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Episode 152 - Amazon John Easterling Shares His Secrets for Optimal Brain Health

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TeriAnn: Hey, everyone. TeriAnn Trevenen here, cohost of the podcast Empowering You Organically. Coming at you today solo and excited for our guest today. We have Amazon John Easterling here with us today. Welcome.

Amazon John: Good morning, TeriAnn. It's good to be here.

TeriAnn: So excited to have you here.

TeriAnn: So let me do a little intro here on John Easterling, fascinating, fascinating background. We're gonna be talking about brain health today, something that John is passionate about. And just to tell you a little bit more about him. Since 1976, John Easterling has been an explorer and treasure hunter in the Amazon rainforest. It was there, after a personal health crisis, he was introduced to the traditional use of medicinal plants by the indigenous people in Peru.

TeriAnn: Since then, his passion for plant medicine has only accelerated. His original degree is in environmental studies. He founded the Amazon Herb Company in 1990, and serves on the board of the Amazon Center of Environmental Education and Research. John's 28 years of plant medicine experience have been profiled on TV and radio including Good Morning America and Fox & Friends. His product formulations have sold over 100 million worldwide. That's a huge number. John has been featured in two PBS documentaries, World News Reports, Amazon John and Rainforest Medicines, and Jean Michel Cousteau's Return to the Amazon. Easterling believes the dramatic growth and interest in plant medicine is still in its early stages, and will continue to significantly improve life experiences and healthy outcomes into the future.

TeriAnn: So I wanna ask you, what in your life brought you to all these amazing things that you do now? What was that connection there for you in your life to bring you to where you are at this point?

Amazon John: Well, Teri, and probably the very first connection was a Weekly Reader we got. I grew up in North Carolina, and you'd get these Weekly Readers that had a story about a kid your age in another

part of the world living. There it was. There was a story in there about a kid in Peru, and so I got really fascinated with Peru, and really developed a passion around that, and knew that that was part of my future. It was just a dream deferred for many, many years until I got done with school in University of North Carolina. I sold my car and used that money to buy a ticket to Ecuador.

Amazon John: Went down to Ecuador and down into Peru, with a passion for finding lost cities of gold, essentially a treasure hunter. I spent ... I'm still a treasure hunter.

TeriAnn: Fascinating.

Amazon John: That's a very broad definition, and I love to use that on applications, you know the banks, "What is your occupation?" "Treasure Hunter."

TeriAnn: I'm sure you get a lot of questions. Explain a little more. It's fascinating though.

Amazon John: But really we all are in our life. We're treasure hunters.

TeriAnn: I love that.

Amazon John: For me, it was all about Peru, and we got into some digs down there, some Chimú and Moche digs, which is pre-Inca civilization. I was making my living with some of that material, and then some artifacts. Then got over into Brazil and Uruguay and Argentina with gemstones, and took that on as treasure. Then later going up the river in the Amazon rainforest, I was trading in blowguns and carved monkey bones, and a variety of tribal artifacts. I got really sick there. It was actually kind of a relapse of hepatitis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever. I'd had a near death experience with it in North Carolina.

TeriAnn: Wow.

Amazon John: I always had kind of a low-grade, little bit of low-grade fever, and would just get these spells where I'd break into sweat, almost like malaria, and just have to go down for a day or two. That was happening in the rainforest, and they just brought a variety of botanicals out and brewed them up into a big tea. I drank it. I was eating grilled monkey paws and everything else. I had no expectations-

TeriAnn: Grilled monkey paws?

Amazon John: Yeah.

TeriAnn: That's pretty wild.

Amazon John: Yeah.

TeriAnn: That's a wild thing. I've never heard of that.

Amazon John: Well, you only do it once. It's like eating a baseball glove. Not so easy.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Amazon John: The point is that I noticed my health improved in just a couple of days of drinking these teas. It was una de gato, chanca piedra, some sangre de drago. After another three days, I realized, "Hey, I'm feeling as good now as I was before I was sick." In another couple of days it was, "I'm feeling better now than I've ever felt."

Amazon John: That was a real shock to me. I did not have that expectation. I was more grounded. The metro-clarity, a lot more clear and focused just because I was introducing things into my body that it had never been there before, and it was changing how all my body's organs and gland and systems; heart, spleen, thymus, lungs, liver. It gave them new nutritional compounds and energetic compounds and informational compounds where they could, each of these organs independently could go to a new level of life experience. I was just recipient of all of that. Ultimately, I sold that company Raiders of the Lost Art, and started Amazon Herb Company.

Amazon John: So that's what? The last 30 years. Then the real passion has been all about plant medicine.

TeriAnn: Yeah. Do you feel, like when you're telling your story, in my mind I've just painted this picture of here you are treasure hunting in one way, and you find a totally different treasure in another way when you look at these ingredients and things that you've worked with for so long now, and how they benefit people. I mean, did it blindside you that, "Here I am doing this, and now I've found this amazing treasure in a different aspect, a treasure for the body."? That's how I paint it in my head when I hear you talk about it.

Amazon John: Yeah, well, we're all blessed in so many ways. For me, it was just kind of blind luck, just blind faith and dumb luck. My whole life I've just kind of pursued what my passion was, and then tried to figure out, how do you make a living doing that? Is the treasure I'm finding, is it also valuable to other people?

TeriAnn: Yeah, I love that.

Amazon John: Sometimes it was. Sometimes it wasn't. So you find that vein where it really benefits, but yeah, the gemstones were interesting because I'd dealt in a lot of tourmaline and amethyst and quartz crystal, and a variety of mineral specimens and rhodochrosite and things. Each of those has a specific vibration, so then I was introduced to vibration, essentially vibrational medicine. Because the density and the molecular structure of how anything is made, it will have different frequency. If you tap it, you can see that.

Amazon John: It tied me into learning about, in the early days, the culture of Peru and how to engage with indigenous people either in the highlands or in the rainforest. Then it taught me about the history, the really deep history. I mean, thousands and thousands of years. You can go all the way back into the Nazca plains. You can go back 10,000 years, way beyond the Inca.

Amazon John: Then with the vibrational aspect, it was almost like all that was important before I was introduced to the plants. Because I was not into plants or any kind of a real healthy lifestyle mode. I was just a driven treasure hunter. So I had to, it seemed like the universe allowed me to have all of that background, and then show me with the plant medicine, how it could turn my life around. It really helped me appreciate all of those aspects that we find in botanicals.

Amazon John: We find the energetics in botanicals, the frequency in botanicals, the nutrition in botanicals, the chemistry. All of that is there. Yeah, you stop and you think about it, and it amazes me. And every day and into the future it amazes me too.

TeriAnn: It's a beautiful story, and I really love that you said we're all treasure hunters seeking different types of treasure. That's really profound for life, I think in my mind, after learning more about you, and listening to you. We've had many calls and meetings with you. I feel like your treasure for people in the world now, and that gift that you're giving to people, is improved health. That's a beautiful thing. We've talked often on our podcast that you just can't put a price on your health. It's what allows you to live a full and beautiful life. So I really, really love that.

TeriAnn: Let's talk about how your journey has brought you to brain health specifically because this is a fascinating topic, and something that is coming to the forefront now of everyone's minds as we talk more about the issues around Alzheimer's and dementia. Tell us how your journey took you to brain health, and why you became so passionate about that.

Amazon John: Well, in the early '90s, when I was formulating or making products for doctors. We made products for lots of different things. Doctors say, "Here's a disease issue," or set of symptomatology. "Can you design something?"

Amazon John: After a while, you got like 45-50 different things, and then you begin to realize, "Hey, wait a minute. All four of these things are really about the immune system. These things are really about inefficient digestion. This is about inflammatory response. This is about energy. This is about detoxification." I really saw about eight major areas where everyone is affected, and almost every specific challenge falls within that category. So if you just address the major issues, you're addressing 90% of really what's out there.

Amazon John: So those were kind of the categories, and that shifts and change as the population grows older, as the environmental challenges shift or change, or toxicities. Currently, yeah, it ends up in the brain.

TeriAnn: Go over those eight one more time, and then let's get to the brain. I just want our listeners ... Say those in order again, just so they have that clear.

Amazon John: Alphabetical order?

TeriAnn: In whatever, if you can do it in that way, go for it, a challenge to you. No, just the eight, so that they can hear what they are.

Amazon John: It'd be like the immune system, primary digestion, secondary digestive, which would be metabolism. Energy circulation, calming and stress related issues, hormonal balancing. Pain, swelling, inflammatory issues, and the last one would be ... Got digestion, metabolism, stress ... probably blood sugar balancing.

TeriAnn: Okay.

Amazon John: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Yeah, a lot of stuff that we educate on, and very important to the health. I love that list. So let's turn our focus to the brain.

Amazon John: To the brain.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Amazon John: Yeah, well, what I find is most people will have brains, maybe not everyone uses them like we should, or maybe we all don't use them as much as we should. But the issues with Alzheimer's and dementia, when you look at the statistics, as I've really gotten into more recently, it is really shocking. It is startling. I was surprised at a lot of the data that I saw.

Amazon John: I just turned 66, and so a lot of this data is mentioning a category of people 65 and over. I said, "Hey, well, that's me." So you look at it, and this, I just did not realize. Say heart disease, okay, the biggest killer in America. The incidence of death from heart disease in the last 15 years has actually declined by about 11%. The deaths due to Alzheimer's have increased 123%.

TeriAnn: Wow.

Amazon John: There's something going on here. You have people over 65, one in 10 have Alzheimer's dementia. But that affects not just ... it is such a heartbreaking thing for them, but so many other people are personally affected, their family. The average have like 5.7 people, kind of non-paid people, taking care of this person. So in addition to the health staff and the medical, and all of that, you have another five people on average that are non-paid, family members or something, that are really taking care of these people.

Amazon John: For those people, they're sacrificing income with that time. Many of these people are they call a sandwich generation, where they've got kids of their own, and they're taking care of maybe their parents at the same time. Then you begin to get stress related issues, and things come up with them because it's very difficult, as you know, when you're dealing with someone with Alzheimer's dementia.

TeriAnn: It takes a huge toll. It's a huge cost. It's a huge time commitment. Emotionally it's draining to watch someone go through that. I do see that becoming more prevalent in the world now, and especially in America. I think the stats on it just speak to the issue that we're seeing with it now.

TeriAnn: Let's talk about, with Alzheimer's and dementia, I mean, who is most at risk for this? And who needs to be concerned about it?

Amazon John: It's kind of an aging thing as we all have kind of imagined and perceive it to be. So over 65, you have one out of 10. Deaths of people over 65 years old, one out of three of those deaths will be due to Alzheimer's. Actually, more people are dying of Alzheimer's than prostate cancer and breast cancer combined. These are things I did not know. I mean, and it's getting older because as the baby boomers, that huge belly of the snake, that big group of population is coming into that age group now. Now that's why you're seeing this really skyrocket.

TeriAnn: It's gonna go up. Yeah.

Amazon John: And the cost is 270 billion dollars now. It's expected to go to 1.4 trillion over the next few years.

TeriAnn: Huge cost. Huge cost.

Amazon John: The Center of Disease Control said that this could break the entire health system. It's a serious, not only health crisis, but an economic crisis. And like you say, it's an emotional crisis. It's a heartbreaking thing, but it actually can break the system, just the cost of it.

TeriAnn: The cost, having a place for everyone to go, having people to care for them. I mean, if it continues to grow at this trend, having the resources to adequately take care of someone, which as we both know, it's a high level of care for someone who's going through this. I mean, those numbers are just almost unbelievable. It's mind blowing.

TeriAnn: Let's talk about how we're facing this as a society right now, and what we're doing to address this. I mean, not in the sense of what you would recommend people do, but what are we just seeing on average with people handling the issue of Alzheimer's and dementia?

Amazon John: Well, as it comes on it's kind of ... it just begins to happen. It's one thing if you can't find your keys a few times, or you forgot where your phone is. I think that happens to all of us all the time, but when you find your phone in the refrigerator or you find your keys in the dishwasher, then that can be ... really get your attention. It begins to come on, how do people deal with it? Well, the current establishment is treating it pharmaceutically.

TeriAnn: Of course.

Amazon John: And here's one of the things about that. The most popular drug they're using, one out of five people stop using it, more than one out of five, more than 20% of people, because of the side effects of it. But they're just not effective. They know it's not that effective. There's been so much money spent trying to go down this course. Like 98% of the drugs that start somewhere in the clinical trials or the different phases going through, drop out. 98%. Because, A, they just don't work, or they've got safety issues.

Amazon John: There's very few drugs in the marketplace. There's always hope for some breakthrough, or some new modality. Now people are talking about a potential vaccine, or there's always something going on. There's a lot of sincere, genuine, smart people with a lot of money involved in this, but many of the drug companies have trimmed back their funding for this because they just don't see a way forward. They're funding research into cancer and some other issues, where there are some breakthroughs, there are some progress, there are some good things happening, heart disease. All of these things, they're redirecting.

Amazon John: I mean, diabetes, blood sugar control. A lot of these other huge issues they have a much better chance of having a successful outcome for spending their money. So they've just kind of withdrawn. This is a really big issues, and I think part of that is because when you're a drug company, normally you're making an isolate product. You're getting a molecule that you can patent, and go into the marketplace with.

Amazon John: The thing about Alzheimer's is, as I'm really looking at it, my perception of it is multiple factors involved in this, so any single isolate, even if you're addressing one of these or one of these, you really should be addressing all of this stuff.

TeriAnn: Why do you ... let's talk about that for a minute in the sense that you said they're really not moving forward. They're not finding anything. Speak to that for a minute, as far as brain health goes, and as we age, and we already get to the point where we're seeing someone get closer to Alzheimer's or dementia, we're seeing those signs. Speak to that for a minute, not seeing any breakthroughs and moving forward. Speak to the science behind that, and why that is, why they're not having breakthroughs when it comes to that.

Amazon John: Well, I think it's really getting a grip and understanding the mechanisms and just the process of this particular activity, the Alzheimer's and dementia. It's kind of commonly accepted that one of these things is happening. It used to be really focused on a protein, a beta amyloid plaquing. So you get this plaquing that occurs in the brain, and then that just interferes with the neuronal activity. So you got the brain, you got all the signaling cells there. And you start at one end, and you go through that signal, and it puts off a spark across the synaptic cleft. Then the next one picks it up and carries it on.

Amazon John: If something's happening in here, if you're getting plaquing in here. It's like an old spark plug, when cars used to have spark plugs. I guess you still get them in a tractor or a lawn mower.

TeriAnn: Yeah, way back when. Yup.

Amazon John: Way back when.

TeriAnn: Times have changed.

Amazon John: So when you get plaquing, your spark plug would foul, and you couldn't start your engine. So same thing here. You get that plaquing in there, and it just can't transmit to the next one, and you don't remember. You can't access that data where you put your keys.

Amazon John: So amyloid plaquing is one issue. Then you've gotta thing, it's referred to as a tau tangle, where you get the neurons that really just become tangled. So you have that same kind of interference. Then there's just inflammation. Inflammation is a really big deal, and actually these other factors are really caused. It's kind of an inflammatory response from your brain to protect itself sometimes, developing this amyloid plaquing to seal off what it sees as an insult, as something that's insulting that. Whether it could be a virus, bacteria, fungus, yeast, mold, any of these sorts of things.

Amazon John: There's a multiplicity of things going on there, and the inflammatory part I think is really, really big because in an inflammatory state, that's a good biological terrain for the progression of many pathological processes.

TeriAnn: Absolutely.

Amazon John: So when you address the inflammation, you're really addressing so much of this. Then there are some specific things that we can do for say the amyloid plaquing and the tau tangles, and

some of the other things that are going on with too. One of those, and this really surprising, and when you think through it, it really kind of makes perfect sense.

Amazon John: This is some work that just came out last month. This is brand new. It's showing the involvement of Candida in brain issues. Normally people with Candida, which is a yeast, and it's pretty widespread through the population. Many people have had a yeast or a Candida type infection. It's widespread because most people have done antibiotics, or are doing antibiotics, and we've got this Candida albicans in our system in our gut, and they reside there, and they serve a purpose.

Amazon John: However, when you take away the other bacteria and the microbes that are keeping them in check, by eating antibiotics you kill off the other ones, then that really begins to over-colonize, overpopulate, and then it migrates. In women, oftentimes it's urinary tract infections is how it shows up. In men, oftentimes it's prostate issues. It's systemic. In other words, it can go through the body. It's in the bloodstream. So this Candida's in the bloodstream and going everywhere.

Amazon John: What this recent work showed was that people did not think before that the Candida could cross the blood brain barrier. Now they found that it actually can.

TeriAnn: Wow.

Amazon John: The Candida itself actually secretes some amyloid type plaquing on its own. When that insults-

TeriAnn: Just as it travels through body, it's just doing that, once it gets there?

Amazon John: It travels through your body doing that, looking for a place to reside where the biological terrain is right. If you introduce a lot of sugar and a lot of carbs into that terrain, boy, they really love that.

TeriAnn: Yeah, it's just like an explosion.

Amazon John: Like an explosion.

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Amazon John: So when these Candida cross that blood brain barrier, the brain recognizes that as an insult, and then you have this coating process. The brain will try to coat that to seal it off. And it will use, ultimately, some of this amyloid beta protein plaquing to seal that off, right? So it's not an issue anymore. That's part of the inflammatory response that the brain would use for that. But then you've got that plaquing issue to deal with.

Amazon John: That makes sense. Why is this so prevalent? It almost, you could probably chart and chart maybe the use of antibiotics as the same, and the incidence of yeast and Candida type infections. We pay particular attention it seems like to viruses and bacteria, but we're not paying enough attention, I think, to the fungus, yeast, molds, which I think are equally as hazardous to our health.

TeriAnn: Yeah. And you explaining all of that, I think a lot of it comes down to our lifestyle and our health, and what we're putting in our body, and how we're taking care of our body. That's something that our listeners aren't foreign too. We talk a lot about that and natural health, and all of the toxic things that are out in the environment now, which I'm sure are contributing to all of this. And being careful about what you're putting in your body, I think it's so critical.

TeriAnn: When you're talking about Alzheimer's and dementia, when you were talking about the plaquing and things like that, would you say it's safe to say that once you get to the point that you have an Alzheimer's dementia diagnosis, at that point it's just maintenance, but we do live in a world now where we have enough information, we have enough knowledge, that it's more about prevention and what we can do to keep that from happening?

Amazon John: I would say that, yes, we want to prevent that from happening. I believe there are things we can do that really make a really big difference from preventing that from happening because you're addressing each one of these kinds of normal processes, normal issues. Lifestyle and diet are really huge. The diet, like we talked about, overeating sugar, overeating antibiotics. If there is something, a specific bacteria that's completely out of control, and you have to do an antibiotic, obviously you want an antibiotic really specifically geared towards that specific bacteria. Because a normal person is gonna have 400 to 500 types of bacteria and microbes in their biome. They're all important, as long as you maintain a healthy relationship.

Amazon John: But if you're doing an antibiotic, or you've been on a course of antibiotics, you have to repopulate, you have to recolonize your microbiome with the good bacteria. I think the broadest diversity of bacteria you can use the better. Most people are familiar with lactobacillus, a lot of yogurt-type bacteria. But there's so many more probiotics that you really, I think you should repopulate with as many diverse strains of bacteria. Because the diversity is probably more important than getting ... it used to be you'd get like five million colony-forming units, and then it was like 50 million, and then 100 million. Now it's a billion and five billion, 10 billion. There's probably 100 billion colony-forming units of probiotics. But the diversity of those, I think, is really critical.

Amazon John: So, yeah, lifestyle ... if you can avoid as many insults, environmental toxicity, as you can, that's really huge.

TeriAnn: Huge, and it's everywhere. I mean, you have to be so careful now. So careful.

Amazon John: You've gotta be careful, and a lot of this we just can't avoid, you know?

TeriAnn: Yeah.

Amazon John: I just arrived on an airplane this morning, and I mean there was another 340 people on that plane. You just hear them coughing and wheezing, and that air's recirculating.

TeriAnn: Yup, we're getting germs everywhere. Yes.

Amazon John: I'm looking at the door. I'm thinking, "Does this seat cushion serve as a parachute?" I'm stuck, I'm there for the next three hours. So we have to have our immune system strong as part of that process, so that we can defend ourselves from those insults. And then paying attention to keeping your

body in a proper inflammatory response state, so reducing the inflammatory things that you're putting into your body, and on a regular basis. And you can do that. I mean, you can do that with supplementation by keeping your body into a noninflammatory space, and that is really big.

Amazon John: The other thing is exercise is my lifestyle because a lot of this is about circulation. If we're not getting the microcirculation to the brain, it's not getting the nutrients that it needs. So as people get older, they're more sedentary, so they're sitting around a lot more and not exercising. They don't have fresh blood flow, those fresh nutrients coming in.

TeriAnn: Yeah, I've been reading a lot of fascinating research recently on exercise and the brain, and aging, and how important it is. I mean, the research that's coming out now. It just goes more and more in depth, but it's so critical. I think sleep too. I mean, I've been reading a lot about sleep and how it impacts our brain health over time. It's so significant. People say, "Oh, I'll just get a few hours of sleep, and I'll be fine." But that's something that even in my own personal life I'm trying to improve because of the information now that's coming out on how you just can't make up for that lost time and losing the sleep. It's so critical to take care of our bodies in that way.

Amazon John: I agree with you, Teri, so strongly on the sleep. It should be ... people should be given prescriptions to sleep.

TeriAnn: Yup.

Amazon John: Here, you have to sleep nine hours. I do best with nine hours. Some people are fine with seven, but nine hours. And that's a time when actually your brain detoxifies. We're talking about the brain health. I mean, your entire body is detoxifying, finding its rhythm again.

TeriAnn: Including your brain.

Amazon John: Including your brain. It's not focused on doing all these things, and now the body can look around and find the areas, and really work on the healing, the healing aspect or detoxification, because your quiet space. You're not taxing it in any other way. Sleep, you're so right on that.

TeriAnn: Yeah. I mean, so there's a lot of things. I love what you said. We can't avoid all of the toxicity, and all of the environmental factors that are going on in the world today, but we can take care of our body. We can do things that really contribute to a healthier mind, healthier body. We talked about some of those.

TeriAnn: Talk a little bit more about, when we talk about what people can do to help their brain function better, and their overall brain health. Talk about some specific things you've found as far as diet. We talk a little bit about supplementation on the podcast, and how it can help people with their health.

TeriAnn: I wanna talk about that specifically in relation to the brain because we hear a lot of information around supplementation in other aspects of the body, but the brain side of supplementation is really coming back to the forefront and what we can do to help our brain benefit from supplementation. So, talk a little bit more about the diet factor, and then the supplementation factor, and what's really standing out to you, and what can benefit people with the research.

Amazon John: I will, and when I look at botanicals, I look at those as food. So, it's part of the diet. I mean, the diet and supplementation just kind of overlay on that. I used to say, "Just eat massive herbage." And then, I like to do that. You can just look at my suitcase. You can see I've got all my botanicals there. Then kind of food is optional because these are food. It's like concentrated plant material. It's concentrated food. A lot of it, it's pretty much from the rainforest, is food that you're not gonna get around here. It's grown in a different area, different space, has a different chemistry, different energetics, et cetera.

Amazon John: I look at the food and supplementation very similarly. But obviously you wanna avoid a lot of the sugars. You wanna be careful about the Candida, careful with antibiotic use. You wanna be careful about all of those kind of things. You wanna make sure you're getting enough sleep. You wanna make sure you're getting enough exercise. Those are really, really big, just all of that. Then when you look at what specific ingredients, or what specific chemistry or nutritional factors are gonna really facilitate and help some of these causative factors we talked about, things turn up like polyphenols for example.

Amazon John: Polyphenols you find in blueberries and chokeberries, you find it in berry kingdom like that. When you're talking about a diet and eating. You can find a lot more concentrated polyphenols in something like a camu camu plant. You get into the anthocyanins, and the antioxidant activity, something like a sangre de drago's 90% by dry weight. It's the croton lechleri tree. You hit it with a machete, it bleeds this sap that looks just like blood. By dry weight it's 90% pure proanthocyanidin. That's a really important part of the chemistry you wanna be adding to your body.

Amazon John: There's things called the brain-derived neurotropic factors, and this is something that our body makes. There are several botanicals, una de gato really is one, cat's claw, that helps stimulate the proteins there that actually initiate a process of neurogenesis. Neurogenesis is where you're building new brain cells, or building new cells. In the case of the brain, building new brain cells. Because the brain cells are dying all the time, and we got new brain cells coming around all the time, just like every other part of our body.

Amazon John: If you have the ability to build new brain cells in a substantial way, and we can. I think one part of your question was inferring we hit a plateau and have been diagnosed, maybe we're looking to maintain. I would suggest that we can do a lot more than maintain. I think we can actually, we're in a position where we can actually have a neurogenesis where we're rebuilding new brain cells that affect memory and learning. And also slow down the process, we call it apoptosis, of normal cells, where cells go through a lifespan and they die, and new ones are being born. You can actually preserve the cells that are already there in a healthy state.

Amazon John: So if you're helping preserve those, and slow down the apoptosis, and you're building new brain cells, then you're actually growing white matter, and your memory and focus, concentration, cognitive abilities, can actually be improving. The cool thing about that is you have something as simple as a cacao. Cacao can slow down the process of brain cells dying. There's chemistry in the cacao that does that. There's epicatechins in that. There's epicatechins in cat's claw. Resveratrol is another one that's very significant here. You find that in the camu camu. And cinnamon, cinnamaldehyde, which has been shown to slow down, to break down amyloid plaquing, and help dissolve the tau tangles.

Amazon John: Amino acids, lucine, valine, serine. These are camu camu. That's really interesting because some of the new data's showing those have the ability to break up these tau tangles. Every one of these things I've mentioned are also very anti-inflammatory. So if you can create a noninflammatory terrain in the brain, and you have a proper immune system, and have enough antioxidants in your body, then it's gonna be neutralizing the causes of these things as you go forward. And because you're building more brain cells, and you're breaking down that amyloid plaquing and dissolving the tau tangles, and if you can eliminate that Candida as well, so some anti-fungal activity there, you're way ahead.

TeriAnn: I love it. There's so many things rolling around in my head right now. The first thing, this is fascinating. The first thing is you touched on what you're putting into your body, so just your overall diet. And just some of those ingredients you talked about. You're working with some of those on a supplementation level, so a more concentrated amount of those from a supplementation standpoint. But just imagine keeping some of these things in our everyday diet, and how that's going to impact you. That's why we need the healthy diet. That's why we need to be worried about what we're putting into our body.

TeriAnn: Then you take it to a supplementation level, and you're taking some of these ingredients, and this is where this ties back to the beginning part of podcast where we talked about your story. You've been introduced to the diet side of things on your adventures and your journeys, at your journey through your story and treasure hunting and finding these amazing ingredients.

TeriAnn: Now you're looking at research behind how they impact the brain. And so, supplementation is so critical now when it comes to the brain, what we can do to have a healthy brain and better brain function overall. I love what you said, you believe with Alzheimer's and dementia, it's not only about maintenance and prevention, but also some reversal there, from what I'm hearing you say, and getting back to a healthier state with your brain even once you've had that diagnosis happen.

TeriAnn: Let me ask you a question about that. So the plaquing and the tangling, when are we starting to see more and more of that? If this is becoming more prevalent, and the trend is going up. Clearly, we're watching this in the brain and when this is happening. At what point are we seeing this more and more as people age? Because I don't think it just turns on like a light bulb, and one day you have this issue happening, and you're not taking care of it. When are we starting to see this more and more as people age? When is it really becoming a problem before it becomes an even bigger problem?

Amazon John: If you look at the stats, it seems to around 65. Stats will say there's 5.7 million people with Alzheimer's that are over 65. There's 200,000 with Alzheimer's that are less than 60, okay? So, it seems like that's a threshold. So, whether that is threshold where we've accumulated enough toxicity, or the threshold where we're not as active as we used to be, the threshold ... All these things we talk about, diet and lifestyle, kind of begin to shift at that point. Then you really see that rise.

Amazon John: Or, not taking care of the immune system, you're not doing all the things that we talked about, really paying attention to the inflammatory state of your body and your immune health, and your microbiome. All of these are really critical factors. Age, it seems to be very age related. I mean, you hit into this category, and it really starts moving in a significant way. I think at 80, you get like one out of two people, or 85, every other person's got Alzheimer's. I mean, that's-

TeriAnn: That's staggering.

Amazon John: That's gigantic.

TeriAnn: That's a huge number.

Amazon John: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Yup. Yeah.

Amazon John: I mean, just because it looks like, okay, that's normal, but just because that's really common doesn't mean it's normal at all. In other words, I think that, I really believe-

TeriAnn: It's the opposite.

Amazon John: ... there are things that we can do about that. Yeah, that's the common, but we don't accept that. Okay, that's gonna happen. No, the idea is that that's not normal, and we can change that.

TeriAnn: Yeah, I agree with that. I mean, I think we look at it as normal now. Well, there's just a chance I'm going to get Alzheimer's, or there's a chance I'm going to have dementia. I don't think we allow that to become normal. I think this whole conversation speaks to that, and taking care of our bodies, and what we can do as far as diet, supplementation, exercise and sleep.

TeriAnn: So, to close this out today, the last thing I wanna touch on is for people in their 30s, 40s, 50s. We've already talked about things you can do, but how important is supplementation? And some of those ingredients you're working with specifically where we're seeing a huge impact on brain health, how important is that in your mind?

Amazon John: Well, you're asking Amazon John, so you know what that answer's gonna be. I think it's critical. I think it's just absolutely critical. I mean, we can only speak from our own life experience, but I know the issues I had that were hepatitis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever. When I came out of that, I had a near death experience, and I just recovered like 60%, and that's just ... I couldn't get back all the way to where I was. The doctors told me, "Well, that's normal. You're lucky to be alive."

Amazon John: At that point in my life, I said, "Okay." I accepted that. So many people accept that, where they're in a compromised place early on. But once I had my experience in the rainforest and realized two weeks later, I'm back to being in better health than I had ever been. I realized, wait a minute, that's not actually the way it works. When you're talking about the diet, we have in America, there's just a couple of hundred things that we eat pretty much all the time. And that's the way we shop for food. We look in the cupboard, "Well, gee, I'm out of this. I'm out of this. I'm making a list. Here's the list." And you're just replacing the same things you've been eating all the time.

TeriAnn: Over and over again. Yep.

Amazon John: Over and over, right? And that's a limited sphere because in the rainforest there's a 100,000 species of plants. Now the guys in rainforests are eating an average of 2,500 different plants during the course of a year.

TeriAnn: Amazing. If you think about the standard diet in America, and you compare it to that, you're absolutely right. It's just recycling over and over again. All these things that are out there that we're never exposed to, our bodies are never exposed to.

Amazon John: So you wanna reach beyond the cupboard of that, and reach into this huge natural pharmacy treasure house of the rainforest. This is my idea, where you've got 100,000 plants. So, for them, they don't make a list because they don't have a cupboard to start with, right? They just go out into the forest, and whatever's in season, or whatever fruits, that's what they're eating. So, they're eating, normally ... I mean, the further upriver you go, they're eating fresh fruit, whatever's in season, and they're hungry. They're extending that into the barks and the roots and leaves and stems, and they're getting really broad spectrum of chemistry, of nutritional factors, of energetics. The further upriver you go, you don't see the degenerative issues, cancer, arthritis, diabetes. Those just really fade off.

Amazon John: As soon as you introduce sugar, refined sugar and bread, and they start getting-

TeriAnn: They start seeing the issues.

Amazon John: As soon as their diet changes, their teeth rot out, they get diabetes, they have all the other issues anyone else does. It's just part of our organism. Yeah, reach beyond the cupboard. Find some things because your organs and glands and systems will appreciate it. They can only do with the raw material they have available.

Amazon John: If you're gonna build a house, you can't build with just nails, right? You need the lumber, you need the mortar, you need the brick, you need the piping, you need all of that. So, the more tools you give these organs, the broader spectrum, diversity of chemistry and nutrition and energetics, the more they can ... they'll automatically do it. They're just waiting to do it. They're saying, "Where has this stuff been my whole life?"

TeriAnn: You just need the tools. Yes.

Amazon John: "Wow, look what I can do now."

TeriAnn: Giving it the tools. Yeah.

Amazon John: Yeah.

TeriAnn: Yeah. I think that's so important for people to understand and really take in, where you talk about going upriver, and the further up you go, the more plants and species they're exposed to, and they're going with the seasons and what's in season. I think that's something, it's something we've lost in our diet because we go to the store, we restock, we restock, we restock. Here's these people where they're living proof of being out in nature, being exposed to a natural plant, eating it in its natural form, in season, going through all these different species. They're not seeing these issues.

TeriAnn: I think that's so important for people to realize. I love this movement that I hear of people bringing gardens back, and having gardens in their backyard, and eating natural and organic, and

supplementation. People really have to grasp onto this concept of food is our medicine, and this is why people who are all the way upriver, they're not seeing these issues, which is fascinating.

TeriAnn: At the same time, it's really not fascinating in the sense that it's just normal. When you talk about Alzheimer's and dementia becoming normal, it's not normal. People who are living a healthy life, and really taking care of their bodies, this is not normal for them. They're living long, healthy, beautiful lives. That's what normal is, and I think we've lost that. We've lost that-

Amazon John: Exactly.

TeriAnn: ... in our culture and our society.

TeriAnn: I've loved this. I've absolutely loved this. It's been very enlightening for me. We're excited to be doing another podcast with you, so tune in for that one next week as well. Not only has this been fascinating, but we're going to expand on what we've talked about here. Really dive into some of the ingredients that you've been specializing in, doing research around, and how they can impact the brain, what they're doing to support brain health. And talk more about your journey and finding these treasures, which I absolutely love.

TeriAnn: So thank you for being here today. I mean, this has been absolutely enlightening for me. I definitely appreciate it.

TeriAnn: For those who are listening in, you can check out all our podcasts, and this podcast, at EmpoweringYouOrganically.com. We are also on iTunes, so you can check us out there.

TeriAnn: Again, John Easterling, thank you for being here, and we're looking forward to having you back again next week.

Amazon John: Thanks, Teri. Be happy to be here.

TeriAnn: Thanks, everyone. Have a great day.

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Episode 152 - Amazon John Easterling Shares His Secrets for Optimal Brain Health