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**Speaker: Mia Voss 00:03**

Hi, Jillian.

**Speaker: Jillian 00:04**

Hello there. It's so nice to be here.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 00:07**

It's nice to see you again. We just recorded a podcast on your episode on your podcast the other day. So turnabout is fair play for you to come on here and tell your story. And I'm really excited to talk with you today, especially with what's going on in the world with the Delta variant and immunocompromised. And that's what we're going to talk about today.

**Speaker: Jillian 00:28**

Absolutely. But, first, it's so funny because I had you on my podcast called the Blogger Genius podcast and like, asking you all these kind of business questions. And then we're turning it around and getting really personal. And there's something so nice about that.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 00:43**

Yes. And that's where podcasts can be complimentary to each other. You can be that exact two people, but flip that and have different conversations. So, don't feel like you can't start a podcast, by the way people, you can. There's a voice for everything, right?

**Speaker: Jillian 00:54**

Absolutely. And I love the idea of long form conversations. And we're living in such a world of Twitter feeds and just kind of snippets of data or information, whatever it is, sound bites, so it's so nice to be able to say, "Oh, wait, let's we can get into this."

**Speaker: Mia Voss 01:13**

Yeah, we can have a back and forth, actually have a conversation. You're so right. Everything is short, short, little tweets. So tell me your story of your diagnosis. So obviously, we're going to talk about MS today, and you're going to give us some stats and figures too, because I think a lot of people don't know about it, unless it's in their life.

**Speaker: Jillian 01:35**

Yeah. So, what I would say to start off is MS is, I just looked it up recently, I want to say it's like one in 300 people, no, maybe like one in 1000 in there in the United States, and really worldwide. It predominantly affects women. So 75% of all MS patients are women. And typically, it strikes between the ages of 20 and 40.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 02:05**

Wow. And when I thought about that, when you said it earlier, too, that it's so interesting, because I can see how you would just be like, "Oh, I'm fine."

**Speaker: Jillian 02:14**

And that's the thing about it. So what MS is, is it's an autoimmune disease where our white blood cells which go out, you know, they're the ones who like, attack infections, clear cancer, just keep us safe, they get confused. And they now think MS starts in the gut, with the white blood cells in you know, you've heard about leaky gut. So white blood cells leak out of the gut, go up your spine, go up into your brain and start attacking your nerves, your like, neurons. And what happens is, you end up with what are called lesions, they're like little sores almost. And when that happens, it can be random in your brain, so you don't know where it's going to affect you. Now, a lot of MS can start with tingling, I didn't have tingling, it can start with pain. But for me, it started with dizziness and my vision. So a lot of times when a woman who's in 20 to 40, shows up with weird vision stuff, one of the things they think about is MS. And so what happened for me was, I was diagnosed, like nine years ago, but weirdly 10 years before that, I had this weird incident, where I woke up one morning, and I started spinning with horrible vertigo. I didn't know what it was to the point where I couldn't move my head an inch without spinning like crazy and vomiting. Wow, I called my doctor and I said, "This is crazy, what's going on?" And he said, "Chances are it's an inner ear infection, and it will go away. And you should come see me." And I said to him, "No, I can't

come see you because I cannot move one inch. Like I can't get to the bathroom.” My boyfriend at the time who became my husband, like would have to, you know, put like a bedpan under me because I couldn't move. So I said to him, “I can't come see you.” So he's like, Okay. Well, he gave me a prescription for like an anti-vertigo kind of drug, you know, some drug. And it took about three or four days, and I slowly got better.

**Speaker: Mia Voss**

Three or four days of that?

**Speaker: Jillian**

Three or four days. That was the weirdness. And even when I got to stand up, it felt like I was walking on the moon. It was so weird, but it went away. And I ended up going, thinking it's like some sort of inner ear thing, so I was going to get it checked out. I went to this place in Los Angeles, I was living in LA and I went to this place. It's like the Hearing Center, you know. It's like well-known people get cochlear implants and they checked me out. And they said, “You're fine.” You know, “Wow, good for you. It was probably like an inner ear virus, you're fine.” And it went away and I never thought about it. And then 10 years later, all of a sudden, we were moving, we moved up to the Bay Area. And stress can be a real, something that kind of triggers it. And I noticed I was taking photos with my big camera, and I couldn't close one of my eyes all the way. You know, you could close one eye to like, look through and then I wouldn't close all the way. And I said to my husband, I'm like, “Wow, this is weird. I can't believe close my eyes.” And then I remember saying to him, “This is really weird. David, I can't go mamama...” And then he turned to me, and he goes, “Why would you want to do that? Like what? Like, who cares?” And I'm like, “No! It's kind of weird. I can't do that.” Anyway, that was it. Those were like some symptoms. And I had no idea what was going – it wasn't bad, it wasn't bad. And then my daughter in there... [**Cross talking – 05:50**]

**Speaker: Mia Voss 05:49**

They're just like a little. They're not every day. Sure...sure.

**Speaker: Jillian 05:53**

They're odd but a little weird. And then my daughter got sick, and I got sick, like a cold, a bad cold. And one morning, I woke up and I said, "David, I feel like I'm walking on the moon again." And he's like, what? And so I kept going to like, urgent care because I had a bad cold, right? So I've cold, I seemed awful. And they're saying, "Yeah, you're sick." And I go, "Huh! Okay, I must really be sick." And I've got inhalers and steroid, like the whole thing. And then one day, like maybe I don't know, a week later, because it's not really going away. I look at my husband in the morning, and I say, "I see two of you." And he goes, "What?" I say, "Yeah, I see two of you, kind of in the corner of my eye." And then during the course of the, and I wasn't weirdly even that concerned. I think because I was so sick, I was worried about a cough and that this was like, "Oh, this is just another weird symptom." And then all of a sudden, is the two of him were like kind of at the side left, they started to move to the front. So everything was two, and they started to move in. And I said, "This is really weird." And he looks, of course on Google. And it says, "If you ever just randomly have double vision, go to the urgent care immediately."

**Speaker: Mia**

Wow!

**Speaker: Jillian 07:06**

I went to urgent care center, I went to this really good place. And they took me in and they said, "You need to weirdly see a neuro ophthalmologist," who happened to be there. And I went up and I saw him and he said, "You need to get an MRI." And I'm like, "Why? What are you talking about?"

**Speaker: Mia 07:25**

Yeah. It's like this big urgency surround you. Oh my goodness!

**Speaker: Jillian 07:28**

Yeah, and I got, I saw he said, "You need to see a neurologist, and then you need to get an MRI." And I saw the neurologist the next day, and I'm still really sick. Like, I'm hacking like, I look sick, I have this bad cold. And she says to me, she checks me out. By the way, she noticed that when she said, "Squeeze your eyes closed." And when I squeezed them closed, one of them popped up and really easily. So she noticed something was up. And I said, "What do you think this is?" And she tries to be calm, and she goes

“Well, it could just be your cold.” And I go, “Of course.” And then she said, “Or it could be a mini stroke or MS.” And I'm like, “Wait, what?” and I go, I have the MRI. She calls me that night and she says, “You have lesions in your brain. I think this is MS. You need to come in tomorrow.”

**Speaker: Mia Voss 08:16**

Oh, what a shock that must have been!

**Speaker: Jillian 08:19**

And oh! And I'm still having double vision. Like I still can't see. Like I need somebody to help me because I can't see. And it was so funny because I was in such shock. And, you know, back when we kind of heard about MS. But like my husband's like, “Is that like Muscular Dystrophy?” Like we had no idea. We're like, “What? What is this?” The one thing though that my husband did is, we promised each other that we were not going to google it that night. And we're gonna wait till I saw my neurologist because we just wanted to stay sane. You know, because you start reading stuff, and it's horrible. And when I heard MS, and I knew this was like some sort of thing that gets worse over time, the immediate image that popped into my head was my husband pushing me in a wheelchair. That was like what I thought, you know, and that was really scary. And I was so sick that I had at the time, we had a five year old daughter. And I was so sick and so messed up that I couldn't like get her to school in the morning, my husband had to do it. Like I had to just lay in bed. And I felt so powerless as a mom because your job as a mom is you get your kid to school and you brush your kid's hair and you get their lunch ready and it's just part of the job, and all of a sudden I couldn't do any of that.

So, it was so interesting. So, my visions messed up and I need to go on to heavy duty steroids. IV steroids, not just pills because they have to take the inflammation down. And I go in to this center, you know like my doctor's office. It's like a big center, and I'm being walked into the back where they have like the IVs'. And the nurse says to me, she turns to me and she goes, “Wow, we get a lot of MS patients in here.” And I'm thinking to myself, “Who is she talking to?” Like, I don't know who this is. And then she says, “How long have you had MS?” And I go since yesterday, like I'm not and I've heard this about cancer patients as well. Like, you all of a sudden become you are a cancer patient, and you were a normal person the day before. And then the next day, you are a cancer patient. And I felt like that like, “What are you talking about?” Like, “I'm a person with MS, and I messed up and I was usually so healthy. How did this happen

to me?" So a lot of times, that was the question. And it took, this is the weird part. So ultimately, I went on these heavy duty steroids, which were weird. My vision took a while to come back. It did, but I just felt so vulnerable in a way I'd never felt before. Now one thing too, I just want to say, MS, the way you get MS is unknown. However, typically what happens is you have a genetic kind of predisposition. So there's a lot of autoimmune disease in my family on both sides. And autoimmune diseases tend to cluster. So previously I have thyroid disease, which is an autoimmune disease, I've hashimotos, not a big deal. I take thyroid at the end. However, if you have one, you're more apt to get other ones. So people with lupus, you know, all of like rheumatoid arthritis, they cluster. So I must have a genetic predisposition. Two, you need an environmental trigger. So something in your life, who knows what it could be, they've tied MS to Epstein Barr. People with Epstein Barr, that could be the environmental trigger. But the third thing weirdly is low, vitamin D.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 11:55**

Wow. I have not heard.

**Speaker: Jillian 11:59**

I don't know. This is the weirdest. My vitamin D is weird. I lived in Los Angeles, but I was super suns. And like, I would wear hats and sunscreen, and my vitamin D levels were so low probably for 15 years, who knows. So, do take vitamin D, and you know, it's come out with COVID. Vitamin D is hugely important. And this is the weird part. There is no MS at the equator. Where people get a ton of sun, they don't get MS. And then as you move north and south in terms of latitude, the MS increases. So in Sweden, Canada, even like Buffalo, New York, they're all these like MS centers because that it is tied to vitamin D. They don't know if it's tied. They think it's tied to sunlight too and there are other things you get from the sun, but definitely vitamin D. So I think for me, I had this predisposition. I had an environmental trigger. And it could be pregnancy, they don't like know what it is, but something where your body goes through some major stressor, and low vitamin D. So definitely, like I tell anybody who has autoimmune disease in their families, whatever vitamin D is neuro. It's protective for autoimmune, especially too with brainstem, very neuro protective.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 13:18**

What a great pro tip.

**Speaker: Jillian 13:20**

No, I take that seriously. Take it seriously. Yeah, my vitamin D levels, like I think mine were in the teens. I think the threshold for being “normal” is like 30. However, I recommend you get your vitamin D levels up higher than that like to 50. For me, they want my levels somewhere between 80 and 100. They want it like high, high, high.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 13:43**

Wow! That's all I keep saying as well, because it's just so much interesting just crazy information, that's not your normal. So I could just see what that must have been like of this one day. And then I was dizzy maybe 10 years ago, you said you had something. But other than that had just been like going right up until then and then that shift. What a trauma in a way too.

**Speaker: Jillian 14:05**

What happened was interesting. I ended up not wanting to tell anybody. And the reason was, so the thing with MS is, nobody knows kind of how your disease is going to progress. And I must say upfront, like I'm in remission, I've been in remission for a long time. I don't have any major deficiencies like I am a really lucky person.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 14:28**

I will tell you, I didn't even know there was an ability to have that be in remission. So again, why I wanted to talk about this to have and of course, we'll talk about how that being immunocompromised comes in. So you're in remission, but you're also living in a world right now

**Speaker: Jillian 14:43**

Where I'm immunocompromised. Absolutely, but I didn't want it to. In the beginning, usually it's like in the first two years of diagnosis, they kind of start to see how your disease is progressing. And nobody's disease is the same as anybody else's. So they don't know. And so you know, my vision is, my husband pushing me in a wheelchair and I can't even, and usually people weirdly like they can't swallow like, horrible things can happen with this disease. You can't walk, you know, it just progresses there certain versions of it were just progresses and gets worse and they can't stop it. So what I noticed is, in the

beginning when I was going through this, certain friends knew that something was up with me. And when I would say I have MS, the look on their face was so scared and so sad that I couldn't handle that. That then all of a sudden, I had to comfort them and make them okay, so I could be okay. And I wasn't okay. And that was so weird.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 15:39**

Yeah. It's that common thing. Yes. And thank you for saying that. I think that occurs in so many different instances. And I just got on a podcast last night with a friend of mine, talking about her diagnosis with breast cancer, which was five years ago, but it's still like how her conversation went with her friends. And that was something that came up that was really tough, is now I have to make you feel better about me not feeling better, which is and I still don't feel better. So I can't even say 'oh, I'm all great.' And I'm just going to make, you know, everything's good, which is what we want to do.

**Speaker: Jillian 16:17**

Totally. So looking at it was like people try to be really nice. But looking at their faces would freak me out and like put me back in bed to think about again, like how bad this could be. So what I noticed was, I had to retreat for about a year. [Mia –Wow]. Because I didn't know what was going to happen. And I would say to my husband all the time like, "Is this the weirdest thing that I have MS?" Like I couldn't even process it for the longest, even though I was messed up for a while, and it took me a while to gain my strength back. And still, it was like it hit me in waves, like, "Wow! My life is different. My life is different. This is weird." And then I was not wanting to share it with anybody. So I had to weirdly retreat. And I just had to kind of go through this. And I had a very good friend who is a radiologist and who was really wonderful, because she could explain a lot of the medically stuff. And she also like, I asked her to look at my scans in my brain because you know, when you get the report from the radiologist, it's very scary. And it has all this medical jargon that you start googling and then you shouldn't start googling. And she said to me this, she said, "You know what, Joe? Everybody gets something. It's just a matter of time."

**Speaker: Mia Voss 17:44**

Amen to that in different ways.



**Speaker: Jillian 17:46**

And that has stuck with me. And then the horrible end of the story is then like two years later, she got diagnosed with a rare eye cancer.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 17:57**

Wow! No, she is then...

**Speaker: Jillian 18:01**

And then we would take walks and just talk about how precious she was that everybody gets something and she's a doctor having to deal with this. So it is true. So do think that something is not going to happen to you. It will eventually.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 18:15**

I really loved this piece of the conversation that I didn't see coming out until just now of that before and after the diagnosis because you hear a bit and it is like you said when you walked into that hospital, they're like, "Oh, you had it?" And so now, you've got this moniker of this this title. They only, "Wait! Who's she talking to?"

**Speaker: Jillian 18:36**

Yeah, that is being weird.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 18:37**

I think that's a huge piece to think of as well of the before and after.

**Speaker: Jillian 18:42**

Yeah, you know. And this is something to that I learned. What and not that again, I lived a healthy life. Like in fact, my radiologist friend who looked at my scans was able to say to me, "Wow! Yes, you have MS. You've got lesions" and I don't have just a few like, because of this potential 10 years, there were silent lesions because it is kind of random. If it doesn't knock out, there are silent parts to your brain. So I was very lucky. But if you look at my brain, you'd be like, "Ooh, I see your you got disease in them." And what she said is, "I can see in your brain that you've lived a healthy life." Like I had a big you know, I

didn't have like brain atrophy. I'm not a drug addict. I'm not an alcoholic. Like I lived a healthy life and it does by the way show up in your brain, just so you know. Like [Mia – Interesting] people can really see your health. Like she goes, “Always what are radiologist friends do is, we look at a brain and we try and guess the age of the person based on how their brain books because your brain ages over time, and that you can see like a drug addict brain. The person might be 30 but they look 60.”

**Speaker: Mia Voss 19:52**

Sounds like your brain tells on you by the way,

**Speaker: Jillian 19:54**

It totally. Like your skin. By the way your skin does too. Your skin and your brain tell like your age. Anyway, but she had said to me, you know, my brain was healthy, and that made me feel a little bit better. But what it did though, having MS and also, by the way, I put my husband on vitamin D, my daughter who was five at the time, I put her on vitamin D, but it made me put - So MS can be triggered by things like stress. And like the basics is like you take vitamin D, I take this very expensive drug that suppresses my immune system, and we can talk about that. But also it is managing things like stress, diet, sleep, exercise, like it's the basics.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 20:41**

It is the basics in self-care.

**Speaker: Jillian 20:42**

And what I learned was, I had to put my health first in order to be the wife I wanted to be and the mother I want it to be. And that was a really weird thing that I backed into that, the thought of me not being able to brush my daughter's hair and get her to school was such a horrible feeling. The idea that my husband could be pushing me around in a wheelchair, and that would be our life, and that would be his life was such an awful thought. And those were awful feelings that I had to say, “You know what, I need to make sure I get sleep, I need to make sure that I take care of myself and eat right and put my health first.” Because I kind of knew at some point you do that, you know, because something bad happens. But then it became, “No, no, this is the time.”

**Speaker: Mia Voss 21:31**

What a reality check! But then, we're hearing that so much about self-care. And you know that it's a different idea that what used to be in that it's mandatory. It's mandatory, and it's definitely mandatory. But in your case too, I mean, talk about the fast track to this is your choice in that. And again, the vitamin D thing is huge. We learned so much about it with COVID. I've been looking at it a lot with getting my levels checked, because being in menopause. So that was a huge silver bullet.

**Speaker: Jillian 22:01**

It really is cos it's like everybody, because here's the thing, if you think about us as like, as we evolved, like we were outside all the time, it's not natural for us to be inside.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 22:13**

Yeah, that's right. That's right. So then,

**Speaker: Jillian 22:15**

And even me like in LA, it didn't matter. I wasn't getting enough it. And here's something too, like where we were in the Bay Area, you can only get vitamin D from the sun from what was it? I think it's like from May to October, right?

**Speaker: Mia Voss 22:35**

Not a time of day, people. It's actually a season.

**Speaker: Jillian 22:37**

It's time of day and season, depending because of the angle of the Sun and the Earth, you don't get any vitamin D during that time. So to think well, like, you know, I get sun and whatever I go. Even in LA. It was a longer window where you could get vitamin D, but it wasn't that much longer. Maybe it was like, you know, from May to September, but it was like there are many months in there where you're not getting any vitamin D. And one of the things they think is one of the reasons we get colds in the winter is because, our vitamin D level drop.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 23:13**

It totally makes sense. And I know even last summer, we weren't getting out here in Colorado, we're getting out that much. And I know on the West Coast as well because of the fires. Right? So that was a huge piece of that too. So tell me about your journey then in the last 18 months and how that has been.

**Speaker: Jillian 23:32**

Okay, I take a miracle drug, and what it does it, and by the way, super expensive drug but weirdly, my insurance pays for it. It's like some sort of crazy system. I don't understand it, however. But my insurance is expensive. So yes. And what it does, because I've got this overactive immune system. My immune system wants to attack everything. Now what's weird about that is, incidence of cancer in MS patients is lower because my immune system is out there go in like, "Ooh, you look bad. I'm gonna kill you, I'm gonna eat you."

**Speaker: Mia Voss 24:07**

You could get into a fight all the time.

**Speaker: Jillian 24:08**

Totally. In fact, like one of my neurologist had said that that because I was feeling really weak and sad and stuff. And he goes, "No, no. People with MS, they're strong. They're too strong."

**Speaker: Mia Voss 24:22**

Oh my gosh! That makes so much sense.

**Speaker: Jillian 24:23**

My drug has to tame it down. However, by tamping it down, I am now immunocompromised. And this is what's weird. Nobody has data on like MS patients on these different drugs. There are tons of drugs now for MS patients. 20 years ago, there was like nothing. Now they're like 15 different things. So you can't like lump us all together because all these drugs do very different things. The mechanisms are incredibly different. So my drug weirdly takes my white blood cells and traps them in my lymph glands, so they're like in jail. They're some traveling around my blood, but not many and the rest are trapped, so they can't go up into my brain. Well, so can I make a response to the vaccine? Who knows? However, studies out of

Israel and Italy are saying no, that my drug blunts my reaction to the vaccine. Therefore, I walk with so and again, we're learning this in real time. So initially, it was what happens to MS patients if, like if I had gotten COVID. And what they discovered was, people on certain drugs were having bad COVID. So that kept me in. And then now people, then I'm like, I was one of those early people to get vaccinated by the way, and I was like, well, wo-hoo! Because I didn't know. And then study started showing up like, Yeah, you got vaccinated, but you might not have the same level of protection as other people.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 25:50**

Wow! What a blow of news.

**Speaker: Jillian 25:53**

So again, it's been this roller coaster. Thank goodness, I like being home and my family is incredibly supportive of that. But it is a little bit like kind of reminds me of when I was first diagnosed, like “We need to take care of mom. We need to make sure mom's safe.” And my daughter was really freaked out because now she's 14, and she was vaccinated. But before that, she would be extra careful, because God forbid, I get mom-sick. So I was like the weak link in the chain. And that felt very upsetting just to be that person. And to also go “Oh, shoot, but it's true.” So we do need to kind of like take care of mom.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 26:36**

Right. It's not just “Oh, Mom's sensitive today,” like your, you know, a mood swing or a bad, bad period. It's like, right, yeah. And, and I can see that, can we talk just for a few about seeing that trauma for your family as well, because I'm sure you're all having to really take care of each other emotionally in that sense to have knowing that they've got to be so super careful for you as well

**Speaker: Jillian 26:58**

So then my daughter gets vaccinated, and then it feels like ‘Woohoo, we're all vaccinated.’ And we did. My husband and I took a trip, when our numbers got really low here in Austin. We actually went away and we went to the east coast, and we went to New York, and we're like, we're over this. This was in June, beginning of July, before the numbers started going up. And it's funny, my assistant lives in Portugal. And she's saying, “It's lucky, you're out, because this is probably just going to be a window. And then what's happening in the UK and in Portugal is going to happen to you.” And I was kind of like, believing in like,

I don't know, American exceptionalism going on, “No, no, no. Because we got the vaccine. We’re good.” And again, you know, be careful when you like, I don't know, get a little kind of confident or are sure of yourself, because then we came back and then our numbers started spiking. And then what was weird was, a friend of mine from college came to visit. And we just recently, this is like last week. Okay, so I've been thinking about the fact that I take a drug that blunts my response to the vaccine. That is proven now. Two, I was vaccinated in January. And people are now saying that the vaccine, the Pfizer vaccine starts to wear off at about six months, and you're going to need a booster. So I keep thinking like, should I get a booster? Should I get a booster? How do I do this? Whatever. Then last week, my husband and I have lunch with a friend and I say to him, “You know, this is weird. I don't really want to ask you this. I know you're vaccinated, we’re vaccinated, but let's sit outside just to be safe because it's starting to feel uncomfortable here again, back in Austin.” Like in Austin, we everybody celebrated, ripped their masks off. It was like a free for all. But then...

**Speaker: Mia Voss 28:42**

It's like the bra. Like liberate, you know. Free the girls.

**Speaker: Jillian 28:45**

Totally felt like that. And then all of a sudden, we started to see masks come back and for me because I'm immune. And I was explaining, you know, I'm in this weird situation. You mind sitting outside. We sit outside, it's great. I hug him goodbye. My husband shakes his hand. We say goodbye. That night, he texts me and he says, “Hey, sorry to tell you this, but I had coffee with somebody yesterday, who's double vacted and just tested positive for Coronavirus. I'm going to get tested but I just wanted to let you know.”

**Speaker: Mia Voss 29:16**

Oh my gosh! So all that time...

**Speaker: Jillian 29:18**

It felt, it was like we went out for lunch. I'm thinking, he's of course safe. It's the whole of other people I'm worried about and then the thought like, “You could be unsafe,” was really upsetting. So this morning, I'm going to admit this. I went to my local CVS and I got a booster shot.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 29:33**

Okay, good. I wanted to ask you about that. I mean you have to do what you do. And this is why I wanted you to come on too because this is what we're talking about of why we do need to get that and of course I know these to be more vaccinated, but it's because this bug knows how to jump. Like, it loves the challenge, it loves the challenge of figuring out how to jump and it's not a scientist. But I know for sure that not getting vaccinated is adding to the problem. But you did go get it. Okay.

**Speaker: Jillian 29:59**

You know. Exactly. But I think it's kind of a little bit of like, choose your own adventure. But because I'm waiting for boosters to be official, but then they're saying maybe in September or October. But they're now official in certain countries. Israel's doing them, other countries are doing them and I was able to get one. And I feel today and by the way, I don't feel sick at all, weirdly. But I just decided that this is something because nobody knows anything. And this is so new and sure their politics all over this. But also I really think that people are just figuring it out as we go. Remember, we were wiping down packages like we didn't know.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 30:44**

The groceries, everything, anything that came into the house. It reminded me that scene from the movie with – I want to remember a scene. Whether it was Cher and Meryl Streep, whether it was –

**Speaker: Jillian 30:57**

Oh, yeah. Yes, the ... yes, yes.

**Speaker: Jillian 31:00**

So good. She kept you know, the shower scene. They did the showers even like, this is 'I am cared so good right now,' like, literally anything, everything pets, paws, the whole thing. And so there's so much trauma to that length of time as well of uncertainty, and unknowing. And I do feel like and I know that you're subscribing to this as well, like using your intuition. And really starting with that and that's part of that self-care is self-preservation. So if that means I have to make you uncomfortable, because I've asked to go outside, I think we have to go back to this new hybrid version,

**Speaker: Jillian 31:36**

Which I love you saying this. Everybody's different. So you know, for example, for my daughter, like I and again, now I'm vaccinate of the whole thing. She's vaccinated. But like, last year, we sent her back to school when our numbers dropped to a place where we felt comfortable because for her and she's a good kid. So she knows protect mom, she's gonna wear masks, she's going to social distance. But for her mental health, it was so important for her to be in physical school. So we were super happy for her that her school did it beautifully. They tested the kids, it was very safe. However, on the, you know, it would be easy to go 'no, no, no', like some of her friends, they'd stay virtual the whole year. But for her, the right answer was be back at school. And that's the thing like everybody, it's so hard to be judgey about other people. And I think that we all have to recognize that it is choose your own adventure, and how are you going to take care of you and your family? And I mean, again, and one thing I read because of course I was like chomping at the bit to get vaccinated. I am a huge proponent of vaccines. I've never been like and I don't understand it. However, I read this weird article that said, "They think a lot of the reason why people won't get vaccinated is because they're afraid of needles."

**Speaker: Mia Voss 33:05**

That's the least of your problems. People.

**Speaker: Jillian 33:07**

But they're weirdly, but that's like a visceral thing. And so you can easily wrap it in all this stuff of like, "Oh, they're going to put some sort of like chip in me or it doesn't really work" or whatever. But it could be too that we're just, you know, adults, I get a flu shot every year but there are adults who don't and like when was the last time somebody stuck a thing in their arm? It could seem really weird.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 33:30**

And people don't get blood tested.

**Speaker: Jillian 33:36**

Yeah, like I get it all the time.



**Speaker: Mia Voss 33:37**

And I get exactly. And I really want to encourage people to get your get your blood levels checked, get your hormone levels, check things like that, you're going to find out maybe your vitamin D levels are right or bad. But again, we're also preaching to people who may have needle-phobia, but that makes sense.

**Speaker: Jillian 33:50**

I have to do it as well. And I suck it up, but I don't like it. It always hurts. Sometimes they miss my vein, but like I'm willing to do it. It's not like I look forward to it or that I think it's no big deal. It hurts.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 34:05**

It does. It is not something you want. And if you haven't drink enough water or whatever. Yeah, I just went in. I've had blood tests a couple times in the last few months again with this bioidentical hormone replacement therapy, and it's just so enlightening to get these results and see like what like, for me when I first got on like how dead my hormone levels were, and to sort of get into this healthy space, but because I've been doing it so much, now I know like walking. I'm gonna look at this vein.

**Speaker: Jillian 34:32**

Me too. I do the same thing. When I say always my left, always my left. They have bad luck on my right always. So I totally I'm with you. But again, who knows how people are making decisions. I, of course want everybody to get vaccinated. I'm getting what

**Speaker: Mia Voss 34:49**

Get vaccinated.

**Speaker: Jillian 34:51**

Exactly. Exactly. And I'm willing to give them plenty to get vaccinated as often as I can. Just like I do, I want to stay out of the hospital.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 35:02**

Yes, exactly. And people, again with that new normal, like, and this is what I did a talk the other day. And I said, not only figure out what your boundaries are, but be very respectful of someone else's. Just because

you are feeling comfortable again, doesn't mean you can go in for the running hug, or that everybody's out. And I do feel like, I'm so glad we're talking today on this, because we're literally looking at that piece again, where everybody's gonna have to like pull back. Oh, well, but anyway, exactly. [Unclear 35:36] it's way too soon, I think so.

**Speaker: Jillian 35:36**

Totally. But like our numbers in Austin right now are really scary. And then but our deaths are not as bad, which is great, because that means the vaccine is working. However, what I have read is though, that not to take this illness lightly, because there can be these long, and this is it. There can be these long term consequences, and a lot of them can affect your brain. So I am so hyper sensitive to anything that could have a negative impact on my brain. I already have injury, I have things in you know, like my brain doesn't work probably as well as your brain does. So you better believe I am hyper aware. So it's not I don't think I'm going to die of Coronavirus. And even at the height of it before I was vaccinated, I didn't think I would die of it. But the last thing I would want would be something like long COVID or anything to affect my brain.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 36:38**

That's where you're going to call the neurological police. Like you want body guards, because I did just read a couple of articles. And I had done an episode on long Haller syndrome and the neurological effects because yeah, you're right, it may not necessarily be about dying. But that quality of life when that gets diminished, and then you're already compromised. Exactly. And I think that's the piece or that folks are not getting is this black or white element. They're just they've got it in this, either you're dead or you're not. But if you just start looking around and looking at some of these stories, they've really a lot of long term effects as well. So keep it up. I'll tell you keep it up. So you're going to tell me what you and your husband are doing now. You're doing some exciting things, and then tell us where we can reach out to you. And thank you again, for all this. This is I learned a lot and I knew I would so thank you.

**Speaker: Jillian 37:32**

So I work with my husband. And one thing that has been really great is going through this whole process and you know, being able to be my own boss. I mean, it was scary at the beginning. Because there were think God at the time, like I had a great assistant and I could go you know what that stuff is happening to

me, I need you to help me during this time. And my assistant today too, knows all about what I'm dealing with. So that even in fact I'm having a bad day or whatever, she can step in. But it's my husband. Yes, yeah. And lots of love and trust, you know, like so much love. Anyway, my husband and I started a site together in 2009, called Catch My Party. And we've grown it into the largest party idea site on the web. And my husband built, my husband is a technologist and he built a tool for us to grow our social media followers, and it's a pop up tool. You install it on your blog, it will grow your followers on Instagram and Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook, your email list, it just is like this very non obtrusive thing, but it really will work. And it's been great, and it's helped publishers, bloggers, influencers, if you have a blog, you can use it. And so we're that is called Milo Tree, named after our favorite tree in Hawaii. But we decided, so we do coaching, where we coach bloggers and online entrepreneurs. And why we do that is not because it brings in a ton of money for us. We keep it very inexpensive for our members. But we get to work with them really closely. We get to see what they're struggling with. And we get to really build these relationships because I always believe, if you want to build an online business, you need to know who you serve. And you need to know them so much more intimately than you think. And they are different from you. Usually they're similar because we're solving problems that relate to us. But they can also be different. And one thing that we discovered was these bloggers and online entrepreneurs wanted to start memberships because they have these engaged audiences.

And I will say there's money in your audience because your super fans will pay to get close to you, to get close to what you do, to watch you get more from you. And what we realized was we serve, our customers aren't interested in the tech, they're interested in solving problems for their user, for their customers, their visitors, their communities. So we created something that we're rolling out right now called Milotree Easy Payments. And it is a way to literally get paid for any sort of membership or subscription you want. And what's great about it is this. There's no platform. So you want to run your membership in a private Facebook group, we say that's great, because you want to be where your people are. Chances are they know Facebook, chances are, they know zoom. You know, you can do it as a paid newsletter. We're totally agnostic when it comes to where you house this. So we're not a platform for it, and then you don't have to learn it. And then your customers don't have to learn it. Go be creative. So people are like starting memberships in private Instagram accounts.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 40:57**

Fun. I love the cleverness of that because I love ease of anything, quite frankly. But the cool thing I like that you both did as well is use your storytelling and curiosity to build something so that you're connecting this. How fun is it to learn about all these different businesses, right? Like goes as part of your brand. [Jillian - Oh, my God, yes]. And I just joined your group today. [Jillian - So I saw that, yes.] Yes, I'm going to put all the links in there too because as a blogger, and today, that's a micro influencer. That's something I want to take a look at too. But good for you both to keep this going and create it in spite of everything that you've both been through. And I like it that you have such a great community team that's keeping that happening. So, yeah, on the new app, on the new pay.

**Speaker: Jillian 41:43**

Yeah. So if anybody wants to start a membership, you don't have to do anything hard. Just you can reach out to me at [jillian@milotree.com](mailto:jillian@milotree.com) And I will, we're looking for beta testers, and I will set you up and you can see how easy this is. Yeah, totally. So you know, no work on your part, no learning on your part.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 42:02**

Because I gotta tell you as part of the pandemic, my brain even without contracting anything, I gotta tell you that that pandemic brain is more like CNET again, that's been me. Oh, I gotta listen to everything twice.

**Speaker: Jillian 42:16**

Oh my God! I would call myself technologically somewhat sophisticated, somewhat. You know what I mean? Like, I'm not necessarily intimidated by like the platforms and stuff. However, yesterday, I was doing a podcast, and this guy is also a podcaster and he has a really cool system set up. So he started to tell me about it. And he uses e-cam and he uses this thing called Descript, and all the stats. So I'm like, Oh my God! I need to change my whole system around. I spent yesterday signing up for these different services and then trying to learn them. Oh my god! I wanted to pull my hair out.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 42:57**

I just bought a little bit like because it sounds great. But then all of a sudden that onboarding have changed your whole thing. Alright, so I have one more question for you, and this could be what you could probably something that you said yesterday trying to onboard that. Do you have a favorite swear word or phrase?

**Speaker: Jillian 43:17**

Fuck!

**Speaker: Mia Voss 43:17**

That's probably what you said all day yesterday.

**Speaker: Jillian 43:19**

Totally! Oh my God! I did... I did.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 43:27**

I like how you emphasize on the 'F' though. There was like a 'fhuu' you going on like 'Fhuck!'

**Speaker: Jillian 43:31**

That's my favorite word. What is yours?

**Speaker: Mia Voss 43:35**

Motherfucker!

**Speaker: Jillian 43:35**

Oh, that's good.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 43:36**

And I will also say it's it can be situational. Because if I'm in traffic, and somebody is an asshole, I'm like, "Oh, you cocksucker!" So these are things that don't come out normally...

**Speaker: Jillian 43:47**

Oh! Here's another one though that I do love; douchebag.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 43:53**

Oh, yeah. Because you can say it like it's a swear word. You can say it like a swear word.

**Speaker: Jillian 43:58**

Totally. There are enough men and again, I love men. But there are these class of men that are just douchebags...

**Speaker: Mia Voss 44:06**

And they really don't call a woman a douchebag.

**Speaker: Jillian 44:13**

You don't. But you totally know what I mean when I say it. It's like every ex-husband, you know, is just a douchebag.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 44:22**

Like when you douchebag like, you using it...Oh, I'm glad we went off on that a little bit. That was excellent. We got to try on a couple new things. So...

**Speaker: Jillian 44:32**

Yes. It feels good.

**Speaker: Mia Voss 44:33**

It does feel good. I literally feel like a catharsis just laughing, swearing and laughing at your good swearing. That's awesome. So thank you for coming on, darling. We're gonna have all the links to everything that you talked about. And again, this information was so valuable, so I appreciate you.

**Speaker: Jillian 44:45**

Oh, this is so much fun. And I'm so glad we're new friends,

**Speaker: Mia Voss** 44:49

Me too. I appreciate it. Alright everybody, tune in next time.