

SACRED women's BUSINESS

with
KRIS MCINTYRE

Transcript for Lisa Foster on Moods, Mania, Menstruation & Menopause

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Lisa Foster has been teaching Ryoho Yoga and advocating natural alternatives to women's health for more than 20 years. She runs the Ryoho Yoga Center and teacher training college in Sydney with her partner and the founder of Ryoho Yoga, Andzej Gospodarczyk. A former broadcast journalist with more than 15 years experience in the media, Lisa not only knows a good story, but has a great one of her own to tell. She's passionate, politically active and inspiring. She's also fierce, irreverent and sometimes confronting, but her conviction comes from a place of deep love and a commitment to help women rediscover what it means to feel healthy and strong.

KRIS: Lis, I remember you telling me you 'thought you were born crook' and you openly admit that you lived an unhealthy, boozy and self-destructive lifestyle before you followed the Yogic way. But your body has been well and truly through the mill ... you broke your neck and back in a drunken surfing accident at the age of 19 and were told that at the very least you would be a paraplegic. At 28, you were told you'd have to have a hysterectomy after living with debilitating endometriosis, but you not only cured yourself, but had a textbook pregnancy and childbirth at the age of 39. You healed yourself through Ryoho Yoga and large doses of tenacity – but where did you get that from?

LISA: That's a really interesting question Kris, and I have thought about it many, times. One of the things that Andzej and I have spoken about is ancestors – that the power that lives through us all comes from the people who came before. And I wondered why some people fight, particularly when I broke my neck – I was in a ward with sick boys because the only people who break their neck are the gun-ho people. Stamp collecting people don't tend to break their necks. So they were boys who jumped off cliffs and rode motorbikes too fast. Of course I was the only girl, but in that group I was the only one that would think that from the moment it happened that there's got to be a different way – that this is a mess that I can get out of. And of course I did with the help of Andzej. But it was that initial spirit, that little fire thing – that's the thing that I think separates those who receive bad news and decide to conquer it, as opposed to people who receive bad news and allow it to overwhelm them. But having said that, I think a lot of people would choose to fight but they don't know where to get the right information from. Now I'm speaking specifically about health. I was born crook because my mother was very old when she had me, so I blame her for everything – as we all do. And I think because of that caesarean birth, all of those things – a lot of antibiotics in the beginning because they just discovered the wonders of antibiotics, so my system struggled very much from being a very young person. But I think learning to struggle young is a good thing. Or learning to try young is a good thing and I did play a lot of sport and I think that set me in good stead because sport teaches you, quite clearly, there's your goal and if you work hard enough you can do it. You might not be good at it but you will get there. So my lucky break was having Ryoho, which was the tools to do it with. Because I could have had all the spunk in the world, but who was I going to go to for help? It was only that I had that access to Andzej – he'd only just arrived back from Japan at the same time, so there was synchronicity involved as well and he had the answers and all that required, as you



well know, is a huge amount of determination and hard work. The determination, the stubbornness – I love the word tenacious because it sounds so much sexier than stubborn – because I’m really just very stubborn. Stubborn is a pig in muck as people would say, but its that stubbornness that is my curse and my greatness all at the same time because it saved my life, but it is very irritating, I’m sure, for other people and I know even for myself when I’m stuck on something and I’ve got to keep going. So the journey started with, ‘here you are, these are your alternatives’. I was given vast amounts of yoga and a very strict diet as my alternative and I chose that because I wasn’t willing to live my life the way I was. Their prognosis of being unable to move and maybe suggesting to me that I take up macramé (that was one of their really good ideas) and also that I learn to paint with a paintbrush sticking out of my mouth was really appealing to me.

KRIS: That I can’t imagine.

LISA: I can’t stop talking for long enough to put the paintbrush in the mouth so that would have been a bit difficult. So I decided, and my father was very strong with me – where again the ancestor line comes through – a very strong man who gave me the right to choose my own destiny and I felt very blessed with that. And he would have supported me either way. So that was the beginning that I was given by Andzej were the real things. Because I couldn’t move, Andzej is clever enough to know that the optic nerve runs through the base of the neck, the base of the skull and into the neck. If I could activate the optic nerve well enough I would start to regenerate nerve growth in the neck region and that’s exactly what I did. So for three months I inhaled and looked up, and exhaled and looked down. I tried to wiggle my toes, which I could do, I could also use my fingers, so I was using the bits I could use – which is the greatness of Ryoho. What we do, or what we’re taught is, ‘whatever you’ve got, use that and build until you’ve got the next thing that will get you out of the huge mess you’ve dug yourself into’.

KRIS: Let’s talk about Andzej and Ryoho.

LISA: We have to really.

KRIS: Because we know him so well. You know him better than anyone. He’s been your partner, lover and business partner for the past 20 years or more. So Ryoho, tell us about that. I know it, but let’s hear you talk about it.

LISA: It is truly profound and I think Andzej Gospodarczyk, because he is so mercurial in the way he thinks, he was the only one that could have access to the three masters – Masanaga for Shiatsu, Master Mashiro Oki for Yoga, and the Oshawa couple (Lima and George) for basic understanding of what we call in modern day ‘macrobiotics’, but it really means eating for you and eating appropriately. Andzej studied with all three, but as you know from their literature, very difficult to understand. None of them had English as a first language, Asian languages were in the infancy of being translated well into English, so most of the texts that came from those three masters are really gobbledygook. You really can’t understand them, even you and I with years of experience. I go to read an Oshawa cookbook and I just walk away, I just can’t deal with that. So Andzej, and his poppy brain that move from that to that and that and make it all make sense, actually could take the strands of those three amazing, well four, amazing human beings and pull it into to something that was useful and useable and almost tangible. I don’t think without his involvement in that group that we would have had the knowledge that we have today. And it’s interesting that it’s actually been formulated in Australia by a Polish person, really!



KRIS: Ryoho has got this beautiful simplicity about which is that it's a lifestyle medicine, so that it's a therapy, and it works through a little bit of

movement, the right food, the right exercise and a few little lifestyle changes. And in that its so simple but we've made such a big mess of making health complicated – particularly women's health. So, what do you think has happened there?

LISA: As you know, I'm a feminist, I'm humanist actually – I'm not going to say I'm a feminist, I'm a humanist. I believe in the power of humanity. I think what we've done as women – there is a historical context here too, where coming into the 1500's and the Dark Ages, women were very much on the back foot, we're actually seeing again the end of the Crusade that started in the 1100's. So we had a mighty war between the Christians and the Muslims and caught up in all of that were women, because we were the doctors up until then. We were the herbalists, we were the people with the knowledge of the continuation of the species because that is what we're actually built for. And unfortunately during the great tussle where the Church came out on top, the Church then decided in its patriarchy that it could then dictate the norm for all of humanity from a patriarchal point-of-view. Really, at the same time, it's interesting to note that the female goddesses disappeared as well and suddenly the world was looking to the male as the saviour – literally and that was what he was called, but bear in mind that 50 per cent of the world's population kept Mary as the being that they looked to for help. So, we are caught up in a historical context, but then also two world wars which didn't help, plus we had the advent of the pharmaceutical industry. So, we lost women, they had the answer. Women got lost themselves. Modern medicine came out of the war zone, mainly plied as a trade by men because women hadn't been educated and hadn't kept up with modern times because the patriarchy had made sure that we weren't. And then we ended up in a time where men held the reins as far as our babies were concerned, as far as our bodies were concerned, whether we would reproduce or not was not even one of our choices. These are not things that I am critical of, they are just observances that are reality. You talk to any Catholic woman. No way did she have the right to say, 'I don't want to have another baby. No, I've had enough. 13 is plenty, trust me Harold, I really don't think we need another one'. Which is why Monty Python do those hilarious 'Meaning of Life' things where a baby falls on the floor and they say, 'ah, would you get that for me?' Because what are you going to do when you've had that many kids? So there we are, we've been taken away. So all at the same time we had medicine rise on the one hand, our knowledge fall on the other and then we had to move down the corridor to these people that we suddenly thought knew more than we did. It's difficult for me because I always had trouble speaking to a male doctor about my uterus, my period pain, my endometriosis. I remember saying to a doctor, when I was 15 and in tears, 'you don't understand, it's agony'. And he literally said to me, 'don't be ridiculous'. So there's a great chasm and immediately I no longer trust you, I understand we are not on the same page and you think that I need to have your system imposed on me in order for me to be well. And that caused me a great level of mistrust. And I think a lot of women feel the same.

KRIS: What did you do to cure your endometriosis? Because that was quite remarkable. You had that from your very first period?

LISA: Absolutely, it was absolutely devastating. Interestingly, because I work with women in the last six months five women who actually started with our workshop years ago – I don't even remember what year that was –the last one actually rang me three weeks ago saying they've just had their last scan and they are completely clear of endometriosis, which is absolutely fabulous. Now this particular person is a gay woman who doesn't want to have children, but literally just wanted to heal herself because she came to that workshop and for the first time someone said to her it was actually possible. The basic idea for endometriosis is that it is completely curable. And I want to make that a very clear statement, otherwise I'm sitting here very deluded and that would be unfortunate. So endometriosis is completely curable. It is an illness of excess and this is one thing that Western medicine doesn't understand. The only test for



endometriosis is a protein test called the 'P125' and it's a blood test and it measures how much P125 women have in their body. But basically what it means is how much protein you have in your body. So this is women who maybe have bacon for breakfast, a ham sandwich for lunch and a little bit of a chop for dinner. We're actually talking about protein as a food source that builds flesh. Once you've reached the end of your growing years at 17 or 18 you really need three per cent protein in your diet. That is a World Health Organization statistic, not mine. However, for most Westerners 70-80 per cent of our diet is protein. Now when you eat a lot of protein you grow things. Once you've finished growing your body, you start to grow other things. So people start to grow spurs on their bones, they grow tumours, they grow growths on all manner of body parts and organs. So, when women when they come to me, the first thing I say to them is, 'this is not for everybody, my approach, but I will say to you that I guarantee you will be cured but you have to get rid of protein'. So that is eggs, dairy, meat, fish. All protein is excluded from the diet for a period of three months only. We need three cycles to cure endometriosis. We have two ovaries and every period a different ovary fires – it's like the spark plugs on a car. So one period, it's the right, the next it's the left. Now by the time I'd cured myself my left ovary was already gone and I did manage to bring it back, that is why I had such a wonderful pregnancy, but it did take a very long time. So, I had been a vegetarian since I was 14 but unfortunately I replaced the meat component of my diet with cheese. If I was to say the worst food for any woman suffering from endometriosis, it would be cheese. It is very thick, very stringy, it's glutinous almost – it just moulds and melts. And when you look at dairy it looks like pus, it really does. That stringy matter – and if you look at a fibroid or a cyst, or polyp, or any of those little growths that occur in the uterus and the fallopian tubes and the ovaries, they have that stringy quality where it literally looks like mozzarella cheese being stretched. So cheese is the worst, number one. Next comes yoghurt, because yoghurt has the probiotic bacteria, but because that is more a colon function than a uterine function, the more probiotic you put into the diet, the more you have what they call those 'floating cells' which do travel throughout the body. But one of the things that you and I have talked about for many years is that I very rarely meet a woman who knows how her body functions. And one of the reasons that in our workshops we give women a diagram is the fallopian tubes are open to the abdominal cavity. Yes, of course there is that anemone-type sphincter structure, but once you've lost that enormous contraction and expansive quality of the female body, those little fallopian tubes stay open. And this is where those endo cells literally float out and they are found attached to the stomach, attached to the large intestine and all sorts of different organs in the body. However, at the moment, with all the women I work with, the moment you take protein out of the diet, within one menstrual cycle you have a vast improvement. And women who suffer from endometriosis know that when that ovulate they have quite severe pain at ovulation as well because the whole system is not working. They'll immediately know that ovulation is less painful and that first menstruation will have at least a 30 or 40 per cent reduction in pain. Not quantity of blood or duration of cycle, but the pain involved. So that's the first thing that gives women the encouragement to keep going because the pain is – and I've got a very strong pain threshold – it is mind-numbingly bad.

KRIS: But that's amazing that you have a 40 per cent reduction in pain in the first month.

LISA: Absolutely, and then by month three, you are almost symptom free. What we then have to tweak is the length of the menstrual cycle. So when you have endo, some of us bleed seven, eight, nine, 10, 12 days straight. I know women who do 12 days on and three off, back to 12. Which means that obviously your blood loss is so extreme that the chances of anaemia are absolute. You've also then got a situation where the uterus, because its shedding at such an enormous rate, the endometrium that will one day hold that baby, that little egg cell, becomes very sinewy and hard. What the obstetricians and gynecologists say to women is that their eggs have become brittle and this enormous blood loss from the female all of those fluids keep the eggs viable and because we are losing so much, all the time, the eggs become brittle. So,



even if you do want to go into the IVF thing and don't want to go the whole hog with what I do, the eggs aren't useful.

KRIS: Let's talk about what's 'normal' because back to your point about there's so much misinformation and lack of information about what is normal of what a woman's body looks like, what happens? What does a period look like? What does weeing and pooing and all those other bodily functions look like? A healthy woman is ...

LISA: Yes, exactly. A healthy woman Isn't it fascinating now that we live in this world where we actually have available to us more 'information' than we've ever had in human history and yet we are more confused about the basics than we have ever been and probably will ever be. So, I'm going to go with my wonderful daughter who is 14, and she'll hate me for this, but – first period arrived just after or before her 12th birthday, a lovely little three day affair, bright red blood, the most beautiful colour I've ever seen (and of course I checked), pain-free, joyful, easily managed, not something we really needed to talk about in great detail, absolutely after the first one it was like cleaning her teeth. And I looked at her with such longing. I remember my first one was completely dark brown, absolute agony from day one – I thought I was dying – and I remember my mother telling me what she had been told, because she also suffered from endometriosis (but obviously undiagnosed in her day), 'oh just put up with it, that's just the way it is, get used to it'. My first visit to the doctor I was told all pain during your period is totally normal, just get used to it. Lies! Absolute lies. From my cure at 28 I never had a period pain again. My daughter has never had period pain. All the well women I know never, ever had a period pain. So you know if I was to get indignant and pull myself up to my full height, I'm very cranky that doctors say that it is completely normal because it is completely untrue. So the misnomer that we are under is unfortunate. A seven-day period is also wrong. It means that the uterus is trying so hard to clean itself because the large intestine is not doing that job. So in Chinese Medicine we look at the metal element, which is the lunch and large intestine, as the element of contraction. What does the uterus do every period? It contracts to empty. When the large intestine becomes floppy and weak, not only does that large intestine not contract, nor does the uterus. Those two things work together. So you've got a uterus that's half-squeezing, so only half the lining or endometrium is coming out every month. Therefore it builds up, and builds up and builds up. Then we start to have the discomfort and the seven, eight, 10, 12-day period.

KRIS: So it's like a dirty swimming pool?

LISA: Yes. That's exactly right. So we get the large intestine contracting and working, the colon will empty, you'll poo properly (which should be done every day, every morning at 5am), bowel empties completely. Once that happens, the contractive ability of the body will return, the uterus will start to contract because that's all it knows how to do – expand and contract that's its job. And once that turns to normal, menstrual cycle returns to normal, endometrium is shed every month, cleanly and beautifully as the gods decided it should be, and all menstrual discomfort and pain will cease. At the same time, people like me with the cysts and fibroids and all the added extras, once the uterus is healed, you'll pass them with your monthly period. And what I encourage my women to do, because I'm a little bit 'out there' is to say look at them. Unroll them, unravel them, really take time to go, 'oh my God, I created that. Look what I've done!' I would unroll some the size of A4, I had a fibroid that fell out that was the size of my hand that looked just like a calf muscle. The protein, this P125, had actually created a structure that looked like a calf muscle and you could actually see where it had detached from the uterus once I had starved it of its food source, which was the cheese and the eggs and those sorts of things.



KRIS: So, recapping – a normal period is three days?

LISA: Three days max.

KRIS: Bright red blood like a cut?

LISA: Yes.

KRIS: Pain-free. And wee, poo every day?

LISA: Poo every morning. One beautiful poo and it should have a little curl in it – even Western medicine says that. And it should happen between the hours of 5am and 7am. If it happens after that it means you've got what I call the 'gun barrel process' happening, meaning you are only pooing because you are pushing more in the other end. That should happen on its own and that is peristalsis. I think we learnt that in third grade but most of us probably weren't listening or didn't understand. But what happens is that you chew and as you chew the squeezey-squeeze motion happens from the mouth to the anus and that is called the alimentary canal. It's one great big convoluted tube-type situation but all matter is pushed through it by a squeeze, release, squeeze process. The moment the metal element, or lung and large intestine, is weak, that process ceases to happen and everything gets stuck.

KRIS: I bring that up because it is particularly important for women's health in that the large intestine is where minerals are absorbed in the body. So if that's not working we've got problems.

LISA: Yep. And that's a very interesting point because minerals are absorbed in the descending colon on the left-hand side of the abdomen. If we are not getting the minerals then we lose our elasticity which is what aging is all about – it's all about elasticity, keeping the spine fluid and loose and keeping the skin fluid and loose, keeping the blood flowing beautifully, strong and 'Yang' as we call it (which just means to be very, very solid in its mineral base). But women, because we tend to eat emotionally and because we are wonderful emotional beings living in this great world doesn't allow us that. You know we yell and scream and cry, which is a wonderful force of nature, but all of a sudden we are 'hysterical, we've lost the plot, we're not terribly intelligent' and we're almost discounted. But that's almost part of our nature – to be passionate of the world. Boys build straight lines with bits of stick and a bridge here and a thing there. What we do is make that structure wonderful. We give it its heart and soul. Boys give it structure, we give it function. But without our mineral base, we haven't got that and women are struggling with food at the moment. Part of the reason is that there is a lot of misinformation out there, but as well women are feeling literally like we've lost it, because we know we have. We don't feel powerful anymore, but we know we are. And as I've said to you over the years, nobody suppresses the weak. They only suppress the strong. So all these years that women have felt suppressed, it's because there's a great fear that if we ever do get our fingers out of you-know-where and stand up and go 'you know what, I've actually had enough. I know that I can make myself well. I know that I'm perfectly fine, independently' and, as I said to Andzej recently, 'I think women have started to realize we only need two or three sperm and we could repopulate the whole world!' Seriously, I know we all laugh, but I'm thinking that maybe there's this thing that really if push ever came to shove women could actually decide that really we don't need it as much as you think we do. And that is the paradigm that is starting to come now.

KRIS: Be careful, you'll put some of these dear menfolk out of a job!

LISA: Bless them all, we love them all but there's got to be a way that it's more reasonable.



KRIS: You've worked with women for the last 20 years and I've watched you and Andzej cure things that were 'miraculous' because western medicine couldn't fix them and that's ranged from breast cancer to infertility, but they are all related to a common thing as you see it. So can you talk about that and what the solution to that is?

LISA: It's alarming in a way because, as you know, it's so simplistic that people don't want it to be that simple. So I liken it to the Rubix cube, which is a little game in a box/ cube. Any four year old can do it because they just play with it and eventually they end up with it all one colour. Adults try to make it so complex. So its part of our education as well that we are taught to not understand a concept, but to hear it and pick it to pieces and make it as completely difficult as we possibly can. But without trivializing anything or making it sound like people's illnesses and woes are not the most important thing in their life, because they are and having been there I know how important it is, but there are basically five conditions that the world can suffer from. So if we have cancer, if we have endometriosis, if we've grown tumours, go back to the protein issue. The way Andzej deals with them – and Andzej gets referrals from Western medical scientists because they know that he knows something that they don't – so they refer to him, and the first thing he does is take them off the protein. It's that simple. So, off the protein, then we've got the beauty of Ryoho which works on the five elements which involves: the fire (heart and small intestine), water (kidney and bladder system), wood (liver and gall bladder), earth (spleen and stomach) and the metal element (large intestine and lung). We give people exercises based on which element if going to help the most. We also need help to eat well because a lot of people have been living on McDonald's and ice cream and packet food, so their organs have grown used to that and it's such a battle for people to then decide, 'I'm not going to eat that, I'm going to eat brown rice'. So what exercises or Ryoho therapy does is allows the organs to function more efficiently and once that happens the idea of themselves change and the organs then think, 'I'm more attracted to that than I am to that because that was my ill self and I was feeding my illness. Now I'm on the way to health, I'm feeding my health'. So the exercise helps to change the diet. One of the great gifts of Andzej and Ryoho is the diagnostic ability and being able to tell what's wrong. Western medicine treats symptoms, we treat the cause. When you treat the cause, it's a lot quicker because you've bypassed all those other things that we may have seen as distractions and we go straight to the focus of what the problem is. So that obviously cuts down three months before you've even started. When you know what organ system is responsible for your illness, the recommendation can be made to feed that organ system correctly, so in the case of the large intestine you would go to miso soup which allows the correct gut bacteria to start to flourish and root vegetables because they grow downwards and this is how basic it is – they grow downward, so they feed the downward energy in the human body. You can hear people laughing at me, but it works. So we literally work on those kinds of ideas. Have look at a cauliflower – it looks just like a human brain. Lotus root looks just like the sacs of the lung. So there is a lot of that involved with Chinese medicine as well in terms of the basics of health. One thing is very clear is that law of nature is absolutely irrefutable. We are all part of it. Somehow with the scientific revolution we believed we could outrun Her (nature), we could outthink Her and we could outdo Her. I think the wheel spinning now to the other side where we have realized that She is one scary bird – do not go there. And we've really pissed Her off on every single level – environmentally, socially, physically, medically and then of course spiritually and all the other wonders that we have walked away from.

KRIS: So you are talking about Mother Earth? And you as a wonderful environmentalist and feminist see a relationship between what is happening to the planet and what is happening to women's bodies?



LISA: I do, absolutely. I hope this analogy doesn't make you laugh but maybe makes you think just a little bit – if we look at the world at the moment, we are in a great debt crisis. If you look at the health of the world,

people are in a debt crisis and they are borrowing more and more (i.e. eating more and more, trying more and more superfoods) and sucking it in at such a huge rate it's in the same way that countries are borrowing money. I want to put that analogy on one side. Then I want to look at the environment. We have very few unpolluted rivers left, that's the blood. I see the rivers of the planet as the blood of the human. I think it was Armstrong – one of the first astronauts who went into space – he noted that the first time he saw the planet from space when he realized there were no boundaries or borders, that one river flowed through the entire continent of Europe, that all of these ideas that, 'that's on that side and this is on that side' actually doesn't exist. It is one living, breathing, seething organism. And as the American Indians say, 'what you poke on that side will respond on that side'. But somewhere in our scientific revolution, maybe at the end of the 1800's, the philosophers were starting to be put down, science was starting to rise, analytical thought, black and white, what you could prove in a test tube, only if you saw it did it exist – all of these ideas had never even existed before. People lived with the unknown in all its wonder and thrived on it, but then suddenly we had to be able to prove it.

KRIS: Yes, because astrology and medicine used to sit next to each other.

LISA: Absolutely! They were one and the same. And in fact it's part of the Hippocratic Oath, which I only recently read, that the same oath is for astrologers and doctors and is still used by the Royal Academy of Astrology in London. So a very interesting point, yes.

KRIS: So there's a bit of a warning in getting well and I remember Andzej talking about this so clearly that when you have an illness, regardless of how little or small it is, it becomes part of your identity. And once you heal yourself that goes and wants all sorts of adventure to happen. I remember doing my training and I ran off to South with a guy I hardly knew. So what happens in that because we get bored?

LISA: You're right because I come from – you know SBS used to call me the 'vibe director' because I was the party girl and had lived overseas most of my life, travelling and all of those things, having the most wonderful life but being desperately ill and having to have a hysterectomy, I'd already broken my neck and literally I was at 'D-day' so it was a case of 'alright, do I decide to get well and get a grip on myself or do I stay crazy forever?' So there was no alcohol, no marijuana, no anything, really clean food and lots and lots of yoga. Within, I guess within two months, I was the most boring, miserable, discontent, boring, boring human that ever lived. I stopped finding Steve Martin funny, Robin Williams didn't even appeal that much anymore and I started to really worry about myself. I lost all my friends. They tried to keep up with me but I remember one party hiding 19 whiskeys behind the fridge because of, 'C'mon Lis, you can just have one' and I'd go I'm tired of saying no, so I'll just hide it behind the fridge. They were so confronted by me sobering up – which is a classic AA story – that I felt I was confronting them by going out with them so I stayed home instead, rode my horses a lot because that was all I really had left was riding, but suddenly for the first time in my life I saw the world. And unfortunately I saw the world in relationship to me and that's very alarming because you realize how completely self-indulgent, neurotic, arrogant despicable really human being you are because all you have done all these years through all the 'me, me, me, everything's got to be fun, got to look terrific, got to spend money on clothes etc.' and never thought about the context of the world – at all. I went to India and the only thing that really bothered me was that it was uncomfortable for me. The poverty didn't impact on me in a way of, 'oh my lord, look at all those poor people', it was almost 'why do I have to see that?' So it's that same self-centered, self-indulgence that creates illness. Andzej put it to me very recently, 'illness starts with one mistake'. That mistake can be thinking incorrectly, acting incorrectly, eating incorrectly. Whatever that mistake is. My mistakes were so myriad because I'd been that way my whole life, that when you sober up, straighten up, get off the crazy food and the protein and start to be very, very



quiet there's only you there. There's nothing else anymore and there's nothing to distract you. It's like people going to rehab. They have the same problem where they become very boring and wonder why things aren't funny any more. They wonder why when you speak to people the person stops listening because you've sort of heard it all before and for me, because I was so terribly sick, it took me so long to get well that I didn't start the 'I need an adventure' for a very long time. And then when I did of course the adventure for me, because I like to push the envelope in different ways, was to see how well I could actually become. So I pushed it that way – how many mountains could I run up? When I wanted to have a baby Andzej said to me, 'because you've been sick for so long if you don't run your pelvic floor and diaphragm will never work properly – ever ' because they've just not worked for so long and you will not be able to carry that baby properly'. So I had to take to mountains and I did – and they were massive mountains. So suddenly it occurred to me that this could become a great 'vibe' thing that I do. How amazing could I actually be? And then I spent the next 10 years doing that? I've now come full circle where I've settled in the medium. There's a lovely analogy of the pendulum – that as far as the pendulum swings one way it has, to by the law of nature, be able to swing the other way. So people like me are luckier than all the other people on the planet who have tinkered around the bottom bit – a little bit sick, a little bit well, little bit crazy, little bit not crazy. Me? Totally nuts! Could be totally enlightened, I just haven't got there yet. and it could be next lifetime even.

KRIS: So you've taken your personal adventure and turned it into a active service for other women, and one of the things that you are really passionate about is helping women get pregnant. And you talk about 'getting fit for pregnancy' which is an unusual concept. We tend to have people turning up on our doorstep once they are already pregnant, but you say you need to get ready, like you are training for a marathon, six months before.

LISA: Definitely. I'm absolutely committed to this, more than anything. Very recently I had two pregnancies, two babies. First baby, the woman appeared to me at eight months with her pubis split already. So the pubic bone – most women don't realize the public bone is actually in two sections – that is purely to allow us to give birth. I wince every time I think of it. Her public bone had split with a two-inch drop and we had two months to go. The other woman had been with me two years prior to this pregnancy. She came to me because she had miscarried three times and didn't want that to happen so I put her on the get fit for pregnancy program. Now I watched these two women in their last trimester – one could do cartwheels, one could run and jump and looked amazing and felt wonderful. The other one was carried in and I had to keep seeing her because we had to keep working so that the baby was OK. We'd given up on making everything OK for the mum because it was too late. We just had to make sure that the baby was going to be born wonderful – which she was by caesarean. But watching those two I became even more committed to the fact that we've got to get fit for pregnancy. Now I'm just going to go back to the historical context. Women were seen as baby makers after the Church took control in roughly 1496/ 1500 the Church very much had control. Women were deemed completely in the background now – all you do is make babies and we'll tell you how, we'll tell you when and we'll tell you how many. This is new because the new paradigm because the woman is a woman even after she becomes a mother. So instead of 'just being mum' and sacrificing – and I use that word with absolute intention because sacrificing yourself so that your children have a wonderful existence is completely unnecessary. Your child (or children) can have the most exquisite life with you as a woman AND a mother. Then you have your whole being and this is one of the big issues that we'll get to in a minute with menopause – women are so lost at menopause because they lost themselves along the way. My thing is to have it ALL! The party woman, the gorgeous woman, the farming woman, the astronaut, whatever you want to be AND the mummy who loves and adores their babies with all their heart and at night puts on a tiara and goes off to the opera. Everything!



Why shouldn't we? Because there is no longer a patriarchy to say that we can't.

KRIS: Yeah. And that starts with running up hills?

LISA: Absolutely. You don't wake up one morning and say suddenly 'I'm going to run the City to Surf today'. You have to go and get sandshoes, shorts and so all this stuff and yet women don't see pregnancy the same way. And yet if you want it all, this whole thing that everyone's on about – super women – can you have a career? Can you have babies? Of course you can do it all but you have to be well and fit and strong. So before you even think of getting pregnant – and I suggest six months before you go to a really good yoga center or school and you learn to get your core absolutely strong. So my test when women come to me and want to have babies – I lay them flat on their back with their arms over their head stretching, pull their chin down, toes pulled back and I ask them to lift their legs to a 45 degree angle to their pelvis (so their legs are in the air) and I say, 'when you can hold them up there for 10 minutes you can have a baby'.

KRIS: And how many women can do that?

LISA: None! And then I explain to them, 'Ok, you have a baby now, you will lose yourself and you'll become a mother. You'll have haemorrhoids, you'll have varicose veins, a huge fat belly covered in stretch marks lose everything that makes you feel totally confident as a woman. Women, what you need to understand is that it's the muscles that hold the baby in, not the skin. If you don't develop those muscles, however, they split in the first trimester and then the only thing that contains that baby is the skin. Muscles snap back, skin never does and even with all my potions and herbs, I cannot cure stretch marks. So my thing is I wanted it all and I still do and I always will, so I'm willing to put the work in to be where I am now and I encourage other women to do the same. And the moment that they meet women like us, they say 'I didn't even know!' And if you give them the option and the tools to do it with they are more than happy to run up hills, do 50 sit ups a day, whatever it takes to actually come out of that with a win-win – I have you and I have me. And then you can be the sort of mother to both boy and girl children that then allows them the great view of the world that they can have 'all of it' as long as they put their work in. No-one gets anything for nothing.

KRIS: And that goes to cleaning up your diet as well?

LISA: Absolutely. And then your baby will be very well at birth and will breastfeed really easily and then they will be open to a lovely healthy diet as they grow from infant to toddler

KRIS: Let's talk about miscarriage and abortion. I know that you had a miscarriage after curing your endometriosis. But you have a particular view on that as part of the healing process. Is that right?

LISA: I do. I had three abortions in my early years because I think it's very important to say that at no point in my life even to this day do I feel even remotely good about that and I had to do a lot of healing around that before I had my baby because it is detrimental to the female psyche because we are nurturers not takers-away. So it is very difficult but there is a beautiful ritual, which is what I did – the wind ritual – which actually heals the guilt and the angst of that. But we also have to remember that spirit comes back time after time, so my Kyri that I have now has been tapping me on the back of the head for a long time and finally arrived and has taught me more than I will ever teach her. So with the miscarriage as well – I had a miscarriage at five months before Kyri was born, that is a great loss and it is as great a loss as losing a child once it's born but not as great a loss once you know the temperament and personality of the child. I have to say that because I work with women who miscarry and still struggle with it many



years later and I have to say you've got to get over it. But again, that is a health thing – part of the letting go of life's deal because we've all had shit happen and we have to learn to let it go. And that's what I love Yoga for because we'll never be able to stop having the crap hitting the fan but we can learn to control the way we react to things and deal with our lives. But in terms of miscarriage and abortion, there is a thing for women where we have dug a little hole in our psyche and its almost like digging a hole in the great mother earth for a mind that is harmful and it does damage the nature of the planet and it does damage us. However, we are the great mercurial beings of the planet. We reproduce whole human lives with the help of Mother Nature and therefore we can create anything within ourselves, so we can create the great healing. And this is where the Church was very dangerous for women – it's not for us to seek outside ourselves for forgiveness. So all you have to say is, 'yeah, that was a time I wasn't as sensible, I was going through the madness where I hadn't become boring and thoughtful, still just doing everything to please myself and it was all about me, the ultimate arrogance which is the meaning of illness, so I made terrible mistakes. However, I forgive myself completely and I have to pick myself up and get on with it.' And we have to do that with every single thing whether we've made mistakes in relationships, with our parents (which we all have), leave it in the past. But again, if you don't have a strong body you will allow those things to infest you for the rest of your life and that's a real shame.

KRIS: Do you think there is a reason why miscarriage happens? Because that is particularly painful for women who are trying to conceive and continually having miscarriages. But what's the reason for that happening, do you think?

LISA: I think 90 per cent is the obvious physical – so for example the young woman I just worked with who have three miscarriages was a very frightened person – so to you and me that translates as a bladder issue. So when a woman's bladder is weak –if you wee more than (I'm going to go out on a limb and say) three times a day, there is a bladder problem. When you have a bladder problem as a female, you are worried that people aren't going to like you and you're a little bit scared about going out about going out at night, and it's very debilitating. You know, there's enough out there that we could realistically be afraid of rather than just have ourselves frighten ourselves, which is very self-defeating. So we need to be able to deal with that. So the first thing I realize with all of us who miscarry is that there is the bladder component, but it's also that physical thing that I go back to of the large intestine being the contraction. So imagine your uterus is a shopping bag. When you use those flat-bottomed shopping bags like we did in the old days that were cardboard or brown paper, they made a very strong bottom on them so your shopping wouldn't fall out. The large intestine, or the metal element, does that to the uterus as well. So I what I did with this young lady was I worked her very hard on those two things – water and metal – we made the colon work very hard so she could contract and hold the baby, and we made the bladder strong so that her fear went away, but also it deals with structure, so we made the uterus very strong structure and then I know it took a long time to get trust because of the bladder problem, but once you've got that really good structural integrity there is no way that baby is going to fall out. But literally, I was still counseling her up until month four because there was always that 'is it going to fall out?' thing. Getting rid of the fear is very hard but again, the stronger the body, the stronger the mind. For all women – its like a mantra to us – if our bodies are weak there is parts of our mind that is weak and we need to yoke or unite (which is what Yoga means) and bring those things together so that the strength of the mind and the strength of the body complement each other and then we can't be beaten.

KRIS: Rather than just being strong headed.

LISA: Exactly, or pig-headed, yes.



KRIS: Why are so many couples having trouble conceiving and well, I know this is probably going to be very controversial, but what's your view on IVF?

LISA: Yes, I have issues with this and only because I was so old – as you know I was 39 when I had Kyri – so that thought process was very much part of my life. What would I do if I'm too old and my eggs are too cracked up because I've been so sick for so long. And I decided that because of the way I feel about Mother Nature and being part of nature, why should I get special treatment? If I can't have a baby, I can't have a baby. And in my opinion there are extremely good psychological reasons for that. My own mother is a very good example. Some women shouldn't have children. Again here we go. Awful endometriosis, chronic period pain her entire life, eight miscarriages before my brother was born. She sort help from some strange Indian healer man, which is what turned it all around, but here we go. These are the indicators that not only are you not only physically capable because of those problems ... the Greek word for uterus is 'hysterius' so if the uterus is ill the hysterius is ill, you are hysterical. You are therefore not a calm vehicle to steer a child through life and you can cause quite a lot of grief to that child as well as yourself. So this is another reason I am saying get fit for pregnancy. Not just the physical body, but your mental body too. Couples, OK. I think we live in a push button society where we've taken the pill for 20 years, we've had the career in banking, we've been the high powered woman, we've got the chiseled jaw and had the botox, we've done all that and suddenly decide, 'I want to have a baby now. Now!' Where you have interrupted your reproductive cycle for a 20-year period with a hormonal mechanism.

KRIS: The pill?

LISA: Yes, and you decide its now because that fits in with your career advancement and the fact that your husband is on sabbatical and your boss from university and that all suits. And notice that this is a socio-economic issue – and I must say that right here, right now. And then you want to have a baby and you click your fingers and stamp your feet and say why can't I? Right, well, I think we've gone through why you can't so and stamping your feet isn't going to work. And this is again the laws of nature. That you could be the most important woman in the room, you could be the most talented person in the room, even the most famous but the great Mother doesn't give a shit because you are just like all the other critters on the planet and you must fall within the same laws of nature as every other creature. And unfortunately that means you are going to have to get off your high horse and realize that and do the work. Or you can pay a lot of money and go the IVF cycle, which is fraught with danger. I think it has a 30 per cent success rate – and that's under 35, so once you get older that you'd be better off putting your money on a greyhound than IVF. Whether your eggs are ok or not another big issue – and then I'm going to go to the big kahuna which is really unfortunate, is that 80 per cent of the problem is the man. Now, when I work with couples and I suggest to them that the male go and have his little sperm tested, the indignation is absolute 100 per cent of the time. I have never had a partner or boyfriend say, 'oh, I didn't think of that. Maybe its me!' We've got a 50-50 thing happening here and yet only 50 per cent is ever held up as the issue. What happens to the other 50 per cent? So I send every single bloke when they come to me and they say we can get pregnant and haven't got a history of miscarriage, we haven't got a problem of not being able to hold a pregnancy, we just can't fall pregnant – I insist they get the male tested and most of the men refuse. So for the men who do get tested and their sperm count is low, the cure is very simple, they dangle their gorgeous little thingies (testicles) in icy cold water every morning



KRIS: Last question, you've recently gone through menopause and had quite a different experience to that which is most commonly talked about. So what is your advise for women going through 'the change'? Tell us about your experience first.

LISA: It was so funny, I thought I was pregnant at 51. I have not cried like that ever in my life probably all by myself howling like a baby, 'I can't do this at 51 And once you've had a baby, you have to have the baby, there's no way you could ever go the other way. So there I was at 51 years old thinking oh my god, I was just devastated. This went on for six weeks and then I don't even know what happened but I suddenly though, 'oh my god, I think I've menopausal and didn't even know'. And that is exactly what happened because I never got another period. So that was the end of that. So the great thing about if you are healthy and if you do eat reasonable well and your core is strong, and your organs are basically in good order from doing Yoga you have no symptoms at all. Absolutely none whatsoever. The period just stops and you have – I had a greatest sense of joy I have ever had on that level, ever. I wrote a blog about it and what I actually said was that it was such a liberation because I realize now that I've dealt with the parent thing, dealt with the boy-girl thing, dealt with the had kid thing, dealt with the mummy thing, I'm terrible at housework but I've done all that and I've cooked, sewed, washed and cleaned, and I've done all that, they are all good and everyone else is dead so that's terrific, so it's basically about me now. So now when I make a cup of tea I make mine first. If I want to do something I just do it now. And the last line was that finally the folder of life has only got my name on it. So its actually one of the most wonderful things that has ever happened to me and I would love that for all women.

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