BtR 351 Amy Novotny\_FINAL

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**SPEAKERS**

Jerry Dugan

00:00

So we're working on getting you out of whatever your pain is whether it's physical, mental, emotional into relief. By first we have to get you to become aware of your nervous system aware of your body position aware of your breathing mechanics.

**Jerry Dugan** 00:14

Hey, Rutter Nation. Welcome to another episode of beyond the rut, the podcast that shares encouraging stories and practical tools to help pull you out of your rut into a life worth living in your faith, family and career. I'm your host Jerry Dugan, and in this episode, we're going to be joined by Dr. Amy Novotny. Now Dr. Novotny is a physical therapist, and author and the founder of the PA ber method. So, we're gonna be talking about how to improve your health, specifically in pain relief, stress reduction, and a whole gamut of other issues all through her method. P A, br That's Papa Alpha Bravo Romeo, for your military types. And that we're also going to talk about how she discovered this method while she was doing marathon running. She's still a marathon runner today, in fact. So grab a notebook, grab a pen, sit back, relax. And here we go. All right. Hey, Dr. Amy Novotny. How are you doing today?

01:13

I'm doing well. Jerry, thank you so much for having me on. It's a pleasure to be here. So

**Jerry Dugan** 01:17

and I meant to ask you before we hit record, but now I'll just ask you now, where are you calling in from?

01:22

I'm currently in Utah near Salt Lake City right now,

**Jerry Dugan** 01:25

man, we were just talking about how I'm coming back from a camping trip in Big Bend National Park. Zion is on my radar. Probably won't do in the next few weeks. But there's that and there's like Moab.

01:38

There's Bryce Canyon, there's a lot of things in Utah. I'm brand new to just be in here. So I haven't even explored everything right?

**Jerry Dugan** 01:46

Well, you take the interview from here, I'm gonna go ahead and repack my bags. And I'll see you all in Utah. There's like a whole different turn. It's not what we were expecting. But so your background, your early career, you were a physical therapist, and then you picked up a doctorate degree and you'd picked up something called the power method. So tell us a bit about your your professional background.

02:09

Sure. So I actually so I studied biology, French, Spanish and math in college. And then I went on to get my doctorate in physical therapy. I did that for about five years. And then I developed the powerbar method. So I started studying more about the nervous system, the respiratory system, how they're all intertwined, and how that actually contributes to a lot of the ailments that afflict us chronic pain, regular pain, stress, anxiety, insomnia, high blood pressure, all those have a common denominator, which is that fight or flight nervous system that we often get stuck in?

**Jerry Dugan** 02:44

Yeah, so I mean, I've heard that phrase all the time. I mean, I was a pre med student. Don't ask me why I'm not a doctor. Because I guess you figured out my GPA was not big enough. I didn't learn enough. And I didn't want to be a doctor, it turns out. But yeah, fight or flight is something that comes up a lot in the psychology courses, you get hit with a stressor, and you either fight it, or you take off, you're like, Nope, I'm out of here. And it's what's kept the human race the human species alive for so many years. Because I guess US versus a bear, we should not exist. You'd think that as a civilized, I guess, species, you know, we've got cities, towns, laws, language, that we wouldn't need fight or flight, but it's still there. And that's something we don't really think about is it?

03:34

Yeah, it's actually there's four categories of fight and flight are the main ones. There's also freeze and fun. So a lot of times when people are in that ramped up hyper vigilant mode, they actually freeze as well. And some people when they're under a severe trauma, they, they freeze, and they become numb to the world. And there's also a condition called fawning, which is like your people pleasing, you're trying to appease a danger or try to dissuade it from affecting you. So but it is a natural and normal process to have it. We need it still, every day, we still need it to kind of wake us up or put us on high alert. You know, if we have something going on and you know, a stress maybe you're walking across the street and a cars coming at you, you need to go in that fight flight freeze or fun mode to get out of the way the car. That's a normal human process. The problem becomes when we stay there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which is often what happens in modern society with all of our stresses, we forget and we just don't take the time to get out of that mode out of that state. And that's where the problem becomes because it really affects our health. Yeah.

**Jerry Dugan** 04:44

And you talked about like it's not just experiencing stress or anxiety, like actual pain, experienced pain is also tied into this common denominator. How what does that How is that connected?

04:57

Sure. So what often happens Now see this in many, many people of all different ages, when someone has stress, and let's say it builds up any type of anytime you have stress, your muscles respond by contracting all over your body when they do that. And if they do that for a prolonged period of time, because you stay in that stress mode, they start to pull on joints and bones, and they pull them slightly out of position, especially if you don't have the best position in your skeleton possible. And you're not considered in neutral where you had the most space. If you're slightly off, let's say you're arching your back too much, or you're sitting cockeyed. And you have a stressful experience that lasts and the muscles start pulling out normally on those bones, it leads to something called impingement, which is tissues butting up against each other. When that happens, you start to develop pain. And because you're in that stress mode, and you don't sense or feel the muscles acting abnormally, you don't realize that that pain is actually from being in that mode of stress and not releasing it. And that's where a lot of people get in trouble. Even those who are elderly, who are told that they're bone on bone and ready for joint replacements. A lot of times, it's not the arthritis that causes the pain, it's the stress over the years that have caused the muscles to pull on the bones abnormally. And once you get them to release it, the bones go back into a neutral position, they regain the space, they don't have top surgery, done that many times where people are bone on bone, have been doing injections for years decades, daily anti inflammatories, and they learn how to de stress and release the tension from their body. They cancel their surgery and they never have to have it.

**Jerry Dugan** 06:45

Well, that's kind of like when you run into somebody who's like in their 90s. But without knowing their actual age, do you think they're probably more like in the late 60s, early 70s. They just move in with lots of mobility, smiling all the time, and they just seem to be at peace. Almost zen like, in a way. That makes a lot more sense. Yeah. Now how many Americans would you say are impacted by this? Like, just oh,

07:09

I'm assuming 1000s and 1000s. I mean, pretty much everyone I have come across, unless they are have a really strong spiritual, mental, emotional and physical practice. Yeah, almost everyone can benefit from what I'm talking about. Even if they don't work with me one on one or personally or in a group setting. If they take this information, and they start to apply it or use some of my free resources, they can benefit. And I have plenty of people who will write to me and say, I just did some of your free stuff. And I feel so much better. It got rid of my back pain, my shoulder pain, I feel relief. So this affects pretty much everyone in modern society.

**Jerry Dugan** 07:46

Yeah, yeah, I was thinking about everybody I know. And including myself. And this sounds like all of us. Anytime there's a tightness in the neck, tightness in the back, you know, the the stereotypical picture of somebody holding their back, like where the kidney is. Or just like, I can think of uncles that when they talked, and certain other folks that when they talked when they were nervous, and under stress that they kind of rock, there's this, like, need to move around all the time. And the vigilance and the way their thought processes doing starts to get tunnel vision in a way, and they're not able to see a bigger picture, because they're so focused on this thing that's stressing them out. And it's kind of holding them back holding them in a rut, in a sense, you know, career wise or family wise. And so I think, you know, there is a lot of benefit in relationships, and whether work relationships or personal ones, if we're able to take that step back and, and Aleve that stress and manage that stress. Because I mean, stress is there. It's like it's a constant in a way, I think kind of like change. It's like, well be positive, like a positive things are gonna change. Positive. There's stress out there. But so what was it that like, drew your attention to the pepper method? And then we'll talk about the pepper method, of course, because we were like, what's this pepper method? Keep listening.

09:07

So, I, I was, at the time, I was training to qualify for the Boston Marathon. And I was running eight miles three times a week on a treadmill in about 55 minutes. So I was running fast. And I decided that I would start playing with my body position and my breathing mechanics so not breath work as we as we hear about breath work, not working on the rhythm, but the actual mechanics. And I realized that when I changed the way I positioned myself, it affected my breathing. And that also affected all those typical little runners, aches and pains and tightness. And I could, when I got off the treadmill, I stopped stretching, I stopped foam rolling, I stopped scraping all the things that I was teaching people to do. Previously as a physical therapist. I didn't need to do it. It felt like I had never got on the treadmill. I was completely We find completely loose, and like, wow, everything that I was experiencing, there's various runners aches and pains when you're doing marathons or longer distances, there's always going to be something that crops up. But all of a sudden, I could get rid of it. And I didn't have to get off a treadmill. And I just walk around like, wow, okay, no, I'm gonna go to work and everything's gone. Okay. It is time I was like, Do other people notice or am I stumbling on something new? Because you don't know. Yeah. And you don't know. It was like, cost you other runners know this. But I couldn't encounter anyone who did and was like, Okay, I need to start experimenting with this more. And I use myself as a guinea pig for sure. And the next marathon I ran, I dropped seven minutes off my time with no other changes. And if you run marathons, you know, that's a huge amount. And then the one after that I ran another seven minutes faster. I mean, I was blowing through the qualifying times for Boston, and I ran a 319 marathon, which for some Joe Schmo, that is I was like, wow, I was never a runner in school. I was not a professional in this or anything like that. And I was doing a decent job. So I started then experimenting on other people, and people were healing, faster timeframes than normal healing. nerve injuries were getting better. And so that's when I was like, Okay, I'm going to develop this method, and put it into use in practice and start helping people.

**Jerry Dugan** 11:28

So the pepper method is your method that you designed? Yes, yes. Okay. Okay, now, let's click in here.

11:36

That's why I'm the founder of Awesome,

**Jerry Dugan** 11:39

awesome, it's I was, I was also stuck for a moment on the part where your running time is amazing, by the way, and this is coming from, I guess, for what it's worth a guy whose running speed is about the same as his walking speed. And I actually didn't learn any running form until well, after I was out of the army. And I was actually three years ago, somebody told me, like, on the balls of your feet, like you're running in place where you're like, kicking forward, I'm like, just applying that I was like, wow, I can actually run. Now I don't just because I don't like getting to run, but

12:13

I'm going to caution you on that. Running on the balls of your feet is only designed for sprinting. Oh for running. For running, like actual running, you want to hit on your heels or mid foot. Okay. Otherwise, you're going to create a ton of injuries. A lot of injuries. Yeah. So so on the balls your fee is only for like if you're running barefoot or sprinting. There's a huge distinction. I just want to make sure because I don't want you to get hurt in the future if you decide

**Jerry Dugan** 12:37

to run mono that already happened two years ago. Yeah, my calves are getting tired. The shin splints went away, but the calves are getting tight. And then the the cramped up on me before I can trip that I had to cancel, but but we're here to talk about the power method Jerry, get back on the topic. Alright. So the power method tell us about that. Like, how did that make it not just how it made a difference in your running, but it was applicable everywhere else. So what are the it's pa br Everybody. And so what are those four steps in pattern.

13:07

So it stands for pain, awareness, breathing relief. So we're working on getting you out of whatever your pain is, whether it's physical, mental, emotional, into relief, by first, we have to get you to become aware of your nervous system aware of your body position aware of your breathing mechanics. And so as we're developing this awareness, we're helping you realize where do you hold tension? How does your ribcage influence if you're in a fight or flight status or a relaxation status. So there's a lot of training on, let's change your body position first, then we work on your breathing mechanics to help you develop a release in your body. And then we need to stabilize you now that your body has released that tension. And that's where the it's a process, not a one time thing. A lot of people can achieve the brain free status or the release. But if they don't take the next steps to stabilize their body in that new position, they will revert back to their painful states from before, because that's all the nervous system was trained to do for decades or years. So and I'm, I'm, I emphasize all this because people will try it and they're like, oh, yeah, I feel great. And then the next day, they wake up with art. Oh, I feel horrible again, it's like, it's because you haven't learned to stabilize yourself and use your body in a different way. Because ultimately, the state you're in right now, is your body just responding to what you've trained it to do. Yeah. So we have to do pretty much a whole new way of carrying yourself and behaving. If you want to feel good and free in your body and safe in your body. Nice. It's

**Jerry Dugan** 14:48

it's very much similar to like forgiveness, right? It's like that forgiveness is not a one time thing. It's you got to do it almost every day, every moment to release yourself of that bitterness against the other person. And so power if you want Get your body to forgive you. It sounds like you gotta keep coming back to that process so that you get that relief. So I guess for somebody listening in, like, how would they apply it? I don't know, you know, a few minutes on a podcast, I'm pretty sure it's not enough to really learn or master this. But if somebody wanted to, like really understand it and try it, how can we instruct them through just this audio platform like you and I can see each other right now, but most folks are going to listen to this.

15:28

Yeah, so Well, my first sessions are an hour and a half. Okay, it wouldn't do justice to spend two minutes trying to explain something that takes an hour and a half to go through just for the first session. And then it's usually includes the another five or six hours before they, as they start to learn all the concepts. So that I would just want to kind of try to give clarity to people, it what you're doing is you're looking at different aspects of your life. Let's say you have back pain. First, we have to change how you position your ribcage, so that you can feel your back muscles release so that your breathing mechanics change so that you aren't using your back to breathe, walk, reach, squat, bend, all these daily activities that we have, we overuse our back all the time. Because what somehow when we were little, we were taught to stick your chest out, pull your shoulders back and suck up your gut, which makes you in a fight or flight mode. And it sounds like you're in the military. So you can understand this even more. In the military. They teach you to be in fight flight freeze or fun mode all the time. So the posture, if you think about that traditional military posture that is designed only for a few minutes or a few seconds during your day, it is not designed to be that way all the time. So one of the first things I tell people is let your belly go, let your gut hang out. So your ribcage can drop down in a neutral, so that you can start to remember how to relax again. And that's kind of a big concept. And then we go from there. And then it starts to branch into how to use your legs and arms. And how do you use them in a safe way so that you're not locking yourself up and creating more pain in your body?

**Jerry Dugan** 17:13

Wow. Wow, like man, thanks again, army. Because like, while you're talking, I was like, Yeah, lift this up, do that. And then I'm realizing, no, I'm just sitting at the position of attention, which is the complete opposite of what you just described and like, okay, that's why it takes at least an hour and a half to start. Yes. Awesome. And so, ever since you've come up with the power method, you've applied this to many people. What are the kinds of results you're seeing? You mentioned one earlier, where you have those who are elderly who are scheduled or slated for surgery on their joints, apply this method and no longer need that surgery. What are some of the other benefits you've seen from the pepper method?

17:54

Sure. Kind of some other descriptions. There's a gentleman named Newy Scruggs. He's in the Dallas Fort Worth area. He's a sportscaster for the Cowboys. We did some work he had the benefit of being able to sleep eight hours a night he his sleep improved immensely. We have other cases where I had a naturopath in Arizona who works with all the professional sports teams. He had a ACL tear MCL tear with a minor tibia fracture. And in his case, he came to see me, we did some work, he was limping, wearing a brace unable to straighten his leg. And in that hour and a half, he was able to straighten his leg and then sit up and bend it fully. And when he was done, he was able to walk without his brace and five sessions later, he walked normally three sessions. After that he played tennis again. Then we have cases where I've a lady who also is in Texas, she has several businesses and just you know, stresses of life and trauma as she developed some kind of anxiety that was afflicting her, and you know making her emotionally reactive and unable to help kind of run the business is really impacting her life, family life as well. And we worked with her to help her comb her body so she could feel safe in her body again. So that anxiety went away. And she was able to grow her business. Now she opened it another one, maybe another couple, she's able to reach out to more people she's now having relationships where there's not this burst of emotion that she was unable to control before but now she is more loving relationships.

**Jerry Dugan** 19:31

Yeah, it almost sounds like what is the core of living is not what we expect it to be. It's, you know, you know, or just in the body. You know, the core is like your six pack abs and I don't know, deadlift 500 pounds out to the Incredible Hulk or something. But it's like, no, there's this different state almost where if you have it all in the alignment that should be in or could be in, then everything else is sort of falls into place.

19:57

Yeah, people think that having a strong core means like what you said, being able to deadlift, a certain amount of having a strong core is, can you keep your ribcage in a neutral, stable position that gives you all of your flexibility, stability and strength while you while you move. And that does not mean locking yourself up, locking yourself up leads to injuries. But having a stable core means can you run, excuse me and breathe, and your ribcage is not lifting up and going down? Can it just stay down, but your arms and legs are free. And that you don't have to stretch, you don't have to try to pull on something externally, to try to be able to move, you should just be able to move freely while your body is not falling apart. And so that's what a true stable core really means. And not, not every fitness professional out there has them. If you talk to most personal trainers, they have some kind of back pain aches or something going on. And that tells you guess what, they're not doing something right. They're not in the right position.

**Jerry Dugan** 21:02

There's always some kind of overuse injury. And I was even getting them just a few years ago when I was training, like twice a day just was a pandemic I was bored. Like, what was I training twice a day. So I would see the benefits, like I can hike faster and go further. But then at the same time, my calves are always sore, my ankles are sore. And yeah, this is so cool. So if so let's say someone's listening right now. And they're like, Alright, guys stop talking. Where do I sign up? Where do I get more information? How do I get help and change my life? Where do they go.

21:35

So the easiest places to go to my website, pablor institute.com, pa VR institute.com. And you can see free resources on there, you can also do a discovery call with me, that's a free 15 minute call, I have changed my model. So I only work with people after I've had a discovery call because I want to make sure it's the correct fit. They're on the right page. And they explained the process a little bit more in depth to them. So they know what to expect. So and then there's the option of working together one on one. But there's also the option of working together in a live group setting a lot of people learn really well in a group setting because they feed off of each other. And sometimes you need don't know what to ask someone else asks it for you. And then soon, upcoming soon we're going to have a video only course that's at a lower price point. So people who have busy schedules and can't meet a specific time each week, then they can do the video course and still learn.

**Jerry Dugan** 22:32

Yeah, and this is done virtually or everything's virtual. I

22:35

work with people all over the world. I love

**Jerry Dugan** 22:37

technology. Yes. Kip is my hero. If you know that reference. For everybody else, you're like, oh, he just called Napoleon Dynamite. Yes, I did. Awesome. So I love this. It's just a whole new way of looking at how to relieve stress, how to be at peace with everything around you. And there is that mind body connection in a way it's not in a way there is that mind body connection, the psychosomatic injuries and illnesses are a thing, right? And so knowing that you could alleviate back pain, joint pain, neck pain, the thing that keeps you up at night all comes back to you know, kind of centering yourself and working with this, the proper method and again, your breathing, right, the ribcage, right? And all those things that it just, it sounds awesome. And I can I can think of people and examples of people where it's like they probably did something similar to this. And so it's it's neat that you've packaged it for folks and made it easier. So that's at pa br institute.com. You've mentioned the different packages. And then any final words of wisdom that you want to share with folks before we go.

23:49

Absolutely. So when you're going through your day, I want you to watch and check on yourself. See how much you suck your gut in and hold your breath. And when you catch yourself, let it go. Sit back in your chair, let yourself relax in your chair. A chair is designed for a position of relaxation, we try to make an exercise, but it should be a position of relaxation. So let your gut go. Let your belly go. So your breathing can actually start to start to be used by be, you know, driven by the diaphragm instead of your ribcage and belly breathing. I just want to say to people is not diaphragmatic breathing. That's just abdominal distension we want the ribcage down to support the diaphragm. Because when the diaphragm is working to help you breathe, it's stimulates a nerve to help you relax, which frees up your body makes you feel safe in your body.

**Jerry Dugan** 24:41

Dr. Amy Divani thanks for being on here and everybody else. You know, again, the website pAB. Our institute.com Emile's Great to have you on here with us.

24:51

Thank you so much, Sherry. The pleasure.

**Jerry Dugan** 24:53

Now, I hope you got a lot of good information out of this conversation like I did, and you're looking for ways to Apply the PA br method to yourself or reach out to Dr. Novotny website right now, to learn more. And if you want to find that you can go to the show notes at beyond the rut.com slash 351. There you'll find links to Amy's website, more information about what we discussed today and other related episodes on living a healthy life. So, there you have it. Now I'm glad you join me on this episode and I look forward to joining you again on the next one. But until then go live life beyond the rut. Take care