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**PSYCHOLOGY** *of* **EATING**  
*The World's Leading School in Nutritional Psychology*

The Art and Science of Food and Body Coaching Summit Interview  
With Marc David and Donna Gates

**Marc David-** Welcome everybody. I'm Marc David, Founder of The Institute for the Psychology of Eating. We are back in the Art and Science of Food and Body Coaching Online Summit. I have the very, very great pleasure of interviewing an old friend and colleague today, Donna Gates. Welcome Donna.

**Donna Gates-** Well thank you very much for asking me to talk about this topic. No one ever has asked me to talk about this before, so I'm excited.

**Marc David-** Yay. Well, let me just brag about you just for a moment. Donna Gates for thirty plus years, has truly been one of the more or most respected authorities in the field of digestive health, diet and nutrition. She's a best selling author. Her first book, which kind of blew the lid off of diet, digestive health and overall body health, was called The Body Ecology Diet. It really, truly changed the field of nutrition, and Donna's ground breaking work has been instrumental and actually transforming the natural foods industry itself. To me Donna, you've just been a front runner. You're always ahead of the curve, and it's why I'd like to talk with you, because I'm gonna learn what's happening that we might not all know yet. Not to put any pressure on you, but I just really appreciate you being such a thought leader for a long time

**Donna Gates-** Thank you. and doing it in a real gracious way.

Marc David- How did you get into this line of work?

**Donna Gates-** Well, I think like a lot of people, I just simply was not healthy. I was, something was wrong with me and I started off just trying to find out how to get well. But, I like to teach. I really do. So now, I'm 72 and I look and look back and I finally have a much better sense of myself, who I am, and I just am one of those people. I don't want to do what everybody else says. I appreciate what you said about me being a front runner, for runner, whatever, because I definitely like to look ahead. I think that's really important. Some people have to be looking ahead so we know which direction to go, what we need next. I just think I have that quality, that desire and so as I started finding answers for myself, I just naturally attracted people who needed help and I love to help people. So, it just sort of evolved. I certainly didn't start off with any type of special intention to end up with The Body Ecology and doing what I'm doing, but I'm really grateful that I think a lot of people feel this way, is that, so, I was sick. I took antibiotics when I was young for my skin and birth control pills all those things. Lots of women did that, and then I got systemic yeast infection which until I met Dr. Cook I didn't even know what that was, and I don't know, if you have the heart to really want to help people, and you sort of, I guess you could say ask the universe for help, I really believe we get that help and I was able to, because

of the certain, the questions I was asking and the answers that were coming, I was really able to find answers for people. So, I actually, I don't feel like I can claim any credit really. There's so much divine intervention around everything that happened. Especially in the beginning putting it all together, and here we are, 30 years later.

**Marc David-** Right, and you've been amongst other things, to a great degree you've been sort of tracking, for a lack of a better term, digestive health and what is contributing to that. What's kind of pulling away from it. Are there any sort of general statements you can make in terms of when you really first started doing this and looking at it, and seeing things, where have we gotten? Have we improved? You know? Collectively in terms of digestive health. I know we have more knowledge and information, but where's it at and where do you see it going?

**Donna Gates-** Well, I think that looking back there was a day when I would tell people. I would go to a health food store and six people would show up and I would share with them about this world inside of our gut, and I just, it's kind of amazing how it all stumbled on that fact. There were microbiologists out in the world reporting on this bacteria, but nobody put it together that we have a whole entire ecosystem inside of us and on us. That's where the word Body Ecology came from, and I coined the term inner ecosystem, and actually people thought it was interesting. If they were into health, they thought it was interesting. But then, I had to explain how it gets there. I mean, I just had to figure it out that it starts at birth and we build this world inside of us, but we have to eat fermented foods to maintain it throughout our life. For an example, to answer your question, I had to teach people what were fermented foods and how to make them. Today you can walk in a health food store and there's six or eight companies that sell them. The coconut kefir that I created, which is fermented coconut water, which is a really important thing that happened just before I started working with children with autism, helped them tremendously. Children started getting well for the first time ever. Now you can go into the store JT, Kombucha cells, a cut low kefir, which was started by a man and a woman, friends, your friends that had two twin girls and one of them had autism, and they started giving Tulla the coconut kefir and she got well. Then her sister. The girls are about 14 years old now and they're just amazing, but Michael started fermenting the coconut water and giving it to other families, and then soon he had it in stores. Then it spread all over, then JT bought them out and it's everywhere and you know, a lot of change has occurred. Inner Eco is another company that makes the fermented coconut water and sells it as a probiotic. Every time I look, people are talking about this world in our gut and we've come a very, very long way. It's now on, all scientists around the world are considering the microbiol because you can't talk about anything diet related or gene related, without saying what effect does it have on this micro world inside of us. Our inner ecosystem. So, yeah, it's a very, and people are in a very different place because I would say things to people, and for most of the people it would go right through them. They weren't interested. But some were, and they were helped a lot and would share the information, but today, many people are interested in it. Of course people are sicker, and they are more desperate for help as well. A very different world today.

**Marc David-** Yeah it seems to me that despite our advancement in knowledge, digestive

challenges I've noticed, they're just as prevalent today as they were 30-ish years ago, more, when I first really started diving into this work. If you were gonna be speaking to somebody about their digestive health, and you just sort of wanna get a sense of where they're at, what are some of the favorite questions you might ask someone just to begin to, for you to understand them better?

**Donna Gates-** Well today, a lot of people have SIBO, or SIBO or SIFO, so they have a bacterial infection, or yeast infections, small intestine. It's so common, that one of the first things I start looking for is do you have, if you eat fermented foods, do you have gas and bloating right away. I like to find out, I feel like the amount of people in the digestive enzymes, I like to know when they eat a meal, are they just digesting their protein or if 30 minutes later do they feel like their stomach's still full. What type of health do they need there? Of course elimination is so important, so of course I'm asking, do they eliminate? Do they go to the bathroom every day, or are they constipated? How long have they been constipated? There's a microbe, not a bacteria, but a microbe called archaea in the gut of many people. Eventually as we get older, more and more and more, maybe 80, 90 percent of us end up with archaea in the gut and archaea causes, archaea is a microbe that takes the hydrogen that bacteria make, naturally make, and they turn it into methane gas and then that causes constipation, because you've got this gas in there and may not even be coming out but it's in there, and it's keeping, sort of paralyzing the digestive track. So, I look for that possibility. I'm always the first one to know the person's age. I like to know their blood type. I know that, first of all 40 something years ago, I was actually a patient of Peter D. Adamo's Father, James D'Adamo, and so for that many years I've been asking people, what's your blood type because I'm an A. Ann Louise Gittleman and I were really the only ones that seemed to care about it and Peter wrote his book, and it became a big, everybody was talking about it and then it kind of died down. A lot of people thought it was ridiculous, but I can tell you from 40 years of telling, like for example when I started working with children with autism I always asked their Mothers, what's your blood type? What's your son's blood type? 80% of the were blood type A, so I talked to my friend and colleague Jeff Bradstreet who was alive at that time, and he checked his files and found that they were blood type A and started telling other people. I just have a lot of little things I'm looking for. If someone's an A or an O, let's say it's an O, than I know a lot about them already. If they are an A, I already know about 'em. The best proteins for them to eat, how well they digest protein, how the fact from earlier in life they are gonna be very low in stomach acid and they have trouble digesting proteins and fats because they lack an enzyme in the small intestine called alkaline phosphatase. They're more, A's are more high strung. They have more anxiety. As a matter of fact, I like to look at people's genes today, which is a new tool that I didn't have before, and I've got a little research project of my own going, where every single person I ask them, still ask them their blood type and now I'm looking to see if more A's have certain genes that are stress related. I don't know it's just so much intuitively. Like one of the things I've noticed bout myself is that I, when it's time to sit down and do a consultation with somebody, I'm not even me anymore. I'm them. I don't even, the whole rest of the world just disappears and I'm totally them. I've even had other people point out to me that I'm just not there anymore, and because I'm feeling them, I'm sensing them. I feel like we all have this very innate ability to connect with each

other. You can develop that if you want to, and your intuition. I just kind of, I just can. You got to listen to what they're telling me. I'm listening between the lines of what they're not telling me, and I can say something that they didn't. I can pull out something or ask a question. So, it's just us. That's the other thing too, it's just like, I feel like once you're within that our relationship with somebody, you're a partner. Like, I don't, I'm not the know it all that they might have come to me thinking they I have answers and I do have many answers. I'm very confident about being able to help them, but it's us working together. So, I need to know them, and feel them, and sense them, and I need to.. It's a partnership, I guess is what I'm trying to say.

**Marc David-** Yeah, yeah.

**Donna Gates-** Well, which is very different than your Doctor. Like, people go to their doctor, and the doctor's sitting there and he gets all your information that he feels that he needs to know, and then he writes you a prescription and then we'll send you over to somebody else. To me, all function of medicine practitioners have a whole different relationship with the person you're helping.

**Marc David-** Lots of great points to pull out of what you've been sharing. I'm interested if you can say more about working on the gene level, and what's even possible in this conversation.

**Donna Gates-** Okay well this is again, where I like to be helping people move into the future, because the future's here now actually. This field, the nutritional genomics has actually been growing and developing for 30 years, and now it's reached the point where there's a lot of people that are trained and practitioners and companies offering gene testing like 23andMe, but there's others. They give you reports back. I have looked at almost all of them and I've taken many, many hours of training and sat in these trainings with medical professionals and doctors and I could say that everybody's kind of confused. Like, okay this is a lot of information, what am I gonna do with it? Well, Body Ecology's based on seven universal principals and I always use them. One of them is the principle of step by step. Sitting there, I started thinking there's got to be a way to teach this complicated topic of nutritional genomics to doctors and practitioners so that they can turn around and really help people, because it's an amazing field. It's an amazing tool. I think a lot of people, I know that a lot of people are, they do what the current fad is. People were all into raw and they ate a lot of sugar really and dates, and honey and nuts and seeds, high oxalate nuts and seeds. Then people swung the other way and went paleo, and now that's better 'cause it's low carb, but A's need to have complex carbs in their diet. Some people don't sleep anymore. So, my point is, is that now everybody's keto. The genes tell you exactly what you should be doing that and the condition that you're dealing with at the moment are gonna give you the right answer for you. This is personalized medicine now and it is the future, and it is where we will be for the rest of our lives. Because we're looking at our genes, the twentieth something, there's 23andMe is based on 23 thousand genes, but there's probably not quite that many, but there's a lot of genes and all the microbes in us or on us, they have their own genes, every single one of the trillions of them. And so they, we have to consider that. What are they doing with their genes inside of us? So, obviously it's a field that's not ever gonna

go away. For the rest of our lives we're gonna be fascinated and utilizing this tool. I've been training myself for four or five years now, I don't know and I've got this program. I put together what I thought would be a really great way to learn it and teach it to other practitioners so they can turn around and teach it to others, but I use basically the principle of step by step. I think this is a really good principle to utilize as a coach because step by step is about the principle of time in the universe. The universe is advancing right? This is very immanent in tiny, tiny, tiny little increments. I'm on the East Coast. It's six o'clock, soon it'll be dark in a couple more hours and then it'll get just little by little, it'll become light again, so another day and another year will pass. That's how the universe advances. So, I thought okay, how can I take this principle, this universal law and apply it to healing? I use it all the time. It's about also, where do we start? I have in asking that question, I came up with some really useful ideas. When you start on, let's say you want have a healthy baby, you want to age well, you want to get well, get over something, you have to start somewhere and so what I like to do, is I like to look and see energy. What type of energy does that person have? Is that a big sink hole for them? Because if they don't have any energy, they are not gonna get well. There are genes you can look at to tell if the person came in and getting enough fats into their body, carnitine. In other words, they utilize their fat for energy. Mitochondria genes and so on, do they sleep well? There's a whole bunch of genes for sleep. What about stress? Are they wasting their energy 'cause they're a very high anxiety person? I like to know all that and then I can help them. I can say well, you are someone who has a lot of anxiety, a lot of you know. One littler stressful thing, and you're jumping in and adrenaline goes off the chart and you can't come down and relax again easily, so you're spending a lot of energy that way. It's probably hard for you to sleep at night. Your glutamate to GABA. Is there a variance there? You can't, you're really smart but you can't calm down enough to go to sleep at night. When I know that, I can really, really help somebody. I like that. Create energy, looking at the energy. The other thing is.. Conquering infections and inflammation in a body, I look at those genes. How much, how strong is your immune system? Were they born with a weak immune system? Do they have a lot of inflammation, so that if they do get something, Candida or Lyme Disease, or something like that, and we resolve that problem, it's this ongoing chronic inflammation that is unresolved for a long period of time, forever really. So, now the person has all kinds of things wrong with them, but now the problem is really the unresolved inflammation. Then we work on that. We can work on, there's always a solution. Then another thing is conquering. Conquering infections and inflammations and of course, fixing the gut, there's a gene called MUC1 and MUC2. If you don't, this is how much mucus that you are able to produce on your gut lining so that the bacteria can actually nestle in there. Another gene, aPUT2. You have a bunch of those variants. The bunch of them, but they can all have variants. Then if you have that, then this to me is a very important gene because at least me, the way I see the world, but this gene means that you don't. Okay, so each one of us with our blood type, like I'm an A, so I produce a certain type of sugar. What is your, are you an A too, Marc?

**Marc David-** I'm an O.

**Donna Gates-** You're an O, okay. So, you produce a different sugar. Like you secret that

sugar, that O sugar in to your sweat, into your tears, your saliva and to your gut lining. I have a sugar. Those of us that are A's, we have a different sugar, but same thing. If you don't have, if you're a poor secretor of that sugar, but variance in that effigy, you're not feeding the bacteria that live in those places. In your eye, in your mouth, you're gonna have gum disease in your gut so you're never gonna get, have enough healthy bacteria and this is a really important thing to know because at the beginning of our life, when we're setting our inner ecosystem into place, we come into the world, if we're not secreting this sugar, we're not feeding that bacteria. If our Mother's a non-secretor and she doesn't have it, she's got the genes and she's not secreting sugars into the baby's gut through her breast milk, than this inner ecosystem isn't set up. So, I know that person has a gut problem from the very beginning of their life, and that's something important to work on strictly because they need bifidus. That's the person who really needs bifidus, and I've told people just open a bunch of Bifidus capsules. We have Bifidus and put it in your drinking water and sip on it all day long, and people will tell me for the first time ever, I'm going to the bathroom on a regular basis. Anyway, the other bucket category that I like to look at of course, is detoxification. Oh, and then the other one is diets. There's a lot of genes that tell us, you know you hear people say well, be careful with salt. We should be careful with salt if we're eating out in restaurants and processed food in the store now because that's bad salt. Nobody does well on that. But a good 70% of us have these genes that the gene makes us salt sensitive. What that means is that we can still have up to a teaspoon of salt a day, but it's got to be a really good salt. Like Salina Naturally has. The makai salt, she's got a great Kosher salt now, her Celtic sea salt. I'll send people there and I'll say look, that makai salt is higher in potassium, lower in sodium. This is a great salt for you to use at home. It's delicious too by the way. But you know, there's just so much priceless information hidden in our DNA that I'm really excited about being able to teach those to practitioners. I'm putting this program together to teach it. To teach Body Ecology and what I know to practitioners so they can turn around and help people.

**Marc David-** It sounds like for a practitioner to embark on that particular educational journey, the end result as working with clients, I would be having them tested. So, we're having some gene tests and we're figuring out from those tests what's going on. Is that correct, or are we just looking straight up at blood type and working?

**Donna Gates-** Well no, the genes, they need to have a gene test. They can, so 23andMe, lots of people have already done that and then they get this report back that tells them that they're part this and part that, but that's a nice, interesting cocktail conversation but the really good information is in all that gobbly goo stuff that you have no access to. That's why you need to have a run into, put into a program, like in my case populates it into certain categories so that the practitioner can look and say, oh this person's achilles hill really is a serious inability to detoxify or they like, for example, with all the people doing the high fat keto doing diet, it could be a big problem because let's say they have the APOE4 gene, just even one copy of that, they should not be eating on the saturated fat. They're gonna be very sorry down the road. They will much more likely be stressing that genes, and causing Alzheimer's and causing the cardiovascular disease that, that gene puts you at risk for. It's very preventive. It's nothing to be

afraid of. I think people, you should take your child's saliva swab or if their a bit older, you can get 'em to spit. Play a game with them and get 'em to spit. Spit a little bit into a tube and send their genes in, because if you notice things about your children when they're little, you'll steer them away from bad things and steer them towards good things, and there's a lot of good stuff in your genes too. If you have the FOXO3 gene, the chance of living over a hundred is very, very strong for you. That's a good thought to carry through your life. I actually have that gene, so it's a nice thought.

**Marc David-** Congratulations. It's kind of like winning the genetic lottery, huh?

**Donna Gates-** Yeah, but I have a lot of bad ones too. I have a lot of bad ones, but you know, here's an interesting thing when I had my genes tested, I found out that I have terrible genes for diabetes and insulin. It's that nobody in my family has had those problems before and I thought I don't eat sugar. Why would I get skin tags? Because that's a sign of being insulin resistant. I thought, where do they come from? I sat for a long thought and I realized, oh, so the other thing that makes my glucose go up, reasons it makes me insulin resistant, is stress. So then of course, I looked at my stress genes and big issues there too. And what do I do? I just, I also have high glutamate, low gaba, I have trouble converting glutamate into gaba. So, actually of all the things that I am most focused on for myself personally, is handling stress. Like not, because my nature, is to overfill my plate and cause a lot of stress in my life. At least I know that, and I know how important sleep is. I make sure I do sleep and I take CBD like a lot of people. Couple of those little chewy's. I take a couple of CBD gummies a day, and I don't feel, I mean they just probably calm me down more than I realize but I don't know, it's just like when you know yourself, you just can make real wise decisions. Very fine tune and then that's true for when you're helping people, you can hang up that phone and people are so grateful because you've really given them some priceless information that they can take with them for the rest of their life. I'm grateful that they even called me and asked me, because it just feels really good to help people.

**Marc David-** Yeah, it's one of the great parts about the job. It really amazes me talking about stress, and it's one of those factors that it almost doesn't matter what our gene pool is telling us. Chances are, if we have a lot of stress or if we're just doing a lot of self created stress, I find that that's at least something we have a say in. Because stress is gonna effect everything. It's gonna effect our digestion, it's going to impact inflammation. Literally it touches probably every process in the body.

**Donna Gates-** We couldn't sleep very well.

**Marc David-** All of it.

**Donna Gates-** Yeah, everything, yeah. Yeah, and you know what's interesting? Again, this is something you can tell from the genes, is that a whole bunch of us have genes that make us full of anxiety and feel stress very easily, like, COMT. COMPT it's called. That gene I find very

commonly in people that they have one variant or two variants of that gene, and I thought about it, and of course we would have that gene, because so many of us would, because it's a survival gene. Many of the genes that we have today, are survival genes. If your ancestor a thousand years ago had the gene and they heard something rustling in the bushes, they'd be very alert, and they'd stay very alert. Their dopamine, adrenaline, everything of origin would go up and you'd stay very alert. If 15, 20 minutes later the thing jumped out and killed them, then they're gone, and they're not gonna have any future descendants. The other person that doesn't have that gene might say, um, you know, I thought I heard something, but probably okay. Then they get eaten up. So, of course a lot of us have ancestors who have that gene and we have it too. I think an event would've happen is we've come into a day and age where stress is everywhere from the EMS to the food we're eating that's stressful to the body, and so now these genes are being expressed constantly, and then constant stress becomes depression. I was just hearing some statistics last night about young women who have every right to be very excited about the life ahead of them, they're so depressed and suicide rate and everything, and I'm thinking, how do you? I don't have answers for all that, but I can help an individual person, or in this case I can't help individuals anymore, so, I wanted, that's why I want this training program to happen and so I can train practitioners to help many, many other people because we have to help people just to survive through this time. I know that the diet that I recommend with the fermented foods, it's very much a survival diet. I used to to say years ago, we're boarding Noah's Arc again. Not like water, you know Arc with water, but in a way it's the same concept and you know, certain people are gonna survive this crazy time with so many toxins and everything, and some people aren't. When you eat a clean diet, when you look at detoxify, especially when you eat the fermented foods, they help you detoxify. Let's say you eat a meal and you put a couple scoops of fermented vegetables on your plate, those microbial, trillions of bacteria with diversity like you wouldn't believe, are now traveling through your digestive track. They're pulling out the nutrients that you need to make you strong. They're identifying the poisons, the parasites, dangerous things that are in that food. That chemicals and pesticides, they're getting rid of them for you. I know that you're immune system's stronger, and that's what we need right now. I feel that, and I need to teach too.

**Marc David-** A lot of work to do.

**Donna Gates-** Well, not really, I'm just enjoying it. I mean it's second nature, you know? But it's just there are more people.

**Marc David-** I say that-

**Donna Gates-** and the other thing.

**Marc David-** You go.

**Donna Gates-** Oh, go ahead. I was gonna say we need support really badly. After you give people some information that's useful and they hang up and they think, oh my gosh, what am I

gonna do with this? I really, really think that people need support more than anything, and that's the hardest thing to deliver. So, that's why I'm thinking, well there's just one of me, but if I trained a hundred practitioners, or a thousand practitioners, or JJ told me the other day, her goal is to train, is to reach out, help a billion people by training I don't know, a hundred thousand practitioners and people too and that's the way to think. Think good like that, because like for example, when I found, I discovered this white powder called Stevia, rebaudioside in China and I brought it out in the world, and I created this product that's now all over the world. Well, I've indirectly helped probably billions of people 'cause it's being used all over the world now. So, we can do that just by starting small and doing what's in front of you, and it just, the universe wants that right now. I think that there's just this group of souls trying to help us make it through these times, survive and there's a lot of support from that world I believe too, if you call upon it.

**Marc David-** Yeah, well Donna I really appreciate your big heart and your big spirit, and really just embracing all of it. It's so true, you know? It's yes, it's taking care of our body, and it's also us being connected to something greater because on a certain level no matter what we eat, what diet we have, we're all, we'll tend to end up in the same place anyway. Definitely quality of life is important along the way, but it's really such a big picture. It's a true holistic picture for each one of us. I can talk to you for hours, but I would love to hear from you how people can get in touch with you and what they should know about your offerings, and just how we plug in.

**Donna Gates-** Well the best way to stay connected to me is through [bodyecology.com](http://bodyecology.com) I think that it's really important right now that every single person do their piece to pull this, to make us, to save us basically. The summit, your doing this Marc. I've known and respected you for years. I think you're the most interesting. One of the things I love about you, is that I think more woman are empathetic and intuitive and are more likely to become coaches, but you will find men along the way that have this really great balance of male and female in them, and you have that. I've always loved that about you and I'm very glad you're doing this 'cause I know you're gonna reach a lot of people.

**Marc David-** Thank you so much.

**Donna Gates-** Thank you for inviting me.

**Marc David-** Yeah. So, [bodyecology.com](http://bodyecology.com) that's how we find you. That's how we stay up on what you're offering. Great website, great products by the way. Donna, thank you, thank you, thank you.

**Donna Gates-** Aw, thank you Marc.

**Marc David-** And thank you everybody for tuning in. I really appreciate it, and there's lots more to come in the conference my friends. You all take care.