Parents Are Hard To Raise S02 E82 Show Transcript

Lipstick Bodyguard: [00:00:00] The world is becoming a dangerous place for us women. Lipstick bodyguard looks just like an innocent little lipstick but it will instantly drop any attacker to his knees so you can get away unharmed. Lipstick. Bodyguard. Fear no evil. Get yours today only at lipstickbodyguard.com.

Announcer: [00:00:37] Psychiatrist and Alzheimer's researcher, Dr. Kat Toups, says dementia is not some mysterious disease that just happens! It happens for reasons. And when we identify those reasons and contributing factors, we can stop or even reverse it. She knows this not only as a doctor, but also from her very own personal battle with the disease.

[00:01:01] Parents Are Hard To Raise is now available on Spotify and its 180 million monthly subscribers.

[00:01:19] Welcome to Parents Are Hard to Raise. Helping families grow old together without losing their minds. An elder care expert Diane Berardi.

Diane: [00:01:28] What if, one day, you suddenly began to realize you were showing all the same symptoms as dementia and Alzheimer's patients?

That's exactly what happened to my guest medical expert.

Dr. Kat Toups is board certified in Psychiatry, Neurology, and Geriatric Psychiatry. She is also a **Distinguished Fellow** of the American Psychiatric Association-- which is their highest honor.

At age 51, having already conducted over 100 clinical trials in dementia and Alzheimer's disease, Dr. Toups began to realize that she herself was losing both her memory and her mind.

What she did next allowed her to continue in her demanding medical work instead of living out the rest of her life in a nursing home.

And now she's on a quest to spread the news of hope to the growing legion of dementia sufferers around the world.

Dr. Kat Toups, welcome to Parents Are Hard To Raise.

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:02:26] Thank you so, so much. I'm so excited to be here and as you mentioned to get this message out to people. I think it's the saddest thing when patients go to the neurologist, especially at the academic centers, and they get a workup for their memory loss, and they're told that you have Alzheimer's disease and we have some medications that might slow it down for a year but really it's gonna keep going. And so you should go home and get your affairs in order. And that is just heartbreaking, because there are so many things now that we actually can do. And so I really want people to know that dementia is not a death sentence and there are things we can do about it.

Diane: [00:03:05] Well that's incredible. And we need to know that because it's true. I talk to clients or children and their parents every day. And so many people who have no hope. And that's exactly what happens to them. They go to the doctor and they say, this is your diagnosis and it's just going to get worse. You have such an incredible story. Could you tell us what happened to you?

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:03:33] Yes, so. I'll be happy to do that. So as you mentioned, I was running a

clinical trials research center. Of those 100 plus trials about 20 of them were in Alzheimer's and mild cognitive impairment so I did research with a lot of different areas of psychiatry.

[00:03:49] But I started to realize that I was as cognitively impaired as my patients in my Alzheimer's trials. And I would test them and I would give them three words to remember in the many mental status exams, and I couldn't remember the words to ask them the answer. So I would I would write it down because I had two sets of three words that I would alternate and then I couldn't remember which set I had used and I had used those words for more than 20 years. So that was maybe my biggest clue.

[00:04:20] And I got to where I couldn't drive a car safely. I could no longer back up a parallel park in the car. I just couldn't sequence those activities. One day my husband got in a car with me and he said, "Kat what is wrong with you? You're driving like a little old lady".

[00:04:39] And I said, "I don't know. So many things are happening when you're driving.".

[00:04:43] And I just couldn't... My processing speed with so impaired that I was having a hard time driving. And then I forgot how to use the computer. I would forget how to do things that I knew how to do and I would ask that same husband, can you show me how to do this. And he would get annoyed with me because he said, well I just showed you that. And I didn't remember and it got worse than that.

[00:05:07] I developed auditory processing problems. So I could decode what was being said when there was any background noise, and I kept going to the ENT and saying I need hearing aids. And they said, No. You just have a mild hearing loss, it's no big deal. And then finally one day the doctor looked at me funny and he goes, you know this isn't your ear it's in your brain.

[00:05:27] So they did testing. And I had developed auditory processing problems. And I have such great empathy for children that are born with auditory processing problems. Because normally people are born with them they were you know they couldn't believe I had acquired that. And interestingly now I have resolved that problem but it was it was quite a path.

[00:05:49] What had happened was I developed multiple chemical sensitivity. So I have become allergic to everything and I was covered with rashes, covered with hives. I couldn't get out of a chair for a year because of severe fatigue. And all of that inflammation of my body was just eating up my brain.

[00:06:08] So the secret to figuring out what was happening in my brain of course started with what was happening in my body and my immune system.

Diane: [00:06:18] Now did you... You went to your regular doctor? What happened? How did you come to figure all this out and get on the path to healing?

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:06:34] Right. Now that's a great question. Well of course as a physician I kind of knew the limitations of what traditional medicine had to offer me. And I knew they would put me on steroids for my immune system. And I never felt like just suppressing the immune system was the answer. Right? The Immune system is acting out because there is a problem, right.

[00:06:54] So I did cover bases. And I went to the rheumatologist, and I went to the immunologist, and the endocrinologists. But, you know, I remember quite well the UCSF endocrinologist. He said, well you clearly have autoimmune disease and it's just not in the textbooks yet.

[00:07:13] So what happened was, I finally I went to a conference called "Food As Medicine." And that conference changed my life. It changed my world view. It changed my life personally. It changed my life professionally. And in this conference at Food As Medicine they kept talking about functional medicine. And so I Googled that and they talked about the Institute for functional medicine and the next module coming up was immune and allergy and I thought Oh goodness I better go to that. So that's how I came to the table of starting to learn about functional medicine and luckily I had enough brain cells left, because I did have a sieve for a brain at the time. But I persevered and started learning again working through all the layers of functional medicine.

[00:07:59] So functional medicine is basically... Is at the root cause Medicine. Instead of wanting to know, "what is your diagnosis?" We don't really care about the name of the diagnosis. We really want to know why. Why do you have these problems? So we want to get at the root causes and what are the driving factors. And then if we can identify those, just like with dementia, with any kind of chronic disease, if we can figure out the factors and get us on balance then the body... The body is designed to heal. If we can get out of its way.

Diane: [00:08:33] Right. Okay. So what causes dementia?

[00:08:41] You know dementia, heretofore, has been considered a mysterious disease. We know there are some genetic factors but we know that many many people get dementia without that classic Alzheimer genes and I do not have the genes for Alzheimer's. But clearly I was quite demented. In retrospect I couldn't even figure that out at the time. But it is a multifactorial disease. So it happens for all kinds of reasons. And even if you do have some genetic risk those genes have to be turned on to express themselves.

[00:09:16] So many people have genes for Alzheimer's and never get Alzheimer's. And I would like to say a little bit about that because I don't want people to worry when they have the genetic risk for Alzheimer's.

[00:09:27] You know some people, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy I think when we believe we're going to get sick, or we think we we're going to die. And so you know even if people have the genetic risk it's the diet and lifestyle and the environmental factors that are turning genes on and off. So we can modify those factors by our choices and in what we do.

[00:09:53] So really I think of dementia as it's a multi-system illness so if it happens from toxins. It happens from infections. It happens from inflammation. It happens from lack of hormones. Particularly nutrients, the diet.

[00:10:07] We've known, forever, that a B-12 deficiency can cause an irreversible dementia. We know that Vitamin D deficiency can cause dementia. Those are easy things to test for and fix.

[00:10:21] So it is multiple factors. We've also known for decades that vascular issues are a problem. So people have very high lipids or their blood sugar is poorly regulated. Those are causes for damage to the blood vessels that will eventually damage the brain.

Diane: [00:10:41] We're going to continue with Dr. Kat Toups, but I just want to tell you something. If you're a woman, or there's a woman in your life, I'm going to tell you about something you absolutely need to know.

[00:11:04] I Want to tell you about my friend Katie. Katie is a nurse and she was attacked on her way home from work. She was totally taken by surprise. And although Katie is only 5 feet tall and 106 pounds she was easily able to drop her 6 foot 4, 250-pound attacker to his knees and get away

unharmed.

Katie wasn't just lucky that day. She was prepared.

In her pocketbook, a harmless looking lipstick, which really contained a powerful man stopping aerosol propellant.

It's not like it was in our grandmother's day. Today just going to and from work or to the mall can have tragic consequences. The FBI says a violent crime is committed every 15 seconds in the United States. And a forcible rape happens every five minutes. And chances are when something happens, no one will be around to help.

It looks just like a lipstick. So no one will suspect a thing. Which is important since experts say, getting the jump on your attacker is all about the element of surprise.

Inside this innocent looking lipstick is the same powerful stuff used by police and the military to disarm even the most powerful, armed aggressor. In fact, National Park rangers used the very same formula that's inside this little lipstick to stop two-thousand pound vicious grizzly bears dead in their tracks. It's like carrying a personal bodyguard with you in your purse or your pocket.

Darkness brings danger. Murderers and rapists use darkness to their advantage. We all know what it's like to be walking at night and hear footsteps coming at us from behind. Who's there? If it's somebody bad, will you be protected? Your life may depend on it.

My friend Katie's close call needs to be a wake up call for all of us. Myself included. Pick up a Lipstick Bodyguard and keep it with you always.

Announcer: [00:13:05] You're listening to Parents Are Hard To Raise. Now, thanks to you... The Number One elder care talk show on planet earth. Listen to this and other episodes on demand using the iHeart Radio app. iPhone users can listen on Apple Podcasts nd Android users on Google Podcasts.

Diane: [00:13:27] And I have some shout outs... Susan from Hill City, Kansas, who by the way, has a 92 year old dad who still works the family farm everyday. She showed her co-worker Nancy how to listen on her smartphone using the iHeart Radio app.

[00:13:43] And Kumiko from the city of Atami, in Japan, who listens and Spotify. She showed her mom how to listen on her smartphone and Kumiko also helps care for her grandparents.

[00:13:57] And finally, Frank. A smart alec from the city of Bellville, in Cape Town, South Africa, who spelled his name phonetically, so I'd be sure not to mess it up, showed one of his colleagues at Tygerberg Hospital how to listen using a Tune In Radio app and wrote, "We love the show and never miss an episode." Thank you “Dr. Smart Alec.”

[00:14:20] [laughing] Dr. Toups, I mess up people's names. I don't know what happens. I get so excited. I mispronounce them.

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:14:33] [laughing] That was cute.

Diane: [00:14:33] So we're here talking to Dr. Kat Toups and we were talking about what causes dementia and you were saying it's not just one thing it's really do two rarely do to just one thing.

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:14:47] Exactly.

[00:14:51] And so that is actually how we approach, from a functional medicine approach for reversing dementia, is that we've become, for me as a clinician, the physician, I have become the detective. And I want to search out and look at all of the factors. Because if I find a couple of factors that are affecting your brain but I miss one, well then the brain is going to continue to degenerate. So one of the things that we do is we test all kinds of things to figure this out.

[00:15:21] But I was saying that we've known for a long time that diabetes is a risk factor, that high lipids are a risk factor. And now we know how to treat those factors as well with functional and nutritional approaches. But I'd like to highlight a couple of things that I think a lot of people don't know about which causes dementia and that they are missing.

[00:15:42] So I think there is a lot of excellent books that are coming out and people talk about you know that you need to get on a clean diet. You need to exercise. You need to do you know, brain training, meditation. You need to sleep. Those are all where you start. Those are all essentially important.

[00:15:58] But what I'm finding in my testing that is coming up with people the big things that I think we're missing are infections, toxins, and lack of hormones. So maybe I'll start with the hormones.

[00:16:17] So we have receptors in our brain for estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, pregnenolone. All these hormone receptors that we think are associated with our sexual function in our reproductive function. Well, they also are affecting our brains. And interestingly, something that I just learned recently in researching for a book that I'm working on, is that our brain actually makes estrogen and progesterone.

Diane: [00:16:43] Really?

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:16:43] So it's not just made in the gonads. And both men and women make these hormones. So the estrogen is made in the hippocampus which is our memory center. And the progesterone turns out it helps to make the myelin sheath and those are the covering over our nervous that help conduct the impulses of the nerves.

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:17:04] So the hormones are trophic for the brain meaning they give life; their life giving and life sustaining for the brain. And what happens then is when we lose our hormones the brain starts degenerating. And there is scores of research on that, it's pretty well documented.

[00:17:21] Stanford did a study about four years ago, and they took women that had been on hormone replacement and they were at high risk for dementia and they randomized them either to stay on their hormones or stop them and they followed them for two years. And at the end of the two years, 100 percent of the women who stopped their hormones had obvious degeneration in their brain.

[00:17:43] So it's, you know, so you know we weren't meant to live ,for most of evolution, we didn't live much past menopause or andropause in men.

[00:17:53] Right. And so we've had this rapid increase in our lifespan. And you know we need to have those hormones for our brain to function. And so sometimes when we have people with cognitive impairment and we start them back on hormones, we can see a rapid improvement in their brain function. And we don't see that in every one but we definitely see it. So that's one factor that's

worth exploring.

[00:18:16] And with the newer bioidentical hormones there is actually even data coming out that even if you've had breast cancer that are replacing these hormones with bioidentical hormones might lower your risk of recurrence. So you know it's becoming safer with some of our new methods, with the hormones to do that. So I think that's one thing that people are missing. And then the infections.

[00:18:45] This is a big area and I think NPR just came out with a story this recently and it's starting to creep into some of the press but infections are a huge factor for the brain and one in particular that we're finding more and more is Lyme disease. And Lyme disease has a predilection either for the joints or the brain tissue.

[00:19:08] And I have you know a single practitioner I don't have a giant practice and I have right now four patients with dementia that have active Lyme disease.

Diane: [00:19:19] Really? Wow.

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:19:20] Yes. So that you know that's something that really has to get on people's radar, it's been neglected for so long. And there are people that are studying the brains of people that have died with dementia and they're finding a lot of Lyme disease in there. So that's that's one factor and there's a lot of other viruses.

[00:19:40] So some other good data has come out. We've known for a long time that herpes simplex 1 occurs at much higher rates in the brains of people that have died Alzheimer's. And about 85 percent of us have had herpes simplex 1 which is the cold sores, in childhood. You know a very common virus. Epstein Barr virus which is mononucleosis or chronic fatigue also another very common childhood virus.

[00:20:07] These viruses they take continue to live in our bodies, but our immune systems keep them in check. But if we have anything that's disrupting our immune function and unfortunately aging itself there is a risk for that., then sometimes the viruses can wake up. So looking for these viruses and these infections becomes a really important factor in trying to reverse things.

[00:20:34] And I should mention that with Lyme disease... Lyme disease is a Spirochete and carries the same kind of organism that syphilis is. And so, syphilis, we have also known about for more than a century that when somebody gets an infection with syphilis it might manifest originally as a STD or a sexually transmitted disease but then 10, 20 years later people will go crazy. And it's because that's Spirochete was affecting their brain. So Lyme does the same thing for some people as syphilis does.

Diane: [00:21:11] Wow.

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:21:11] Yeah.

Diane: [00:21:11] That's amazing. me. I mean because I have been reading something about that Lyme disease. It's incredible, this information. But It's wonderful that you're getting this out, because people don't know.

[00:21:28] Well, and the exciting thing is, these are treatable. Okay.

[00:21:32] It's not fun to have Lyme disease. And you know I mean there is there is Lyme disease

in little letters there is Lyme disease in capital letters. And some people get extremely sick, and they have to lay down on my exam table for our interview because they can't sit up, and they're dizzy. But a lot of people don't have have that strong a reaction. But but it can be affecting their brain. And we do have ways to treat it. And the story of how they're treated is still being written. It is an art, not a science because not enough research has been done in this area. But it definitely is something that can be treated.

[00:22:07] So once we can identify all these factors, we get treatment targets. And then the other factor to consider is the toxins.

[00:22:16] So you know we all know our world is getting more and more toxic. And so many of these chemicals toxins cause neurodegeneration. And we can test for them. It's an easy first morning urine test. And I have a test where I get a bunch of pages of the levels all kinds of different chemicals. And I had one patient that I was treating for dementia and she was already pretty far along when she first came to me. And she was already in memory care. But still we said well let's see what we can do and we got a lot of things in balance and she went from being agitated and anxious to calm and happy. And interestingly in four years she has not progressed at all.

[00:23:05] But she had some cardiovascular risk factors and she had some lack of hormone risk factors, but I didn't think it fully accounted for how demented she was. And then this new test came out a couple years ago where I was able to test these chemical toxins and in this test if you have one chemical in the red zone that is considered very significant. Well this lady had nine chemicals in the red zone.

Diane: [00:23:32] Oh My God!

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:23:33] I know. I know. And then you think well, how did she get all those chemicals? What did she do? Was she a farm worker? Lived next to an agricultural area? No. This lady was a schoolteacher.

Diane: [00:23:46] Really?

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:23:46] And Her daughter told me, " my parents were always into health. We always ate well. We didn't use toxic chemicals in our home.".

[00:23:54] So she just generically was a poor detoxifier and managed to accumulate these high levels of all of these chemicals.

[00:24:04] And we can get rid of the chemicals. So what are the best ways, and this is an interesting is something that your listeners could do in their lives, because we all have toxins. We know that babies now are born with more than 200 chemicals in their blood that they have gotten from the mother during her pregnancy, right.

[00:24:23] So we know that basically that sweating takes those chemicals out of our body. Something that we've known in our ancient wisdom for centuries as well, right. Many traditions use sweat lodges and sweating and different kinds of rituals with that. But there is very nice data that shows if you're doing a regular saunas or sweating... Sweating of any kind will mobilize the toxins.

[00:24:50] But one thing that's important is, say if you're doing a sauna, you need to be wiping the sweat off as you're sweating so that you don't reabsorb it back into your body. And then you need to go and jump in the shower right afterwards; wash it off of your skin.

[00:25:06] But there was a study that came out this past year out of Finland. And in Finland it seems like it's part of the cultural traditions to do saunas every day. And so... yeah.

[00:25:19] So they studied elderly men and the rate of sauna and they found out that the men who did sauna up every day had a very low risk of Alzheimer's. And they compare them to men who did it three times a week and they got higher and then they compared the people who were doing it it was higher still. So this is something that we should all be thinking about incorporating. To try to keep up with the burden that we're getting right now, with all the environmental toxins.

Diane: [00:25:53] Yeah. My gosh. I Remember a friend of mine always saying...she would say to me you gotta exercise, you gotta exercise. You've gotta sweat. You got to get the junk out. So she was right. [laughing]

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:26:04] Right. Exactly. I know. And I don't like to sweat. But now I have a different... I feel better about it when it's happening.

[00:26:15] So the exercise is another really easy thing to mention for all of the listeners here.

[00:26:20] So the best validated stuff that we have to change our brain and to help our brains make new connections are exercise and meditation or mindfulness. And both of those can increase something called BDNF and that stands for brain derived neurotropic factor.

[00:26:38] And so this is a factor that helps our brain make new synaptic connections with the neurons. So we can sprout new connections just by exercising. And if you exercise hard just for four minutes you'll raise your BDNF up and start making new connections.

Diane: [00:26:53] Wow, just four minutes? [laughing]

[00:26:56] Yeah. that'll start the process. More is better of course. The more you exercise... I mean that is something with all of my patients with dementia, we try to get these factors in, where you know people should be striving to exercise everyday.

[00:27:13] And then life is come and cause you to miss a day or two out of the week right. But you know if your goal is three times a week and then... "Oh, I couldn't do it yesterday," then you're down to two times a week. Well, that's not enough.

[00:27:29] I think people need to have on their daily plan like: what am I going to do today to move, to exercise, to sweat? And that really is protective for the brain.

Diane: [00:27:39] That's unbelievable. I know. We want to talk to you. I wanted you to tell about your book. You know you and your Web site your Facebook page for that people can find out more about you and about what you're doing.

[00:27:58] And we're going to have you back.

[00:28:01] There's so much to say on this topic. Yes, so... I'm working on a book called Dementia Demystified. And I'm trying to make it a "how to" manual. How do I work this up? What are all the factors" What exactly are the labs that need to be ordered, so people can take that to their physician. And you know to just make it a "how to" practical manual. So it's taking longer than I thought. But you can find updates about it on my Web site or my Facebook page so if you just put in Dementia Demystified that will take you to my Web site and I'll post updates there. And then I also have a Facebook page and it is called let's see what is it called. It's called Kat Toups M.D. - functional

medicine psychiatry and dementia. If you just try searching my name you'll probably find it there. And I try to post interesting articles and data, and things that are uplifting, so I try to avoid the doom and gloom.

[00:29:03] But what can we do about it. Because that is really the message. Dementia is not a death sentence and there are things that we can do to get the brain back. And that is the biggest message.

Diane: [00:29:17] That's wonderful. That's the message we want to hear; something good. Something good. And we're going to have you back, Dr Toups. Thank You so much.

Dr. Kat Toups: [00:29:29] My pleasure. And I would be happy to come back. There's so many things more we could talk about. The role of the diet on the brain and a lot of fun things.

Diane: [00:29:39] Perfect. I hope you got something out of this episode. I know I did. I love getting your e-mails and questions so please keep sending them.

[00:29:46] You can reach me a Diane@ParentsAreHardToRaise.org. Or just click the green button on our homepage.

[00:29:52] And remember there's so many new ways to listen to our show... Spotify, Roku. You can listen on your smartphone with Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. You get us an Apple TV, Direct TV. And you can even just ask Alexa to play the show for you.

[00:30:08] And if you're listening to the show in one of these new ways please do me a favor and show someone how to learn this new technology.

[00:30:17] Thank you so much.

[00:30:19] Parents Are Hard To Raise is a CounterThink Media production. The music used in this broadcast was managed by Cosmo Music New York, New York. Our New York producer is Joshua Green. Our broadcast engineer is Well Gambino. And from our London studios, the melodic voice of our announcer, "Miss Dolly D.".

[00:30:37] Thank you so much for listening.

[00:30:39] Till next time... May you forget everything you don't want to remember and remember everything you don't want to forget.

[00:30:45] See you again next week!