

# Toni Talks

## Humanity Matters

### Episode 1

Good morning. This is Toni Julian and I'm the host of Toni Talks. This is our very first podcast and I am just welcoming you and delighted to have this time with you while you are getting about your day. Over the next year we're going to be sharing information about different aspects of our health, our wellness of happiness, adversity, moving through life with grace. In a perfect world we know the things that we need to do, but you might have in the past asked yourself, why am I not doing it if I know what to do, why not? Well, certain things can take us off track. We've all experienced that. We would be able to really stay at the top of our game and stay motivated and focused if external factors didn't influence us. So we are going to be delving into nutrition, fitness, spirituality, sleep, embracing the strengths and the person that you are so that you can have vitality that you deserve and live life at the top of your game.

One thing that I will promise you, is that through this I'm going to keep your best interests in the forefront of my thoughts and my comments. I'm going to be sharing insightful, thoughtful, hopefully inspirational and motivational topics with you so that you can recognize that you can have a strong mind, a strong body and spirit at any age. It is never too late to start.

Back to life taking us off track, this weekend I'm going to be heading to Vegas and here I have this really great eating and workout regimen, but as you and I know these external influences in life can derail us. So, I know it's going to be really difficult to be able to stay on my eating and workout regimen. I'm not going to be able to control my schedule as much as I would if I was at home.

Other things that can get us derailed would be perhaps a sick parent or a wedding and then we have our own demons you might say, which relate more to self-sabotage. We might self-medicate. Our mind is super tricky. We can create minimizing excuses like "I just had a *couple* of biscotti". Over time, these habits are not bad for you. But if you take that one thing and it becomes a daily, a weekly habit, then those habits add up over time. Years ago, when my papa was working in a company, they had this vending machine and he would leave his office and walked down the hall and go to that vending machine every day. And he started buying just a little really small packet of peanuts. And he realized that over a few weeks or a month is that he started putting on weight and then he realized even though it was just one small thing, he gained weight.

So those little habits can add up over time. And those small habits and what is my philosophy is that we need to turn those around and incorporate some healthy changes. So when you make a change, it's not some restrictive, difficult diet to follow, but it's a small incremental change because only then will it be sustainable. We've all tried to go on certain eating regimens, whether it's to lose weight or just to be healthier or to avoid certain things because we know it's not good for us, but sometimes if those regimens or plans are too restrictive and we try to accomplish too much at once, it's just not sustainable. We know that. And then, if we fall off the wagon so to speak, we think we failed. We say to ourselves, "I didn't do things exactly to plan, so therefore I didn't do a good job with that and I have failed. I give up!"

It's really not about being perfect all the time. It's about incorporating small habits that are healthy, that become your lifestyle. My philosophy has always been that new change becomes a habit, that habit becomes your lifestyle and then even your preference. So, I can give you an example: I cut way back on salting my food, and it really allowed me to start tasting foods better. Now a chef will argue with me about that because salt does bring out the flavor of food, but on the flip side of it, if you do too much of something, your taste buds are going to adjust to that over use of salt and that will become your new norm. And that will make things like biting into a juicy Apple tastes not as great, right? But if you modify that one habit, then over time it becomes your new, learned behavior, and even your preference.

When I went to a restaurant and I ate, it was so salty, it was just not even palatable to me. It just destroyed the food and I couldn't even tolerate it anymore. So what we're going to focus on over this next year is developing new habits that can become your lifestyle. And your preference. My purpose in life is to lift people up and that's it. I am a not monetarily compensated. I simply want to share what I know with you and I'm going to talk to you like a friend or a sister or a brother that I believe you are. There's only one thing that I ask of you and that is don't take everyone's advice at face value, and that includes mine. Taking the information--whether it's here or it's elsewhere--and be discerning because we are all bombarded with information and it takes time to educate ourselves.

It takes time to understand our body and understand what's right for us. You can talk to an expert about something. For example, a nutritionist might say, you need to incorporate ginger into your diet because it will help with your immune system. It's a great anti-inflammatory. It will aid with digestion. It will help with nausea. Yes, those things are true for most people. You may or may not be most people. So you need to see if that's really going to work for you. And the reason I bring this up is that you could have a food sensitivity to ginger, in which case it will cause inflammation. It will cause bloating, it will cause digestive upset. So, what I am asking you to do is be discerning, get to know your own body, test yourself, journal. Do what you need to do and learn because nobody knows you like you know yourself.

Now you spend a lot of time as I do, taking care of the house, taking care of the children if we have them, our pets, our schools, our businesses, our community. I am an entrepreneur as some of you may be as well. And if you think about it, we get a lot of information about other things that really are less important. I'll give you an example: the printer that you own, it comes with a user's manual. You know what to do. You know that you need to restock the paper, you need to replace cartridges, you need to calibrate it, you need to dust it off, right? There are lots of things we need to do to keep our printer well. It needs to be plugged in so it has electricity, it may be wirelessly connected. So, there are all these other things you need to do to keep your printer functioning smoothly.

But what happens when it runs out of paper or it doesn't have ink, it's going to malfunction. We don't always take the time to learn about our bodies and ourselves and we have such an opportunity to really enhance our spirits, our minds, our bodies, our overall wellness and everything is connected. There isn't any one thing. So, I don't want to pigeon-hole myself into and just tell you I'm going to talk about sleep and nutrition and fitness. I want to talk to you about deeper subjects, which is why I'm doing this podcast because I want to delve deep into things that really can help you reflect on how you can make these small sustainable changes to lift yourself up.

Our bodies, our human bodies are amazing. If you think about how they work, even just our eyes, our vision with the rods and the cones, and our DNA. We are just so resilient and strong and frail at the same time and life is so frail. There is no user's manual for us. So back to this, we have to be the best judges, educate ourselves, seek information and discern. You may have a neighbor who may give you

some advice and you may go to an expert who may give you some advice and your neighbor may be spot on and that expert can be way off because they may or may not know you and chances are an expert is of course educated. But you know, you have to think about where they are coming from and their biases. If you go to a doctor for back pain and that doctor, all they do are spinal epidurals (a steroid injection procedure through the neuroforamen's of your spine) and that's all they do, well that's what they're going to recommend as a solution. So, what I am saying is check out other sources. There's not always one treatment or test. Our bodies may respond to something that someone else's body does not. We may have an idiosyncratic reaction, which is everybody else responds to this particular thing one way, but you're going to respond differently. So just know that with all this information is that what I want to do is help give you some insights and different ways of looking at things so that you can be discerning and maybe you look at something a slightly different way and that's your solution.

I do not profess to know everything. If anybody ever tells you that, they're wrong. There are a lot of people in this world. They want a podcast, they want to be on television, they want to be heard, and sometimes that's just about them. But just know, I will always have your best interest at heart. I will always ask you to do your own research. Come up with your own decisions. Do not be influenced by people who are motivated to sell you something, who have their own agendas, like really, really think outside of the box about that.

Last week I turned 60 and I'm sharing that with you because the topics that I want to talk about are ideal for people of absolutely any age. Whether you're a 15-year old young girl, whether a 25-year old football player, it doesn't matter. Whether you're an aging person--whether you're 80 years old--habits and behaviors that you have when you're younger and get away with may no longer work for you.

Habits add up. And these habits that I'm going to be talking about become of increasing importance. As you get older, our hormones change and suddenly you may not be in the body that you had 10 or 20 years ago. You might have food intolerances that you're not aware of. Maybe you have menopausal symptoms, maybe you are overweight or just deconditioned or just feel like crap because you've not taken care of yourselves at the level that you need to. Your body may have inflammation, you may have physical pain, you may have emotional pain. You may have gone through things in your life (and at some point, I will share some of the things that I've been through) that are real hurdles. So I think that we can get through some of these things with grace. Absolutely.

My background, to share with you why I got into the field of health and wellness, is because I had a very lucrative career through founding the first marketing communications firm in Silicon Valley. I had the first company that managed trade shows, conferences and special events. Most corporations back then had their own internal people but I started a business. And while it was lucrative, I just really wasn't fulfilled. I felt like I needed more of an artistic expression of what I do. People became increasingly more important to me and I was realizing that I really want to help people feel good in their environments, how they represent themselves, and how they show up in the world. I felt increasingly off my path and not like I was doing the right thing.

I got into the health field when I was 48 and it was because I had a good friend--I will refer to her in the present even though she's passed, because I don't really believe our spirits really just completely "poof" go away--but my friend Barbara Wyman-Sun was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer when she was 48. And I was diagnosed with an early stage aggressive pre-cervical cancer at the same time. My history with Barbara went far back and we met when we were 11 years old. And I was just this kid that moved to Morgan Hill on this acre with two of every type of animal that there is out there. The first person I met

was Barbara and she was tall and blonde and kind and had the most beautiful hazel eyes with long eyelashes. And what I loved about her was her spirit, she just absolutely accepted me for who I was and I hadn't experienced that before. And so, we became the best of friends and she just made me feel so accepted for the shy kid that I was at 11. We went through high school together and college and we had children at the same time.

We led very parallel lives. She was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and I'll never forget; she left a message on my answering machine saying that she was having health issues. I was caught up in my work and going a mile a minute and I went over to see her and she explained to me that she had pancreatic cancer. I didn't even know what that was or the depths of that meant. She survived for 17 months, which is over the anticipated outcome. And I believe at that point in time the survival rate was one year and she survived longer than that, which was a blessing. When she passed--and I was with her at the time and her two children--it shook me to my core and I just vowed that what I wanted to do for a living from here on out had to impact people.

The very next day I was scheduled for a trip to Italy with my husband and our youngest daughter. And so I was on a plane and you know, just devastated, sad that I had lost really my best friend and the first person who I felt just unconditionally loved me. But we were in Italy and as we were going through the cities, I sought out every church that I could find. In each church, most people went to look around the nave and admired the art. I went into the areas where you could pray and I said a prayer for Barb and I just asked God to please show me a way where I could take this situation and turn it into some good. And I, I really wasn't sure what that looked like. I thought maybe I could help perhaps start a nonprofit and help children who had lost parents to recreate their bedrooms into some beautiful place [sanctuary] where they could feel safe and it could be what they wanted it to be.

That didn't work out very well because you these families are grieving. And so that's really the last thing they want is somebody in their home trying to make changes. But that is why I got into the health field is that people around me started to becoming sick and I realized there's got to be some way to turn this around and what is it that's causing us to be sick? What is it in our society that is creating issues where we have colds and viruses and cancers and disease and obesity? I thought, I am going to work on myself because I, after surgery was fine from my diagnosis of pre-cervical cancer, but my friend had no real chance of surviving of what she was diagnosed with. So I thought, I have to turn this into something good. I just have to.

I started looking into making changes in my life and was realizing that in order to incorporate them, they had to be sustainable. They had to be things that I could do simply and quickly and not overwhelm myself so that I could be in the best possible position to be successful. And again, going back to diets that are not sustainable. If you try to do too much at once, we're just not going to feel successful. We're going to feel like we failed if went off the wagon for a night or put something in our mouths that wasn't right for us and that's not what it should be about. It should be about making lifestyle changes that we feel good about. We need to embrace our bodies for what they are and the God-given amazing, amazing bodies that we have that house our beautiful, bright spirits and literally love ourselves.

It makes a difference. Our thoughts, the things we think about ourselves, and this is an entirely different topic so I'm not going to go off topic on a tangent here, but we really need to care for ourselves and be kind to ourselves in this process. There is just so much that that we can do and learn and grow and I ask of you to think of this as a journey for yourselves. You may have highs, you may have lows. In fact, I know you do because I do and we are human, and go through periods of learning and growth and

sometimes stagnation and more learning and growth and hopefully we've learned from our experiences. I would love to at this point just share a little bit of my background because I know that some of you know me, some of you may be new to getting to know each other here. I've explained why I got into this health field is to really make an impact, and that experiencing losing my friend, I completely changed and re-invented my life.

I started with making my own sustainable lifestyle changes to be healthy. I frankly turned into a little bit of nutrition and fitness geek freak, I'll call it, and I got my personal training certification through the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) and also nutrition and sports nutrition certifications. I went on to write my first book called *BITE ME! Change Your Life One Bite at a Time*, which basically goes into all the different aspects of nutrition. I changed my body composition from about 30% body fat at 48 years old and I brought it down to 18% in eight weeks. I lost 14 pounds of fat and gained six pounds of muscle. I accomplished this by doing resistance training four days a week for an hour and then added some other training as far as hikes, walks and cardio about three hours a week.

Seven hours a week of resistance training, building muscle. And then I dialed in my diet. I literally wanted to learn about myself and I wrote down every single thing that I ate. Every cup of water, every bite of chicken, every bite of vegetable. I weighed it, I measured it. I could predict very accurately how much I was going to lose each week, how much fat based on my journaling and journaling is really important. I'll get into that into another episode, but it is so important to be able to learn what it is that you need to learn about your own specific body. And you could look at habits and behaviors and say, "that worked for me" and "that didn't". I wrote my first book based on the premise of eating for balanced blood sugar. I focused on balanced macros to stay full and satiated and to help regulate my hormones.

You can build muscle, lose fat, and improve your body composition at any age. I ended up doing a natural figure competition at age 48. I was consistent with my training and ate healthily. I tied for first place in the Sports Model category against 20-year old women and I was closing in on 50, so my point here is that you can make changes at any age. The competition taught me that I can go out of my box and be brave. I was so shy as a kid and I was very, very uncomfortable being in a little bikini and stilettos on a stage. My legs were shaking. I was so nervous and so uncomfortable and to be my age and going against younger people that hadn't had babies and maybe were never overweight in their lives. They were just trying to have this perfect body and for me, I didn't do it because look, I wanted to see that I could be on stage. It wasn't that at all. It was I had just become healthy again.

I had surgery, I was well, this was, gee, what can I do? What's the icing here? How can I learn about my body? And there's nothing like knowing that you're going to be on stage in a bikini close to 50 and really wanting to stay on your eating regimen. There was nothing more motivating than saying, "I'm going to be up in front of a lot of people being judged". How hard is that? So as uncomfortable as I was, I'm so glad I did it. In fact, I did another one. I followed up and took second in figure so it was a great experience for me.

It's off my bucket list now, so I am not being boastful. I just want to share with you my background so you have some frame of reference of where I'm coming from and that is thoroughly understanding body composition. I went on to start a personal fitness program. It was for women at a local park and I did that for 12 years, three mornings a week. I taught women how to improve their body composition, how to be strong. After I got my personal training certification, I started that and loved this group of women. I stopped last year after 12 years, just feeling pulled in a direction to make a greater impact and also to

focus a little bit more on my own health. And it was just a wonderful experience. These women were amazing and they're still, my friends are still beautiful people of course.

I started making some new changes to my life about a year ago. I wrote a second book and I wrote this because--you're, you're not looking at me now--but I am a very white girl. I am Italian, but my mother was blue eyed, very pale white skin. And somehow between the two of my parents, I turned out to have extremely pale skin and prone to overexposure to the sun. And I did end up getting cancer a year ago. So, this was August of 2018 and I was diagnosed with melanoma, which if you don't know, is the kind that actually spreads through your body. So it was a little bit frightening. I went on to have a few surgeries, lymph nodes removed. Thanks to the blessings of God I was able to eradicate it through surgery. And so that is no more, but that did force me to look a little bit more closely at how I was spending my time and really wanting to make a bigger impact.

When I was diagnosed August 1<sup>st</sup>, August 2<sup>nd</sup> I had surgery. And right after that I knew I wanted to write a book. Actually prior to that, my second book, and I knew I wanted to specifically talk to women because I did turn 60 and because there are so many things that are specific to women. That woman may inspire a girlfriend, she may inspire her husband, her children, she has a lot of influence and women will reach out and share. It's not that men don't, I'm not saying that, but women will take what they learn and they will apply it to many aspects of their lives being the nurturing people that most of them are. So, I wrote the book, *Smart, Fit & Female: The Busy Woman's Blueprint for Looking and Feeling 10 Years Younger*.

I literally sat down at my kitchen counter for three weeks and prior to me knowing that I had the melanoma, I knew what I wanted to say. I knew the title, I knew the content. I just needed to make it happen. So, I sat at my kitchen counter three solid weeks. My husband would leave in the morning for work and I would be at that kitchen counter. And when he came home 12 hours later, I was still sitting there and I ended up writing the book and launching it on Amazon. So I am self-published. It is an excellent book. It's an excellent read for under \$20. What I go into is the top three changes you can make in many categories of your life where you can make the greatest impact because you're busy, right? Yes. So am I, so do I want to read a really long book? No, I don't.

So I took things that are in many categories of our lives, from embracing your femininity, to sleep, to nutrition, fitness, spirituality, and taking those different aspects, hitting the top three things in each one of those categories that I think would have a big impact. And I literally, when I wrote it, I just sat down and I thought, "I'll just write this for my girlfriends". So, I pictured some in mind; all the people that had been around me that had asked me questions and I thought, what is it in their lives that would have the biggest impact? So that's what I wrote. The book turned out to be something that I am really proud of as I grow and learn. You know, I'm sure I have more books in me, and the more I learn, the more I want to write.

I look back at my first book, and it is good, but I look back now and think I've learned and grown so much more. The book was really focused on nutrition, like really boiling that down and helping people with body composition. Now I'm at this point where I have two books under my belt. I've done a lot of speaking engagements. I was the proud recipient of the Silicon Valley Business Journal's Top Woman of Influence and I was very honored to be that recipient. It was awarded to me for my work, not just only in the community, but work within my family and with nonprofits for my community. I mentioned my fitness program and nobody really knew it at the time, but if there was a woman who needed lifting up, say she was going through depression or a divorce or financial hard times, I would sponsor them and I'd

have them come work out with us, which was a really safe, wonderful, positive, great energy environment and would just sponsor them.

So in other words, do it for free, invite them and help lift them up and help them go through their difficult, challenging times. And then I also took care of a terminal parent, my father who was sick for five years, and I know in some future episode I will talk about him as well. But I learned so much about helping somebody age and transition with dignity the best I could. We had our scuffles and our disagreements, but overall I feel really blessed to have been able to be by my father for five years to the weekend and help him. I just learned so much as far as patience and helping when he wanted help. And do you know, it's never easy when you have children and an aging parent and you're in the middle being pulled between the two. So that is a life experience that I do want to delve into deeper in the future.

But I have been through many different things from childhood trauma--being domestically terrorized as a kid, our family was, (and I will go into that) through divorce, sicknesses, through cancer, through losing people close to me. So many things in life and coming full circle. When we talk about lifting ourselves up and doing things that are good for us and having regimens, we can't be hard on ourselves. I used to be so, so hard on myself and so critical. And I always told people, "you don't have to say anything to me. I'm harder on myself than anybody else ever thought about being." And that was so true. I still have remnants of that perfectionism nature in me. And that's what helped me get to where I am. But sometimes we'd need to lose things that do not serve us. So I share this with you because I want you to know that I've been through a lot and it is hard to stay on task.

It is hard to lift ourselves up and take care of ourselves the way we need to, and I'm human. I need to improvement too, but what I am wanting is for you and I to be able to inspire each other and lift each other up because the better we take care of ourselves, the better we can lift people up around us in our community. The better we can make an impact in our world for a better world. We just need to do better. Like, we need to get rid of divisiveness in our world. We need to get rid of judgment. There are so many things, so I am going to be sharing those things with you so that you can stay at the top of your game to the best of your ability. Hopefully the things that we talk about will either validate what you already know, give you insights into new ways of thinking or to give you new information that you can adopt. And do be discerning because, back to this, you know yourself best, but I would love to be here to support you, to help lift you up and to help you be your very best version of yourself.

And I know that's a little bit of a cliché, but really, we all just need to be on this journey together so we can improve where we are. All right, so I think that is probably enough for one day. I'm really happy to get to know you. If you have topics that you're interested in, please email them to me at [info@tonijulian.com](mailto:info@tonijulian.com), or leave a message below. I would love to know what is on your mind, what you would like me to talk about or share with you. I appreciate you being on this journey with me. I appreciate you listening. I appreciate you being my brother or sister. We are all connected, folks. We really are. All right, so I'm going to close now and just know that I am sending you prayers, healthy healing, and love and hugs from me to you. All right, until next time. Bye-bye.