

Caspar (00:00):

If you knew the impact of your health decisions beforehand, would you choose differently? Today, we welcome a renowned chiropractor with more than four decades of experience. He's been the team chiropractor for both the San Francisco 49ers and the Giants, and has helped celebrity patients such as Tom Brady and Joe Montana manage their injuries and maintain wellness. He's also the author of a new book, and he's coming on to tell us about making conscious decisions for health that can lead to better mental, physical wellbeing as you age. This is the Story of "To Health With You," with Dr. Nick Athens. Dr. Athens, thank you so much for coming back on. This is your second time.

Dr. Nick Athens (00:38):

It is my second time. And so I had such a good time the first time I wanted to come back.

Caspar (00:43):

<Laugh>. Well, you wrote a book, you know, since then, which is great. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. I, I I love that. Why, why the title "To Health With You?" What, what, what made you come up with that?

Dr. Nick Athens (00:52):

You know, one thing, after 42 years of practice Caspar, you, you don't, you learn, you don't want to tell people what to do. You guide them to where you want them to go. Yep. And so I wanted it to be a, a book where I'm holding their hand. I'm taking it into the mindfulness room. I'm holding their hand into the flexibility room. I'm holding their hand into the high intensity interval training and the accountability room. I'm kind of holding their hands, showing them why they need to do this for aging and longevity. So I felt a good title was to kind of take the pun of you know, the other term, <laugh> <laugh> help with you. And so kind of I'm guiding you to better health and to get people's, you know, to perk them up, to say when they see the book on newsstand to, or they see it out on Amazon, which it is now, is to say, well, okay, what's this about? And then you put a quarterback quote on there and you put a heart on there to have it attractive and you have and talk about mind and body solutions. And pretty much that's how simple you have to keep it.

Caspar (01:47):

Well, let's be honest, Dr. Athens, it's not just a quarterback. We're talking about Joe Montana on the cover here. I'm reading right?

Dr. Nick Athens (01:54):

Uhhuh

Caspar (01:54):

<Affirmative>. Yeah. You're looking to take control of your health and transform your life, use this book as your ultimate playbook. Joe Montana, I mean yeah. One of the greatest quarterbacks of all time, debatable, if not the greatest. But, you know, you got your start working with the 49er. Yep. Where I, I, I loved reading that whole beginning part of it, of how you started and got into chiropractic and then had these players in the eighties and nineties, you helped them win a number of championships back then. One of the greatest, you know, dynasties in football ever. And, but one of the things that really resonated with me was this fact that as much as you help the players, the medical team for the 49ers still sort of dismiss you for a bit there.

Dr. Nick Athens (02:37):

Yeah. You know, starting out Caspar as a chiropractor, you come outta school and you graduate and you know, you say, okay, well, it's time to start a practice. Right. The, the world owes me a practice. I I I, I educated myself. I took a loan out. I, I I paid for my education, and now it's time for the world to, you know, gimme a practice. No. That, that was a perception, fantasy that was not reality. So in essence, you realize, okay, now I'm have to learn to hunt and fish in the woods, pretty much. Right. And you have to, you have to kind of get good at it. You have to figure it out. And so one thing it taught me is to, instead of a physical callus build a mental callus. Mm-Hmm. And so as a result of that you know, you learn how to battle and you learn how to be in in the trenches, and you learn how to be in the foxhole in the street, fight, and learn how to battle.

Dr. Nick Athens (03:21):

And you kind of figure, well, a healthcare provider shouldn't have to do that. He's got a degree on the wall. Well, in 42 years of practice, no one has ever asked me, my GPA, they never asked me anything about my education. All they asked me was a, Hey, can you help my shoulder? Can you help my neck? Can you help my back? Can you help my health? And so I realize you, you know, just like sports, if you take sports and put it to life, it's all about performance. You, you're gonna get you know, Yelp reviews, people are gonna refer to you. They're not gonna refer to you. So you gotta be really good. You have to master your trade. And you can't be bored with mastery. You have to master fundamentals. If you master, I figured if I mastered my skill and I could be really, really great at the fundamentals of adjusting and teaching people lifestyle choices, I can give them better results.

Dr. Nick Athens (04:01):

You know? And people are looking for that. So through the athletes, it was great because they they promoted it. And as a result of that, they promoted it. And then people said, well, Jesus, if Joe Montana's doing, I don't need science behind it, I just, Joe's <inaudible>, you know, or Tom Brady's doing it. Right. So, and as a result of that you know, people get a chance to say, and, you know, well, he goes, works on the team. And even though I was independent of the team, they thought I was a team doc. But, you know, with all the publicity they gave to the news media as a result of it you're able to get all these referrals from that one Super Bowl story, which is in the book. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And then from all those people that came in, I was getting after the Super Bowl on the pregame show, as I said, I was getting 50 to 60 new patients a month.

Dr. Nick Athens (04:43):

It was kind of, whoa, I, I need to kind of have other docs. I can't help all these people. But then you figure after a while, you know, what am I learning from these people? What's bringing them in? I'm a last resort doctor. I'm, I'm profiting off a system here that says I'm a quack and I'm a pseudoscience. I'm not a real doctor. And, and how is this, you know, they're all coming in. So I better perform and I better make plays and I better get them well and teach them. And if I taught them, then they refer even more business. And I could kind of start proving a system that said I wasn't that great into Wow. Well, I challenge the system now and say, well, geez, are you as good as you're saying you are, you know, I have to perform. And that's how I have to learn to hunt and fish in the woods.

Dr. Nick Athens (05:23):

And you're kind of having going to school and employ in the system. And, and that's how you make your living and all these patients are given to you. I had to earn these patients and to earn the patients. It's a different level of performance than just going to work, working a shift and having the patients there for you. It's another level of performance. And I have to be locked in. I call it, you know, locked in when I go to the office every day. You have to kind of perform like an athlete on the court. And if you want the reason Tiger Woods and the Steph Currys and, you know, all these great athletes over time get, you know,

a crowds to see 'em. 'cause They perform they're performers on a regular basis, and they're consistent with their performance. So why not do that as a healthcare professional?

Dr. Nick Athens (06:06):

You could perform on a regular basis in the office, teach people those lifestyle choices, educate them, get them out of their discomfort and their pain as a last resort. Then you're gonna get referrals. And now you're, you're building this practice of your dreams that, you know, starts escalating. And then you get so busy and you learn from so many people. And you could write a book. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. So in essence, now you, I'm, I feel like I'm a channel of all this information of over 750,000, you know, visits, patient visits, and kind of now I gave a jigsaw puzzle to the world of what I learned from all these people that were coming in. And that's the whole premises of the book is, you know, how can I change people's lives? I got a great, the best text I got was not too long ago, a few weeks ago from someone in Wisconsin and said Dr.

Dr. Nick Athens (06:51):

Athens, I gave your book to my mom, and it changed her life. And it's great. You could put something out there that is that that changed someone's life that we care about. So it touched me because it was like, Hey, you know what, now I could take all the information I've learned and, and share with other people and change lives on people I will never meet. And that's power, that's impact to me, that's making plays as an athlete. Right. So that's the ultimate. And so my goal is constantly, and I'm 65 now doing 42 years. I still have the mindset of, you know, making plays and coming in the office and performing on a regular basis. So take care of myself on a regular basis to do that.

Caspar (07:32):

Yeah. No, it's, it's such a paradox in medicine that the people that get results outside of the conventional world are still labeled quacks and have so much skepticism about them because, you know, they turn to this unscientific type of approach or whatever it is they say, but the results speak for themselves. And people see past that after a while because they're not getting the results. The other way should really be the other way where, you know, medicine on a, on a more conventional basis should be what you do more of the integrative approach. And alternatively, you should then only use drugs and surgery. It should be the alternative to what you should start with, which is chiropractic, more energy medicine, lifestyle changes, a lot of these things you listed in the book. But we still live in a little bit of a reverse world with the sick care health system and not a real health care system that cares about health. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you started the book, you know, with a, a, a big section on the brain and hormones. Can you talk about that? Why, why that was so important as a, as a kind of, you know, starting point for all the other lessons and, and recommendations you give throughout the book?

Dr. Nick Athens (08:42):

Yeah. I wanted to talk about the brain, because that's how we create habits. And our habits determine our destiny in our future. So if we create good habits, we're gonna have a, a better quality of life. We have bad habits. We have a, you know, a worse quality of of life. So what I find is the consciousness, the subconscious brain, I talked about that. And the subconscious brains are true health. It's the brain that adapts and has to the survival brain that runs our true health. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So typically what happens if we're teaching that brain bad habits, it runs our life. It's like our autopilot brain. And if our autopilot brain is running our life in a bad way, because the bad decisions we're making that will expose itself over time and, and time exposes our decisions. So you see what happens with time being in practice 42 years, you see what time does to the body.

Dr. Nick Athens (09:33):

And when you're younger, you don't see time. So I'm kind of the future talking backwards, saying, okay, well, geez, if you could change this and do that, and these habits matter, and the subconscious brain that runs our body, if you could teach it better habits, then it will time will reward those decisions. Time will reward those decisions, and you could have a better quality of life. And I think that's changing now. I think younger generation, they're more proactive with their health. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, they're, they're doing things for their health to prevent breakdowns rather than wait for the inferno to happen. And then they do something about it. And that's how typically you, you're talking about the sick care system works. So there's no lifestyle changes. And, and, and the reason I wanna show the mind was because you know, in that subconscious brain, we have the stress and anxiety state, and we have this calm state as we know, that runs our body.

Dr. Nick Athens (10:25):

And I, I wanted to talk about that, that instead of taking stress away, people use these outside in coping mechanisms. And these outside in coping mes, alcohol, sugar, recreational drugs gambling, whatever it is, they're, they're waiting for this dopamine hit. And, and they keep trying to use this outside in coping mechanisms. That's why it showed scales. And instead of taking the outside in, we're building the craving system in the subconscious brain. And now we lose the tug of war. So if we lose the tug of war, now our subconscious brain owns us. And Horace was a philosopher. He said, if you don't rule your mind, it will rule you. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And what he meant by that was, if you set up a bad craving system, you lose the tug of war. And you can't even say no to yourself. And if you can't say no to yourself, how do you expect, how, how can you not be exposed to those decisions will be exposed over time, and then you're gonna just take medications and your quality of life, that's gonna be terrible.

Dr. Nick Athens (11:20):

You can't move. You're gonna get depression. You have all these ailments that they just throw products at, and you, and, and they just throw products to slow the progression down the rabbit hole as time goes on, instead of trying to do lifestyle changes and proactive things that move the rabbit hole, getting out of the rabbit hole. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So in essence, that's how the society works. So I figured, man, if I could teach people how to, how to have this young mind and this body that's young too, now you have more congruency, you have better quality, more fun, more activity. And a lot of it starts with the habits and teaching ourselves the habits. And we'll go into a little bit more how there's ways to do that that I taught in the book. But the only result is I, I, I taught how to add more calm. So instead of taking stress away, add calm to balance the scales. And if you add calming activities in your life then your body you, you can have more fun in your life because you're making better decisions inside. And that, again, those decisions will reward you with time.

Caspar (12:21):

Yeah. You talk about those addictions and the, the you know, search for more dopamine hits. You know, when I was reading it, it, it brought up, I read a book, A Dopamine nation Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> that, that really talked about how much of what we do today is based on that. Let's say a ping in your phone is like, oh, it releases a little bit of dopamine. You want more and you're always on your phone searching and more likes and other things. And of course we use alcohol, drugs, all these other things that release dopamine. But then we go down, you know, and have that, and it's a negative, unhealthy manner of doing it. In that book though, they, they kind of gave this, this, these examples of people who addicts to drugs, the people with the biggest dopamine you know needs, how they replaced it with other healthy things that released dopamine, like cold plunging, let's say. Which I know you talked a bit and said it's healthy. I is, is that your supposition also is that we need to replace the unhealthy with healthy dopamine hits? Or do we need to regulate to a point where we're not searching for the dopamine hits constantly?

Dr. Nick Athens ([13:29](#)):

Very good question. So look at the, the, the brain setting off. We're looking the endorphins, the dopamine, the oxytocin, serotonin, we're looking for these hormones that kind of give us a, a great mood. We're all looking for that every day. Right? And so looking at it like a dimmer switch in a room, right? A light switch or a music switch, and, and the higher the dopamine hits, the body gets used to that. One thing you realize since the subconscious brain's duty is to adapt to whatever you're doing in your life, it has to adapt to survive. So if you're used to getting high, dopamine hits it wants high dopamine hits. So the best thing to do is kind of give it just dopamine hits. So your body just gets used to that. And it takes about four to five weeks to make those habits happen.

Dr. Nick Athens ([14:11](#)):

You know? And your, the conscious brain will teach the subconscious brain. It usually takes about four to five weeks to change those habits. So if you do the exercising, you do the stretching, you do the mindfulness, you do you know, weight training, you get out in nature, you listen to, you know, our five senses protect us. Our five senses calm us. So if you use your senses in a way it should you talk about a lot, a lot of that on your Instagram, getting out in nature and walking and, and, and enjoying what life is out there for us. You're getting these dopamine hits and instead of not to say you can't have the alcohol, not to say you can't, you know have sugar and desserts. It's just that again, the more you do it, the more the subconscious brain gets used to it as part of your life.

Dr. Nick Athens ([14:58](#)):

This is what we do now. We have dessert, we need more sugar, we need more gambling, we need more 'cause. And then you get this addictive nature where again, you're losing the tug of war to the craving system you built up in the subconscious brain. And that's where there's gonna be painful results with time. And, and and we'll talk about it a little later on the accountability chapter, which I talked about. It's hard to go through life by yourself to figure that out. 'cause This conscious brain, which I talked about, doesn't really know the difference between fantasy perception and imagination. That's right. And that's why athletes have coaches and athletes have coaches, coaches manage the perception of the athlete. You can only imagine the chaos in pro sports. Without coaches, the athletes would be down by 40 points thinking they could still win the game.

Dr. Nick Athens ([15:42](#)):

No, no. Time out, sit down, coach up by 12. Why'd you call time out? 'cause You were up by 26 points and now you're up by 12 and you're gonna lose the game. So the question is, is who manages perception? Who manages our perception? Well, if we do, we're not putting ourselves in a good situation. So we need realistic voices around us to, to really manage us, to keep us going in the right direction. To manage so we don't get overused with this craving system that wins in our brain. And I would say, do these outside activities that are healthy activities. Right? Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> stretching laughter is great. News media probably on a regular basis, if you watch it and you get through, all the brain gets used to that. And that's probably not good because they manage they, they put out more stress and anxiety to get you riled up.

Dr. Nick Athens ([16:25](#)):

And then as a result of that, that's not good for your health, which we talked about in that hurricane chapter. The calm chapter. And I said, if, do you mind if I kind of go into that a little bit now? Surely. Yeah. So and I, and I, and I wanted to think of something that showed stress and anxiety and calm in one photo. And I thought of a category five hurricane, because most people live in these outer band of the category five hurricane, and they becomes their normal. That's what they taught themselves unintentionally. But that's how they taught themselves. And now they go through this life and this high

stress and anxiety situation, which is not good for our health. They wanna get to a calmer state. They wanna get to the eye of the storm, but they think they could get there.

Dr. Nick Athens (17:06):

But it's a lot harder than they think it is. Their perception takes over, they think they can do it, and it's a lot harder. And they, when people are in pain, they're in the stress and anxiety world. And I see it when they come in seeing all these thousands of people. What did I learn from? Well, were there stress and anxiety? They talk more, they talk about the same thing. And I had to go to a counselor to learn to listen. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. And you say, listen as a doctor. Well, yeah, because I knew I could help the person, but I had to acknowledge them. I had to, people wanna be heard. I had to acknowledge, Hey, neck and arm pain. Okay, right arm, okay. All the way down. I would used to say, let's get you on the table, let's get you on the table, let's get you on the table.

Dr. Nick Athens (17:44):

And people would keep talking about their same condition over and over again, because they were so, the, the pain level was so high, they wanted to talk it out of themselves. Hmm. So I went to the counselor and he, and I said, Hey, doc, you know, people aren't hearing what I'm saying to, I'm trying to get 'em on the table, and they're not listening to me. And he said, I see the problem. You, you're not listening to them. I said, what do you mean? He says, well, people wanna be heard. You have to acknowledge people are in the discomfort they're in. Make sure they're heard and they'll go on the table. I started doing that, and now it's more effortless to run a practice because, you know, two ears, one mouth is better to listen. Right. That's what they're there for. So become a good listener and you become more productive. So I, I've heightened my listening skills.

Caspar (18:29):

It's, it's what every doctor should do, right? <Laugh>, it's kind of the humbleness of not, you know, just giving informa it's taking it in is absorbing that information. And also being, that's part of the therapeutic process is allowing someone to vent, allowing someone to get that out of them, which we know is part of the emotional pain gets stored in the back and other areas. Yeah. And like you mentioned in that common stress section of the book, you know, we deal with so much stress on a daily basis. Sometimes it's not, it's just perceived stress that we do upon ourselves, kind of, you know, different levels and see everything as a stressor. Other times it truly is, like you said, if you watch the news, it is all fear porn. It's made to kind of you know, be addictive in that sense of keeping you in a fearful state. What's gonna happen next? Oh my God. It's the end of the world. And yes, calm is a, a, a big portion of trying to balance it, but I wanted to get into your work and how that can help as well, because actual chiropractic, what you are doing is also part of that equation to calm. Can you go talk about how the chiropractic work you do is part of that calming need to balance out everything?

Dr. Nick Athens (19:41):

Yeah. first of all, the reason you wanna get to a calmer state is because you're less reactive with your decisions. You're making better decisions in the calm state than you are in the reactive state. So just if you look statistics, baseball managers look at statistics all day long for lefties versus the righty. And they look at statistics on a regular basis to win the game. So if we wanna win the game of life, and you have to have better statistics with your decisions, and your stats will be better in that calmer state, blood pressure's lower, sleep is better, breathing's better, everything's better. So, you know how do you, how chiropractic care helps with that is by getting adjusted you're in essence rebooting the nervous system. So it's kind of like getting a kink out of a hose. You're allowing flow, you're allowing the body that is just impinged creating this chaotic internal stressful state to undo and flow more efficiently.

Dr. Nick Athens (20:39):

And so a lot of patients would say, well, I don't know. Is that good for me? Is that, you know, can that help me? And I, and I say in the book, there's different chiropractors do different things but, you know, we're working with our hands so there's good there's good docs with their hands. And there's other ones you just do your research on who, who would be a good referral source from your friends and family would know. But you know, the malpractice for a chiropractor I said in the book is, you know, 1500 a year, 30 years ago, I'm only \$2,500 a year. And, and that's kind of, a lot of people don't know that. And I wanted to share that in the book on a malpractice. So the chance of injury is way low, according to, let's take it away from what the doctor says and what I say, let's go to the source that would manage that and look at oversee that.

Dr. Nick Athens (21:20):

And for something to be so low, that \$2,500 a year, you know, real estate agents pay more to do real estate deals, <laugh>. So I'm, I guess, you know, you look at that, okay, so now let's look if it's safe. And then so if you could safe and take someone out of pain, and I find that a lot of these people who are in bad moods and pain coming in, Casper, getting out of pain, discomfort, they can reset, refocus, recalibrate, recharge to go forward again. So in essence, instead of saying, you need to remove your stress, you need to exercise, you need to get off sugar, it's no. It's like, okay, break the cycle for me, doc, break my cycle that I'm going off. I can't move my back's hurting my neck, my knee, my ankle. I can't move to get out of this discomfort.

Dr. Nick Athens (22:05):

What do I do? So then when you help them with this pain response they're in, then they could reset and say, huh, you know, doc, I went for a walk today. I went for a walk today for the first time in months. I was, I, I feel a lot better. Great. So then this start working on your diet. Now you feel better. Let's start working on your stretching program. Let's have you start kind of going out in nature more. Let's getting out in the morning. Great idea, doc. So now you become the source of information. And doctor to me means teacher. Is the doctor teaching the patient? Like a coach should make an athlete better To me. Are doctors making people better, teaching them lifestyle choice to make them better? Joe Montanas, Michael Jordans, the Barry Bonds, they made athletes around them better because they performed and had other athletes

Dr. Nick Athens (22:53):

they helped them with what they do and what they did, and they made them better. And as a result of that, my job is to, you know, I tell patients all the time, I'm so happy you hurt yourself. And they say, why would you say that, doc? I said, because my job is to make you better. My job is to take your health to another level. My job is to make you better than what you before that you even know you could experience. So if I can adjust patients, reboot the nervous system, get pressure off the nervous system, get them to move better, now they feel like doing Caspar, so many other things that can be healthy addictions in their life, to move them out of the rabbit hole, which we talked about, instead of taking products to reduce them, and then they become a health statistic.

Dr. Nick Athens (23:34):

And oh, Mary was a nice person, but unfortunately she, she passed on. Yeah, she's a health statistic. And Mary could have saved her life if she went the other route. And then we have all these statistics with no accountability. If I'm that bad in my practice, I'm out of business. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I have to perform every day, like I said. So you get used to performing, you bring people outta the rabbit hole, you break their pain cycle, you get 'em outta the stress and anxiety state, you teach 'em how to get to calmer eye of the hurricane life. And as a result of that, you kind of like see these results. Like, I, I can't help

everyone, but I'd say 98% of the people come in the office are getting better. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. And I see up to like 60, 70 patients a day.

Dr. Nick Athens (24:11):

And I wrote a book on seeing 60, 70 patients a day, which is crazy. I don't even know how I did that with four kids, <laugh>, who are older now, but I mean, still in working out. And so it's, it is a lot of effort. But, you know, I wanted to share the story so much about, you know, what I saw and share that experience. It's just, and, and, and I found like, I, I found so many answers when people came to see me. I found answers that they were looking for and that you could help them with and guide them to a better quality of life.

Caspar (24:40):

Yeah. And a lot of that guiding happens, of course, not just in your office, but outside. And that's what the book is about. Right? It's so much of the empowering details in one of those pieces you mentioned a little bit before, but I want to get into is stretching and flexibility, which so many people overlook. Right. You know, we, we, a lot of people know, you go to the gym, you lift some weights, you know, you break it down. And again, it's funny because people know, you know, that pain the next day is a good thing, they're gonna grow from it. Right. And that's where you say that pain, you could help people grow from it too, right? Yeah. But it's also a good thing. But if, if you were to talk about, you know, stretches and flexibility, what would be your recommendations for someone? I know I, I think you're big on doing it before you go to sleep, correct?

Dr. Nick Athens (25:20):

Yeah. I, I, I, I wanted, what I saw is people didn't stretch. They were hunched forward. They, yeah. They didn't work out. They didn't have muscle strength. And so I wanted to I wanna write a book and sprinkle chiropractic in the book, but make it a healthcare book. And when I talk about hydration and in the book, and then I'll get into stretching, but the hydration portion, I saw a lot of dehydration injuries. People said, doc, I just bent over to feed my dog. I bent over to brush my teeth. I bent over to tie my shoe, my back just locked up. I go, oh, geez. That's interesting. Dehydration. Because in essence, a lot of people don't drink enough water, their body's more susceptible to injury. So I started on this whole project by seeing, like, I saw a lot of contractors who came in, electricians, plumbers tradespeople

Dr. Nick Athens (26:03):

came in. They always had left hip and leg pain. I go, how come these people have hip, left hip and knee pain? And a lot of people say, well, the way they bend their old shoes, I get it. But a lot of 'em have high trucks and when they get outta the truck, they pound the left leg outta the car. Hmm. So I said, oh, okay. So their, it band got tight. Their, they kept jamming the hip and legs. So I said, when you get outta the car, swing both legs and then swing both legs in, and you see these things changing. So I could fix 'em up, but if they keep going back to the bad habit, they're not gonna get the results. So I wanted to add more things to, now that they felt better, I wanted to add these other routines like weight training.

Dr. Nick Athens (26:37):

Why would you wanna kind of get your shoulders back? Because over time, you know, our spine has these curves for a reason. And we hunch forward, we become more like a shrimp. And our spine doesn't absorb shock when it's a shrimp, it absorbs shock when it has three curves. Neck, midback, low back, it's like a shock absorber, right? So if we can't get these three curves and we change 'em, we're on our phones all day, we're on our computers, we're just constantly rolled forward. Well, the body doesn't like that. And the subconscious brain will notice that it will adapt. And it throws calcium at the site and they call that

arthritis. Mm. So now you have this arthritic spine that you can't get the time back. You get the time going forward. But when you're eighty years old, you can't say, oh wow, I shouldn't have done that.

Dr. Nick Athens (27:16):

I shouldn't have been looking on my phone and computer like that because, so I'm gonna get the time back. Sorry, you had a chance 40 years ago. It should have happened. Someone should have taught you that. And if you don't learn that early, it's gonna affect you. When you get older, you can't move as much. And then you're frustrated. 'cause Now you're in pain all the time. You're in the stress and anxiety state. You can't move, you get depressed. And this whole bad cycle happens. So flexibility is a big part of that 'cause as we age, not just our muscles contract, but our lymph system, our cardiovascular system, our lungs, and we can't get flow. We become like an LA traffic jam inside our body. And our body has to adapt to that. And as a result of this constriction, we're in a bad mood.

Dr. Nick Athens (27:53):

And now you're looking for help and you're looking for ways out of it. And a lot of people just take medications again, to slow the progression. They're not doing anything to go out of the rabbit hole. And I think that flexibility is a big part of it. I think training your heart and vascular system. I talk about high intensity interval training longevity. We know weight training's important for longevity to keep your muscles moving. And, you know, it's kinda like this Golden Gate bridge. I said kind of support the base. The cables are important to the bridge. The base are the cars. So keep your body strong so you can move. If you get movement, your body's a repair recovery machine. And I talk about it as an adaptive waste management treatment plant. So adaptive well, nutrients in takes the information adapts to what you're feeding it and taking care of it.

Dr. Nick Athens (28:37):

And whatever you're doing, it's gonna kind of remove the waste products and it's gonna adapt as necessary. And over time we'll expose the decisions you're making for this body. And like you said, we have this sickcare crisis. 'cause People aren't being taught how to be healthy because the business of sickness dominates the market. Now, well, ironically, from the pandemic, you have this business of health that is being created. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. And stretching is a big part of that. So I give all the yoga instructor structures credit, the Pilates instructors, the naturopath, the integrative medicine docs all these people who are, are there in the system that never get kudos. And me being one of those alternative people where, you know, I'm in the profession where it's the largest drugless health profession, but it doesn't really get looked at like it should. And my job is to kind of take that to the level and, and explain to people how chiropractic can help them. And then how doctors can be lifestyle coaches to teach people how to improve their quality of life against, especially with time.

Caspar (29:40):

Part of the part of the equation I saw, you know, that, that you were talking about through throughout the book is of course there's, there's this notion of movement throughout and exercise. And you talk about high intensity interval training. And I actually read this stat that 95% of people after the or age of 35 will never sprint again. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> you, however, wrote in the book at 65. Yep. You're still doing 110 yard sprints, correct? Yeah.

Dr. Nick Athens (30:06):

220s

Caspar (30:07):

That's impressive from the track. That is impressive.

Dr. Nick Athens (30:10):

So

Caspar (30:10):

You're definitely in that 5%.

Dr. Nick Athens (30:12):

Okay. So put it this way, I, there's talkers and there's doers in life and people talk like they can do it. People don't care about my degrees. They wanna know what I'm doing. What am I doing? I saw you sprinting, doc, I saw you weight training. I saw you doing this. Great. I'm, I wanna show you what you can do too. You can do this too. You don't have to do what I'm doing. But, you know, going to the gym and kind of strengthen your body would be a good idea, don't you think? Yeah. I just gotta find the time. So you help them where they can find the time. And you just mentioned stretching. One of the best times to stretch is life compresses us all day. So I said in the book, maybe a great time to stretch would be right before you go to bed.

Dr. Nick Athens (30:49):

Mm-Hmm. And a way to change the habit. If you wanna hydrate, put a water container in your desk. If you wanna stretch, put a yoga mat and a foam roller next to your bed. And then your subconscious brain says, in your conscious decision making can say, wow, that's there for a reason. I put that there to start changing my habit. Four to five weeks later, you're gonna start stretching before you, as you're gonna see it is just part of your life. So if, if you do these positive things, what's crazy Caspar, you could change your aging trajectory and you could enjoy yourself as you age. And like I said, at 65, sprinting, you know, I went in, you know, I'm a Medicare patient now, right? I'm supposed to be immunocompromised. I'm supposed to have comorbidities. I'm supposed to be weakened. I'm supposed to have all these health ailments. Really? According to who?

Dr. Nick Athens (31:37):

So I what's amazing, I've proven a system wrong for 42 years. Do I need another 30 years? I mean, how many more years do I need to show over and over again? And I put these people on Instagram and show them what, what I see on a regular basis as a last resort doctor who's been to all these doctors. And these doctors said, well, you should be outta business. You're, you're not a real doctor. Okay, well I agree with you. If you were doing your job, I should be outta business. So my point being is I'm so used to being locked in. Like I said, when I come into the office to give people results, that's all I know. And that's how I've learned and taught myself. And I guess I don't know if I could ever change that habit, which is good. My son's going to chiropractor school, so he'll be out in a year and a half.

Dr. Nick Athens (32:18):

So that's good. I can move on. But in the meantime, till then, you know, I, I still, you know, it's not over yet. So my goal is to guide people to better health and give them ideas that maybe they never thought of that can improve their health. And, and breathing with a high intensity interval training, breathing in the nose, out the mouth, expands your lungs, helps blood flow to the brain with nitric oxide. And as a result of that, you can have a better immune system. Less chance of comorbidities, better health, better energy, better hormonal system where you're getting more endorphins the dopamine hit and healthy addictions that you don't need outside in stimulation. You can get it from the inside out.

Caspar ([32:59](#)):

Yeah, I appreciate a doctor that can practice what they preach. There are few out there, right? And another way you do that is through your sleep routine. You're asleep by about 9:30 or so, you wrote. 4:30 you're up, seven to eight hours of quality sleep. But so many people suffer from poor sleep. And it's not just poor sleep, it's poor positioning. They wake up with aches, they're waking in the middle of the night. You talk a bit about that, especially how it deals with the spine and different ways to sleep. Can you give some recommendations for people that do have aches? I found myself sometimes in different beds in different areas when I'm traveling, wake up with some hip pain and things like that. Just like I know a lot of people, lower back pain or just others. What, what, what recommendations do you give that I know were in the book.

Dr. Nick Athens ([33:45](#)):

Good question on sleep. So a lot of people I find why is that important? First of all is because if you're contorted in a bad sleeping position, it pre stresses your body. Mm-Hmm. So for instance, a lot of people I find sleep like this, their hand or their face, and then they try to go out to their workout routine and do pushups and planks. Well, their right arm's already kind of in essence pre-tightened. It's prestressed. So now when you put stress on a pre-stressed area, you're gonna get an injury. So in essence, that's why that's huge is because people, you see, again, patterns people, I find a lot of people sleeping on their stomach and their side stomach. No one taught 'em how to sleep correctly. So you put a body pillow in there where they're not allowed to go on their stomach and you're teaching them in the middle of the night that the pillow is there for a reason to keep them from rolling over on their stomach so it keep them on their side or on their back.

Dr. Nick Athens ([34:37](#)):

And it keeps the three curves. I said earlier about those three spinal curves in a shock absorbing position, not in a compromised position. So a lot of people sleep compromised. And over time that's gonna have consequences. And if you can sleep more on your side or on your back, hands away from the face. And, and in the sleep chapter we talked about TMJ, a lot of people get TMJ, which is the most misdiagnosed condition I've seen in 42 years because it could create a lot of mental health issues. And why I'll post again on Instagram. Another it happens so often. A lot of people are just like this and they twist their jaw. That affects superficial temporal arteries which affect oxygen flow. And I say in the book, you, ya, excessive yawning means your brain's trying to get more oxygen to the brain. So that could be a TMJ, not to say it happens to everyone, but I look at that regularly on people and how their scalp is and how tight that is.

Dr. Nick Athens ([35:31](#)):

A lot of people breathe incorrectly at night. I recommend mouth tape in the chapter maybe to get used to breathing through the nose more often. Change your sleep angle, raise it to 30 degrees to get less resistance on the lungs. So you could get better airflow in. And then train your body a little bit at a time and a little progressive steps. And then your body gets used to that new way of doing things. And I put recommend scents or stimulate the sense of smell. Waves, oceans, raindrops. You could put apps to help calm you anything to help calm you. Sleep is great. I said the scalp massage and stretching before bed puts you in the present moment. 'cause The brain doesn't wanna be in the present moment. It's always looking to protect you. So it wants to go to the future in the past, in the future in the past.

Dr. Nick Athens ([36:19](#)):

So if you could teach people to be more in the present moment where they could do present time activities to calm their brains, pickleball, golf, stretching, cooking, gardening, these factors, I archery weight training running. It keeps the brain in this present moment and stretching before bed, you'll say, oh wow,

this is really tight. Oh, and then crawl into bed after you do foam rolling and stretching and go to sleep and get good quality sleep. And if you do that, easier said than done. But if you add these other ways to improve your sleep that I mentioned in the book, it's and sleep posture is one of those. So you can get off your stomach. So sleep on your side or back, you'll notice a big difference with less aches and pains in the morning. And you'll notice better quality sleep where you're not as stiff and sore and you're, you're gonna get up with a little more vibrancy, a little more energy, which hopefully you get outside. You go for a walk and start moving, as we know is all helpful for your health.

Caspar ([37:15](#)):

Yeah, no, there's so many recommendations in this book. That's why it's wonderful. And they are these kind of small implementable recommendations that anyone could do one at a time to optimizing their health in this kaizen small win every everyday approach. Right?

Dr. Nick Athens ([37:30](#)):

But

Caspar ([37:30](#)):

You, you know, you've mentioned this in the last chapter of accountability. You can't do it alone, right? This is, you know, we, we as humans are are not solitary type beings that, you know, thrive alone. And we do need someone to help us with accountability, whether that is a coach or people around you, community. Wh why was that important to kind of end that off with, because a lot of people would just kind of stop after sleep, I believe and call the day on the book. But you made that a a, a good final point. Why did you do that?

Dr. Nick Athens ([38:03](#)):

Good question. The reason I added accountability into the book, because you look at people and their, their habits and their statistics to see how moving forward and moving the path forward in their healthcare journey. Can they get better statistics by themselves or can they get better statistics with other people around them? Well, you, I put nature's example and I use a flock of geese. Geese line a V formation for a reason. There's 40% less energy on their wings when they're in a V formation than rather flying alone. So nature has these principles. You look at nature, they're all in, most animals are in packs. They're, they're with other animals and they use that for their survival to have their backs to watch out for them. And you find these people who go to gyms and go to yoga classes and tai chi classes in the park and swim classes and and hiking clubs.

Dr. Nick Athens ([38:52](#)):

They're gonna be better statistically going in the right direction because we don't have good days every day. And since we don't have good days, what's gonna get us outta that bad day? Well, we need that person, whether it be a healthcare coach or an accountability person that you go hiking with or cycling with or swimming with or Tai chi. And now that accountability's huge because Caspar, where have you been? We were supposed to go to the gym today. I thought, where have you been? I thought we had this workout routine. Three days. Yeah, you're right. See, if people rely on their own brain, it's not gonna be, it's out. It's job is to protect you. And it's only gonna agree with you what you say to it will always agree with you. So you need someone to manage that. Athletes have coaches for that. And if we don't have, and I talk about that in the book about your conscious fantasy brain isn't as accurate as you think you need realistic voices.

Dr. Nick Athens ([39:43](#)):

So the accountability part is the realistic voices to help keep you on track. 'Cause we all get off track in life and much like rehabilitation and anything you do in rehab, we have realistic voices to help guide you to the center to get you going in the right direction. Like a reset or a recalibration. And the same thing. If you could do that proactively, you're gonna have a lot less breakdowns with your life than if you do it reactively. And most people if they learn that now to look for, you know, places to go and, and all these other places, I tell in the book the yoga instructors, you might say, well, I'm overweight. I'm outta shape. They're gonna notice me. Everyone's gonna look at me No, everyone's in there working on themselves, they're trying to figure it out themselves. And the yoga structure will be so happy you're there just to make the change.

Dr. Nick Athens (40:30):

The alternative practitioners, they're all out try knowing you're grinding. They know you're trying to figure it out. They're there to help and they're there to, you know, train you and, and try to guide you on the weight training or the yoga or the flexibility or your spin classes. And, and they're trying to get you to get more outta yourself. And if you get more outta yourself on a regular basis, that's your new habit. That's what your brain knows because that's where you're teaching it. And now it's a normal part of your life, which is a good addiction that we talked about. And you could start having what's called proactive aging, not reactive aging. And I wanted to show a stock graph on that at the end of the book to show the angle of aging that you could take care of your body. And I try to use myself as an example where I practice what I preach to share with the world.

Dr. Nick Athens (41:16):

That you don't have to have these comorbidities. You don't have to have these immune compromises. You know, I think I miss one day in 42 years of the office and you know how I did, I sprained my ankle at 5:30 in the morning running and I get exposed to all these people come in and coughing and sneezing and you know, I get it. Not everyone's gonna be around other people, but my immune system gets stronger. But I also take care of myself with sleep, which affects the immune system. With stretching and, and weight training. I try to keep my body inside inside so it could battle what gets thrown at it from the outside in. So I wanna be more Teflon on the inside to absorb what life throws at me. And if I could do that and learn how to manage myself, and that's what I wanted to get out in the book, that you know, there's more in you than you think and use other people around you to help you because you're gonna talk yourself out of it a lot of times.

Dr. Nick Athens (42:07):

And is that the best thing for you? Well then that becomes your new habit because when you start talking yourself out of it a few times, then you get used to talking yourself out of it. Well, if you get accountability now, those people are talking you into it. And so the three words I recommend is "just get there." Just just get there. Just get to the gym, get to the Tai chi class, get to the swim. You get to the pool, excuse me, get to the yoga class and you'll find the brain will be like a dimmer switch will go, oh, okay. You're supposed to, I guess we're supposed to stretch today. I guess we're supposed to do a HIIT class today, I guess. So put yourself in the position to succeed and your brain will change. It's, I've never gone to a gym saying, huh, you know what?

Dr. Nick Athens (42:44):

I should have gone to back to bed and slept. What am I even doing here? No, my brain kind of wakes up 'cause I see all these other people working out. My brain lights up. You get your dopamine hit saying they're okay. It's, and even if I start walking on the treadmill and watch everyone else, I'm doing nothing but walking, pretty soon my brain's gonna take this information and start saying, okay, well I see Tom over there doing some bicep curls, or Mary or Sally doing a workout. Maybe I should start doing

something here. I see them here every day. They're so consistent, I can't believe it. You know, let me do some things too for my health. So, you know, you guide people, you put your body in a position to change habits. You, you, you stay in a calmer state. You don't react to this.

Dr. Nick Athens (43:23):

You make better decisions in the calmer state and less reactive. And if you do that with accountability, you know, if you look at the Blue Zones, what are the blue zones about? They have a long Asian, what do you find? They're very calm, there's no stress. And they have accountability. They have other people around them guiding them and encouraging them, giving them you know, clapping for them. They're helping them out on bad days. So build up your accountability team, in essence, you're doing with the blue zones, in essence, a good diet with, you know, great food choices. You're, you're going in the right direction more than most people in America. How's that?

Caspar (44:01):

No, no, there's no greater ROI I say than healthy choices and healthy actions. Just, you know, striving for health that's gonna give you the greatest ROI to be more productive, to do more things, live longer, be happier, all these things that, you know, pay back dividends, right? So, you know, you need to focus on that. And so thank you for writing this book and putting all this information on how to make those healthy choices. Yep. And thank you for being a trailblazer, which aren't just my words. That's Joe Montana on the back cover there. <Laugh> calling you a trailblazer. So I appreciate it. Congratulations again on the book. Where, where again could people pick this up or connect with you? So

Dr. Nick Athens (44:38):

"To Health With You," it's on Amazon or we have a website now called ToHealthWithYou.net. You could order it on the website, be happy to send it out to you then. But it's on Amazon and so far so good. Sold over 1200 copies.

Caspar (44:51):

Nice.

Dr. Nick Athens (44:52):

Which is great. And getting some good feedback on it that people are liking the read. It's not too overwhelming. You can read it on an airplane. It's, it's easy information and, and I, I didn't wanna waste people time. I just wanna give them, you know, how do you get from San Francisco to Chicago? Don't get me the sightseeing towards <laugh>. Just show me how to get from San Francisco, Chicago on the best route. And I wanted to show people a route to have a blue, more of a blueprint formula for how to take care of your body as you continue to age with less breakdowns and more fun. That's pretty much what it's about. Yeah,

Caspar (45:21):

Well you'll get to Chicago and you'll get to healthy quick following these <laugh>. So yeah. So thank you for the blueprint. Thank you for the book and all that you do. And it was great talking to you and hope to have you on again when you have your next book out, next Venture. So thank you Dr. Athens,

Dr. Nick Athens (45:36):

I appreciate you doing that and, and and, and then that and interviewing me. I appreciate it.

Caspar (45:39):

Thank you. Okay. And be sure to check out ToHealthWithYou.net for the book. You could also find it on Amazon. And there's also AthensChiro.net for more information about Dr. Athens. Until next time, continue writing your own healing story.