

Episode 174 Transcript

00:00:00:00 - 00:00:10:00

Sabrina Zohar

Our parents didn't have the resources that we have now. They didn't have the internet. They didn't have podcasting. What did they have? My mom had magazines saying, here's how to please your husband. Do this to make your man happy.

00:00:10:01 - 00:00:35:09

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Welcome to the DUTCH Podcast, where we dive deep into the science of hormones, wellness, and personalized health care. I'm Doctor Jaclyn Smeaton and Chief Medical officer at DUTCH. Join us every Tuesday as we bring you expert insights, cutting edge research, and practical tips to help you take control of your health from the inside out. Whether you're a healthcare professional or simply looking to optimize your own well-being, we've got you covered.

00:00:35:11 - 00:00:56:11

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

The contents of this podcast are for educational and informational purposes only. This information is not to be interpreted or mistaken for medical advice. Consult your health care provider for medical advice, diagnosis and treatment. If you've ever sat and stared at your phone and seen those little three dots that are coming while you're waiting for a text message to come back, it felt all that anxiety climb inside of you.

00:00:56:16 - 00:01:21:08

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You're going to love our episode. It's just for you. Today my guest is Sabrina Zohar. She's a dynamic entrepreneur and a dating coach renowned for her transformative podcast, The Sabrina Zohar Show. But more than just dating, Sabrina actually knows so much about neurology and psychology and attachment, wounding and all the ways that our exposure is when we're younger show up in the way that we are in the world today.

00:01:21:09 - 00:01:40:08

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Now, her expertise and kind of her platform is based upon dating. But even if you're not dating, I just felt like so much of what she talked about was really relevant to

everything that can trigger anxiety in relationships with us, whether it is in the dating world or whether it's in your relationships with your family, with your partner, or even at work professionally.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

It's really all about how our past shows up today and in the way that we think and the way that we feel, and the kind of response that we have to give, that stress response that we have to learn to quell. So anyway, it was a great conversation today talking about not just the thoughts around that that happen, but the fact that there is actually underlying nervous system regulation that needs to happen.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Even if you fix depression or even if you fix anxiety, there's kind of this third piece that's so critically important, which is rewiring the HPA axis and rewiring our stress systems in order to help us really fully recover and change the way we respond in the world. So Sabrina's podcast has resonated globally. She's in the top 0.05% of all podcast.

00:02:24:10 - 00:02:44:06

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

She gives the best tips. She's like the girlfriend that gives you the hard cutting advice, and each episode features tips that are backed by board certified and licensed psychologist really aimed at helping listeners improve their dating lives by fostering self-worth and personal growth. And like I said, even if you're not dating, I think you are to love what we cover in today's episode.

00:02:44:08 - 00:02:55:21

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Let's go ahead and introduce our guest. Well, Sabrina, welcome to the podcast. Today. We're really happy to have you on the podcast. It's a little outside the box, I think, for both of us, but I think there's going to be so much to talk about and I'm really glad you're here.

00:02:55:23 - 00:03:09:00

Sabrina Zohar

Likewise. Thank you guys for having me. I it's funny, I talk so much about dating and relationships, but what people don't understand is the physiological components of

anxiety and how it manifests and how the DUTCH test when I took it actually changed a lot for me, so I'm excited to share all of that.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Well, I can't wait to hear more about that. And I think that is something that is so important to think about. We talk about it all the time when it comes to relationships and the daily life. I think all of us as doctors have sat in front of women in particular, who've carried the burden of a bad relationship or trauma from their childhood or just toxic patterns.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And you can see the way it plays out in health longer term, like when you're sitting with women who are perimenopausal, post-menopausal and you know that this has been a burden they've had forever. And you just think about the chronic stress, the impact physiologically, like you said. Anyway, there's just so much we're going to have a great conversation.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

But I want to start out with your biggest announcement, which is you have a new book out.

00:03:50:10 - 00:04:09:12

Sabrina Zohar

I do, it's called Why Am I Like This? And it really is the amalgamation of all of my neuroscience, psychology, personal experience to help people break their patterns and actually get the life they get the life they want, not even just deserve. Because that is inherent. And I believe every person deserves only the best. But this is really about what it is that fuels you and fulfills you.

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Sabrina Zohar

And understanding how breaking these patterns, at least for me, changed my life. Because I'll give you a quick background. I. When I was 19, I was diagnosed as, borderline personality disorder, and I was hopped up on medication for five years and I didn't feel I was completely numb to the world. And what I realized when I started again, my personal experience.

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Sabrina Zohar

Anybody that is taking anything, I highly encourage you to talk to your doctor and not just go off on a whim. But when I stopped that, what I found was it was just a lot of trauma. I didn't have any of these diagnoses. I had ADHD that was incorrectly diagnosed. And really, what this book helped me to do was to create a blueprint, a way of actually being able to break through your ... and get the life that is on the other side of the version of you that people have told you to be.

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Sabrina Zohar

And once I did that, it's a whole new freedom that I've never experienced before, one that has ups and downs like everything else, but it really gives you the roadmap to being able to become your authentic self. Authenticity isn't becoming a different version, it's letting go of the version that you were told to be your whole life.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Yeah, it's like unpacking those outside layers to really show what's inside. Now you describe yourself in your book as someone who spent a really long time not understanding why you kept repeating the same cycles, what happened that helped you finally make sense of what was going on.

00:05:29:22 - 00:05:49:12

Sabrina Zohar

Full transparency. It was doing the work. It was going to therapy. And I'll never forget I was in one therapy session I had backed. Prior to that, I slept my way through Manhattan. I was I found that if I went to another man, to another bed, to another person, that validated me, then I was going to feel worthy and deserving and all of my father wounds were going to go away.

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Sabrina Zohar

And it wasn't until I was with someone who was pretty much my dad. And that's one of the biggest heartbreaks I talk about in the book. And even on my own podcast. I have a show called The Sabrina Zohar Show, and I talk all the time about how these heartbreaks and these things culminated, but without them, I would never be where I am right now.

00:06:05:08 - 00:06:13:01

Sabrina Zohar

And I hit rock bottom, and I was actually with my therapist at the time, and we were doing tapping, which I absolutely love, and I was.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Just, type of tapping.

00:06:14:17 - 00:06:33:06

Sabrina Zohar

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I was gonna say not eMDR specifically, not with the ball, but just tapping on the acupressure points and going over and saying really hard things. And the first thing I said was, it's all my fault. And I remember I really, genuinely believed that. And so she was repeating back to me what I was saying. She said, you're right, it's all your fault.

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Sabrina Zohar

And in that moment, it was like just a crack in the armor. I said, well, it couldn't have all been my fault. And that was the moment where I realized I had to hold other people accountable and myself for the behaviors that I exhibited, and that they did as well, because I kept allowing people to treat me the way that they were, because I genuinely didn't think I was deserving and worthy of more, which then culminated to crippling anxiety sleep issues.

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Sabrina Zohar

I had cortisol that was up and down. I was eating terribly. I wasn't taking care of myself even though I was working out for five hours a day to burn through the anxiety. I was a hamster on a wheel, and it wasn't until I sat with myself and really started to understand, where did I learn this from? How old do I feel?

00:07:14:08 - 00:07:21:22

Sabrina Zohar

It's not about blaming or parents, it's about saying they taught me this or I learned this, and then now what do I get to do with it?

00:07:22:00 - 00:07:34:22

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

It is so interesting to think about, and I think this is something that I would love to talk more about, is the role that our upbringing has, and who we are and how we behave in the world today. That's really not the point of our whole podcast is going to be today, just to cut to the chase of it.

00:07:34:22 - 00:08:10:12

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

But it is really profound that even as adults, we carry this, just the patterns that come from so, so young. And I mean, I grew up in a in fact, my parents met at 14, found love, married at 17, and now they've been married 50 years. Like, I grew up in a bubble and I think the other piece that shocking to me was coming into adulthood and just realizing how unique that is that, I wasn't exposed to a lot of unhealthy patterns, but they were and they were the cycle breakers that are they did the work kind of like a generation ahead of when most of us are doing that.

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Sabrina Zohar

Oh, I love that. And it's such a beautiful example of, like you said, you only know what your side of the street is. So if you have, you can have two incredible parents. This doesn't mean that they were bad people. I mean, I just so happened to have a dad that's not the best. But not everybody has these big T traumas.

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Sabrina Zohar

But sometimes what we can look and say is. But maybe they didn't teach you what other people do. And so you go out, you think everyone's is lovely and amazing, and then you get hurt. You're like, but I don't understand. I've always seen this. And so, you know, we see that same with parents that never fight in front of their kids.

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Sabrina Zohar

So kids think that anybody that raises their voice or says no to them means that there's something wrong, which all that just means is that maybe they didn't see a full spectrum in the same way that all I saw was screaming and yelling. I didn't actually see what healthy, insecure love looked like until I was an adult. Seeing my sister get married and other people saying, oh, so that exists.

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Sabrina Zohar

And it's it's really about, you know, we have to remember our nervous system and our brain. They're not designed to help you grow. They're here to keep you safe. So they're always, always going to default, to familiar, to keeping you safe. So if growing up we learned in our nervous system 0 to 18 or nervous system is is nonverbal or we are nonverbal.

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Sabrina Zohar

As humans our nervous system is picking up all of the messaging. And so that's why I love asking how old do I feel right. So an example I use quite often because it really kind of gets down to it if you're dating and if you're even in a relationship that maybe you like someone and they didn't text you, and to the average person it could be, oh, you know, right.

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Sabrina Zohar

Maybe somebody who's really secure in themselves, who never really saw that, could say, oh, are they at work? Do they have their phone? Right. Like it doesn't always mean. But maybe if you've had those traumas, you go right to see. I knew they didn't like me. They don't want to be with me. And really, what I stopped to ask is like, okay, where am I feeling this?

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Sabrina Zohar

All right. I feel like a six year old. Okay? What makes me feel like I'm six years old right now? This feels dismissive, like my dad. Okay, so then this has nothing to do with the other person. That's where I learned this from. And then once I understand that, I can then go and repair it, that version of myself and say, you're safe now.

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Sabrina Zohar

You're not six years old, you never will be. But I am so sorry if I've ever done anything like discredit you and dismiss you and talk down to you in the ways that other people did, and by just doing that, it doesn't necessarily mean like, oh, that's it, your life is amazing, but it gives you agency and choice and it turns your prefrontal cortex on.

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Sabrina Zohar

It allows you to be able to be in the moment for what it is and not for what we're perceiving it as, because facts are not or feelings are not facts. They are valid. But that doesn't mean it's factual.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Right? It's like you have to stop yourself from falling into your instant reaction and like, put some space in between that so you can think a little more clearly. You know, now a lot of your work and this has come up already and like really steps at the intersection of psychology and nervous system science with behavioral aspects of daily life, like in dating.

00:10:58:01 - 00:11:02:09

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

How do you come to see these things as just really inseparable?

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Sabrina Zohar

To me? At one, the it's funny, the reason I called this book Why am I like this was because I knew everybody wants to know why. Okay, well, I can tell you why that if our nervous system and our nervous at the brain and all of these things are as are when we're little meat loaves, if that's how we're developing and that's how it starting to form, well, then of course it's going to make sense that our amygdala stopped growing at 6 or 7.

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Sabrina Zohar

Right. So then that's our fear center. So our fear center is going to hold on to things that it was scared of. And I think it's important to understand all of these aspects because understanding why does it change anything. It gives you the awareness. That's great I know why, but then it's about implementing it and integrating it, which is where the nervous system starts to come in.

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Sabrina Zohar

And I'll be honest, the reason I bring all of this is because that was my journey. I was in like just in very heady therapy. Lots of let's challenge the thoughts. It's put it on

trial, very focused and I loved it, don't get me wrong. But I kept feeling like ... I kept feeling sad and low. And it wasn't until I understood the role of the nervous system of regulating, of being able to put the power, of the pause, of taking 60s to just be before I reacted, and noticing and being very aware of wow.

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Sabrina Zohar

Like, I'll give you an example, my partner and I, it was one of those stupid things where he said something. I got upset and it just started to escalate and it was hurtful. Don't get me wrong. And I in the old me would have screamed and yelled and gotten very big. That was what I learned growing up. And instead I said, I'm going to go upstairs.

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Sabrina Zohar

I need five minutes because otherwise I'm gonna say something I want to say. And he was like, okay. And I went upstairs and I cried. I let out like that guttural cry. And then literally a second later, I was like, oh! And then I hit me and I was like, wow, that's not as intense as it was a minute ago.

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Sabrina Zohar

I'm not as angry as I thought I really was with him. And then when I came down 20 minutes later, I wipe my tears and I said, can we actually talk about the situation at hand? Because I had to understand that we go back to those childhood core beliefs and those feelings because we go into lizard brain, and when our prefrontal cortex shuts off and we're not actually in this moment, it's going to be very difficult for us to talk to this person like an adult when we don't feel like one.

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Sabrina Zohar

And so that's why it's so important. And to me, most of the work I do isn't about do this to get a partner. I can't guarantee that. But what I can say is if you come home to yourself, it doesn't really matter what's going to happen externally. You'll be okay no matter what because you have you.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

That's absolutely right. Beautifully said. I mean, I think the thing that you describe here is that like fight or flight or freeze and we talk about this a lot with HPA axis dysfunction. And I love the way that you're connecting the thoughts, the thought process and then the like physiologic science. And I think you're right. The nervous system regulation is separate from a clean side of the street in your brain and in your thought process.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Because what happens is when you get into this story or pattern of thoughts, you can change that still, but the downstream physiological effect still happens. I mean, just to share a little bit from that point of view, it's like you get adrenaline and noradrenaline and cortisol spiking and when that starts to happen chronically, it takes a long time to unwind.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And I think about it like this. Bear with me for this. I've used this metaphor once before, but imagine a football field covered in mousetraps, and on every mousetrap there is a ping pong ball, right? And you sit in the stands and you have some kind of trigger stressor, and you take a ping pong ball and you throw it onto the football field.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

What starts to happen? It lands. Once it bounces, then you have to, then you have four, then you have eight. And within a minute it's this chaotic storm of ping pong balls. Now if you reach in and you pull out that triggering thought or you pull out that triggering experience. What's hap what happens on the field? Absolutely nothing.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

There has to be more work to be done to kind of bring down the physiology. And that takes so much practice to do, to be able to train yourself utilizing different techniques. And we can talk about those, but to be able to recover faster, more effectively. Like, I love that story that you share about going upstairs and crying because that's a physiological reset.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And it's like it really can change the way that you interact in your relationships 100%.

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Sabrina Zohar

I actually it wasn't until I took a DUTCH test that I found out, because I kept waking up every morning on this cycle. No, I would wake up, I would cry, I would come downstairs, I would be really anxious and be like on my loops. And my ADHD brain was going crazy. But then my partner, who is more on the spectrum, then he would retreat because he would be like, well, this is overwhelming.

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Sabrina Zohar

I'm not safe. She's mad at me, right? All of these things. And I knew something was up and I was. I worked with my doctor, my amazing functional medicine doctor, and she said, you need to take a DUTCH test. And I took the test. And then we started to see where my cortisol was and why I was waking up at 2 a.m. and where it was happening, and how I was spiking.

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Sabrina Zohar

And I think that this is where it's so important to understand that, yes, we could go to therapy all day, every day, but sometimes there are other things at play, right? Sometimes. And now that I've gotten my cortisol under control and I have my modalities right, the first thing I do when I wake up is I do some jump squats to help, maybe metabolize and try to get rid of that.

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Sabrina Zohar

Then I'll go do a workout because my brain I have to. Otherwise I'm not going to be motivated for the day. Go for a walk. Just doing little things have culminated. No screens before bed so that I'm not feeling dysregulated. Before I put my head down. And honestly, going against the ... advice don't go to bed angry. No, sometimes it's okay to say, you know what?

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Sabrina Zohar

We're not going to have resolution tonight. I need to go get some sleep. I need to process what's happening. We will talk again in the morning. And I think it's really just seeing it comprehensively and holistically, because I get a lot of my, my girls that come to me on the show and they're so into the like, okay, well, I know why my father did this, and I know when, I know when I know.

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Sabrina Zohar

But then when we really start to say, but what's happening physiologically for you, you start to realize there are other things here at play that might be making it feel worse because since I started getting my cortisol under control, I don't wake up feeling like that, which then made my relationship have a different impact because my partner doesn't feel attacked first thing in the morning.

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Sabrina Zohar

And so now we're able to have different conversations so that when I do get stressed during the day and it happens right by my waves, he has more capacity as well to hold for me because we're not starting the day with me being a bull in a China shop. And so I really think it's so important when we're doing this work to be able to say, if I genuinely can say, wow, I am doing all the things right, I'm regulating.

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Sabrina Zohar

I'm, I'm challenging my thoughts. But man, I still feel this, that sometimes it's okay to say what else is there without necessarily jumping to take an antidepressant. Because for some of us, we having an MT have our gene mutation that doesn't work for us. It actually makes things worse.

00:17:38:07 - 00:18:00:09

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Well, and it's really interesting, I think there's this tie in or this easy confusion between the way it feels when you have cortisol really elevated or really flatlined, frankly, and then the mental emotional symptoms of anxiety and depression. And I'm not an expert in anxiety and depression, but you can imagine the overlap and interplay between those two where you're right, you mentioned this before.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Therapy tends to focus more on our thought processes and how we can kind of control that. But especially with anxiety, so much of the anxiety symptoms, it shows up physically the same with spikes, cortisol. And so even I mean, I just think it's such an important thing to be untangling 100%.

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Sabrina Zohar

I, I have had I've even had to have a conversation with my audience and say, my babes, I know you want to know about the avoidant and why do they keep doing this? I said, but I'm going to start to bring in other modalities here and talk about other things, because what changes your life is cumulative. And it's like saying, you know, I think of therapy as that's like saying I want to lose 100 pounds.

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Sabrina Zohar

So I go to a trainer once a week, but I don't do anything else outside of that. I don't eat well, I don't move, I sit at my desk all day, I eat Twinkies and Oreos, but I'm going to the trainer once a week. Well, that can be done right and I can only do so much until we start to say I am a sum of all of my parts.

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Sabrina Zohar

So I need to understand maybe generational trauma. What's my family history? What did I learn at this age? And then also accepting the parts of yourself that I don't think this is ever going to go away. Right? I'm never going to wake up one day and have no money issues, because that's what my father really instilled in us and ingrained in us from early childhood was like, you're not worthy and deserving.

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Sabrina Zohar

Money comes and goes, I take and I give when I want. So I've always had that. Can I work through it? Can I push through? But there's still going to be that part of me because it's like to me trying to get rid of a limb, right? If you try to get rid of it, sure, but you'll always have the phantom that is there.

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Sabrina Zohar

And so for me, I think it's really accepting and being comprehensive about all of these things and accepting the things I can't control, which sometimes mean your health, your mental health, and how you feel about things.

00:19:40:01 - 00:19:59:01

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Well, I want to dive into an area that you've really talked a lot about in your book and just generally with all of your content, and that's attachment wound wounds and its connection to the nervous system. Now, attachment patterns, they end up forming in childhood. And they don't even they don't shape only how people think about relationships. They change how we respond to social cues, emotional cues.

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Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You've talked about this now when you say attachment wounds live in the body and not just in the mind, what do you mean by that?

00:20:06:12 - 00:20:24:07

Sabrina Zohar

Our body remembers how we felt right? So if I were to say, close your eyes and remember when you went to the State Fair as a kid with your dad for the first time, you would probably say, I feel it, right? Oh, I remember the sun on my skin. I remember be so happy and excited. You probably don't remember what you thought.

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Sabrina Zohar

You don't remember what you were saying to that person unless it was like a triggering traumatic experience. Right? Or, you know, 911 we all remember where we were when that happened. We all know exactly. And I remember I can tell you how I felt, I felt scared, I felt worried, I felt all these things. But I don't remember the conversations I had with anybody because that was 25 years ago.

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Sabrina Zohar

Our body stores trauma and experiences in the same way our mind does, oftentimes quicker. Sometimes our body remembers it even faster. And so I think the the reason that I want people to start to understand the body sensations is I do

this with my clients. Joe Taylor, the neuroscientist. It takes 90s for an emotion to run its course.

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Sabrina Zohar

But the problem is, every time we have a thought process, it starts again. And so I've had my clients and I'll sit there and I'll set the clock for 2 to 3 minutes and I'm like, okay, don't worry, I'm not keeping you here forever. And usually what I'll do is I'll say, where do you feel it in your body?

00:21:17:07 - 00:21:33:00

Sabrina Zohar

And they're going on. But I feel scared and I feel anxious. And I said, let the thoughts know will come to it. Don't worry, I'm going to get to you. Second. But I want to know where you feel it. And I have them all set, and a good portion of the ones I feel in my chest. I feel it in my stomach, I feel it in my neck and when I have them texturize it right.

00:21:33:02 - 00:21:51:20

Sabrina Zohar

Is it a color, a shape? Is there a sensation? They'll say, oh, it feels so intense. And I say, sit with it. And then all of a sudden they say, oh, oh, I feel a little bit better because we won't feel better unless we allow ourselves to feel now as children, where bottom up we feel first. We don't know what to do with all these feelings because no one's there to teach us.

00:21:51:20 - 00:22:08:16

Sabrina Zohar

We don't have a developed brain. So then we go into core beliefs and creating these narratives. As adults, we're top down. We think, we think, we think because we don't want to feel. We want to avoid dealing with anything sticky and uncomfortable, because that I don't want to feel like I did when I was six and I felt helpless.

00:22:08:18 - 00:22:24:23

Sabrina Zohar

And for me, it's about the intersection of all of those aligning right? Because that's why I say I talk about this in the book all the time. When we ask why questions were actually intellectualizing why did they do this? Why don't they want to be with me? All that's doing is avoiding dealing with one the reality and two how you feel.

00:22:25:01 - 00:22:39:01

Sabrina Zohar

Because if I can focus on why you didn't choose me, I don't have to feel and focus on the fact that I feel dismissed and that I felt small, and that if I figure out why you did it, oh, see, then I have the answer and I'm not going to hurt. But that's just intellectualizing.

00:22:39:03 - 00:22:53:01

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

That's so interesting. I have never really thought about it that way. But you're absolutely right. Like trying to figure out and uncover a situation is a really effective tool to not reflect and like, look in the mirror. What's happening for you? I've never really piece it together that way.

00:22:53:03 - 00:23:10:04

Sabrina Zohar

I had a neuroscientist friend and she talked you. When she said it, I was like, oh my God. And she realized it because she was working with kids. And she said, they ask why questions all the time. And she realized she's like, you don't care why you are, you don't like it. So when we reframe why to I don't like, oh my God, all of a sudden your life changes.

00:23:10:04 - 00:23:27:07

Sabrina Zohar

And so let's talk the attachment wounding right that we were saying earlier. So in psychology. Right. And again is this a theory. Like a lot gravity's a theory too. But this is a theory. So there are four main attachment styles. We've got the three insecure and then the one secure. So there's secure attachment which is high sense of self and high sense of others.

00:23:27:12 - 00:23:46:18

Sabrina Zohar

We know how to live independently and interdependent, right. We can have a life together and apart. There's no threat to our homeostasis in ourselves. How we see ourselves. Just because we don't hear from this person, that doesn't mean secure. Perfect people are perfect, but they just don't put their worth on the line. If it doesn't work out, then we go into the insecure attachments.

00:23:46:18 - 00:24:03:02

Sabrina Zohar

And the reason I bring these up is because they also have to do in the why. So we have the first. We have anxious avoidant and disorganized anxious attachment is low sense of self, high sense of others. We regulated as children right. That's a lot of the in and out caregivers and consistency. You know you didn't know if your caregiver was going to be there.

00:24:03:02 - 00:24:21:00

Sabrina Zohar

You didn't know if you had safety. And so it creates this high anxiety where everything is, you tell me, I'll be okay. You come back and get me. You reassure me constantly. I need to talk. I need to talk. I need to talk. When this person's just trying to regulate through an external experience. The other side of the coin is the avoidant right.

00:24:21:00 - 00:24:37:19

Sabrina Zohar

Low sense of others, high sense of self. I can only rely on myself. It's not safe for me to have emotions. They retreat, they pull back, they remove themselves because their nervous system goes. This isn't safe. Shut down. No, no, no, you need to run. This is not good. Fight! Flight. Freeze! Foreign. If we had to. The anxious is the fight, right?

00:24:37:19 - 00:24:56:04

Sabrina Zohar

I need to talk. And I need to say that isn't the avoidance. More the flight. And then when we go into disorganized, I think a lot of people misunderstand it and say, oh, well, some people I'm anxious, and with some people I'm it. But that's not how that works. Disorganized is the amalgamation of the trauma in the attachment style.

00:24:56:06 - 00:25:12:18

Sabrina Zohar

So what that means is push pull, right, I love you. Come close to me, get away from me. And so if you feel whiplash, all of a sudden, the person's all over you. In seconds later, they don't want you to touch them. And they're saying, why are you trying to pin me down? Where we see that low sense of self and low sense of others, we see that prevalent in like alcoholism, homes of abuse.

00:25:12:18 - 00:25:42:15

Sabrina Zohar

When your caregiver was, your fear was your source of fear and love. So that's why it's the come here, go away kind of mentality, because they feel uncomfortable with both. And the reason I bring all this up is one. That's just how our caregivers are tuned to our needs. It doesn't mean your caregivers had to have been traumatic to you, but I had a client who her dad used to work full time, and as a kid she would be screaming, banging on the door and her mom would come get her, but her dad wouldn't come out, and she had this perpetual anxiety.

00:25:42:15 - 00:26:03:03

Sabrina Zohar

That doesn't mean her father did anything wrong, but as a child, her perception was he's not coming to get me. Only she is. So we want to understand it so that we can learn and unpack and then give that little child the space to have freedom to understand and say that's valid, but it doesn't mean it's factual. Now, when we think the why questions, the fun thing is avoidant.

00:26:03:03 - 00:26:23:19

Sabrina Zohar

People are anxious in the same way anxious people are avoidant. When we start to go into the why, why are they doing this? Why don't they like me? Why didn't they pick me? The anxious person is avoiding dealing with the deeper root issues that are actually coming up, and then the avoidant person that shuts down has an immense amount of anxiety because they're thinking and they're going and their wheels are turning, and it's not the perception that they don't care.

00:26:23:21 - 00:26:37:09

Sabrina Zohar

And so I think just understanding that it's not that we have to excuse poor behavior, but it allows me to have empathy for other people and then compassion for myself as well, because I have ... behaviors that I'm not necessarily proud of either.

00:26:37:11 - 00:26:54:02

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Yeah. It's really the example that you give about the person who's dad was behind closed doors working. That's an interesting one. And I'm curious, just as a follow up to that, because you can imagine as an adult you might have a different perspective

on that situation than you had as a child. But still that pattern emerges and you carry it forward.

00:26:54:02 - 00:27:12:04

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

How do you work with people to really get through that? Because you could say as an adult, yeah, now I get it because I have a job and when my kids are at the door, I have to tell them to go away too. But still, that pattern gets carried forward. What is that? That's the kind of the physiological side of it or how it rewires our brain.

00:27:12:06 - 00:27:31:07

Sabrina Zohar

Yeah. Neuroplasticity. So we have to remember to like what's a trigger and neutral action or action. So I think a lot of people misconstrue that as like oh well they were rude to me. It triggered me. It's like, no, no, they were rude to you that you have every right to have felt the way you felt. A trigger is they shut the door loudly, and that reminded me of being in a moment back in the past.

00:27:31:07 - 00:27:49:12

Sabrina Zohar

And like that. That doesn't mean that that inherently is a bad thing. So, for instance, with this client that I had worked with, once we understood that, I start to go into effect, which is internal family systems created by Dick Schwartz. I love it personally. And so what that really shows is that we have all of these different parts of us.

00:27:49:15 - 00:28:10:05

Sabrina Zohar

We have these authentic versions of us. So the authentic little girl that went to the door saying, dad, please let me and I need you. Well what happened? She's crying. She's screaming. It doesn't get met. She's not attuned to no one's there for her in the moment. So she then creates these maladaptive coping mechanisms that we see as self-sabotage, which are really just protective parts.

00:28:10:06 - 00:28:25:01

Sabrina Zohar

There are these protector parts that come in and say, oh my God, look, you're being vulnerable right now. He's never coming to you. No one's ever going to save you. So let's get rid of this desire to be seen, heard, and understood. And let's create these

new coping mechanisms. Maybe that means scream louder, scream harder, start kicking in the door.

00:28:25:01 - 00:28:44:21

Sabrina Zohar

He'll eventually come to get you. So we create these maladaptive, maladaptive coping mechanisms that might have worked when you were six that you eventually opened the door. But that doesn't mean it's working in your adult world. So what we first really start to look at is making a relationship with that part. And if we can't see that part, then maybe the protector part understanding, what are you trying to protect me from?

00:28:45:02 - 00:28:59:19

Sabrina Zohar

Because how she saw it manifest was when somebody didn't text her immediately, she would lose her marbles and she would text 100 times and she would call her friends, and her friends had to calm her down, similar to her mother coming in and calming her down. And so we had to have her meet those parts, to cry and to grieve.

00:28:59:19 - 00:29:16:13

Sabrina Zohar

The fact that we can hold two conflicting thoughts. My father was an amazing man, but in that moment he didn't realize that I needed him. And then that allows us to be able to release the feelings and be able to hold on to those feelings and say, sure, I felt dismissed, but that doesn't mean that I'm still being dismissed.

00:29:16:15 - 00:29:34:12

Sabrina Zohar

And then we can hold space and say, okay, so what are my choices now? And, you know, above all, what she really needed to do was she had to apologize to that part because she was enacting that same behavior by seeking the external, by acting out and doing things. She wasn't actually connecting with herself. She was exiling that same part, saying, you have a need.

00:29:34:12 - 00:29:59:02

Sabrina Zohar

Well, you're a pathetic loser. So let's go into the old behavior and then it didn't make it all go away, but then it allowed her. Then, moving forward, she started to put a minute between the response, the the, the stimulus, the reaction into a response.

And then she started to challenge it, which then led her to not freak out on the guy that she was dating, which ended up becoming her husband because she allowed herself to let things unfold without trying so hard to control them.

00:29:59:02 - 00:30:08:11

Sabrina Zohar

Because she realized that she wasn't being abandoned by anybody. She was abandoning herself by acting out in ways that didn't align with the person she was trying to actually become.

00:30:08:13 - 00:30:32:09

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

It's a really amazing. And I think the the again, it's like interrupting the pattern. Like, I love that you say she kind of created space between the trigger and the going from reaction to response, almost to be a way to think about it, to be able to kind of learn to create space in there. It's so interesting with that nervous system type of work, because it actually comes from in utero, like there's studies showing and if you've ever seen these studies, but it's unbelievable.

00:30:32:09 - 00:30:52:04

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And my whole work has been preconception fertility like my clinical practice was focused around that. And of course, stress is something that we look at a lot. And what was so profound to me was learning that when women are stressed during pregnancy, it actually plays out in the offspring. Like their HPA axis functions differently, their cortisol is released differently.

00:30:52:04 - 00:31:14:08

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

There you go where you're raising your hand for anyone. We can talk more about this, but it's fascinating. And the other studies that blew my mind is that for women with anxiety and depression during pregnancy, if they took an antidepressant like an SSRI, the main category that was studied in this case, they felt better, but their children actually had no perceivable change from when they were not on medication.

00:31:14:08 - 00:31:39:12

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

So even when the woman in this gets me thinking, I mean, I'm learning a lot today in this conversation, but the thoughts versus nervous system, you know, the women actually on medication perceive themselves as being better, but most likely the underlying cortisol release and nervous system dysregulation that was happening was not improving. And what you see is like in the child, they're born with a heightened HPA axis and a heightened responsiveness, which.

00:31:39:17 - 00:31:55:15

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

So it's not only childhood exposures. You think about things that really they're out of your control sometimes that you have to take on the burden of responsibility to retrain yourself, retrain your nervous system to create space, slow down, let be less reactive, etc..

00:31:55:17 - 00:32:13:09

Sabrina Zohar

100%, my brother, it's interesting. My brother just had a baby two months ago, his first and his wife is so chill. She very like water off a duck's back. She had two really great parents, like she has her stuff like everybody else, but she's so chill. My brother is the classic ADHD kid. Bouncing off the walls was on Ritalin like, can't focus, right?

00:32:13:09 - 00:32:29:16

Sabrina Zohar

He was that classic. It wasn't hard. Do you talk to him for ten minutes and you're like, there it is. And, you know, to your point, like growing up, we had an incredibly traumatic childhood. Just so much screaming and yelling. My father never wanted kids. He threw a plate at my mom when she told him she was pregnant.

00:32:29:16 - 00:32:44:06

Sabrina Zohar

He wasn't there for any of our births. My poor mother was alive. Breaks my heart when she was giving birth to my brother, she said back in the day, you know, she's like in the 80s. You would have one final dinner the night before you gave birth with your partner, before you brought a child into this world. And she's like, and he didn't show up.

00:32:44:08 - 00:33:04:10

Sabrina Zohar

And it was just my mom and I, my, my, my gut just wants to punch this man. And so imagine what my brother was brought into. Just that the trauma, the sadness that she was experiencing giving birth alone to your child, wanting a family unit. And so my brother and I were talking the other day and he goes, man, it's just so different.

00:33:04:10 - 00:33:20:12

Sabrina Zohar

And he didn't understand what he was saying. And we kind of piece it together. And he goes, I don't know. I look at my daughter and she's so happy and she coos and she smiles and she's coming into herself and she's so loved. And he goes, it's just weird. I've never felt. And I looked at him. I was like, so at peace.

00:33:20:13 - 00:33:41:06

Sabrina Zohar

And he was like, no, I said, because look at the childhood dynamics she has versus what we did. And he's just like, oh ... And I said, look at like, mom and Dad. What they went through before we got before they even had you. And then when they had my sister and then by the time they got to me, my poor mother dealing with my father cheating on her and the screaming and the arguing and the hitting the kids.

00:33:41:08 - 00:33:56:00

Sabrina Zohar

So by the time I came out of the womb, I was already bred into so much anxiety that now, as an adult, when I see my mom, I'm like, there it is, I love you and I would. So I would sell my soul for this woman. But I can start to see this is where I learned it from.

00:33:56:06 - 00:34:10:23

Sabrina Zohar

This is why I don't trust myself. Because look at the way that you're hovering over me, and you don't let me just make a choice. And again, it's all of this to say is I don't blame her for anything that she did, but I'm going to hold her accountable for the fact that she wasn't the parent I needed.

00:34:11:05 - 00:34:20:23

Sabrina Zohar

And now she's trying. And that, to me, deserves just as much accolades as the fact that she couldn't show up at the beginning. Because I can heal that now with her because she takes accountability and ownership.

00:34:21:01 - 00:34:34:16

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

That's such a beautiful way to phrase it, because I think you're definitely not alone in being someone who has, well, I'm not putting words in your mouth, but like, they have complicated feelings about their parents and about their upbringing. Right?

00:34:34:18 - 00:34:58:18

DUTCH Podcast

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00:34:58:20 - 00:35:01:00

DUTCH Podcast

Welcome back to the DUTCH Podcast.

00:35:01:01 - 00:35:25:04

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

The amount of information and resources that are available to us to care for our self is very different from what our parents had. Just that culturally it was different. Access was different. Paying payer systems were different. The options were less like there's I think about the things that my grandparents, my parents went through and grew up with and the fact that they came out even as good as they did is mind blowing sometimes.

00:35:25:04 - 00:35:39:05

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And also, it's okay to hold them accountable for the things that they didn't provide to you at the same time. And I love that you're, you know, re kind of rebuilding that relationship and watching your mom heal herself and show up for each other differently. She probably gets a lot of it from seeing you.

00:35:39:07 - 00:35:55:22

Sabrina Zohar

I also think we need to hold space for the fact that our parents didn't have the resources that we have now. They didn't have the internet, they didn't have

podcasting, they didn't have what did they have? My mom had magazines saying, here's how to please your husband. Do this to make your man happy. But nobody was talking about what to do when your daughters are struggling.

00:35:55:22 - 00:36:17:06

Sabrina Zohar

No one was really talking about what to do with an abandonment wound. And it's so interesting because we've I think the pendulum really has swung. We are at a time right now where there is more access to information than we have literally ever had in history. Every day becomes more historical. But yet I find people know less and less because I think we're so beholden to the external.

00:36:17:06 - 00:36:32:20

Sabrina Zohar

And what is this person saying? And what is this doing and what is this doing for? They really hope people come back to themselves. That's what I hope this book does, is that it brings people back home to who they actually are. Because we need more light in the world. We don't need people to just keep following what other people are saying.

00:36:33:01 - 00:36:55:19

Sabrina Zohar

We need people to authentically say, I want to break generational trauma. I don't want to bring kids into this world. And, you know, it's funny. I think a lot of people think that giving your kids what you didn't have means giving them a nice house and money. And I don't ever want them to struggle. But I think what you need to give them that you didn't have was security and safety and being seen, heard and understood and knowing that if you don't succeed, that doesn't mean there's something wrong with you.

00:36:55:20 - 00:37:12:16

Sabrina Zohar

But sometimes that does mean that you need to try again, work harder, or try something different. But that doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with you. And I feel like that would be really what we could give to the next generation, because we're trying to make it so easy for them that we forget that they also need to learn things through experience.

00:37:12:18 - 00:37:30:00

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

I, I'm a mom and I love what you just said, and I actually think it like gives what children really need from parents. And my point of view is they need to be put in a situation where they get to struggle and you have a parent behind you that says, I know you're going to figure this out, like I'm here if you need me, but I think you got this.

00:37:30:00 - 00:37:50:20

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

What do you think you should do? And I think that that just that belief in the child being able to solve it. And, you know, you see so many that helicopter parenting style where parents fly in to fix things, to interact with the teachers when the kid's not doing the homework, and fight for them to get an A, when really the kid needs to do the homework, like, you know, all those situations that that's how we can set ourselves up.

00:37:50:20 - 00:37:56:21

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

I love that concept of that generalization. Generational wealth is far more than cash in the bank, you know, 100%.

00:37:57:01 - 00:38:16:11

Sabrina Zohar

I even watched a clip on TikTok and it was a girl. She said something embarrassing, right? It was a guy interviewing, asking her questions about something happening, and she made a fool of herself. And the dad comes in and says, and she's a 25 year old girl. This isn't a child. This is a grown ... adult. And the dad came by and goes, hey, could you delete that?

00:38:16:16 - 00:38:28:15

Sabrina Zohar

And the guy goes, why? And he said, no, no, could you delete it? She sounded really dumb in this. Could you please come on, just do me a favor. I don't want her to look bad. And the guy goes, no, I'm publishing this. And you know what? I'm also going to publish your response to it. And he goes, oh, come on.

00:38:28:15 - 00:38:45:12

Sabrina Zohar

She's just a little challenged. He goes, so are you calling your daughter an idiot? And it was just to showcase exactly what we're talking about. It's like we can't stop to try to protect people like, I understand you got hurt. No one was there to protect you when you were a kid. But there's a way to balance that without overcorrecting and course correcting.

00:38:45:12 - 00:39:05:22

Sabrina Zohar

Because I'll be honest. Sure, I don't wish upon anybody the childhood I had and the parents and the situations and the dynamics that I had, which I talked very extensively about in the book. But what I will say is it created who I am. So if I try so hard to get rid of it, that I'm actually not accepting the parts of me that are probably never going to change, because there is only so much that a person can change about themselves in one lifetime.

00:39:06:00 - 00:39:12:12

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Absolutely. Well, I want to shift gears a little bit, and we couldn't have you on the podcast not talking about dating.

00:39:12:14 - 00:39:13:07

Sabrina Zohar

Let's do.

00:39:13:07 - 00:39:34:11

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

It. Let's do it. So I you talked about at the beginning this like anxiety that people have around dating and you know, it. We actually we should run tests like when people are texting new people dating. Maybe we should do a little paper, you and I together where we'll have people, like, respond to text with new new dates, and then we'll have a saliva sample captured and we can actually see what's happening physiologically.

00:39:34:16 - 00:39:40:14

Sabrina Zohar

That'd be awesome, I love that. I like as you can see, I'm freaking out. I would love to legitimately understand what's happening physiologically.

00:39:40:14 - 00:39:58:19

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Let's do it. I'm totally game for that. But you know that anxiety that comes is not just a mindset problem. You've talked about. This mindset is a piece of it. Maybe the story that you're writing behind what's happening as a piece of it, but also the HPA axis, that physiological response that drives alertness and that feeling of not being safe, right.

00:39:58:19 - 00:40:13:18

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You're like being chased by a tiger only all it is is three little blinking dots that you're, like waiting to see what's going to come through. That's like our modern day tiger. I want to talk a little about this. Like, what does nervous system regulation look like in the context of dating?

00:40:13:20 - 00:40:31:16

Sabrina Zohar

So we also have to remember too, right? What happens is that our cell phones are little dopamine reward systems. Right. We are at a slot machine. Slot machines would not be fun if you knew you were going to win or lose every single time. If it was predictable, your brain would be like, I'm good. So and I give the example of like those creepy little booboo dolls.

00:40:31:16 - 00:40:52:17

Sabrina Zohar

They freak me out, but nonetheless, right? I was reading about the company when they were super exclusive, right? Because what happens when your brain perceives something as being valuable, not the high value woman and man stuff? I'm talking actual value. But then there's inconsistency. We create novelty. And so when the booboo came out and you didn't know when you were going to get one, you didn't know when the drop was going to happen.

00:40:52:17 - 00:41:04:19

Sabrina Zohar

You didn't know how many they were making. Could you afford it? Could you not? So it created this massive desire to have them. I think they were evaluated at like \$300 billion. It was insane.

00:41:04:21 - 00:41:05:06

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Wow.

00:41:05:07 - 00:41:26:01

Sabrina Zohar

Well, then what happened? Hubris, right? The owners didn't quite understand the psychology. Like that's what Birkin bags makes them. So special. I think they just sold one for like \$10 million for the or the original. Unbelievable. Maybe even more. Maybe even 100 million. But what makes them exclusive is that you can't get them. And so what happened? The La Booboo guys, they overproduced and they said, oh don't worry, demand will keep increasing.

00:41:26:03 - 00:41:43:16

Sabrina Zohar

They are now evaluated at \$30 million. They lost everything because when people realized, oh, I can have it, it's not that exclusive. I don't want it. All of that is exactly what happens with the texting when you are so beholden to somebody texting you. And why didn't they send me? Good morning. And where are they? And they sent three dots, but they didn't answer.

00:41:43:16 - 00:42:07:00

Sabrina Zohar

They put a period here, but they didn't do. They were on social media, but they didn't answer me as hypervigilance. That's the first thing, right? We're so hyper focused on every little thing because we're trying to see when am I going to be abandoned, that we completely self abandon ourselves. And then on top of it, we are now on a withdrawal loop, because if this person texted you every day and set this precedence, my mama always says when they started 100, where else do you want them to go?

00:42:07:01 - 00:42:23:09

Sabrina Zohar

So they come out the gate texting all the time. And good morning and how's your day? And baby, I can't wait to see you and I can't wait to meet you. And you're so amazing. And I've never met anyone like this. You're starting to create a baseline in your system of dopamine. Dopamine is gotten is a is a neurotransmitter you get in anticipation of the the reward.

00:42:23:11 - 00:42:40:00

Sabrina Zohar

But then what happens? You're not getting that reward anymore. You don't get the anticipation. You're sitting there waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting. And what's happening in the behavior changed that. At the end, we're no longer even talking about who they are as a person. You're now just trying to get your fix because you're perceiving that the external is going to keep you safe.

00:42:40:06 - 00:42:58:15

Sabrina Zohar

The external will give you the drug that you need. And so I don't need to sit in any discomfort because I just need them to tell me I'll be okay. But really, where the nervous system comes into play is your nervous system is now going, well. That's it. We're not safe. That's why you can't eat, you can't sleep, you can't drink because you're perceiving it as I'm only okay if I have this person.

00:42:58:17 - 00:43:19:14

Sabrina Zohar

But really? Then what we need to look at is in saying, okay, I need to regulate. I want to dispel what regulation means. I'm so tired of seeing content on the internet of like, just pull on your ear three times and that activate your vagus nerve and then you don't feel anxious. That's not how it works, right? If there was a tiger, the tiger just merely walking away doesn't mean that all of a sudden your body just basslines.

00:43:19:20 - 00:43:38:22

Sabrina Zohar

You still have a lot of the like. We talked about the adrenaline and all of the cortisol, things that are spiked in your system. It would take you another, you know, few minutes, if not longer to be like, okay, I'm back. I'm here where I'm at right now, all regulating does is it turns the prefrontal cortex on. It allows you to start and come from a place of decision making.

00:43:39:00 - 00:43:55:14

Sabrina Zohar

My favorite tools that I use are rubber band around my wrist. Like I'll snap it every time I'm starting to feel something. I mean, because you're your brain can't be in two places at once, so it's the same with sour candy. If you have. If you're super anxious, keep sour candy all over your house. Because when you start to have the stink of thinking, you pop it in your mouth.

00:43:55:14 - 00:44:13:08

Sabrina Zohar

Your brain can't focus on the past, but also go, hey, there's something going on in your mouth right now. Going for a walk? Doing 20 jumping jacks. Like all of these things. What they're do even wall pushes, right? Literally going up to the wall, pushing, pushing, pushing with it and stopping. What they do is they allow your body to use that either a lot of anxiety.

00:44:13:08 - 00:44:32:05

Sabrina Zohar

So if we're talking poly vagal theory, which I do love, if we're talking about all of that sympathetic energy of like, I have to know and I need to know it, where is it in my in. No, no, no, no. You feel like you're going to go insane. Go for a walk, do 20 jumping jacks, do something intentional, like a walking meditation that makes you focus on things in your surroundings.

00:44:32:10 - 00:44:50:05

Sabrina Zohar

What that does is it activates a prefrontal cortex to say, wait a minute, I'm an adult right now. I'm a 30 something, 40 something, 50 something, whatever year old person, there's no threat. Is person just didn't text me right now. Then I can start to say, so what? What are my choices? And that to me is the part of the nervous system.

00:44:50:05 - 00:45:04:17

Sabrina Zohar

Because when we're dysregulated, we don't feel like we have a choice. And I want everyone to know that you're not six years old, you're not a kid anymore. You're an adult now, but your brain and your nervous system doesn't understand that you have credit cards, that you have autonomy, that you have freedom. And so regulating to me is the first step.

00:45:04:17 - 00:45:27:04

Sabrina Zohar

And my friend, Doctor Chris Lee, brilliant neuroscientist, I, I love him so much. And he always talks about when you have conflict, you can't just have conflict and repair. You need conflict regulation repair. Because without the regulation, we don't know what story and narrative that we're really creating about this entire situation. And so we need to regulate before we can try to repair the remedy, the situation.

00:45:27:04 - 00:45:42:23

Sabrina Zohar

Because that allows me to say I feel this, and the only way I can access my I feel is by coming back into my body and giving myself a minute. Otherwise, you did this and you did this. And I hate when you do. You always. You never. At that point, we're just not fighting fair.

00:45:43:01 - 00:46:02:04

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

That's such a good point like that regulation piece does allow you to get into how you feel, and it also almost clears the table for other versions of what happened, because I do think that what you're describing, you go in very sat on this is what happened. This is why it happened. But when there's someone else involved, like you're not even stopping to ask the question of this is what happened?

00:46:02:06 - 00:46:21:00

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Why did it happen? Right? Having that curiosity or like clearing some space for that. You talk a lot about self-trust. And, you know, we've talked about these relational patterns, but you have said in your book, like, you need to have self-trust before you can actually shift relational patterns. Can you talk a little bit more about what that looks like?

00:46:21:00 - 00:46:27:05

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

How does someone know when they have enough self-trust to be changing things externally?

00:46:27:07 - 00:46:45:08

Sabrina Zohar

Self-trust? I think a lot of people, it's the same with confidence. People look at confidence and say, oh well, you must, just as it's always been like this confidence is comes after you do something and realize that you didn't die and that you're okay after you did it. And so trusting yourself could look like saying, I don't want to do that tonight.

00:46:45:08 - 00:47:00:18

Sabrina Zohar

So I'm going to trust myself that that's not the right choice. Trusting yourself is so I look at it this way, right? Is it your gut or your anxiety? Your gut reaction is usually a lot calmer, right? If I were to say, Jacqueline, do you like the color pink? And you know. Right. That's your gut reaction. No, I just don't like it.

00:47:00:18 - 00:47:13:17

Sabrina Zohar

That's how I feel. You didn't sit there. You didn't. Now when we think anxiety, it's oh my God, wait, but what if I say that I don't like pink? And what if that's her favorite color? And then what if I annoy her? And then right. It comes with a narrative. It comes with a story. It comes with body sensations.

00:47:13:17 - 00:47:31:12

Sabrina Zohar

You start to get hot and fluttered, and I don't know what I'm going to say. Wait, wait, what? I'm saying the right thing with it. That's the difference right there. In practice, trusting yourself means validating yourself means saying, yeah, you know what? You just said something rude to me, and I'm not going to let you discredit that. I might not need to get angry at you for it, but I don't appreciate what you just said to me.

00:47:31:14 - 00:47:50:14

Sabrina Zohar

Trusting yourself. My mama always said, you have to love yourself more than the need to be loved by other people, and to me, that is the pinnacle of trusting myself and who I am. Because then what I'm saying is, I know that no matter what, I will be okay. And if no matter what, I'll be okay. Then anything that comes my way, I'm going to be able to handle that creates resilience.

00:47:50:16 - 00:48:08:03

Sabrina Zohar

And I'll give you an example of kind of this. I didn't trust myself, and it is an experience and really trying to control the outcome and create a narrative and story that didn't exist. So I was I was supposed to be on this, this, this podcast for the book. And we were all going, they're not answering that, not answering.

00:48:08:03 - 00:48:22:00

Sabrina Zohar

And so I started to create narratives. I was like, oh, see, they hate me. They don't like me. I knew it, I knew it, I probably did. They just didn't like my content. I started

creating this narrative. Turns out when we reached out to them, they were like, oh, sorry, we never saw the emails. Yeah, yeah, let's get you on this.

00:48:22:05 - 00:48:39:08

Sabrina Zohar

Something that was nothing. Anything. What it was. Now, if I trusted myself in that moment, I would have said, SAB, you got to trust that right now. It has this story, a narrative. You have no facts to back this up, babe. That just sounds like the core belief that you don't think you're good enough. That sounds like dad's voice.

00:48:39:10 - 00:48:50:22

Sabrina Zohar

But when I trusted myself in that moment and I said, you know what? No matter what, I'll be okay. And if we get it, we get it. And if we don't, we don't. But you know what? Let me give one last email to one last person in the company. And that just so happened to be the email that worked.

00:48:50:22 - 00:48:54:08

Sabrina Zohar

And they said, oh, I think all your emails went into spam. We got you.

00:48:54:10 - 00:49:00:18

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

I mean, think about think about how things would have changed for you if you got stuck in that story, right, and didn't actually make that next.

00:49:00:18 - 00:49:13:21

Sabrina Zohar

Outreach is the same way. When I met my partner, he didn't text me every day if I didn't trust myself to know, okay, well, let me see this through because I think that's where I hear a lot of these people. No, no, I need certainty and I want to know. And you don't actually need to know all of those things.

00:49:13:22 - 00:49:30:02

Sabrina Zohar

Here's the thing. You won't know all of those things. There is no way that I could give you a way to vet someone on a first date that will omit you of any negative experiences I could tell you to look for certain behavior, but that person could be really good. That person could be great at first dates. Really what it's about is saying.

00:49:30:02 - 00:49:36:15

Sabrina Zohar

But I trust myself that even if this doesn't work out, I'm going to be okay and my life isn't contingent on if this person chooses me.

00:49:36:17 - 00:49:54:00

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

That's amazing. I mean, one of the things that I think is so interesting, too, is like that this is multilayered. And when we talk about whole person health and, well, let me talk a little bit more about this here. But when we look at HIPAA access, like look at hormones, we look at them on a continuum. And HPA axis function is the really the bottom of that pyramid.

00:49:54:04 - 00:50:14:01

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

That's that foundational piece that everything else is built on, including your metabolic health, including your reproductive hormones and stuff like that. I want to talk a little about this if you're open to it, because I think it really impacts women who are in the dating world. And certainly this dynamic of the anxiety of connection or slow response, like it doesn't end dating.

00:50:14:01 - 00:50:33:12

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

This is something that becomes pervasive in your job and in your marriages. And, you know, maybe you have some thoughts about that. But it is really interesting because a lot of this is at the core of HPA axis dysfunction, where you get this chronic relational stress that changes the way your cortisol is released and your HPA axis functions.

00:50:33:12 - 00:50:55:22

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You end up getting really high cortisol. And then high cortisol actually suppresses our sex hormones. So for women who experience a lot of hormonal dysregulation or a cycle changes that, it can be related to cortisol. In fact, we know that one of the biggest medical reasons of your cycle stopping is physiologic stress. And it could be like we hear about with athletes who are under fueling.

00:50:56:00 - 00:51:21:07

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

But also it happens in times of great emotional stress. So then you have this like lower production of hormones that happens. And then when the hormone sex hormones are lower, it actually further creates degradation to your neuronal infrastructure. So we see a weakened prefrontal cortex. You get more amygdala activity. This happens when estradiol goes down. So this is another big piece for perimenopausal women who start to sense more anxiety.

00:51:21:07 - 00:51:40:16

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

It's because the lowering estrogen actually changes the way your brain works. You also can get impairment in your social reward processing. We don't make oxytocin the same way for women. So you end up having this connection between the the rise in stress and then all of the other hormonal systems. And I bring that in because it's so important with the ductus.

00:51:40:16 - 00:51:51:13

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And that's one of the reasons why the HPA axis is part of the DUTCH test. A lot of people order it predominantly for estrogen and progesterone, but it's really critically important to understand stress as a piece of that.

00:51:51:15 - 00:52:10:01

Sabrina Zohar

Oh, the brain to gut, right. The whole the axis and everything is literally game changing. And for anybody that thinks, oh, I just am anxious in my relationships or dating, but it's not anywhere else in my life. You're actually kidding yourself. Of course it is. Because these these behaviors and patterns, they don't just start and stop. It's not like, oh, I it's just this I used to be really anxious in dating.

00:52:10:01 - 00:52:29:10

Sabrina Zohar

Then I worked on that. Then it became just in my career. Then I started to feel like people were abandoning me. That didn't make any sense. How could how could these people be abandoning me? They don't know me. And it's interesting because I was on birth control for ten years in my 20s. And listen, I'm not a fan personally, but like, that's everybody do whatever they want to do.

00:52:29:12 - 00:52:47:01

Sabrina Zohar

But it it completely altered my brain chemistry because I wasn't seeing things in the way that I probably should have. I was putting up with a lot of things because I was getting all of these different literal drugs, and I think that's why I love the DUTCH test so much. Is because we're getting under the hood. It's not just slapping SSRI like, you're just take a pill, just go, go, get out of my office.

00:52:47:03 - 00:53:07:18

Sabrina Zohar

It's about saying, wait a minute, right? And actually what was interesting was I was doing a mole detox. That's when I took my my DUTCH test and I was taking candy back in, and it's like it's a supplement, right? It's nothing crazy. Oh, my God, I was a nut job. I was crying all the time, I wasn't. And my doctor, she started laughing and she was like, oh, I know what's going on.

00:53:07:18 - 00:53:20:19

Sabrina Zohar

She's like, you had an overproduction of good bacteria. And she was like, your body is holding on to dear life for all of these things. I couldn't do it. She wanted me on one more week. I was to the point where I was like, I'm about to delete my social media and break up with my boyfriend and move and become a monk like I was.

00:53:21:00 - 00:53:36:16

Sabrina Zohar

I couldn't function. And all of that is to say, same with sugar. I used to eat like a six year old at loose in a grocery store. When I quit smoking, I cut sugar. I got off my medication and I started working out. It was the hardest six months of my entire life because I was recalibrating everything I.

00:53:36:16 - 00:53:56:03

Sabrina Zohar

My face was puffier I was, I had all that sugar. And we don't realize that what you eat, how you treat yourself like, are you drinking water? Are you getting sunlight? Did you go for a walk today? I know it sounds basic, but we are plants. We are like plants, right? We need basic, fundamental aspects and I love that we can go deeper because it was funny.

00:53:56:03 - 00:54:10:14

Sabrina Zohar

It was. For a long time doctors thought I had, hormone issues. And then we did my DUTCH tests. My hormones were beautiful, but my doctor that called it, she called me immediately and she goes, your cortisol is the issue. And she said, right now where you're at, you're at peak burnout. And then the next test, I completely flatline.

00:54:10:14 - 00:54:26:06

Sabrina Zohar

And she was like, you are at the lowest you could possibly be. And she said, this is what I see with depression, anxiety and people taking their life. And she said, you need to go get work on this immediately. But had she not, had I not knowing all of this, I would never have been able to do anything about it because I was waking up at 2 a.m..

00:54:26:12 - 00:54:42:04

Sabrina Zohar

I was waking up multiple times in the night, but every doctor kept saying, oh, you just have insomnia. Maybe try a meditation and had nothing to do with that. It had to do with the fact that my body was not calculating and calibrating correctly. Now I sleep through the night. I get my eight hours, I'm in bed by 830, I'm up by 430.

00:54:42:06 - 00:55:00:18

Sabrina Zohar

And I feel. Which I mean, I don't love being up at 430, but here we are. But I feel a lot more balanced within who I am, which is the important thing that people need to recognize. Yeah, sure. Your partner could be a lot of things, but it doesn't always mean it's behavioral. Sometimes it really is. The fact that our our gut and brain axis are not communicating effectively.

00:55:00:20 - 00:55:15:12

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You I mean, you nailed it. Absolutely. And I thank you for sharing your experience with testing and kind of where you were at. I was going to ask you about that, like what you had seen on the report when you looked. But it's really it is a fascinating thing because, you know, we don't think about our body sometimes.

00:55:15:12 - 00:55:38:01

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

The thing about our body is failing us. Right? And it's actually it could not be more opposite from that. And this actually really ties in well to that self-trust piece. Our

bodies are innately meant to find balance. So if you are exposed to a situation that is stressful and anxious, your cortisol adapts in order to protect you. In fact, cortisol has a very bad rap on social media.

00:55:38:01 - 00:55:57:11

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Everyone's like, lower your cortisol, let's make your cortisol better. But cortisol is our body's fire extinguisher. And you know what? If you have a fire, you really need it. The problem is that we're spraying it everywhere all the time, and it gets really dysregulated. And so when there's too much around, our cells actually change the way they use cortisol.

00:55:57:14 - 00:56:18:18

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And then that causes more upstream dysregulation because your body starts to adapt to what the cells are doing. So it's a communication problem. Cortisol itself is not the bad guy. In fact like when it rises it's rising in response to a higher need for it in the body. So it's such an important thing when you talk about self-trust, because that gets into your biology as well.

00:56:18:20 - 00:56:32:06

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You have to start at the beginning. You have to get rid of the inflammation or whatever that stress trigger is for it to come down. But how scary like to get to that point where, yeah, it's really dropping out and you don't have that coping mechanism. You were living in a house with no fire extinguishers.

00:56:32:08 - 00:56:50:18

Sabrina Zohar

100%. And to your point, once I started to understand what it actually was, I was able to address the root of it and not make it mean something that it didn't need to mean, because trusting myself was me saying, no, I don't want to do another medicine. No, I don't want you to give me another supplement. I want to understand what this is actually what is actually going on.

00:56:50:20 - 00:57:08:00

Sabrina Zohar

I literally had we went to a doctor a year, two years ago, and he told me this was a medical doctor. Like, this is not just a woo woo. He told me, I don't need bloodwork

until I'm in menopause. And he said, Watts, it's not going to change anything. And I was like, are you are you kidding? And then I said, well, I'm struggling to sleep.

00:57:08:00 - 00:57:25:02

Sabrina Zohar

I keep waking up in the middle of the night, like, can I test? Is it my hormones? And he goes, oh, what are those tests going to do? What? Come on, you know what, Sabrina? I want you to try this. He said, when you go to bed, I want you to close your eyes and I want you to repeat to yourself, I am going to fall asleep.

00:57:25:04 - 00:57:41:04

Sabrina Zohar

That was his. I'm not kidding. And I was like, I was like, I think I'm going to find another doctor. And so we have to remember that, like, you know your body best, you know? And I know that when I was in my really, like, feeling like I was off my rocker because I for me I pmd.

00:57:41:06 - 00:57:59:16

Sabrina Zohar

So that week before my period that's why I tested the DUTCH around that time because my doctor, she really wanted to see like what's going on. We realized my hormones were actually fine. Right? It wasn't just the estrogen and progesterone. I mean, those were playing into it. But there was a day where, like, there's one day a month where I want to burn it all to the ground, like, I'm done, I'm going to move away.

00:57:59:16 - 00:58:15:07

Sabrina Zohar

I'm going to go and be alone. No one touch me, no one look at me. And then the next day I wake up and I'm like, who is she? Where did she come from? I don't even know. Because it's also knowing that in those moments I you. Now I come down and I tell my partner, today's the cloud day, please just let me have it.

00:58:15:07 - 00:58:29:00

Sabrina Zohar

And I know in that moment don't trust every thought you have. Because baby, you're not seeing it clearly. But it took me years of trusting myself to get to that point, to be able to say, is this actually something I need to worry about? Or is this the fake tiger?

00:58:29:02 - 00:59:00:08

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

And I love that you have language around that for you and your partner. Like what a beautiful thing for both of you. I want to wrap up the podcast because I think there's so much in here with like growing into self trust, regulating your nervous system, kind of learning how to retrain that aspect. What are the top recommendations that you give to people at a high level for how they can start to put this into practice in their life, so that they can move on from these patterns that they were, you know, really developed very early on and move into a healthier attachment style and really a healthier response to stressors in life.

00:59:00:10 - 00:59:03:21

Sabrina Zohar

So of course, getting why am I like this? So it gives you this blueprint.

00:59:03:21 - 00:59:08:06

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You will have the link in the show notes for those of you who want to grab it. And you can get it right now.

00:59:08:08 - 00:59:21:21

Sabrina Zohar

Of course. So that would be third. But really, if we're talking, what we have to remember is your nervous system doesn't do well with big. So that's why New Year's resolutions don't work, right. Oh, I have never run a marathon. So I'm going to go and sign up for a 26.2 and you're like, okay. Yeah, that's why you didn't actually show up.

00:59:21:23 - 00:59:34:12

Sabrina Zohar

Because if it feels so overwhelming, what we're trying to do is I look at it this way, the mountains in front of you, you have to climb it. You either give yourself the tools and the clothes and the shoes that you need, or you're going to you're going to raw dog your way up and go naked and try to do it alone.

00:59:34:15 - 00:59:50:05

Sabrina Zohar

One is going to be significantly more painful than the other, but it might take you time to put the belt on, to put the shoes on, to put everything on. And so I say we have to start really small. So if that means right now you say I'm going to incorporate one tool this week. So maybe it's walking.

00:59:50:05 - 01:00:03:14

Sabrina Zohar

So then what that means is for one day you put a sock by the door, and then the next day you put another sock and then the third day you put a shoe. And then the fourth day you put your shoes on and you walk around your house. And then the fifth day you walk around your block. Maybe by the sixth, seventh or eighth you're walking the full loop.

01:00:03:16 - 01:00:22:18

Sabrina Zohar

Because what that's doing is it's allowing your nervous system time to go. This is safe. This is safe, this is safe. This is safe as opposed to I haven't left my house in six years. So okay, I'm going to go walk six miles and you're like, it's never going to work. You're going to feel overwhelmed. So I would say start really small and start having little wins because we have triggers, but we also have glimmers.

01:00:22:20 - 01:00:43:23

Sabrina Zohar

Incorporate three new tools. Maybe that's skating for safety and that's looking from left to right in the room and finding three things that you recognize to remind yourself and reorient. Maybe that means the sour candy, the rubber band holding two ice cubes. When we get super overwhelmed, grab some ice cubes like the mammalian divers response, right? You can hold it, and it allows you to just come back to the present moment.

01:00:44:01 - 01:01:03:01

Sabrina Zohar

Maybe it's saying, normally I respond in five seconds, I'm going to put a minute clock and I'm going to sit in uncomfortable. When the minute clock goes up, then I'll make a choice, because when the clock, when the phone goes off, it activates your prefrontal cortex to say what's going on, and you might snap out of it and be like, oh my God, I was just about to blow this all up because this person didn't answer me.

01:01:03:03 - 01:01:14:04

Sabrina Zohar

Give yourself the grace and the opportunity to give yourself a minute before you make a decision that could literally change your life forever, depending on if it's you or if it's your anxiety.

01:01:14:06 - 01:01:24:12

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

I love those recommendations. I really appreciate having you on the show today, and I can't wait to share more about your book. Tell us where people can find it. And the best way to find you now.

01:01:24:13 - 01:01:40:04

Sabrina Zohar

Thank you guys so you can get why am I like this? Available worldwide on Amazon is usually the easiest. Or go to your local bookstore, Barnes and Noble, anywhere books are sold, you could go and get a copy. And Sabrina's OHA is me, so you can look me up on YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify. Literally any modality except for X.

01:01:40:04 - 01:01:50:01

Sabrina Zohar

I'm just not a I'm not a tweeter. But if you just look up Sabrina Zohar or the Sabrina Zohar show, you can come and sit with me so I could talk to a camera for 45 minutes and give you guys some tough love that you might need.

01:01:50:03 - 01:02:13:07

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

I love it, I do, actually, I really love your tough lifestyle. I'm social because you're very real. You're very down to earth, and it's no B.S. you're just straight down the middle. I really appreciate that. And again, really appreciate you having on on coming on the show today. It's been really fun. And for those of you who are listening and want to know more about DUTCH testing or want to hear more about hormones, have more conversations like this awesome one.

01:02:13:12 - 01:02:23:06

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

You can also follow us at DUTCH Test on all the socials or click subscribe. We do a podcast every Tuesday, so I hope you join me for more and I'll see you next week.

01:02:23:08 - 01:02:36:02

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