

Build a Healthy Relationship with Food

WITH EMILY HOCHMAN

Julia Chebotar 00:04

Spice up your life with me Health Chef Julia, as I set out on the journey of What is Healthy. In each episode, we'll explore the different meanings of healthy for some healthy means indulging in something decorative and delicious. For others. It's a mental health day and a good workout. There's more to health than just food. It's about living well, enjoying your life and having fun. Having you heard redheads do it best. Come with me, and we'll find out just what healthy is. Thanks for coming back, guys. And we're here another episode with Emily Hochman of the Weller. She is the founder and CEO of this amazing company that I basically found on Instagram that like an eye n event. And you were talking to the entire group about Valerie, and how it is so important for people to be healthy and kind of have people who can afford a health coach or all of the things to have a nutritionist on their phone at all times, which I think is genius. So thank you, Emily, for being on. And I'm in all of you. So please share to everyone what Valerie is and how you're doing it. And it's amazing.

Emily Hochman 01:14

Thank you so much for having me. You know, I love chatting with people like you, because you've been following along so long. And one of the best parts about business building is just to see the evolution as I'm sure you can relate, you know, to your different mediums and channels, and all the amazing things they are doing is to remember where you were and how far you've come and that this is all still just the beginning. So very, absolutely. I

01:39

love that.

Emily Hochman 01:40

Thank you for your support, of course.

Julia Chebotar 01:43

Um, so yeah, you guys are officially live. I think we did an Instagram live together like the beginning of COVID. And now it's officially live and looks amazing. And you've been posting about the health coaches that have joined. And yeah, thank you.

Emily Hochman 01:59

Amazing. So we are now live, we're a mobile application that is live in the App Store. And on Google Play. So we don't discriminate against you know, our mission at Well, it means to make personalized nutrition accessible for all. So whether you have an iPhone or an Android, we're here for you. And what our app does is it matches you with a well earned nutrition coach, all with the goal of helping you to build healthy habits that last. So if we look at diet culture, and we look at the pitfalls of diet culture over the last many, many decades, you know, what we can identify as the pain point is that there's not a one size fits all diet and the notion that someone can, you know, follow a good, what's good for you and

what's bad for you. And this antiquated marketing messaging that we've all seen, which is sign up here to lose 30 pounds in 30 days just doesn't work. And what we do at Valerie, all the mobile application is we actually match you with one of our well our nutrition coaches, who are either certified health coaches, licensed nutritionist and a registered dietitian. And you actually get a real expert in your back pocket, no pun intended, because figuratively, we are in your phone. And what we do is we help you build healthy habits. And we do that all via photo sharing mobile apps. So all new clients are prompted to take a picture of everything they're eating, and they share it with their nutrition coach, and they get daily tips, feedback, recommended recipes, encouragement for how to build healthy habits. And we do that all tailored towards you and your goals. So if you're someone who wants to lose weight, if you're someone who is signing up to build a healthy relationship with food, if you're someone who has a chronic illness and is looking for preventative measures, we really create a custom, personalized plan that lives in the app that helps you really identify what to eat on a meal by meal basis. So when T for breakfast, for lunch for dinner, snack, dessert, etc, etc. And we don't have a diet, we believe diet is a dirty word. Our food philosophy really stems in a lot of what you do, which is, you know, no more packaged food and really like how can we learn to eat real Whole Foods? And so?

Julia Chebotar 04:13

And is there different tiers, there's just like one price,

Emily Hochman 04:16

right now there's just one price. So it's at 999 per month, it's you can cancel at any time. So you know, a lot of what we believe in is transparency. And if it doesn't work for you, that's okay. Although we think it's gonna work really.

Julia Chebotar 04:30

I think so too.

Emily Hochman 04:31

Thank you, thank you. But the way that we think about our pricing, you know, 8999 is a higher price point, some might say, but it's actually extremely affordable when you look at what's out there. So if someone were

Julia Chebotar 04:42

to workout classes, that's

Emily Hochman 04:44

exactly right, for monthly membership, right, so you can actually have your nutrition coach every single day. And if you were to go see a nutritionist or dietician or health coach on your own, specifically, let's say in New York or LA, you're talking about somewhere between 200 \$250 for a one hour session,

Julia Chebotar 05:03

yeah, or even more, I mean, like, no offense that I and they were telling us, once you become a health coach, we won't even get into that, once you do the prices that you should be charging, we're like 350 to 550 for an

Emily Hochman 05:13

hour, right. And not every consumer can afford that. And so our mission is to make nutrition coaching, accessible and affordable. And the accessibility is, of course, covered by the fact that we're a mobile app that you can go anywhere. And then, you know, the affordability is where nearly a 10th of the cost of what it would cost you to actually see someone. So if you're paying, let's just call the 250 for a one hour session, and you will see that person for a month at about \$1,000 for the month for four sessions, where 90 bucks, you know, 8999 for 30. Plus, that's exactly correct. I mean, you can message your nutrition coach anytime of the day, if you wanted to message them at two o'clock in the morning. You know, they might not respond at two o'clock. But, but you have, you know, we like to say we're with you when you need it most, which is the hardest part about building healthy habits is not getting the what to do or not to do. It's the part when you're in there, you know,

Julia Chebotar 06:12

having someone keep you accountable.

Emily Hochman 06:14

That's exactly correct. accountability is one of two words you hear us say 100 times a day.

Julia Chebotar 06:19

Yeah, what I was what I wanted to know, like what motivated you to start? Well, are it because like, it's so smart, and I can't believe that it hasn't existed.

Emily Hochman 06:28

Thank you so much. That's the name. I like what we're doing something right. Um, I started it out of my own personal pain point. So when I was in college, many years ago, I was terrified of getting the freshman 15. And I did what mass media told me to do at the time, which was go on a diet. So I did and I'm a type A personality, I'm an INTJ, which means when I do something, I really do it. And I dyed it like crazy for four years name a diet, I've definitely tried to avoid the challenge of school. I had tried every diet and had none of the quote unquote, guaranteed results that they tell you, you're going to have, and unfortunately actually become very sick. So I went to the doctors, and they told me I had polycystic ovarian syndrome, hypothyroidism, pre diabetic, and potentially could never have children at the ripe age of 22. But they said, you know, don't worry, just take this medication, and you'll be fine. And I like to always say, I believe very much in Dr. Oz, I believe in science, I just felt like that was a fast diagnosis for me that I just wasn't willing to accept personally. So instead of doing that, I said, I'm gonna go figure out how to become healthy and what does relevant to your podcast that were like, what is healthy? How to actually solve that? And what I found was in the health and wellness world, there was everything in the fitness category, you name it, you could find it. There was nearly nothing in the nutrition category. You know, there were products that company for selling you But how did I know if that product is right for me or wrong for me or when to eat it or why

Julia Chebotar 08:04

it is or recipes devoted to that specific diet, but not actually just overall health? It's like a keto diet or a Paleo Diet recipe a gluten

Emily Hochman 08:12

free, dairy free. Yeah, exactly. Right, and how to and I don't know, how do I know if that's right for me, and, and how can I answer those questions? Or who do I ask? So similar to how we know each other, but I ended up enrolling in the Institute for integrative nutrition to try to get the answers to these questions. And I did you know, I learned, we learn, you know, over 100 different dietary theories, I learned the principle of bio individuality. One person's food is another person's poison. And through that experience, I was actually able to really start to look at myself and say, Okay, what are you eating and why? And I wasn't really eating what I should have been eating and the short answer is actually able to cure myself of every single potential chronic illness leaning into the power of food and food as medicine and food as fuel.

Julia Chebotar 09:00

And I say that every single

Emily Hochman 09:02

day. It's the power of the world you know? So when that happened, I was like, This is incredible. I mean, you know this better than anyone else food is it no rubber ball,

Julia Chebotar 09:14

no car shingles just by like food and diet. So yeah,

Emily Hochman 09:17

the main thing I mean, we have to talk about that I have so many questions. It's amazing because it really does work you know, if you if you give yourself the right fuel, you know, you can really solve so many things. So long story short, to answer question why we started with iOS right? I became obsessed with the power of food and I told every single person I knew about my experience and how and gotten sick and then I wasn't sick and and how that all came from food. And the short story is every single person I spoke to had their own relationship with food, whether it was someone who had gone through shingles and found the power of food or you know, someone who had been trying to lose fit tend to 15 pounds for 10 to 15 years. And Couldn't you know, maybe it was someone with digestion issues or, or disorders or, you know, skin problems or chronic illness? I mean, the list just, you know, we're talking about nearly 50% of the American population, so

Julia Chebotar 10:17

and they do chronically go with pain, and they just think it's okay.

Emily Hochman 10:21

Right? And right. I mean, I remember I think we talked about this last time, but so much of chronic pain can come from inflammation, which can come from what you're eating. And so, you know, I said, on top of everything else, that this was a few years ago, but on top of everything else that was going on in the world, we're currently we weren't still are currently in a national nutrition crisis. And they said, Wait a minute, like I need to be on the forefront of solving this problem. And then, the last bit of the story is I had just become a certified health coach. And, you know, I started to talk to other health coaches, and

other nutritionists and dietitians, and really sought out the experts in the industry. And what I learned pretty quickly, it's a very fragmented industry, it's lacking innovation, it's lacking job opportunity, quite honestly, it's lacking consumer opportunity. And so the short was, I became obsessed with how do we connect the hundreds of millions of Americans who are struggling with a healthy relationship with food? And how do we connect them to the hundreds of 1000s of nutrition experts, I'll be at a certified health coach licensed nutrition nest or registered dietitian, how do we connect those two built on a brand that's culturally relevant for today, and backed by technology so that we can, you know, scale and, you know, really build And so with that, I quit my full time job started building, and, and now we're

Julia Chebotar 11:40

live in the App Store isolation, it's amazing. But that's the thing, right? Like, I think some people outside of a major city, look at your credentials and see health coach and kind of think that it's some kind of joke. But in New York, or LA, people do kind of see that as more of a basis of knowledge and a massive credential. And I love that outside of a big city. Well, we can bring health coaches to everyone now.

Emily Hochman 12:06

You know, it's it's fascinating, that is really our goals, our mission of the business is to make personalized nutrition accessible for all. And that stems outside of major metropolitan areas, you know, how do we help people in the middle of the country? And one of the big questions I get often is, okay, well, if I sign up for salary, and I'm paying the 8999 a month, am I now spending hundreds of dollars on my groceries? You know, like, Are there added costs? And? And our simple answer is absolutely not. Our goal is not to up to the amount of money you're spending, it's how do you actually make smarter decisions with the money you're already spending? So how do we actually help you learn how to buy fresh fruits and vegetables instead of packaged food in the refrigerator? or freezer? section? And you know, how do we just reallocate the money you're already spending wherever you are in the country? How do we help you, even on a daily basis, make one small change a day. And, you know, we have a saying that says, you know, we focus on micro adjustments that lead to macro change, and we really believe in them. That's so true, though,

Julia Chebotar 13:11

like, look at how many people go into the grocery store and are triggered to purchase like those words, fat free, low fat. And people have stopped eating whole foods, and health supportive foods and foods that actually fuel you, because we're filled with like processed foods. And I'm actually really interested to see like demographics of the next generation of I 10 to 15 years from now. And they're like hormone levels, and like, you know, children in diverse areas have get their periods earlier and have all of these different health issues due to the process because they've been their whole life. So I think it's such an amazing thing to bring it was able to bring this to the masses, and how kids and other people are gonna, like surpass this. And if I learn from it,

Emily Hochman 14:01

you know, Katie Carr, I couldn't be more. And it's about Katie Couric actually just came out with an article a couple weeks ago, that was all about the rise of colon cancer. And the underlying tone of that article is diet, diet at a young age, you know, pediatric diet, diet and your developmental years. Diet,

diet, diet. And the more I'll speak personally, the more I investigate and learn, research and learn about the power of diet from a very young age, you know, through your childhood, through your teenage years and into adulthood. It's so powerful. It's so unbelievably, unbelievably powerful. And when we look at how sick Our nation is, I'm sorry to say I'm no longer surprised. Absolutely. Yes.

Julia Chebotar 14:49

so obvious. Like we're just literally feeding medication to people to keep them doing the same exact things. And then

Emily Hochman 14:58

I make a turn over. I'm eating this too, but you turn over a label in a grocery store of products that we're actually selling that our country has said, yes, you, you buy this, and you look at the chemicals and just the stuff

Julia Chebotar 15:13

that people pronounce half of it.

Emily Hochman 15:15

I mean, it's horrifying. And then you know, we wonder why our life expectancy is declining for the first time ever. And it's because most consumers are consuming chemicals every single day. And chemicals just aren't good for you.

Julia Chebotar 15:32

Absolutely. I love this thing, when I don't love this thing. I love this fact. But it's disgusting, is that pharmaceutical companies make most of their money off of antibiotics for livestock. And I'm not saying like, I'm not plant based. And I'm not telling people they need to be plant based, but like, you are what you eat in all forms. So like, people just need to learn how to make those simple changes, and they will now from your app.

Emily Hochman 15:57

That's right, we your thing that was perfect. For us, we have two words that we use a lot as well, which is education and empowerment. And a lot of what we do is exactly what you just said, which is how can we educate people? Because unfortunately, and we hope to be a part of making this change. But unfortunately, right now, you know, children aren't taught nutrition education, we're taught sound. Barely, barely. That's the difference. But we're not taught nutrition. And so, you know, one of the things I got, you know, we hope to be on the forefront of this conversation down the road as well. But, you know, we're not teaching our nation how to eat. And so one of our mission statement that while our use is to do that is to really prioritize the education because nutrition isn't actually rocket science, when you distill it down, you know, how do you actually eat real food? Obviously, it can get more complex, the deeper and deeper you get. But at its most simplistic form, what we believe in our food philosophy is eat real food, not packaged food. And if we can just help more of the nation do that, we will see a drastic decrease in you know, hopefully death rate, we will see a drastic decrease in number of chronic illnesses across the nation. You know, you just you can just see the impact that real food has so quickly and so clearly.

Julia Chebotar 17:23

Absolutely. I love that. Yes. And I feel like so someone takes by downloads the app, they sign up on their phones, and like how instantly does like interaction happen? Yes,

Emily Hochman 17:36

great question. So someone, I'll take you through our onboarding. So you download the app, you create a profile, a profile has three parts to it. So there's your demographic, where we consider your registration, which is your demographic information, your age, your gender, your location, if you're willing to share. And then we have our nutrition profile. So we get to know your dietary preferences, any diets you've tried before, how, what you're eating, what you're allergic to excited what your goals are? And then the third part is your communication preferences. So are you someone who likes drafting to the point feedback, Are you someone who likes Oh, sounds like a dating app almost. And then from there, you're then matched with someone on our team, and not all happen, you know, within just a few seconds, we have, you know, the benefit of technology on our side. And algorithm that's helping us make the right fit for you. And then from there, you land in our in app messenger. And you're prompted with an onboarding right away. So for instance, we offer you what we could call our get to know you call this is a 30 minute phone call or video call, you schedule that with your nutrition coach. And this is an opportunity to do and to really get to know your nutrition coach, which we believe is so important. So you know, one of the things that we evaluate ourselves on is you are actually getting matched with a nutrition coach who you will get to know and we'll get to know you. It's not a bot, wherever you know where we are real people behind the app. So we really give you the opportunity to get to know each other and then you're prompted to start photo sharing and then your your nutrition coach responds once a day and gives feedback helps get to know you and then you start to build weekly habits. Do you have a good virtual best friend at all times telling you what to eat and what not to eat?

Julia Chebotar 19:18

I love it.

Emily Hochman 19:19

It's It's the first time someone's actually we hear this feedback a lot, which is it's the first time someone's actually helping someone think about what to eat and why to eat and how to eat and, you know, it blows my mind when you know we talked about that. problems in our nation and nutrition. It blows my mind that nutrition has been left out of so many conversations today and we really want to bring it to the forefront of conversation.

Julia Chebotar 19:41

I'm actually curious, like within Corona and self quarantine, even Katie Couric post, it's like two thirds of the population is like, felt like they better themselves in some sort of way. And I wonder if people post this will either taking consideration. They're crazy work schedules as we do as New Yorkers. They're like crazy lifestyles, they're like eating on the go and stuff like that. And I wonder if post all of this, those habits will stick with people?

Emily Hochman 20:14

You know, to make the question. I wonder, my gut reaction is, I think we had a much needed wake up call. Absolutely. You know, I think I will speak like you, you know, as New Yorkers, you know, we have been moving at the speed of light, we've been on the hustle on the grind. Don't prioritize our house, don't rise asleep. But you know, at the end of day, we're all human. And I do believe it was a wake up call to actually say, how do you actually prioritize your health? How do you prioritize your work life balance? How do you prioritize being human? Which I think we have negated for for a little bit?

Julia Chebotar 20:52

Yeah. Does the app also like what if someone's like, Oh, hey, I'm gonna go work out and then eat this is they're like,

Emily Hochman 21:00

yeah, we ask you those questions, you absolutely can share that with your nutrition coach, as you build healthy habits. So we believe in the foundation of building your nutrition habits to start. So building a strong foundation of breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, etc. And then we move on to what we categorize as wellness goals. And so that's how we are wellness habits, rather. And so that's how we get to know what is your movement habits look like? What does your meditation habits look like? What is your self care habits look like? And that's really hyper personalized to each individual and what their goals are.

Julia Chebotar 21:34

I love that. Um, so besides the App Store, if someone wants to like ask a question, they would first have to download the app right to talk to someone so like, they can't like just like dm you guys.

Emily Hochman 21:48

I mean, we're active on Instagram. You can dm dm us at any time, but not if you wanted to work with a nutrition coach now. Nutrition question, are you really wanting to start? You know, building healthy habits you eat, we would always recommend downloading the app. If anyone had any questions about how the app works or anything, they can always dm us.

Julia Chebotar 22:08

Okay, amazing. Thank you so much for being on Do you have any last things that you want someone to know about? Well, Ray, please mention all the things where they can find you. Well, every all the handles, you know the works.

Emily Hochman 22:23

Yay. Yes. For anyone listening, we are here to help. Whether you're looking to lose weight, build a healthy relationship with food, figure out how to stay healthy at home for those who are in their kitchen for the first time. We are here for you. So you can find us in on the Apple Store on the app store or on Google Play. Again, if you have an iPhone or an Android, you can learn more@www.att.com You can find us on Instagram at Valerie. And we would love to work with you. We have an amazing team of almost 600 health coaches, nutritionists and dietitians and it's amazing love to be here for you to come find us.

Julia Chebotar 23:05

And their Instagram is beautiful. You should just go on follow them anyway. And they give you tons of facts and tide tons of like interesting information. So please go check them out. Thank you, Emily. So much. I love talking with you and I really appreciate you spending time today.

Emily Hochman 23:22

Thank you so much for having me your support since day one means everything. Thank you