

Christa Orecchio

Yuri: Okay, guys, welcome. I'm really excited to be joined by my good friend Christa Orecchio. Christa, welcome.

Christa: Thanks, Yuri. I'm happy to be here.

Yuri: I'm excited today because in this special interview in the Fat-Loss Summit, you're going to be talking about something that I think is really important for people to understand, which is the health of their gut. I would say the gut is kind of like the universe, like the sun of the solar system; that's kind of where everything starts.

Christa: It is.

Yuri: Before we jump into the meat and potatoes of it, tell us how you got into focusing on gut health and improving your gut to become a fat burner instead of a sugar burner. How did you get into this whole universe of gut health and all that good stuff?

Christa: I think whatever we struggle with we then go on to help other people with. I had a raging case of Candida, which is a yeast overgrowth in the intestinal tract. I'm originally from New Jersey, and I grew up on pizza, pasta, and antibiotics. My dad, bless his heart, was in pharmaceuticals.

When you're on heavy rounds of antibiotics without taking care of your gut health at the same time, you're really setting yourself up for some trouble in your adult life. I figured that out as I was going through and learning about nutrition and holistic health and was able to reverse all that. I would definitely be here probably obese and diabetic sitting in front of you now had I not found this field. It's something I really love to talk about.

Working with clients for the past 10 years, they come in, they want to lose weight, and they want to get healthy, but wherever they're struggling, you look at the gut and you start to heal and improve gut health and everything else starts working better. Like you said, it's the center of the human universe.

Yuri: That's awesome. I love pizza and bread too; that's my downfall, so I can definitely relate to that.

With gut health, one of the most common questions I get is: Yuri, what brand of probiotics do you recommend? Not to get into that, but how do you know when they're working? This is a very interesting topic because we take probiotics, and it's one of those things where you don't always know if they're really working or not. How does somebody know, to begin with, if their gut is completely messed up, and why does that impede their ability to lose weight in the first place?

Christa: Well, those are all really good questions. I would say, Yuri—and I'm sure you would agree with me, being in this field—that 95 percent of people, whether they have overt gut symptoms like constipation and bloating or not, they could use a gut tune-up and overhaul.

We know that our standard North American diet is not so healthy and that we've done everything possible to really kill our gut flora and over-consume sugar and have genetically modified foods. Everyone's health can benefit from rejuvenating their microbiome is what I call it, the world inside the gut. It's not as simple as taking a few probiotics and you'll be fine.

We've gotten really complicated with health. A lot of people aren't even healthy enough to tolerate probiotics. I really approach from this very gentle, yet powerful five-step approach to rejuvenating your microbiome. We just took 2000 people from around the world through this process, and it's fascinating to see what happens, not only are chronic digestive disorders reversing—Crohn's and IBS and autoimmune conditions like Hashimoto's and rheumatoid arthritis—but people are now finally able to heal their thyroid, which is a root cause of being overweight; your thyroid isn't functioning well. They're able to finally recover from adrenal fatigue, which is another root cause. And then their livers start working better, which is *another* root cause when people can't lose weight.

This whole idea of weight loss seems so esoteric. The diet industry is a billion-dollar industry because diets don't work, and we have to come up with a lifestyle that works. It's about treating the body with respect and kindness and understanding what it needs, removing what it doesn't need, adding what it *does* need, and watching it magically heal itself.

You really want to lose weight? You have to let toxins come out of the fat cells, but you have to create a safe environment to be able to do that, get yourself healthy, and then everything starts working. I went off on a little bit of a tangent there, but I felt like I needed to say that.

Yuri: That's totally cool. We'll talk about those five steps—I'm very interested in those—in just a moment.

To begin, you talked about the weight-loss industry being this billion-dollar industry, which it is. I think everyone is so concerned—we see this all the time because we're putting out cookbooks and stuff quite often—the most common question is: I would love to see the nutrition facts. How many calories are in this recipe?

That seems to be the paradigm of weight loss. Weight loss equals calories in, calories out. They totally forget about everything else like liver health, adrenals, and gut health.

Walk us through why having leaky gut or an unhealthy microbiome is a problem. How does the average person sitting here watching this figure out if their gut is unhealthy? Do they look down and say, "I'm bloated; I've got issues"? How do they understand they might have an issue systematically, for instance?

What is leaky gut doing? What are these gut issues doing to stop them from losing weight? Is it just a matter of impairing liver function or adrenals? Are there other things like inflammation throughout the body that might be coming into play as well?

Christa: Sure. Like you said, a calorie's not a calorie. I would harness Jonathan Bailor for that, who wrote *The Calorie Myth*. It's all about the *quality* of our calorie, certainly not the *quantity*. If we focused on that, we would all free ourselves from this diet mentality.

What you're asking for is root-cause stuff that's causing the weight gain. You, in your last book, spoke about step number one: inflammation. It takes away from your energy, your mental clarity. Brain fog is a sign that you have a gut issue. Having low energy or achy joints are also signs of inflammation.

Most of the time, the root cause of inflammation is happening in the GI tract because the chips are now imbalanced with the good guys. Let's say if we were having an army scenario, the bad guys start to outweigh the good guys, and now you're not absorbing the nutrients from your food; now you don't have a nice, strong intestinal lining where it should be nice and strong; if it were a brick wall, the lining of your small intestine, now some of the mortar is missing.

Now food particles and bad things are escaping into the bloodstream that don't belong in there. How can your body focus on losing weight if, now, the liver has to work double time? The spleen's job is to clear inappropriate matter—foreign matter—out of the blood, so now it's working 80 hours a week instead of 40 hours a week. Your body's working really hard literally just to keep you functioning and alive; weight loss is not a top priority *at all*. The priority is: keep the fat toxins in the fat cells to keep you safe because your body's always working for you.

Yuri: That's awesome. I hope our viewers and listeners really get this. This is not visible stuff; this is not like looking at a food and saying, "oh, it's fatty." This is stuff happening beyond our perception. That's very important to tune in to.

Let's jump into these five steps of improving gut health and how those turn anybody from a sugar burner into a fat burner.

Christa: Yes, yes. You're right, Yuri, because if you guys get this—so much of changing your health is about changing your belief system. And just through understanding, then you can make a lifestyle out of this. Our five steps to gut healing, like you had just said, all disease begins in the gut. Hippocrates is the father of natural medicine; 3000 years ago he was saying that. This is not new; it's just an idea whose time has come back.

First and foremost, what we have to do is slash inflammation. The body generates inflammation as a response to injury. It's a healthy response for a short amount of time. The problem is: The majority of us are living in an inflamed state. It's like a state of emergency that we're living in. You really have to look at your diet. That's the single best way you're going to slash inflammation.

This is all about weight loss, so I know you're probably talking about sugar until you're blue in the face. Sugar is the number one killer for inflammation. We have to start to filter sugar out of our diet, eat lower-glycemic fruits and vegetables, use the natural sweeteners instead of the hard core white stuff, and have enough high-quality animal protein and healthy fat.

Again, we come back to the calorie issue, the quality issue: So much of our meat supply is what I call polluted. Every time we go out to eat, we're getting a low dose of antibiotics because we have this factory-farm situation where we've been feeding our animals antibiotics in their feed because they're not in healthy living conditions, and we've been pumping them full of hormones to make them grow faster.

When we go and eat that polluted meat, we are then on a low dose of antibiotics. We're killing our good gut flora. If there are bad sugar-producing bacteria, you're now giving it license to have a party in your digestive system just by going out and having that polluted chicken or whatever it is you're eating. It's really important to think about food quality in that way.

Starting to slash inflammation from a diet perspective is crucial. My whole platform is learning how to use food as medicine—again, our friend Hippocrates. You want to try to incorporate things like turmeric into your diet on a daily basis. One of the most popular recipes on our Web site is turmeric-ginger lemonade. You can make that, one batch, and it lasts all week.

Yuri: Do you mind sharing that? I'll share a latte with you in a second. I'll let you share first.

Christa: Do you want me to share the recipe now and tell you how to make it?

Yuri: If you could, that'd be amazing.

Christa: Of course. I like fresh whenever possible; if you can find it at the health-food store. You get fresh turmeric root, fresh ginger root, and you peel about three inches—a couple of knuckles—of it. You peel it, then slice it very thin, and pour boiling water over both of the roots. You let the nutritive properties steep out into the water. Then I add the juice of a full lemon and stevia to taste. You can have it hot or cold, and it's pretty amazing.

Yuri: Excuse me, I'm going to go make that right now. That sounds amazing. In the spirit of giving, I want to share an amazing turmeric latte that was inspired by our good friend Cynthia Pasquella. This turmeric latte—for those of you watching, if you're addicted to coffee, this is a good substitute.

We use powdered turmeric because we can't find fresh turmeric where we are. We'll heat up some almond milk and throw in about half a tablespoon of organic turmeric powder. Throw in a couple drops of stevia or a little bit of honey if you want, some cinnamon, black pepper, and give it a little stir. It's amazing; it is so good.

Christa: Yuri, I'm going to make that tomorrow morning.

Yuri: I'm going to make your lemonade as soon as we're done this interview.

Christa: Yeah! Way to go, Cynthia! I love her and I love that she puts black pepper in it, because black pepper helps you absorb more of the good stuff in turmeric.

Yuri: And it brings the flavor to life too; it's great, a beautiful combination.

Christa: Yeah, it's a wonderful anti-inflammatory way to start your day. I think that a lot of people are so attached to their coffee, which is inflammatory or acid-forming, but it's not necessarily the coffee; it's the ceremony of it that they're attached to. If you can replace it with something so much healthier, like that, then you're in business. That's great!

Yuri: Awesome. Step one is killing inflammation. Other than doing a C-reactive protein blood test, which is pretty invasive for most people, we can just look at our foods and say, "If I'm not eating these good foods that you just mentioned, I'm pretty much creating inflammation in my body." Is that fair to say?

Christa: Yeah, it's fair to say to really look at the quality. When we eat out we're getting a lot of canola and soy oils, and those are pro-inflammatory oils. Really having an honest look at what you're doing, even if you think you're eating healthy, to just evaluate it.

Of course, we can all use more organic fruits and vegetables. The clean meats, the good-quality oils—coconut oil, ghee, olive oil. I like duck fat. Seeing if you have a pro-inflammatory diet or if you have an anti-inflammatory diet.

When we're working with our program Gut Thrive or someone on a Candida cleanse, they're really shrinking, also, their carbs but not too much to where you slow the metabolism. It's really kind of finding that right balance.

Then you have to also use enzymes. When we're talking about getting rid of inflammation and helping the body work better, enzymes catalase a response; they help things happen faster. I would use digestive enzymes with someone to help all parts of digestion; make sure you're giving the pancreas a little bit of a break; make sure you're helping the liver and gallbladder; and that you're taking the burden off of the digestive organs for a little while so that you can start to get more nutrients from your food. That's when most people think, *I'm full longer, I can think clearer. I feel better after I ate; the bloating is going away.*

We also use other types of enzymes, Yuri. I'm sure you've heard of proteolytic enzymes. Have you heard of those?

Yuri: Yeah, I use those on an empty stomach to go around and scavenge all that inflammation.

Christa: Exactly; that's exactly what proteolytic enzymes do. They're systemic enzymes that will go in without any food, and they're going to clean up inflammation. I love them for helping to clean up fibroids in the reproductive system and process it through the bowels.

Another type of enzyme to clean up the GI tract we use are called hydrolytic enzymes. When you have pathogens, or bad guys, in the digestive system—which we all have; it's just that when they get out of balance, then it becomes not a great thing—they build little forts because life wants to live; it wants to stay alive. Just like we need homes, they need homes, and they build them inside the intestinal tract. You've got to be able to get rid of those; you have to dismantle those forts if you want to get those guys out of your body, so we use hydrolytic enzymes to start to dismantle what's called biofilms, and that is really a root cause of getting rid of inflammation. You start taking those away, and then you can get at the pathogens and kind of invite them to leave.

Yuri: Awesome. We've got digestive enzymes in there, proteolytic enzymes—which would be like papain, bromelain, stuff like that—and then the hydrolytic enzymes. These are all things that people can get at their health-food store, for the most part?

Christa: They can get them at their health-food store. You really kind of have to know what you're doing with hydrolytic enzymes, or biofilm busters, so you want to talk to someone who knows a little bit about them before you just go pick one up.

Yuri: Cool, awesome. Step one, covered. What's step two?

Christa: Step two is a pathogen purge. People come to me and they say, "Here's my lab work. I have SIBO," which is small intestinal bacterial overgrowth. Those are the guys, they've got sugar-producing bacteria. They can literally smell the doughnut down the street and gain five pounds. You really have to see what's going on here. No matter what you eat, those are the people who eat perfectly, but nothing is really happening for them.

It's all about knowing the nature of the bacteria before you start to throw probiotics in there. You could have worms, Candida, fungus, you can have protozoa, like blastocystis hominis. These are things that we see a lot. You never just have one, because it's a colony in there. You have to figure out what's really happening, what's overgrown, how many bad guys versus good guys you have.

We break the biofilms and then start to invite them out of the body. We do it in a way that's completely different. If you go to a traditional allopathic doctor, they're going to say, "Here's antibiotics. Attack!" If you're going to sometimes go to a traditional naturopathic doctor, they're going to say, "Here are antifungals in heavy doses. Go attack!"

Neither way really honors the body system. What we figured out is the way that pathogens talk. Instead of just attacking them, we go in there and kind of cut the wires of communication; we take away their cell phones so that they can't communicate anymore and they can't keep building these communities.

I find that's a much more natural way to allow your body's natural strength to start to rise up. You start to use different antifungals, antivirals, antipathogenics like pau d'arco and oregano oil, and we use sometimes berberine or Oregon grape. We use grapefruit seed extract, golden seal, lots of different things that are going to take care of the bad bacteria and the yeast and the underlying heavy metals that are in there. It's always a combination of things.

If we can do that in a gentle way instead of going in there, like having a war with our guns blazing, instead it's like we had a party and we're going to turn off the music, there's no more booze, don't you want to leave anyway? We want to more invite them out instead of have this whole attack because bad guys produce metabolic waste.

If you're trying to lose weight and you have bad pathogens in your system—and, Yuri, I'm finding most people do—and you start attacking them, they leave more metabolic waste. When they do that, you feel worse, and that leaky gut that's preventing you from losing weight, that's putting an extra burden on your liver, gets worse before it gets better. This is a much more graceful approach to it, just start to purge out those pathogens in a more graceful way.

Yuri: Nice. With oregano oil and the pau d'arco, what kinds of dosages are we talking? Not every day, but I'll occasionally use veggie caps and just drop in a bunch of oregano oil and shoot that back. Is that what we're talking about here, or is it a bit more systematic? What kind of dosage? The person watching may be like, "How do I put this into play, because this is pretty cool stuff?"

Christa: What you're doing is great if one of the kids is sick or you're feeling a little run down, maybe something's going around, to put oregano oil in capsules and take that for a couple of days, but if you're working to systematically rejuvenate the microbiome, you don't want to use too much of any one botanical. Let's say you're going to take between 500 and 2000 milligrams of oregano oil a day if you're trying to get rid of something that's going around, but you're going to take a much lower dose and you're going to blend it.

Let's say you did 100 milligrams of that, 100 milligrams of grapefruit seed extract, 100 milligrams of golden seal, and you blend four or five together—hopefully you can just get it in one bottle; a chemist already did that for you. Then you're getting this lower dose because we all have a genetic propensity to really take to one of these versus the other. Some people become resistant, so you're really getting rid of the odds and making them better if you use lower doses and just spread it out a little further.

Yuri: Cool. Typically, the way I was taught was with an anti-Candida diet, it was six months of no sugar, just eat vegetables for six months. Well, let's be realistic: no one's going to do that. What type of time course have you noticed with people going from SIBO or full-on gut dysbiosis to starting to see improvements with these types of protocols?

Christa: You start to see improvements within four weeks. One of the beautiful things about our Gut Thrive program is the brevity of the pathogen purge. Because of the way you're rotating and using the system, you don't have to spend a long time in the kill phase because we can move into building the system and re-seeding.

You can see a big improvement in 30 days. Candida, it depends how long you've had it, but, really, within 6 to 12 weeks max. I have a Candida cleanse, and, like you said, when you're breaking the biofilms, you don't have to eat like that forever. I use an antifungal rotation because Candida is very smart and can adapt to the same antifungal. Yeah, within three months, a decade of what you've been through can turn around, and that's a very fast time frame.

Yuri: Awesome, very cool. Step three, what's that all about?

Christa: Step three, *now* we talk about the probiotics. I always say you can't plant flowers in a junkyard. We've got to do our weeding first, and *then* you can add the good stuff in and start to see, now we add in anywhere from 5 to 13 strains of probiotics depending on what's going on, and we use them like a starter log, if you will.

Yuri, you grew up in Canada and I grew up in New Jersey. Whether people grew up in Africa, Asia, wherever, we all have 300 to 500 strains of bacteria that are inherent to our genetic code. But science, nature can never re-create all of those. You can't take all of those in a bottle, so you want to educate your immune system through this process so now you have this starter log, the right types of bacteria, and now you can go and make whatever else you need from the air you breathe, the water you drink, the food you eat.

That's where you get to a level of health where you don't have to worry about losing weight again. You don't have to worry about a lot of issues because you've informed your own systems to adapt and survive. If there's only sugar available, your body's going to burn that sugar without you having to gain weight. If there's only fat available, your body will learn to burn fat. We're a lot stronger than we give ourselves credit for.

Yuri: Nice. You'd recommend the probiotics not at the same time, I guess, as the step-two pathogen purge?

Christa: At least not for the first two to three weeks of the pathogen purge. We just want to clear it out. You can have some overlap. People who have SIBO, they have an overgrowth of *good* bacteria too, so you're going to give them probiotics too soon, and they're going to bloat up. We've got to close what's called their ileocecal valve to make sure bacteria aren't coming back up.

It really depends. I would say at least three weeks of them purging the pathogens and then you have to add three different important strains of probiotics. You have to add the lactobacillus. All the different types of lactobacts, they're going to help you digest your food and absorb so many more nutrients so you don't need to live on all these vitamins because your body learns how to do it. They're also going to be the shepherds and shepherd out other bad bacteria in the future so you don't have to do another pathogen purge.

Then you've got to get the bifidobacterium in there. They're going to colonize and stay and really contribute to good digestive health. And then bacillus, which is going to be the front lines of your immune system, like, "Hey, this doesn't belong in here," and it will kill it before it has a chance to mess you up again.

Yuri: Just going back to SIBO for a second, this might be a new concept for a lot of people watching. Just symptomatically, can somebody know if they have SIBO without going to a doctor, just symptomatically?

Christa: Well, what we do is we've created an assessment we've run for two years in tandem with lab work on hundreds of patients and clients to be able to figure out if you have SIBO or not. The best way is to run a full breath test to see if you have.

But the SIBO folks, they always feel six months pregnant, and they always feel pregnant no matter what they eat. Those are the ones who've become afraid of food. Not only do we have to work toward improving their relationship with food, that it *is* medicine and it's not going to hurt you—they think, *I don't know what I can eat*. They eat broccoli and they bloat up, they eat seemingly healthy foods. They can't handle the fiber, and their system is quite confused. That's the number one symptom for SIBO.

Yuri: Awesome; helpful to know. Okay, step four. We're starting to plant the seeds, the good probiotics. What's the next step?

Christa: Step four is: Heal and seal the leaky gut. Now we know there's got to be some damage still left over, so we have to go in there caulking the brick wall and seal it up. That's when we're using things like marshmallow root, glutamine, slippery elm, and a combination of different things that are going to go in there and really help.

We use colostrum; that helps people who are run down and have adrenal fatigue and thyroid issues. That's going to help to reeducate their immune system and heal that leaky gut. It goes in and closes what's called the tight junctions.

Lots of bone broth throughout. I know that we all talk about healing bone broth, both chicken and beef. That's probably the number one thing for those people who have sugar-producing bacteria in their gut, and they cannot lose weight. During a pathogen purge, a four-day bone broth fast can starve that sugar-producing bacteria really quickly.

Yuri: This is just bone broth for four days by itself.

Christa: Yeah, or if that's too much for people and they've never fasted, I have them add in a teaspoon of coconut oil, and they're having five cups a day. Also, maybe one or two tablespoons of collagen, which is going to be great for healing leaky gut, and it's also going to give them a very easy-to-use protein so they can still work and think straight as they're going about their day.

Yuri: With bone broth, do you recommend people make it from scratch, just get bones from their butcher and just start to make their own broth, or are there better solutions?

Christa: It all depends on your lifestyle. I'm kind of lazy sometimes, so I buy it. And with the Internet, we can buy high-quality bone broth shipped right to your door, which is awesome. You can make it very easily on a Sunday.

As long as you can get organic chicken or beef bones and put them in a Crock Pot. I like to use them raw, not cooked. Put a little bit of apple cider vinegar in there—that will draw the minerals out of the bones—and some herbs like rosemary and thyme and just slow-cook it for 24 hours. Skim the fat off the top, and then I would freeze it in small containers.

If you're doing chicken, then you want to ask if they have the feet, because all the collagen is found in the chicken feet. Some people, that grosses them out; some people, they've been down this road before.

Yuri: So, you wouldn't add carrots or celery or onions to this? Just straight up bone broth with the herbs.

Christa: You can absolutely add carrots and celery and onions, but if we're doing a full-on bone broth fast medicinally, a lot of SIBO folks can't handle the starch in onions. I have them just go straight broth.

Yuri: Cool, awesome. That sounds good. Sealing and healing that fortress, that brick wall that keeps us healthy and lean. And then what will be the fifth step?

Christa: The fifth and final step is like the finishing touches. We teach the body how to produce its own hydrochloric acid again. It's building and boosting HCl. HCl, we absolutely need this and it's first offense; it's going to kill anything that could cause problems for us, and many of us aren't producing enough HCl.

Or the cells that produce them—they're called the parietal cells—they're just tired and weak and a little damaged and are like, "I'm giving up for now." During this process, we give them a break so they can get their strength back, and then they can produce HCl again and something called intrinsic factor, which helps us digest and use our vitamin B12. We do that.

Food is medicine. Can I give you another recipe?

Yuri: Totally. Bring it on.

Christa: One of the best ways to train your body to boost HCl outside of using apple cider vinegar—I love that stuff—is to make what I call a ginger pickle. You would peel—have you ever done this or heard of it?

Yuri: No, but it sounds good already, so I'm in.

Christa: Okay. We'll peel a ginger root; kind of shave it with a carrot shaver. Then you squeeze the juice of a full lemon, then about a teaspoon of pink Himalayan salt. You just mix it up in a jar and let it sit in the fridge; you're pickling the ginger, basically.

Before each meal, you would chew maybe a half a teaspoon, up to a full teaspoon. You would chew it really well, spit out the pulp, and then you start to secrete more hydrochloric acid and train your body to keep doing that on a regular basis. Then you need to use less and less. Then you take the training wheels off, and your body can do it on its own.

Yuri: That's awesome. A naked piece of ginger, lemon, and salt. Just put it in a jar, seal it up, fridge, and it takes a couple days, I guess for it to do its thing.

Christa: It's good to use by the next day; it just needs 24 hours to get the full potency.

Yuri: Sweet, very cool. A lot of people typically talk about using HCl supplements—betaine and stuff—to get in there and produce the acid externally, at least. Does that retrain the stomach to start producing its own? Or are you talking about doing things more intrinsic, like the apple cider vinegar and pickled ginger as better alternatives to that?

Christa: We're using betaine HCl and papain. We're using things that are going to help you throughout the whole process to give those cells a break. But if you use that too much, you don't use it, you lose it. We don't want to tell the body, "Hey, you don't have to do this anymore." We just want to give it a break and then start to train it to do it on its own.

I don't think there's anything wrong with an HCl pill as you're healing or if you're going to have a very complicated meal, but not on a regular basis. Another thing you can do is what's called an HCl challenge, where you can take a lot of—I'm sure you've done this before.

Yuri: It's always fun.

Christa: Yeah. You take a lot of HCl until you start getting that burning sensation, and then you back off. That's a way to train your body to learn how to make its own HCl again.

Yuri: Ideally, over time, you need less and less and less as your body starts ramping up.

Christa: Yeah, that's the whole idea. If we can really trust the body, it's just an amazing bio computer we've been born inside of. You know, with training professional athletes. We don't have to give it so many crutches for so long; we just have to identify the root of what's happening and then heal it from the root cause. Then the body gets the directive, and it can take it from there.

Yuri: Yeah, that's awesome. I love this discussion because it's really talking about empowering your body to do what it's naturally supposed to do, as opposed to, "Here's a potential problem. Let's just throw stuff at it, and, hopefully, it'll go away." But you're talking about getting to the root, uprooting the weeds, getting all that stuff out, and allowing the good stuff to come through, which is infinitely more powerful.

Christa: I think it is. We don't want to just guess at it anymore. I think that's where a lot of frustration comes in the diet industry. People feel like they don't know how their own bodies work, and it's just so confusing. There's just such a set of emotions that comes with that and an unnecessary added level and layer of stress. I think it's really important.

There's one study that's coming to mind, as we talk about sugar producers, that I just wanted to bring up. It's a German study they did with twins. There was one twin who was lean and the other twin who was obese. A lot of people are getting into doing fecal implants; that's the holistic way in the Western world to help rejuvenate the microbiome.

They couldn't understand the power of gut flora on weight. What they did was took lab rats that were a set of twins, that their intestinal tracts were essentially a blank slate, and they did fecal implants on one twin. They fed the rats the exact same amount of food, the exact same diet. Within one month, they almost exactly mirrored their human donors.

That is fascinating. That should relieve a lot of the pressure and stress of "But I'm eating less and exercising more," kind of beating yourself up over it, but it's not your fault.

Yuri: That's amazing. We're not saying to go and get your lean sibling's poop and inject it.

Christa: No, but we're saying, more power to you if you want to do that. But you can go through the process that I just outlined, and that's a way to rejuvenate your microbiome and reset the gut bacteria so you can be a lean person naturally, with a thriving metabolism.

Yuri: There's so much research that shows such a strong relationship between the gut flora and obesity, type two diabetes, specific weight issues, not just the immune stuff. It's all related. Nothing happens independently of anything else in the body.

It's great that you're bringing this to the forefront and really educating people on this. I find one of the biggest problems in our world is nutritional and health illiteracy. I think a lot of people are financially illiterate, and that's why we have so many financial issues, but the same thing with our health. If you don't understand what's happening inside your own body...

It's like if you bought a car without the owner's manual. You're like, "What do I press to get the windshield-wiper fluid? How do I do that?" That's why I'm really excited about this stuff, because we're teaching them how to fish. We're helping them understand what's happening inside so that they can start to resolve their own issues or at least have a better discussion with their doctor or health care provider and hopefully get to the bottom of those issues, which is really important.

Christa: We couldn't be more in alignment, Yuri. It's true: Gone are the days where we deify the health practitioner, the doctor, or the nutritionist—whatever—whether it's in finances, whatever aspect of your life. This is a revolution of our personal accountability, personal responsibility, and empowerment.

Yuri: Cool. I've got a couple more questions for you just before we finish off. The first one is: When it comes to fat loss, what is one big mistake you see people make? Clients or other people that you may have crossed paths with in the past.

Christa: They don't eat enough. That's probably the biggest mistake. They still have that mentality of less food equals less weight, and they drive themselves into deeper imbalance.

We have so many—I think it's something like 64 million people struggling in the U.S. alone with thyroid issues. So many of us, let's say our lab report comes back normal, but our thyroid is not functioning. Then you don't eat enough and the body says, "Okay, they're pressing the brakes. Slow down the metabolism again," and we're doing this exercise and insanity. That's priority number one.

Yuri: Wow, that's good. What's something that people don't know they don't even know when it comes to losing fat? Other than everything you just talked about in this interview.

Christa: What they don't know, I think it's still pretty much on the fringe to think that your gut bacteria are responsible for your weight. That's just kind of mind-blowing to most people. I think that's probably the biggest thing they don't know.

If we could just shift to an integrative-medicine sweep of all disease begins in the gut and that's always where we're going to start and that's your standard lab you run with your doctor, a full gut panel, every year just to see where you are, we probably wouldn't have obesity or diabetes problems. We can take care of it within less than a decade.

Yuri: Awesome. It's a little bit more involved than just supplementing with probiotics.

Christa: Of course. And just like in your book. I call it primary food, the things that feed you other than food. Your thoughts and your feelings and how you feel about things, studies show that they change your gut microbiome; it changes your gut flora from good to bad. It's really so fascinating how it can change the terrain.

How you live, view life, and handle stress are so important. There are other deeper-cleansing techniques we could talk about. It's really like you said: Nothing is independent. Mind, body, spirit, it's all working at the same time.

Yuri: That's a very interesting discussion. I was thinking about my next, next book, and I was thinking about calling it *The Belief Diet*. If you believe what you're eating is bad for you, it probably will be, even if you're eating the healthiest food because, as you mentioned, the energy you're emitting into that food completely transforms how your body handles that, which I find fascinating.

It's tough to measure quantitatively perhaps—now—but I think, and maybe from your own experience, you've noticed this too. I don't want to say ignorance is bliss, but sometimes there are people who just eat whatever they want and they're fine. I wouldn't say that as a general rule of thumb.

Then you've got people who are so obsessed about their health. They're obsessed with everything they're eating, and it's never good enough. It's like, "Oh my God, I've put too much olive oil in that salad. Now it's blown." It's like this orthorexic type of obsession. What are your thoughts on that? It's a very interesting discussion.

Christa: Yeah, I couldn't agree more! Think about it: A lot of times, we eat with all of our friends, and it's kind of a stressful experience of who can eat what and everyone's so afraid of how it will affect their body. That's definitely orthorexia of "I can't eat clean enough." I'm with you: *The Belief Diet*.

I always say that if you can't get whatever it is you're looking to eat, bless it and eat it and move it. It really is about, so much of it is what you think about what you're eating. If you've been in pain or you've been struggling or you've been overweight for a long time, you have to work on healing your relationship with food and to see it as nourishment instead of seeing it as a source of pain or confusion.

I think you would really help so many people. You've got my backing. I'll support that book any day.

Yuri: We'll see what happens. It's just an idea that I had. I think it's very interesting to talk about that. I believe the invisible is more powerful than the visible.

It's kind of on the fringe because it's stuff that we can't quantify right now, but it doesn't necessarily mean it's not true. We'll see as technology evolves and who knows what. It's very interesting.

Christa: It's evolving fast. Harvard just did a study on meditation. It was an amazing study about how quickly it can increase the gray matter in the brain. I think the bridge is being built right now. I don't think it's going to take as long as we think.

Yuri: Totally. Well, I'm personally going to be living to 144; that's my goal. I'm sure a lot of people watching this will be living beyond 100 as well within the next decade or so. It's a good future ahead, for sure.

Christa: It is, yeah. It's exciting.

Yuri: I've got one final question for you. Speaking of this optimistic future, I just got word that, unfortunately, the human species is about to become extinct. You've been called into this special task force to help solve the problem. They ask you, "Christa, what is the *one* thing we can do, starting today, to reverse this epidemic and get us back to our healthier ways?"

Christa: Okay, I'm on special task force here. I've got my uniform and it's going to be all about busting sugar. You're going to become a health detective; you're going to read every label; you're going to look for grams of sugar; and you're going to learn all the sneaky ways there are to say sugar, from high-fructose corn syrup to maltose, to dextrose, to cultured dextrose. You're going to get it out of your hummus, pasta sauce, salad dressings. You're going to get it out of everything and then save the human species.

Yuri: Great advice. Sugar, be gone. Awesome.

Christa, it's been a pleasure. It's always great to connect with you. This has been a lot of amazing information. Everyone watching, this five-step protocol that Christa's laid out, if you want to go more in depth, we'll have a link for it on this page somewhere. It's amazingly powerful.

I can't thank you enough for sharing that and the delicious recipes that you shared, which I will be trying right when we're finished this interview. Thank you so much for that. Thanks again. It's been a pleasure having you in the Fat-Loss Summit, Christa.

Christa: Always great to see you, Yuri. Thanks for having me.

Yuri: For everyone watching, I hope you enjoyed the interview. Take one piece of advice or more from this interview; take action on it. We'll see you in the next interview.