to keep them safe.

Alex: Yeah. That's not to say that some of those patterns might not be appropriate, of course. Washing your hands regularly, wearing mask in certain contexts. But it's sort of where we're doing those things to excess because we're trying to get a feeling. The problem is you can't change things on the inside by doing things on the outside. So if you have a feeling of not feeling safe, there's no amount of doing stuff on the outside, which will actually give you a feeling of feeling safe.

The way you feel safe is actually by slowing things down enough that you actually connect to yourself, and you connect to your inherent sense of safety. And that's something which is much more substantial. It's much more stable. It's much more supportive, but the system has to calm and settle enough to come into that place of feeling safe. But just also to speak to some of the other ways people might've responded to Covid.

People respond by going into denial. There's sort of a whole series of people, particularly some people will be sitting on social media that have gone into all kinds of conspiracy theories. And what you're really seeing is a sort of magnifying of their own relationship to authority, and their own reactivity towards their own sort of parental issues that are not worked out. And anyone that tells them to do anything, must be controlling them and must be some evil sort of dark force. You've other people go into a response of anger and blame. And what do they do under pressure and stress in their life? They get angry. So they're angry at China, they're angry at the government, or they're angry at so and so that's not wearing a mask.

Jodi: Do you think that when people are externally angry it's because they don't know how to process it internally? And so they just kind of spew it on other people?

Alex: I think anger is an emotion that has a bad rap in popular psychology. So in popular psychology, there's a lot of positive emotions and negative emotions. We need to feel happy, and love, and grateful, but we're not meant to be angry, or hateful, or resentful, or whatever. And I think anger spewed over people causes suffering, causes harm, and is obviously not generally a helpful thing to do, except in certain extreme situations where we actually need to defend ourselves, or we need the force to be able to do that. But when we shut down our anger, we also shut down our personal power. We shut down our capacity for strength, our capacity to stand for what we believe.

Alex: We can feel the energy, and the strength, and the power of anger without vomiting it, without kind of spewing it over other people. So I think that's right. I think when people are spewing anger around, what they're actually doing is their sort of a way of getting lost in the energy of it, without actually feeling the potential of it. And it's often also because it's a protection against people's vulnerability. So normally when people are protecting against sadness and hurt, they go to anger and aggression as a way to defend against that.

Jodi: Yeah. That's probably why it's part of the grief process because it's easier to feel angry than it is to feel sad.

Alex: Yeah. I remember, a while ago I had an elderly patient, and he very sadly died of cancer, and I knew we'd done very good work with this patient, had a very good relationship. And I knew I had quite an important impact upon this patient in the sort of later time. And then after they passed a few months later, I got this letter from one of their children, which was really the most hateful, aggressive sort of letter.

And part of me was kind of really hurt because I knew the value of the work that had been done. But exactly, that's the realization, that's the grieving process. You have to find someone to be angry at, and someone to blame, and that's a safer place to go. It feels like an easier place to go than to go to the sadness and the vulnerability, because at least in anger, we have an illusion of power and control.

Jodi: That helps kind of frame a lot of what we're seeing on social media, because there does seem to be an uptick in the anger right now.

Alex: Yeah. I think there's a lot of people that, and understandably, that feel out of control, and feel let down, and feel disappointed. And there's a lot of people in a lot of pain right now as well. And I think not just pain right now, but the sort of anticipation of pain in the future of people, of loss of financial stability, of loss of community, and loss of connection.

One of the models that I've found very, very helpful in understanding this, some model called Polyvagal Theory, which comes from Stephen Porges' work. In Polyvagal Theory, we talk about three different states or stages within the nervous system.

So there's the safe and social states, there's the fight or flight, trying to get away from, there's a sort of freeze shut down. One of the things that helps us to come to a calm, relaxed, healing state is connection and community. That's why it's called safe and social. There in that state, we're able to be in connection and to feel the support and the holding of other people around us.

Alex: When we lose community, for many people that causes an agitation to the nervous system, that causes the sense of not feeling safe. And so people find themselves in fight or flight. So one of the qualities, of course, of fight or flight is fight, that we start to become more defensive and more aggressive because we're trying to keep ourselves protected, just like an animal that's under threat.

Jodi: Yeah. Dr. Porges is actually on the summit, and he spoke about that, about how masks block the facial connection and gaze averting. You're totally right.

Alex: Yeah. And it's a very interesting example of one of those situations in life where it's sometimes called "wicked problems" where problems that just don't have clear simple solutions. It's like, you've got protecting people from Covid, but also protecting the economy. You've got keeping people safe through isolation and mask, but you've got the loss of human contact. And I think part of what is causing a lot of the nervous system agitation in people is there aren't simple answers. There's not a sense of, "But if we just do this, it's all going to be okay."

That sort of sense of ongoing uncertainty and lack of clarity, it's very familiar for those suffering with medically unexplained illnesses. I think there's a very interesting parallel between suffering from a condition, but like many chronic health conditions, which are fluctuating in nature, there isn't a clear medical pathway to resolution. And so people will live in an ongoing state of uncertainty and ongoing state of not knowing whether they can trust their body, and whether they're going to get worse or better, or if they should rash if they try this treatment. It's the same thing on a macro level right now that's happening with the pandemic, that it's not as medically unexplained, but it's a medically unclear, let's say, situation.

Jodi: Right, right. And which is why what you're doing, and your point about finding safety in yourself, is so critical right now. Because we can't control anything, and that will remain uncertain, but we can control how our body responds.

Alex: That's right. And that's where it really comes back to what we were saying a little bit earlier. That firstly, we have to build that awareness, that if you can see it, you don't have to be it. That if you can see, "Hang on a second, I'm trying to deal with the situation by trying to think my way, strategize my way, obsess my way, to a feeling of safety."

Jodi: Yeah. Anticipatory stress.

Alex: Yeah. If I can see that I'm doing that, I now have some choice. Now, it might not be that in seeing I can do it, it just miraculously stops. There are different stages to that awareness. Sometimes we can see, "Yes, I do that pattern as a general thing. I can see that I do that." The next step in that awareness is to be able to go, "And I can see these examples of me doing that. I can see that yesterday I was going out to the supermarket. And I kept thinking about what time of day I'm going to go, will there be people there? So I can see an example."

The next stage is to be able to see it in real time as it's happening, because then we can have a choice in that moment. "Hang on, right now, I'm doing that pattern. Or I'm in an anger response, or I'm in a sort of conspiracy theory, kind of like don't trust anyone sort of response." If we can see that we're doing that, we now have a choice. And sometimes we need strategies and tools. Sometimes the awareness alone is enough to take a step back. And maybe if we've got some tools, like mindfulness tools or we've got kind of body awareness tools, that we can realize that our energy is all up here. And actually we need to just start slowing things down.

We need to start bringing our energy back into our body. Then that feeling of safety starts to arise. And then just like they're sort of vicious circles of, "We feel unsafe, so our mind speeds up, so we feel more unsafe, so we're more kind of frenzied." There's also a virtuous circle. "So we feel more relaxed, our mind calms down, we take a few breaths, we feel more safe in our body. We then make better choices. We decide to go for a walk and then being in nature calms us further." So often it's about moving the direction. Are we getting more agitated, or are we moving more to a healing state, and more of a calming and settling of our system?

Jodi: Okay. That's great. And I love that you mentioned like walking and being in nature as a pattern interrupt. What are some other things that you found helpful? Like when you know, "Oh my God, I'm having an anxiety attack. I know what I'm doing, but how do I get out of it?" How do you help reset the nervous system in that moment?

Alex: Yeah. So there's different sort of categories, let's say, of strategies that I think are important. So the first thing is certainly awareness. You got to be able to see what's happening. The next thing is we need to have ways of rewiring those patterns and responses. Like there is a habitual element to, for example, anxiety. We've trained the brain, we've wired our brain to think in a certain way. So I have a 12 week online coaching program called The Reset Program. And one of the things we teach in The Reset Program, after we've worked on awareness, and we've learned sort of meditation, mindfulness techniques to help calm things, the problem with if you just do mindfulness is things calm, and as soon as you stop the practice, they get wired again. And then you kind of meditate. And again, it goes up again.

Alex: So we need to look at what are the patterns that drive up in the first place and then specific techniques to stop those patterns. To see them, to stop them, and then to calm the system. And then we practice catching the pattern, stopping the patterns, and resetting the system. So those sort of rewiring of the pattern piece that becomes, I think, very important. For some people, that alone is enough. But one of the things that I've noticed with people that have done other programs, that are just doing that piece is, what can sometimes happen is we end up in an endless pattern of seeing patterns, stopping them, calming them. And then the pattern that comes back.

Jodi: Like yo-yo dieting with our emotions.

Alex: Yeah, exactly. Because the question is why is the brain wired in the first place? And one of the reasons, there may be a number of reasons, one of the reasons for many people is it's a way of escaping the feelings in our body. So there are traumas, maybe they're big "T" traumas, you know, physical abuse, sexual abuse. But for many people, it's what I call trauma with a small "t", it's that we didn't quite get the emotional holding and support that we needed as a child. Maybe that we learned that we were only safe if we sort of anticipated things, things that might go wrong. So that's all held in the body and what happens is, is we start to calm the mind and we start to connect to the body.

We start to feel that stuff, which we've spent years not feeling, what do we do? We go back to the mind. So you sort of get this sort of come to the body, run away, come to the body, run away. And so learning to feel, to metabolize, to digest those emotions becomes enormously important. And I'm a big fan of techniques. Things like emotional freedom technique and tapping techniques and other strategies. They definitely have their place. I teach them as part of one module in The Reset Program. But the limitation of those techniques can be, that what we've learned is each time I feel something, I've got to do something about it, and get rid of it.

And one of the things that I really emphasize and teach people is the importance of learning to simply feel. To open to the feelings that are there in our body, and learning to trust our body's enormous, innate wisdom. And one of the things we look at is the different strategies we use. I talk about six emotional styles. So things like avoidance, and distraction, or state changing, or analyzing, these are ways that we've learned to not feel our feelings. So again, there's an awareness piece here, starting to become aware of those strategies. But then ultimately, and it sounds so ridiculously simple, but it can be very challenging to do sometimes, is learning to relax enough that we start to open up to our heart sensor and to starting to feel.

Jodi: You know, I have a yoga wheel, and I try to, it's unbelievably painful. It's very intense. Like I almost have to chunk it in small doses, but yeah, it's hard to be in it.

Alex: Yeah. Well, that's an important point that one of the things we have to learn is to titrate. We have to learn to feel what we feel able to feel, but not push, because many people that have experienced trauma or have achiever patterns is they've learned that the way you deal with things is you push, you make it happen.

Jodi: I've muscled through my whole life.

Alex: The problem is that when we do that to ourselves emotionally, our emotional center locks up more. It's sort of like going towards a vault where our emotions are sort of protected, and locked, and walking at it and pulling out a machine gun. What happens? The bolt locks down more. So we have to find and learn a way to relate to ourselves emotionally, where we're building emotional trust with ourselves.

Jodi: No, I think that I want you to elaborate. I've never heard it put that way. That's brilliant. Please continue.

Alex: Yeah. Well, we all have a way of relating to ourselves emotionally.

And I realize I'm a highly clichéd, I've got a psychology person sameness. We learnt in childhood, normally, it's not always the case, but normally how our parents related to us emotionally, is how we learn to relate to ourselves emotionally. And yes, there is the impact of trauma in childhood that's held in the body, and processing, and metabolizing, and digesting that is often very important. But the real suffering is not always, not often, that. It's the way that we are ongoingly traumatizing ourselves day to day, by the way that we've learned to relate to ourselves emotionally.

Jodi: So we adapted a script in childhood that we need to rewrite to have a more healthy relationship with ourself and our emotions.

Alex: Because what happens is our emotions come up and just like perhaps our parents ignored them, we ignore them. Or perhaps our parents judged us for having emotions. So we start to feel a bit tender, a bit vulnerable. And our inner critic comes in and says, "Stop being so pathetic, and being so weak." So we've internalized, we've learned these ways of relating emotionally and this perpetuates this cycle.

So we start to feel the pattern comes up. We go back into the mind, and the nervous system is once again activated. And so partly this is about awareness, but partly it's also about learning to feel the body. And the way that I talk about digesting emotion, it's similar to digesting food, that there's steps to the process.

Alex: So when we digest food, what's the first thing we do? We chew on it. So we chew and that chewing process helps begin to break it down. What does that mean emotionally? It means reflecting on it. It means talking about it. It means starting that process of reflecting, and perhaps it means journaling, perhaps it means having some therapy, but we start that process of chewing. But then we swallow.

And when we swallow, in the digestive system there being hydrochloric acid, digestive enzymes that start to break down the food. We don't do that consciously. The body has a remarkable ability to do that. Same is true emotionally. There's a point we go from, it's an active process of chewing and sort of thinking about, to a surrender that we allow a process that is enormously wise and powerful to start to happen. And then we move to our next stage where we've broken down a certain amount and we start to assimilate in the small intestine. We start to absorb before eventually we eliminate what it is that we don't need.

What that means emotionally is there may be emotions that come out, there may be crying, there may be screaming into a pillow. There might be just feeling like a lot of intensity and anger in the body, acting it out on other people, it just causes more suffering. It's not generally helpful, but learning to feel and to allow those emotions. The body has the wisdom to process and digest. It's not something that we need to do. It's something we need to get out of the way and allow to happen. And as that metabolizing and digesting and processing of emotion happens, what I then find, as we go through The Reset Program is that people are then actually able to come home to the body. It's not a constant effort to get to the body. It's not a constant, endlessly stopping of patterns, or that may have been an important step along the way.

But what then starts to happen is there is a natural place where people are able to just find themselves in their body, in a calm healing state. And that has sometimes miraculous impacts upon other things in someone's health and other things in people's lives. Other times it's more subtle. You know, what we can see is, and it's very interesting in the context of the Optimum Health Clinic, that one of the things that we found is if people have a lot of sensitivities, or intolerances, or reactions, or different approaches, that when we calm the nervous system, when someone gets more into their body and the system starts to reset, other approaches can be much more effective.

Jodi: Oh yes. Yeah. I almost call it like priming the walls before you paint it. It just lays the foundation. That was so exceptional. I love everything you shared. And I'm wondering, is there anything else that you'd like to talk about for the nervous system, and kind of your outlook and approach to resetting?

Alex: Yeah. I think what I would say is that it can sometimes feel quite daunting. We've talked about quite an involved process here in some ways, from learning techniques around mindfulness and meditation, to interrupting patterns, to emotional styles, to feeling emotions, to working with inner critic and those sorts of things. I think what's important to remember is different strategies and different tools work for different people at different points. And we all start where we are.

And you know, what that can sometimes mean is that one particular piece of that journey can be really critically important to us. That could be quite a hard piece and we can work hard at that piece. And we think, "Oh my God, if this piece is hard, I'm going to be on this journey for 20 lifetimes before I get to the point that things change."

But just because one piece is hard, it doesn't mean that all pieces are hard. And really, I'm touched every day by the enormous capacity that human beings have to change and they have to transform, but for that change and for that transformation to happen, we do also have to commit to it. And if I think back to my own experience, I spent two years, as I mentioned at the start, getting more and more sick, and getting more and more desperate. And it wasn't in that moment of decision that I was going to become responsible for changing what was happening, that it all miraculously happened. But in that moment of decision, I changed direction. A little bit, initially.

Jodi: Personal responsibility is huge, it's necessary, and it's critical. And I love that you've laid out this roadmap. I'm sure everyone that listened to this is going to want to learn more. How can they find you? How can they find out more about The Reset Program?

Alex: Yeah. So there's a couple of things that I always suggest. So firstly, I have a weekly YouTube show where I actually film people's sessions with me as it's quite an unusual thing that we're doing. People are brave enough to let us film the sessions. And they also do video diaries and they sort of share their journey working with me. And they're often also going through elements of The Reset Program as well. So people can go to my website, alexhoward.tv. They can find that this is sort of a place you can get the different directions to different things that people can find there links to In Therapy, which is the YouTube show that I mentioned. And also there's a free, three part video series.

Jodi: Say that three times fast.

Alex: Near the top of the homepage where you can sign up for free for a kind of three 45 minutes or hour long videos, which take much of what we've been talking about here, go a bit slower, put in more detail, more context, talk more about some of the science and how this works. And at the end of that, people also will get details if they want to join the 12 week Reset Program, which is an enormously powerful way, I find, the people to not just get more intellectual understanding, but actually to really get the techniques, and the support in actually making change in resetting their nervous system.

Jodi: Just amazing. Thank you so much. This was fantastic. I appreciate you and your time and everything you're doing.

Alex: Thank you, Jodi. It's been a pleasure. It's been a lot of fun and yeah, well done. I know how much work it takes to put on events like this. So, well done. I'm really pleased to be part of it.

Jodi: Thank you.