



## **PWE09: Which elements are you missing when approaching endometriosis naturally?**

**Aubree:** Welcome to the Peace With Endo Podcast. My name's Aubree Deimler. I am an author, speaker and integrative wellness coach who helps women with endometriosis naturally manage pain, increase energy and find peace with endo. This is episode number nine and on the show today we have a special guest named Melissa Turner. Hi Melissa. Thanks for being here.

**Melissa:** Hi! Lovely to be here, thank you so much for inviting me.

**Aubree:** Melissa was one of the first ladies that I came across when I was first diagnosed with endometriosis and she really was the one who inspired me to follow more of a holistic path. So, I'm super excited that you're here today. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

**Melissa:** So, I began my blog in 2010 and it was really a personal mission to try and heal myself. I had been diagnosed with endometriosis at age 19. I had stage four endometriosis and went down the conventional approach for quite a number of years, about 15 years, where I did surgeries. I had seven surgeries. I did hormone treatments and I was pretty much still living on painkillers and just didn't feel like myself. I, you know, was on the pill at that stage, and you know, I was constantly moody. I had weight issues. My skin was always breaking out, and it felt like it was affecting my relationship and like I say, I just didn't feel like me.

It felt like a less superior version of me basically, and so, yeah, so I went on a mission to try to find another way, another approach, and initially when somebody, a friend of mine, suggested that I look at a natural approach I actually went, that's not going to work. Like, I have stage four endometriosis. It couldn't possibly help me. You know, like I just had this mindset that what I had was serious and I needed hardcore medical treatment. But she said, look what's the worst that can happen? Just try it out. Give it six months and see what happens. And that's kinda where the whole journey started.

Initially, I just focused on diet, you know, I cut out a lot of foods that were not, you know, not ideal. They created a lot of issues in terms of my bowel health, and I actually noticed that as a first thing. The first thing I cut out was actually dairy, and I noticed the minute I cut that out that I actually felt substantially better, and then I just carried on, you know, that's sort of the beginning, and I kept going because as I kept trying things as information I came across I would go, Ok. I'm going to try this,

and I just kept going, and eventually I got to a point where I was completely pain and symptom free and didn't have any issues, and that's why I do the work that I do because I can see some real merit to, you know, women needing to know, that look there are other options out there, and there is a way that you can manage this successfully without relying on just conventional approaches.

**Aubree:** Absolutely. And I'm so grateful that you decided to share a lot of that journey with the Internet, right? I know that can take some bravery, a little bit, to put it out there. What really inspired you to share that in that manner?

**Melissa:** I don't think it was intentional to share it with the world. That was never my intention. I liked the idea of a blog because I could access it from anywhere, and it actually became kind of fun in the beginning because I did get some comments back, but they weren't negative comments. They were, you know, supportive comments, and people intrigued about what I was doing and at the beginning of the blog it was really just a journey of discovery. It wasn't, you know, intended to grow into anything. It was really just hey I'm recording my journey. Do you want to follow along? That was really the approach. So, I don't know if it was really intended to shift the lives of women, as it is now. It was just a place that I could capture information and refer back to easily. It was sort of easy for myself really to record it all in one place. So, yeah.

**Aubree:** Awesome. You talked a little bit about diet, obviously that's a bit part of feeling better with endometriosis.

**Melissa:** Definitely. Yeah.

**Aubree:** I know that you've expanded on that into your personalized program that you now offer though Endo Empowered. You want to talk a little bit more about your technique?

**Melissa:** Yeah. So, what happened was I started working with ladies to help them and initially I had a program that was focused solely on nutrition, and what happened was women would go through the program. They would shift their diet. They would eliminate a lot of the inflammatory, triggering foods. They would basically eat really well and still not get the relief that I'd gotten, and that frustrated me. I didn't like that. I wanted what I created to actually help women, and so, when I interviewed these ladies what came out was that they were largely just really stressed out. They had huge anxiety or their jobs were really stressful. I just noticed an interesting trend with this need to be perfect, this need to control things. This need to do more, do more, do more and this was a psychology that I kind of noticed with a lot of these women.

And so from there I also realized that some of the ladies were struggling with Candida issues or struggling with having a history of mercury in their mouth, for instance, and there were just all these little pieces that I hadn't incorporated into

that and so that's where I then developed the REACH technique©, which is focused around more of a holistic approach.

So, essentially it's "R", which stands for replenish, which is all around diet. So, really, I don't like the word diet. To me, because it implies restriction and oh there's a whole bunch of foods I can't have, which I think is not great for the mindset. So, it's around replenishing what you're body might be lacking. So looking at, Ok, well you know, what nutrients am I not getting? You know, so if you're lacking in say vitamin B how is that going to affect your ability to have more energy and so, we dive into a lot more of that.

Then we move onto "E", which is exercise. So, how are you moving your body? And how that obviously affects the overall health of your body. So, a lot of these women that I was connecting with they had high stressful jobs. So, they would literally go to work really early, get home really late. There was no movement in there. You know, like they literally sat at a desk the entire time, and so recognizing the importance of some kind of movement in your day.

And then moved on to "Affirm", which is really the component that's all around what you think and how you view the world and your body and your health and the mind-body connection essentially. So, how are you embracing experiences that have happened to you and how does that correlate to perhaps the pain that you've got in your body. So, you know, working on releasing some of the emotions that may be a trigger factor in that and looking at some of the kind of deeper reasons for the stress that you're experiencing. So, you know, where is this perfectionism coming from? Why do you feel the need to push yourself so hard? And you know diving into those components and freeing some of that stuff up so there isn't this stress element that comes into play with that.

And then moving on to cleanse, which is really looking at well what blocks are there inside your body, things that are inhibiting your health? So, if, you know, if you have a history of having mercury fillings in your mouth and how to actually get rid of the mercury in your body because yes it's great to have it removed, but there's always going to be remains of mercury, and mercury is an incredibly powerful heavy metal. It can actually block the receptor sites to cells.

So, there's a link between high levels of mercury and Candida for instance and a lot of women with endo seem to have Candida. So, and Candida affects hormones, so it's like these puzzle pieces that come together. So if you've got mercury you can do as many Candida cleanses as you want. It's an energy source for Candida. So it's just going to come back. So, once again I had ladies do my Candida challenge and they keep getting Candida and it's like, what's the missing piece here? And so, that's where. It was like, Oh, Ok. They've obviously got high levels of mercury in the body.

So, the cleanse portion is really about looking at what is inhibiting your health that you could get rid of inside of your body. So, it goes into heavy metals. You've got

parasites, bacteria that may be inhibiting your digestive health, you've got, you know, all these layers of things that are quite easy to get rid of, but often times we don't want to go there, because it does involve cleansing out the organs of the body and we go through a process going step by step through every cleansing organ of the body, so it's not just focusing on bowels, and doing a bowel cleanse, you know, which you can find those fairly easily. We go through a very concrete step-by-step process to ensure that the toxins in your body are eliminated.

And then the "H" part of the REACH technique© stands for help or support, and that's really something we all desperately need around endometriosis. Getting the acknowledgement that what we're going through isn't in our heads. That, there is hope, and having a community of women that can share that hope, rather than being in a space where people are all just saying well I've got pain every day and it's never going away, and this is my life. I don't believe that. I believe that we need to move forward and like my website says Endo Empowered it's about empowering yourself on what you can do rather than just staying stuck, because I think there's nothing worse for the psyche than that. So, being in a group of women who get it and want to move forward.

So, yeah. That's pretty much the technique, and that's what I base everything on now is because I believe that we need that holistic approach we need all those various components to come together to ultimately provide an environment for healing. So, a lot of times women think that they just need to change their diet and that's it, and the mindset is a little bit like a medical mindset of I take this to give me this result. So, it's like, I take this supplement and it will solve my endo, and that is how we've all been trained. You know? It's like Oh I have pain I'll take a painkiller, but a holistic approach is quite different, because what we're doing is we're providing the tools for your body.

So, we're giving your body fabulous food. We're giving your body movement to help the lymphatic system. We're giving your body a calm, peaceful environment. We're giving your body, you know, taking out the things that might be inhibiting it and then providing you with a comforting, cushioning space that you can do all of these things, and then you've created this perfect environment for healing, and then the body does the work. So, it's a little bit of a mindset shift, because I think you know, it's sometimes hard to get your head around, but the specifics are not about Oh, if I do these five things each day then I'm going to get a result, and that's not necessarily going to work because if your environment is stressful or you're approaching it from that perfectionism driver, well, it's counteracting what you're doing.

So, you know, sometimes women write to me and they say, Oh I feel so guilty, I had chocolate last night and I don't feel like I'm ever going to get better because I had chocolate, and it's like the end of the world if they have a piece of chocolate. I'm like, the stress that you're creating for yourself in worrying about the fact that you had chocolate is worse for you than having the chocolate.

**Aubree:** I'm so glad that you brought up that stress topic because I do think that is a big component and maybe something that's overlooked.

**Melissa:** Oh completely. It's huge. I mean, I recently made a lot of connections with the breath and lack of oxygen to specific organs and how this lack of oxygen attributes potentially to the pain in the body, and if you think about what happens when you're stressed, you actually slow down your breathing, and in some cases you breathe really shallow, and so when this happens your body will naturally oxygenate those organs it feels are really important, you know, so the heart, and you know, things that keep your body running, but it may not feel like some of the other organs are as important. So, I think there is a connection there where if you're feeling stressed a lot. Well you're not going to be able to supply those areas of the body with oxygen as well. So, yeah it's an interesting connection there I recently made, because I was chatting to a lady about breath work, and you know, she focuses solely on teaching you essentially how to breathe better, because in this society we're all rushing around like, you know, matthings, and we just forget to breathe properly we don't actually deep belly breathe, and so yeah, there's an interesting connection with stress for sure.

**Aubree:** Yeah. That makes a big difference with your nervous system, you know, that's one piece of advice I always give to ladies, because that helps me, you know, when you're feeling stressed out, when you're feeling anxious or you get kind of in that mindset. If you just take a couple deep breaths, you know, it pulls you back in your body and it calms your nervous system.

**Melissa:** Definitely. Yeah. That's why yoga is such a key component to, I believe, to what we do, you know because it's really a way to do that consciously.

**Aubree:** Absolutely.

**Melissa:** Spending that half an hour in the morning or whatever it is, for me it's transformative. Like, if I don't do yoga, I notice it straight away.

**Aubree:** It's making time, you know, to connect back to yourself. Whether that be through yoga, you know, whether I'm a big fan of meditation for those who like to do that. Anything that's going to give you that space to breathe.

**Melissa:** Exactly.

**Aubree:** It helps bring you back to the present moment, because I think a lot of times with endo we can stress about all the what if's, all the things we can't see, you know, is it coming back, is it getting worse?

**Melissa:** Exactly.

**Aubree:** Coming back into the now makes a big difference.

**Melissa:** Yeah. Definitely. Yeah.

**Aubree:** Well I appreciate, you know, you sharing this. So much good wisdom for the ladies that are listening here. What do you think, like most ladies miss when they're trying to take this natural approach? Do you see anything that's consistent?

**Melissa:** I see a lot of focus on diet and supplements, and I know that's where I started too, and I spent probably a good five years out of my seven year journey to actually getting well just focused on diet and supplements, and it was only the last two years that I really looked into the other components, which I've mentioned, and it was actually in those two years that real shifts happened.

So, I think a lot of ladies think that if my diet was just stricter, if I just found the right supplement then everything will be Ok, and they go through stricter and stricter diets, less and less choice, which I feel mentally is a bit, you know, it makes it challenging. It makes it challenging to go out to social events, you know, women stop going out all together because they just go it's too hard. I'm too scared of what I'm going to eat if I go to a restaurant, and I don't want to risk it.

There's that control thing that's coming in there where it's like if I make my food myself, if I know where I buy it from, if I prepare everything then I know that I'm getting the most, best nourishing food, which is fantastic, but it's also that control thing. That freaking out if you miss a day or if you aren't being 100% perfect about your diet. I'm totally guilty of this. I know for myself I have huge issues around that where it's like Oh I ate a bad food, I'm a bad person, and I'm never going to get well, and you know, the control over the diet was ultimately what I think mentally actually made me feel better, because it wasn't so much the diet. I think it was the fact that I was telling myself well I'm eating 100% pure healthy diet and therefore I feel better.

So, there's a lot of mind stuff that comes into this stuff and I think it can be a negative. It can be causing women anxiety and stress because they are so adamant about being so strict about the diet, and if they then miss something or they eat something they shouldn't. Particularly over Christmas I noticed, you know, I get a lot more people writing in saying Oh I feel so bad I had, you know, Christmas and we had alcohol or we had this or we had that. You know, and it's just like yeah the stress of worrying about it is worse for you. So, I think that's another one, and then of course supplements.

I mean, I can tell you I had an entire cupboard devoted to the amount of supplements that I purchased over the years. It was ridiculous, because I really thought like I've just got to find the right supplement and that's going to solve everything, you know, Ooh I need to get this or I should try this, you know, there's just so many out there and so many web sites now focused just on supplements, and they really do promote it like this is going to be the answer to all your prayers. You

just need to take this supplement and everything will be better, and that's once again that medical mindset of I take something to get a result, and the holistic approach just doesn't work that way.

Sure, I'm not saying, you know, don't take supplements. What I'm saying is those supplements are designed to supplement what you are doing. So, in terms of your diet, in terms of your lifestyle, in terms of creating that perfect environment, yes you can take supplements to support yourself during certain times get, you know, the balance that may be out of balance, but it's not something we should be relying on forever and a day, because that's again falling into that medical model trap and it's not about that.

It's about looking at your body and looking at how can you truly nurture your body from every angle, you know, so really hone in on this, like think of your child that needs some love and care, because that's ultimately what all that pain is about. It's yelling at you saying, I'm not happy. Please help me. It's like a child screaming saying please help me, and whatever you're doing is it's not helping your body. So, think about your body like that. Like how can I truly nurture my body with food choices that do that? What does my body need? Does it need to do yoga everyday? Do I need to sit down and do twenty minutes of, you know, just calm breathing. Do I need to move more? Do I need to think differently? You know, like really think about how you would treat a child, and what you could give that child. You would want to give it everything, and that's how we need to look at our bodies.

I see so much self-hatred around endo and our bodies and it's just so sad, you know, seeing women labeling themselves as an endo sufferer, and hating on their bodies like they're broken, and all this kind of stuff is just not supporting health at all. So, I think we need to really embrace that approach. So, yeah, my key advice would be to just move away from thinking that it all comes down to diet and supplements cause it isn't. There's a bigger picture here that I think a lot of women are missing.

**Aubree:** I'm so glad you brought that up because I see that as well, and you know, that was something similar in my journey too. You put so much weight on the diet and the supplements and you know what can happen too is, you know, you're restricting yourself. That word, restriction, right, and you may be still experiencing pain, which can be frustrating. You know, I know that was for me. I'm being perfect. I'm doing everything right, and you know, I'm still having pain.

**Melissa:** Yeah.

**Aubree:** And I think that's part of the journey. So I don't know if you have any advice for those that may be doing everything right but are still feeling that pain and kind of continuing onwards. Do you have any advice for those ladies?

**Melissa:** Yeah. I think, for me, what was my saving grace in my journey was I didn't finish, and I didn't see some end goal. It was more like I'm going to trust that the

answers are going to come to me when I need them, you know, so rather than looking at it as my end goal is to eat this way, and if I do that 100% then I should get the results. You're approaching it like a business transaction or you know like a, like working for a boss or something, you know, where it's like, well I've done these ten steps and now I should get rewarded. It's not, you know, it's a journey, and what works for some women will not work for you, and there are things that can shift everything that may be really out there, but you may not be ready for that right now. So, you know, it's about embracing and trying and seeing it as a little bit of an adventure to be honest, you know, rather than this hardship, this struggle, this I just need to have that result. It's about going, Ok. What's next? What else can I try?

Because here's the thing. I see these statements a lot. I've tried everything. I'm doing all the right things, and it's those kind of finishing statements that are mindset things. They're once again restrictive mindset things. There's nothing else to try. Well it's not possible. There are so many things to try. I mean I actually had this scenario a few weeks back where ladies came in and they were debating on whether to have IVF treatment, and the comment was, I've tried everything, and you know it's like when you go down the holistic approach there are countless things to try, and some of them may seem really out there when you first start and you wouldn't even consider them, but as you keep going you will find more and more things that, you know, you can explore and try and it really is about a journey. So, yeah.

**Aubree:** Absolutely. I think it's important to remember too that it does take time, right? You can literally re-build your body but it takes time and if you think back to how long you may have been sick.

**Melissa:** Exactly. It doesn't happen in a month, and I think that's the other thing, you know, women come in and they go I've been not eating gluten for a month and I'm not seeing any changes. Yeah, but you've had endo for like twenty years and you've been eating gluten for twenty years and your gut has been damaged over that time and you've probably taken painkillers and synthetic hormones and there's probably Candida going on and there's a whole lot of other stuff that it's layers of things that need to be healed. It's not a quick fix, and I think this is both something you and I both grapple with. You know, we are so trained to believe in a quick fix, and that's what women so desperately want.

I just recently did a blog post about this. It's like just give me that miracle pill. I just want a miracle pill to make it all go away, but I can tell you that endo is a complex condition, and I don't believe they will ever find a miracle pill because there are so many components to this condition and even when you think about other health conditions, the pill isn't solving the real depth of where that condition is coming from. It may resolve a symptom, but it's not resolving the imbalances that have contributed to that condition, and I believe that's the approach we should be taking.

It's really about well the symptoms are displaying an imbalance here, but what is the underlying reason for that imbalance? It's like women come to me and they say oh



my hormones are all out of whack. I've got too much estrogen and not enough progesterone. Do you think I should take natural progesterone cream? Sure. You can. Of course you can and it may help you. But why are your hormones out of balance? That's the key question. Why are your hormones out of balance?

Yes we can take supplements to try and correct that but the question still needs to be well where is the underlying reason for that symptom? And so addressing that is really what we should be focusing on. Yes you can take the progesterone cream in the interim to support yourself a little, to supplement as you're going, but ultimately we need to ask well what's going on there? And so that's where digging deeper and finding out what imbalances are going on in your body is the key thing.

**Aubree:** Absolutely. So, I think the bottom line is there's no quick fix, right? That we've been trained.

**Melissa:** I wish there was! Because I know it can be a hard, long journey for some women, you know, and shifting that mindset to I'm going to take this as an adventure. I'm going to, you know, keep trying things can feel exhausting for some women, and they just want to have it, you know this is where I get women who just go, I just want to have surgery just take it all out. I'm done. And they believe that that's going to solve the problem. You know? I mean the hysterectomy rates for endometriosis are ridiculous. I'm disgusted at how easily doctors recommend hysterectomies.

**Aubree:** Right.

**Melissa:** It's like, Oh I have, I have a cyst, an ovarian cyst. Oh yeah, sure, let's just take it all out. Huh? It's a cyst for God's sake, it's not like, you know, it's not that serious, you can easily shrink a cyst. It's not that hard. You know? But it's no, let's just take it all out. It's just ridiculous. So, the thing is, and the sad thing is that you see women that have these dramatic surgeries and they regret it afterwards and there's nothing they can do once it's all out.

**Aubree:** Right.

**Melissa:** Then you're living on hormone treatments and ah it's just, you know, and that affects your health on more levels than just your ovaries. Like we are in this mindset of oh yes I have some ovaries and they're there to make kids and oh well you know I don't want kids so we'll just cut it all out. Well no, those ovaries do more than that. You know? They have other jobs besides that, and the key one is looking after your bones, like women have affects on their bone health if they, you know, go on hormone treatments for long periods of time, or if they have hysterectomies that can affect your bone health, and that's stuff that, you know, they don't tell you. They don't give you those insights.

**Aubree:** So, I think it's important, you know, to know that there is hope, and I think, you know, that's what keeps me moving forward. So, stories like Melissa's, you know, who've had success following the holistic journey provides hope for those of you and even if you maybe you've done the treatments, you know, maybe you had the hysterectomy, maybe you did what the doctor said, you can always start today, ultimately, your know your body wants to heal. It just needs your love, you know, it needs your nourishment.

**Melissa:** Definitely. There's always things you can do. I mean even if you've had a hysterectomy or you've been doing hormone treatments for years like I did. You can. The body can heal. The body is amazing, like once you actually start researching it and digging into it, it's like amazing what the body can do. So, there is always a way forward ladies just make sure you really dive into possibility, you know, find web sites, books, information that can show you ways forward. Embrace yourself with information like that rather than information that tells you you can't, and you've got to live with this forever, because that stuff is not helping.

**Aubree:** Absolutely. So tell our listeners, Melissa, how they can connect with you further and your REACH program.

**Melissa:** So they can find me on [endoempowered.com](http://endoempowered.com) and there is a free REACH Kickstarter program that they can join which gives them essentially the components with some fabulous ideas to get started. So, there's free recipes, and tools and things to guide you with implementing some of the REACH technique© that I've shared and there's going to be a whole lot of new stuff that's coming out and you know we're looking at more videos this year so we're going to do various series on different topics and so yeah, just sign up and you'll get to know all about that.

**Aubree:** Excellent. Well I appreciate you being on the show today and sharing your wisdom with us. If you found this episode to be helpful, I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey, and I hope that you find some peace in your day today. Sending you so much love. Bye for now.

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