



From Fear to Informed: Calmly Navigating Mold With Andrew Melrose

SPEAKERS

Kendra Seymour, Andrew Melrose

AM

Andrew Melrose

00:00

I always say that if you know where to look, how to look, and what tools to use, and how they work in conjunction, and you're very thorough, give me three, four or five hours of that, rather than 20 tests. But I'm not allowed to inspect. Okay, if I had a choice between, hey, test as much as you want, but you're not allowed to inspect the home, which, I don't know how it's even possible, but let's just say, versus you're not allowed to test but you have to thoroughly inspect the home, and you have flashlight, moisture meter, borescope, thermal camera, particle counter, like you have some things to work with. Now I'm going to get a lot more data about your home, knowing where to look, how to look, and how the home is an interconnected system.

KS

Kendra Seymour

00:39

Hello and welcome back to Your Indoor Air Podcast brought to you by Change the Air Foundation. My name is Kendra Seymour, and today we're diving into a conversation that goes beyond just mold inspections and buildings. We're going to be talking about the human side of indoor air, you know, the physical, some of the emotional, maybe the mental journey, in addition to, you know, all of the normal things we like to unpack here on the podcast. So my guest today has walked this road personally. He spent years guiding others through some of the hardest chapters of their lives. His insight and compassion and his experience, I think will just bring so much to our conversation today. And I think we're going to touch on some stuff that you're not going to hear in more traditional conversations, but I think everyone who goes through this journey needs to ultimately hear. So if you ever felt overwhelmed or confused or alone on this journey, I think you're in for a treat with this episode. So that said, I want to welcome Andrew Melrose from Melrose Mold Solutions. Thank you so much for being here.

AM

Andrew Melrose

01:37

Thank you so much for having me. I think the world of Change the Air, so thank you.

KS

Kendra Seymour

01:40

Thank you. Yeah, I have followed you for a long time, and I so appreciate in this world where there's so much conflicting information, it's so overwhelming and so uncertain, that you kind of just bring this like, calm clarity. Let's take this step by step, like, let's talk about your unique situation and so I'm really excited that we're going to talk about that, because this isn't, you know, an easy process, and it can impact like, every aspect of your life. So we're going to get into a little bit of that today. But before we do, I do need to say a quick thank you to our sponsor, MV Restoration. It is because of companies like this and our wonderful donors like you all that help keep our resources free. Everything from our downloads to our podcasts to our advocacy work at the state and federal level for homeowners and renters and those in the military, and even our small scale research that we like to fund. So thank you to them. If you want to learn more about our corporate partners, you can head on over to ChangeTheAirFoundation.org, and click on our corporate partners tab, and you'll get a insight into what they're all about. So let's jump in though, Andrew, because I know we have a lot to talk about, and I would love to just kind of start with your story, like what first pulled you into this work, and how has that personal journey kind of shaped how you show up for your clients today.

AM

Andrew Melrose

03:02

Thank you. Yeah, I really look forward to talking. We'll get into a lot of different topics. I have to start with this so it doesn't get, you know, lost at the end. But Change the Air has been taking a mountain, really, of what is needed to be taken in this industry, which is releasing information from trusted people, and you taking this as a nonprofit, especially to say, I'm going to give really good information out there with from infographics to blogs and all the stuff you guys do is just very, very good. And I got a lot of respect for you. It's so many of the info you've put out, like, man, they beat me to it because I didn't have enough time. And you have just worked tirelessly so well done, and from getting into the HVAC stuff that you've been doing, I mean, really, just need to give you your respect, honor and props for all of this and every guest that you've had on, it's just really been an amazing place. So I hope this becomes the, you know, master motherboard of information for everybody coming in, because the awareness is growing in this industry like crazy. I mean, from Joe Rogan podcast, you know, people mentioning mold and illness and stuff to so many different places, right? We're all living in homes and buildings that can be contaminated, or we're having mystery symptoms that are being like we're just running in circles. And so I really believe that Change the Air can be a massive part of a doorway people can come into, because what a big passion of mine is, as I get into my story in a minute, is that the more that we walk into learning about mold from a really fearful state, like the first time we hear about it is a crazy

horror story of how it ruined someone's life that first time we hear about it can be the lens we look through now going forward, and you can't help it. You just scroll, you find something, or, you know, whatever, however it may happen. But what I'm hoping is that more people find out about mold proactively from you guys, because now the lens can be very informational, clear, regimented and holistic, rather than kind of overly impulsive and fearful. So anyway, well done.

KS

Kendra Seymour

05:06

Yeah, well, no, thank you, and right back at you, because the impulse, and I get this, because I have been there, so I know what it means to panic, even today, and I've been on this journey for 15 years, and when we started, there wasn't as much information, right? There was like a Facebook group, and it was like the first time I found first time I found people who like, hey, no, this can be a very real thing, and I felt validated, but it was also so overwhelming, and I didn't know what parts of their story were applicable to my personal situation. And so one of the things that we want people to do, and that's why I love your platform as well. Is like, with knowledge comes power, right? And the power to make better choices. We're going to get into, like, this pursuit of perfection and how that's not realistic and that, and, you know, the analysis paralysis, and we're going to unpack all that. But, yeah, I think when you've been through it personally, and then you come to this other side where you're helping other people. I think it brings such a unique thing. So do you want to touch a little bit?

AM

Andrew Melrose

06:07

Thank you. Thank you for letting me start. You know, off topic first. But yeah, so I was told by my parents that a mole dog came in and checked our house because there was a leak behind from the roof, behind one of my headboards, or whatever as a kid, and they didn't know back then, but I just had, like a shot immune system most of my life as a kid, not really knowing why, and didn't help with probably my lifestyle and how wild of a teenage life I lived. But then I do remember just how sensitive I was to environments growing up, and I do think that was a massive component to my health and immune system back then, but then had a radical transformation at age 20. Literally, my entire life changed like who I am now is not who I was before, and it was amazing encounter with God that radically shifted my entire life. And from there I got really passionate about health, because I don't think that basically what happened to me wasn't just spiritual. It impacted body, mind, emotion, like literally everything. And I believe that God cares about the body and therefore environments as well. So then I'm learning about all this health stuff, and I knew nothing about the environmental health at that point, that was a blind spot in my learning of health, until I met a guy, Tom Ray. Shout out to him with his company in New York that does asbestos and mold and lead abatement. And when I met him, I started shadowing him on some jobs and when I was doing inspections, I kind of realized the massive impact that it was having on

people's health, and then I got red pill'd by the toxic mold summit, because I, when I got in this industry, I learned like, okay, if I'm going to get in this, I have to do this with a clear conscience, and I have to actually give people good information. Like, what you're taught as a mold inspector is just walk in, walk around for an hour, do an air sample per 1000 square feet, and leave. When I started to learn about the health impacts, and started to learn about the, you know, from the toxic mold summit, all the different impacts it can have, I'm like, I gotta be more thorough than that. So I just started hunting information and learning organically. Because you have to, you have to take ownership of this to really learn. He equipped me with certifications, tools, and I went off to the races doing inspections in the Carolinas for a while then. But yeah. So speaking of how it impacted my health, it was just two years ago that I took a blood sample that showed for the antibody, the mold antibody test. I was just curious what, what mine was showing. And what was fascinating was the mycotoxins showed up highest in my antibody test was one that was really correlated with a suppressed immune system, that as a kid, that when I was that's what I was being, you know, exposed to often. And if I go into a house today where that type of Penicillium amount, or Penicillium species is around, I can feel it like right away. And sometimes drive back from that inspection feeling like I got hit by a truck. So it's just pretty fascinating, also how sensitivities are developed, or how the body is very, very smart in detecting these things. I always say that if you were bit by a Doberman when you were four years old, maybe when you're 24 that cell danger response would be like, you know, the the body remembers that Doberman, if when you see it 20 years later, you kind of get on that high alert. And so I've felt and noticed that when I'm in a, you know, an environment with high Penicillium. My own wife went through a bunch of different health things. There's a YouTube video we did on my page, Melrose Mold Solutions, where we did an interview about her. And that was also very fascinating to get a bigger realization of those autoimmune, you know, markers and things that were contributed from mold. So, yeah, the journey was always just learning and knowing the impacts. I think that's one of the most important things for an inspector or someone in this profession to know is, like, if you're going to vet a professional, if they don't know anything about the health impacts, there just might be a huge blind spot in some in a very important piece of this puzzle, because I see what I do as a health procedure for the home, rather than just some blue collar contractor type of thing. And I think it's merging more and more into building professionals are not official health professionals, but a massive variable in that equation.

KS

Kendra Seymour

10:35

Yeah and that's so true, because you don't need the person to be a doctor, but you do need them to be health conscious, because what they do impacts your health. And I think there has been a shift over the last few decades from like this as a purely cosmetic thing, or that's what grandma's basement smells like, or, Oh well, just tear it out like I have been there early on, when we started. Because I think the other thing that most people don't realize is that the industry, both the inspection and remediation industries, are largely unregulated, so unlike other professions, like if

I want to get my hair colored, my hair stylist has to undergo way more training and certification to color my gray hair than the person who's inspecting and remediating your home? Why, because there's a health impact. When my children are old enough to drive, they will have to go through more training, right, and pass tests and physical hands on experience, because there's a health component and a safety component to driving a car. Yet when it comes to inspections and remediations, it really is the wild west, and if you listen to our podcast, you're probably tired of me saying that, but as a consumer, you have to know that, because I was always trained that the person you call the professional, the doctor, whoever they're, the expert, you trust them. And it's not that you can't have trust in the people you hire. I certainly hope that's a component. But my family got burned early on, because we trusted the professionals, we trusted the people we hired, we didn't know that, you know, it wasn't regulated, that tearing out the mold was unsafe without precautions, that it could impact our health. And as a result, like we paid the price. We paid it with our health. We paid it with our finances, emotionally, mentally, and so I hope that people realize, and we'll talk about this, I think a little bit, that one of the biggest things you can do for your journey is to learn to become your own advocate, because no one will care about your health or your home as much as you. And I want that to be empowering, not scary. You you can take control of this, because you're going to care more, right? If the remediator screws up, they're not paying the price you are. If the doctor misses the diagnosis, you're the one, or your child's the one, or your spouse is the one that's left suffering. So of course, like all these things we've gone through personally, and I'm sure with your clients, you've started to see kind of patterns emerge. So after supporting so many people over the years, have you seen some like common pitfalls or traps that maybe people get stuck in, and how can someone listening right now avoid or move through those same moments?

AM

Andrew Melrose

13:14

Yeah, great question. I think I quickly want to talk on what you just said with getting professionals even as well. If you knew nothing at all about working out, and you're like, I got to get in shape and you called the first personal trainer, and that personal trainer said, Okay, I know exactly what you need. We're going to do barbell only training crazy heavy, you know, max capacity, and I'll see you in a week. You, if you knew nothing about working out, you might just go roll with it, but I think most of us know, okay, like I'm, let's say I'm an older person who's overweight, whatever that is the worst recommendation for it. A sign of maybe a good, in this case, a personal trainer would be asking the questions to deduct who you are, your lifestyle, what your goals are, all that stuff and just that conversation causes you to say, this person actually knows what they're talking about, they care, and you can, you can start to really vet a better trainer. In the inspection and remediation world, why Change the Air is really good, and why these conversations are good is because there is a criteria of, are they speaking a certain language? And then don't turn your intuition off. That's another big thing, okay, so a pitfall. People turn their intuition off because they get impulsive from fear or quick, too much trust, really fast. And I always say we need to use

a left and right brain approach. Left Brain approach, guys is literally Change The Air Foundation. You go through their criteria a little bit. You know that when people are talking about remediation, they should be talking about removal, we can get into some of these things. Again, what I just said, if you have an inspector who says, Yeah, we're going to run an air sample per 1000 square feet, or two of those, and we'll know if you have mold in your house. Some of this, those are the red flag languages that we're, just gonna, you know, they'll be filtered out. Yeah, but how are you also feeling about this person? You might have two or three really good options, but you at the end of the day, have to know who do you resonate with and who do you feel good about. And I'm not going to turn my intuition off, but take ownership and responsibility, like you said, to do this, and the more knowledge you have, then you're going to kind of recognize when they're talking gibberish or actual, you know, proper information.

KS

Kendra Seymour

15:25

Yeah, I'm so glad we took kind of like a pivot here, because there are two things. So for listeners, you're like, great. I want you to know that if you head on over to our website, ChangeTheAirFoundation.org, and you go to our resource tab, the very first thing you're going to see is Start Here under that resource tab, and you can click, mold in the home. There's also mold in the military, mold in the workplace, and coming soon, mold in schools. But click, mold in the home, and we're going to take you through step by step how to find that good IEP, indoor environmental professional. And we list out what they should be doing, what they shouldn't, red flags. There's a great free download. You don't even have to give us your email, literally, just download it on questions to ask when hiring an IEP, and we give you the answers to listen for. Why, because it's one of those pitfalls that Andrew was talking about. They can sound knowledgeable, and you have no idea if what they're saying is accurate, right? Maybe they're confident. They throw in, well, I've been doing this for 30 years, like I've heard that before, and you're like, oh, okay, right, sure, that sounds good. We want you to be able to call BS. And so the downloads are there with the questions and answers to listen for. So I want you to check that out. We have the same companion document for remediators too, but I want to also something that isn't talked about enough, and I did not learn until this age is that trusting your intuition is so important. And I always felt like, oh, it's like bad to question the doctor, question the IEP or the remediator. I am now at the point where I am very upfront with anyone who does any work in my house, and I'm always respectful about it. But again, like it is my house, I suffer the consequences if something's not clear, I instead of being embarrassed about, can you explain that again? Like, I will just ask, or I will say, what about this? And based on their answers, it tells you a lot. Are they dodging the question? I always hated when they would answer, like, with things like, oh, is your husband home? No, you're talking to me. Or, you know, I've been doing this a long time, just trust me. I want to trust you, but I've been burned. And so here's what I want, listener, I don't want you to wait till you're burned, to take this advice that Andrew and I are giving you, right. Like do your homework, vet people, trust your intuition. So that's a good one. Are there any like, other themes

or pitfalls you're seeing? Do we want to talk about a little bit more on the fear online, hearing other people's stories,

AM

Andrew Melrose

17:51

If you want to go that route, for sure there's a lot of pitfalls practically that we can get into

KS

Kendra Seymour

17:56

Do you want to start with those first?

AM

Andrew Melrose

17:58

If I can just bullet point, yeah, why I started doing virtual consulting in addition to on site assessments, because I did hundreds and hundreds of on site assessments, and then I'm seeing the demand being higher around the country for like people needing that next step in the process of, how do I vet someone? What is this estimate looking like compared to this one? Just that that next step of consulting is because maybe they already got two to three really lame inspections from someone for four or 500 bucks and one air sample, and then didn't have enough data, and with one zoom call, we could get a lot more accomplished that way. And so again, the more you learn and take ownership of what this needs to look like, you will make better decisions that way. But I think one big one is that humans have this obsession with sprays and with liquids being I don't know, the cleaning industry has done a darn good job marketing over the years. But if we're coming close to Christmas time, and for this episode, if a Christmas tree was dead and dry in February in your house and you wanted it out. When would you ever think, let me pull a spray out to get this thing out. Okay, so if mold is structured like a plant or tree, one of the big pitfalls is that I just get too many questions of, well, does this spray work better than this one? Or this company is using this one or this one? I'm like, just if you zoom out and understand that remediation is removal, and you remove condition three, visible growth manual, or remove the materials that can't be saved. Then you remove mold out of the materials that will be left behind. And that is where a lot miss it, abrasive cleaning, you know, pulling the mold out of that HEPA sanding things like that. And then the final detail clean, that's dust free, really small particle, getting the final, those three levels of remediation should handle it. Are we going to maybe use a surfactant and maybe some sprays along the way to help with the process? Yes, but we're not relying on those to be it. And that's just a big one that I'm like, we wouldn't be asking so many questions about different, how about this one, and this company and that brand, if we just understood those philosophies of actual removal and cleaning that just takes the manual work to do, so.

KS

Kendra Seymour

20:07

Yeah, and I think the other thing that I hear, too is it's always about removal folks, regardless of the type of mold, right? Oh, the, I've people calling them, they said, it's not the dangerous kind. Okay, let's we don't have to unpack that. But mold, whether it's growing or dormant, whether it's producing mycotoxins or not, can impact your health. We want to remove mold growth from our home. We want to do it safely. We want to do it effectively. It does not involve killing anything. And if you're interested. Andrew talked about, you know, little bit on the remediation, on like, what can be saved in terms of abrasive measures and what do we just toss things like drywall and insulation that are moldy. You get rid of those. But we have a great, great resource. It's mold remediation at a glance. You get it for free by signing up for our newsletter. I think it's one of the most, I wrote it, it was the most consumer friendly document, in my opinion. And I guess I'm biased, out there on this, because the standards are written for professionals. And I was like, there isn't a lot out there that's like, consumer focused, in their language, picture heavy, and it's for free. And you can just head to our website, sign up for our newsletter, and you can get it also that Start Here section, I mentioned it's linked several times in there, but it breaks that down a little bit more. But yeah, that big takeaway, guys, it's not about killing. I don't care what your uncle says or your spouse says or whoever. It's about safe and effective removal. You have a couple others in your bullet point list.

AM

Andrew Melrose

21:38

Yeah, really actually, just the two categories of remediation, which we covered, and then now inspection and testing. And that's the key, is inspection and then testing. So the other main question is, what tests do I do? I mean, that's obviously one of the main ones, like,

KS

Kendra Seymour

21:51

That's where people start, and that's the wrong question to be asking. So if you think you have mold, the first question is not, what test do I do? Yeah

AM

Andrew Melrose

22:01

We'll go back to the the doctor analogy. If you called a doctor and they said, don't tell me anything about your life. I'm going to cheek swab you, and whatever that thing says, I'm going to

know everything about your health. You'd automatically know that's not a good doctor. And so vice versa, with an inspector, if they start leading with testing, I am a test second, maybe even third, if there's another, inspection is going to give you the most data. After doing hundreds and hundreds of on site assessments, the tests, to me, fill in gaps, they give types, amount, severity, comparatives like they can fill in some gaps. But I always say that if you know where to look, how to look, and what tools to use, and how they work in conjunction, and you're very thorough. Give me three, four or five hours of that, rather than 20 tests, but I'm not allowed to inspect. Okay, if I had a choice between, hey, test as much as you want, but you're not allowed to inspect the home, which, I don't know how it's impossible, but let's just say, versus, you're not allowed to test, but you have to thoroughly inspect the home, and you have flashlight, moisture meter, borescope, thermal camera, particle counter, like you have some things to work with. Now I'm going to get a lot more data about your home, knowing where to look, how to look, and how the home is an interconnected system to find those problems. And then some of my best inspections, I've had to do little to no testing because of those findings, right? And there's too many things that homeowners can learn where, and, I've also been in homes where, within five or 10 minutes, I'm right at the problem, and I'm like, guys, you didn't really need me here. I never really tell them that, but that some of this stuff is, like, fairly obvious, and we just needed, you know, help or a new set of eyes on it. And so I think a big one is rely on your senses. Your body is going to tell you if you feel worse in the home versus out of the home, or you're smelling something or something changed when this happened, the leak, the humidity spiked, you know, the weather changed, whatever it might be, that storm, that's pretty important data. Back to the doctor analogy. My 45 question questionnaire, when I intake that from a client, I already know a ton of where we're probably going to go because of all those different data points. And then we can, you know, start the conversation at with a head start because of all that data. Like, if you have a really old, nasty HVAC system that smells bad every time you turn it on, and you have really old carpet from the, you know, previous owner who was didn't keep the house well, and your crawl space has never been looked at. And, you know, you send a picture of that, and it's looking really rough, like we already kind of know, yeah, there's going to need to be some work here. A test might not have to confirm an exact type and amount, and testing can get very, very confusing. I'll stop here and let you jump in. But you can, if there's mold this big and multiple different species and colors, or types and colors here. You can take a swab here and here, and it's different types right there. If it's different, you know, amounts of water, different materials it's on. So why get so caught up on a type and a species and an amount that you're trying to chase down, if you can just handle it. People chase down a mycotoxin that may have shown up in their body at a certain time, that's another thing. Well, if you're trying to find that exact mycotoxin in your home, that's kind of a needle in a haystack. That's almost like saying, I need to find the venom that the spider released over here, rather than, this is where a spider would hang out. This is where the nest is. And I found all of them. And then, yeah, I'll, deep clean the house after for whatever venom that's maybe left behind. Does that make sense? So it's kind of a, it's just don't get caught up in those really, really tunnel vision type of, you know, aspects that are not actually going to be really helpful.

KS

Kendra Seymour

25:31

Yeah. I mean, it really is just a single piece of the puzzle. And in a similar note, like I see this all the time online, is people will post their test results often, like a do it yourself test and say, do I have a mold problem? And I'm like, again, let's get rid of the test. I can ask you five questions, like, that's right, tell me, are there, has there been any history of current or past moisture? Has there been any current or past mold growth, to your knowledge? Have you noticed any changes in odors? Is there any discoloration and staining? Have health symptoms. By the time I get through asking all of those questions, and then I'll say, what did the physical inspection turn up? Oh, well, the moisture meter found this whole area here, there was staining here. There were staining, already we're at our answer, testing just confirms it, right? Yeah, it sounds like you need to remediate X, Y and Z, or when it's not quite as it sounds like, this is a suspicious area. Maybe we need to do, you know, maybe some wall cavity or something a little more to give us a little bit more information. But I think it's and I understand this is not a criticism, if you're like, hey, that was me, because I was there too. We're so programmed to be like, tell me the test. And I think, the other piece of this, though, and I want to just re emphasize this, when we're talking about the thorough inspection, I'm not talking about what is happening 95% of the time, which is when the guy or gal comes in, they look around for like 5, 10 minutes, they don't go into your attic, they don't go under crawl space. They're not looking under sinks. And they call that a visual inspection, but Andrew is describing, a good portion of a day. Yeah, yeah, like three to five hours. I mean, I think you and I talked about that like, these are long inspections, and you're going through and tools are supplemental and the testing supplemental, but it's the knowledge and skills and expertise of the person. Do they understand how moisture moves? Do they understand building science? Do they understand mold growth, right? Not some materials are, you know, perfect food sources for mold. You know, drywall, like we literally, it's a matter of, if you've ever been in the industry, they say sometimes just add water for drywall, because its a prime source for mold to grow, or certain types of mold to grow. So I think that's the other takeaway. And again, we want you to find the right people so that Start Here section under our resource tab, really gets into the detail, because Andrew and I joked we're like, we could talk for eight hours on this and still not cover everything, but we tried to capture a lot of that. Andrew, we'll link to your social media and website, because I know you have a lot of educational resources there as well.

AM

Andrew Melrose

28:02

And two quick stories. I love stories, helpful. And then let's, let's jump into the next. On this exact thing, a client of mine had zero chaetomium, ERMI type, or on their ERMI. Was a mold type on their ERMI that had zero. I get to the house, I find 10 feet worth, plus of just fully contaminated

with chaetomium, of all mold types, right there. So the ERMI didn't tell us that it had zero. So the inspection found that. A lot of you know, lower ERMI still can have mold sources in the house when inspected and vice versa. Another one was this client could not get rid of their eczema to save their life, their whole you know, family and their eczema experts. They had their own skin care. They're all crunchy family. And I'm okay. So check the house. I'm like, I'm not finding anything that would seem big enough to cause this, but let me go finish up in the attic, and HVAC system up there. Pop the HVAC system open. It's this thick of hair, dust, nasty, everything you can think of. I'm like, guys, you keep a great home. What happened your HVAC system here? And they said, Oh, well, we did buy the home from a hoarder, and we never really did anything with the with the system after that. I was like, let's put our focus here. It's probably more related to that with blowing air all around your house rather than a spec out of window sill. Maybe that's causing your health problems. Well, six days after they replaced their ductwork and HVAC system, she sent a before and after of her hands with eczema, and it had completely cleared up. And I just got a text from her two weeks ago saying, for the last two years, it stayed cleared up just on the replacement of the system that couldn't be cleaned. And that was awesome, so.

KS

Kendra Seymour

29:36

Yeah, and we had eczema, my son did, and it's one of those things, like they start with food, and maybe it is, but if you're doing some of the things that your doctor suggests, and you're not getting better, it's time to ask a different question. And one of those questions might be, tell me about the place you're living, tell me about the air in your home. And we want you to keep asking questions and searching for answers, because there's always an underlying reason.

AM

Andrew Melrose

30:00

That's right.

KS

Kendra Seymour

30:00

Do we want to talk just a little bit on because there's a lot of noise online. It can be really great and powerful, but I know for consumers, it can also be overwhelming. There can be some misinformation. Is there anything you want to touch on advice you're like, please just ignore that. I don't know why that internet rumor is out there. Or just speak to anything that

AM

Andrew Melrose

30:20

I hope, yeah. So, yeah, hopefully that story was a good segue that there is, there are success stories out there. We hear so much, there's a massive pool of data of all that is working against us, that's so confusing, that's so hard and difficult and traumatic, and someone else's kid going through, and it's very, very hard. And I'm, I think 90 plus percent of my followers on social media or women, and the first thing I want to say is, you have a you have an empathy, you have a superpower, you have a sensor. What I would say, what I tell a lot of husbands, is they have a radio station that's on that we don't, okay. It just you as women really can sense and feel things differently, and so that also can be really tough when you're getting all the horror stories and trauma of other people's stuff to draw that in. And I've said this so many times, I'll say it again that I just encourage you to observe the information before you absorb it, because that's what tends to happen. It happens in microseconds. So a lot of this starts back within, to get still, to get back to your intuition, get back to knowing that so much is working in your favor. Right now, even on this, since listening to this and talking with you, we don't know how much our body has healed us from like, what if we've been healed of a terminal illness both of us on this call, and we don't even know it, our body is constantly working for our good. So the more that we grab data that we would deem as bad or scary or whatever it might be. And we stay in that survival response, and we're constantly attaching meaning to, oh, shoot, mold is, is bad, it's probably behind every wall and all these different things that these, were meaning making machines. And the more that we do that, the more we're drawing in that heightened fight, flight or freeze response, and it will cloud our judgment, and could even cause our body to get in a stress state that will just heighten all of it. But if you can observe the data before you absorb it and really get a quieted, regimented, methodical approach to say, You know what, I'm going to get the right team in place. I'm going to learn this information, but not make it my own and make it my story, because a lot of people's story does not actually apply to you at all, like every home and every person's body is extremely customized and unique to them. So that's another really big one is that just because you saw that, don't let it cloud, you know, your path forward, because there are solutions. Like, really, everything can be solved in a home or building at one extreme, literally tear the whole house down and rebuild it the right way. That doesn't have to happen all the time. But everything is actually fixable, right? I think we have this idea too, that it's just this is not fixable. And sometimes you got to weigh the pros and cons of, is it worth going down this road financially, and what's the likelihood this home can actually become a mold, safe home without, you know, fully tearing it down. But most homes are not in that condition to begin with, and they say, you know, the difference between a medicine and a poison is dosage. So it really does depend on where are we, with our dosage of exposure in the home and where our bodies are to really help, you know, navigate those next steps.

KS

Kendra Seymour

33:26

Yeah, and we can touch on this a little bit shortly. You know, I think it's that pursuit, well, I'll just move to another home, and it won't be a problem, and maybe it has fewer problems, or whatever

else. But as long as humans live and work indoors, right, and we're gonna have indoor plumbing and tighter, like we're always going to have to be mindful of this. And I love that you touch on the panic, because I know what that feels like, and how destabilizing and debilitating it can get, and something that I see a lot, and I have been here, and it's not just with mold journey, but in other parts of your life, and you hit this analysis paralysis where you're so overwhelmed with information, or oh my gosh, I have to do this, and then I'm gonna have to do this, and then this and this and this, like that. You shut down and you make no choice because you're scared of making the wrong choice, or you just aren't confident in your next steps. But doing nothing is also a choice. And if you're in an environment that's making you sick, that is just adding to the burden. And so I, that's why I'm a big fan of focusing, and you said this like it's one step at a time. Do some research. Get to the next step, then get to the next step after that. Don't worry about am I going to have to toss all of my belongings if you still don't even understand what's going on in your home, you need to start at step one and work your way through it. You can keep in mind that some of these things, but the panic helps no one, and that's when I see people making poor choices. Well, I panicked, so my husband took bleach to it. I panicked, I just, I just wanted it out, and I get that and. Please know Andrew and I get the seriousness of this. We know how, I have had my life changed forever because of this, and have been through what is the, easily the most life changing, challenging, physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, experience. And it's something that can drag out for years, and you learn to you, either learn to find tools to like, move through it, or you let it consume you. And we don't want it to be something where you're kind of stuck in this we want you moving towards healing. I'll get off my soapbox, but

AM

Andrew Melrose

35:37

You've done it. You've been the example of it. Like literally the best people in this industry that I've seen and known, and there's so many good ones, are those who said, I'm going to allow this to teach me. I'm going to lean into this and solve it. I'm going to get better. I'm going to help more people. I'm going to turn into part of my purpose, like, what if it's coming to you or is happening around you, so that it can be transmuted into something good, like, what if, right? So, yes, there's so much hardship that can be around it, and maybe you don't need to think that way in the middle of it. But what if there is another the other side, and what if the other side is really going to help more people? What if you're called to be in this industry at some point, or at least to help your neighbor who's in a you know, worse spot. The awareness is growing, like I said, in so many places, that you might be someone's guiding light to the right information, so that they don't get their whole house fogged with some crazy biocide that is going to just make things worse, because you at least knew that, right? So it might be hard to think about think like that in the middle of it, yeah, but that is such a huge part of it is turning this into purpose and saying that there might really be something good.

KS

Kendra Seymour

36:51

So this panic thing, we see it all the time, this overwhelm, because it is physically, financially, mentally, like exhausting. It changes relationships, it ends marriages. It jeopardizes friendships and, you know, job security and stuff. So talk to us about some things that you know we can do there to maybe start to move past it.

AM

Andrew Melrose

37:12

Yeah, the first is, there's so much power in pausing and stillness, and if we can get still, like I just talked about with observing information first. Getting into a place of stillness will give us a sobriety from the anxiety that we feel within. We getting intoxicated by worries and anxieties that literally shoot all the hormones and neurotransmitters through our body to keep us in that state. And so number, like before you even start making decisions and going down this path it, you know, there's talk about, like, nervous system regulation. There's probably a million different ways to do so, but getting still is number one, and being able to breathe and come back to your breath, because your body is made to be in this survival state where it's constantly taking in information to try to keep itself alive, right? And that beta brainwave state the reptile brain is really in that survival state to just stay here in a really quick state. So if we can keep teaching ourself and mold is, if we take the hate off of it for a second and just say, Okay, what if it's just teaching us something? What if it's showing us that, wow, it's pulling triggers in my physiology that is causing all this other downstream stuff. Let me just pause and breathe, get still, learn about this stuff. And from that place of stillness, you can really get proper decisions and stillness will be breathing, putting your feet on the ground. There's different things with, you know, tapping certain places of your body to, like, get calm and still, to really calm yourself down. And then after you've gotten to that place, I've found a lot of benefit in the opposite, which is moving, like, intentionally move, because if your body is in that state of stress and everything, it's actually wanting to lose it out. So I mean, I do a ton of these different lymph flows where, you know, you're just rocking back and forth and moving your arms and doing exercise and whatever you can do, shake that stuff out, right? So the more that we sit in these you know, in front of these screens and down tight here and scrolling really stressful information, like it's holding the tension in your body, your mind's reinforcing that, and you're expecting what, like your physiology, to overcome what you're doing to it when you're tight and tense. And like, we got to kind of put ourselves in a position, quite literally, to get that new energy flow before, you know, making decisions. And so this might seem like way off topic, but it's actually going to help with every area of life, like, take this off of mold and environmental illness, because some of these, you know, toxins and contaminants, you can't just, like, think your way out of them, that's not what I'm saying? I'm saying, do what you can to work from the inside out as well, to strengthen and heal the terrain and regulate yourself. And even some of the things where people learn how to be in stressful situations. The military does

these trainings where you got to be in a stressful situation and regulate yourself any way where you can get into stillness, prayer, gratitude. When you're in a state of gratitude, you literally, your brain cannot be in a state of anger. It's those, those cannot coexist. So the more that we get into these states intentionally, it does a lot of good, to get out of the paralysis of analysis and then start to make the right decisions on this stuff, and not impulse buy or just think that finding the next, you know, Facebook post on in a Facebook group is going to, you know, be your solution, when really, what if you really were needing that 30 minutes outside of stillness and movement and fresh air. And now let me, you know, get my agency and autonomy back, because what if mold is teaching us all of that like you, Kendra, have said it about your own life, like you have felt so strengthened and empowered by the knowledge. But then you said, knowledge is power. Knowledge is potential power. We can turn that knowledge into power against ourselves and against everything or in our favor? Yeah?

KS

Kendra Seymour

41:05

And so, yeah. And I think there's also, there's a segment of people, like, once you've gone through this and you're kind of on the other side, then it shifts, because then there's, there can be a level of fear, like, I don't want this to happen again, and we hope that you turn that into I want to be proactive, and I'm going to do things to manage moisture, prevent moisture, you know, from little things, you know, leak alarms and trays under your sink, to making sure the grading and drainage and humidity. But here's the reality, and I'll get personal for a moment, like, at some point, you are going to face another mold and moisture issue in your home. At some point, something will happen. Maybe it's a small thing. Hopefully it's not as big as maybe what you've experienced in the past, because you've learned something and you're being proactive. But when that happens, even now, for all that I know and all the training I've had, I will still panic for a moment, and then I literally stop, I close my eyes to take a deep breath. And I'm like, All right, like I am not the same person I was 10 or 15 years ago, making those mistakes. I know more now. I know what to do. I know what my first step is. I know what I don't want to do. And so then I get going. Is it still stressful? Yes, but guess what? I am a different person, and I have more knowledge, and I'm going to make different choices. And so the way I look at life now is, all right, I know that this is going to happen, so what can I do to prepare for it? Right? I'm going to do all the prevention things that I can, but some of these things are out of our control. I'm going to be prepared that I know a good IEP to call or a mediator or whoever I need to handle that when the time comes, I know I'm not going to allow myself, I'm going to be honest. I allow myself a moment of panic, and then I say, Okay, I'm going to release that and move on. But you're not the same person that you were. So if you've listened to our resources, you're already more knowledgeable. You listen to Andrew's stuff, then you were yesterday or last week or last month. And so it is hard because this journey, it's not a fast process. Getting an inspection takes time, getting remediations, rebuilding, getting the answers to your health, and it can feel like this long tunnel. So do we want to end on like, a hopeful note, like maybe the light at the end of the tunnel? Like what that looks like for people

you just want to speak to anything that kind of gives people, like, a sense of hope, because you and I see stories of healing all the time. However, that's not what dominates online, and so I would love to just kind of leave people with something if they've lost that sense of self and safety, like, what would you say to them?

AM

Andrew Melrose

43:36

Yeah, no, you said it perfectly with you changed, and what if we allow this stuff to change us? What if our hardships and sufferings are actually producing something in us, rather than holding us in a holding pattern? What if we allow it to produce steadfastness, perseverance, learning, agency, and what if that is a thing that's then producing character in us, which then can produce hope, because I'm a different character, and I can get through this differently. And now I know, you know, who the team to bring around me. Something else is that team around you like you, we need each other, and mold is funny, right? So mold is a bunch of microscopic little spores working together and reproducing. And it works very well in community. Okay, so what if we learn from mold and go, Wow, how am I working in community? Do I need more community in my life? There's many, many things, and you study the mycology of how mold actually behaves, that can really teach us about ourselves, teach us about life and our internal states. There's many, many different things on, literally, how mold behaves. And I've contemplated on this for many, many hours as learning, like, when I'm learning about mold, I'm like, wow, this is, like, pretty fascinating stuff. It's very intelligent stuff, and it can teach us a lot. So how are we in community? And I think also some of the greatest success stories I've had is when a husband and wife are on the same page. Like, when they're talking to me together, and they're both looking for a solution in agreement, and they're working together on it. I tell them right off the bat, like, you're you have a higher likelihood of success right now just by being on the call. And you know, props to both of you for for doing that. Like, don't let it get between you, like, get it, get it to be a something that's going to bring you together for solutions and learning. So, and for those of you who don't have it, just be patient and say a prayer and go to your significant other or your person, you know, you're going to be talking with from more of a calm state of just communicating, hey, I need this help, and I'm going to need your, you know, agreement on this. That's another really big one, is how we communicate it. I've seen a lot of people kind of pushing away the person who's trying to communicate a very truthful thing about mold and environmental illness that they might not understand, but they're being pushed away because of just that, again, that charge, emotional charge, that if we can get, you know, calm and say, this is very real stuff, and, you know, need and want your help on it, it can really do a lot. So mold ends up, this whole topic ends up teaching us a lot about, wow, like I had beliefs, I had triggers in my life that I didn't know were there. Like, it reveals a lot of stuff. It causes all this, all that deep stuff, to come to the surface. And it really can be used for our good, like, like you've done, like, really turning it into part of your superpower, to give others. And so I want to say that to people here, like, the worst may be behind you. You may be in the middle of the hardest it's going to be, but you'll be different. Your body is going to

continue to heal and recover. And if you're in a new house, or you're remediated, or whatever, even this little leak that hits a leak alarm, like you mentioned, that doesn't turn into a widespread systemic mold issue in a second, like it, this, these minor things can be handled before they become major, and they're everything's fixable and solvable, and you now know the solutions to get through it.

KS

Kendra Seymour

47:04

Yeah, I feel like that last piece about the spouse, especially when you're on the different page as them, could be its own podcast, and maybe you come back for a follow up, because I hear that all the time and but yes, I really appreciate your time today, Andrew, and your insights, and everything that you're doing to educate the community and help them move through something that is can be very overwhelming and very scary. It can be very isolating. It's nice to have that breath of fresh air that you offer people. So thank you for spending time with us today.

AM

Andrew Melrose

47:38

You're welcome. Thank you so much for having me.

KS

Kendra Seymour

47:40

And for everyone listening, if you found this interview helpful, do me a favor head on over to ChangeTheAirFoundation.org, and sign up for our newsletter, because it really is the best way to get great information like this sent directly to your inbox. Thanks so much. We'll see you next time.