

## **Overcoming Food Aversions with Special Guest Susan Roberts – Part II**

Guest: Susan L. Roberts – M.Div., OTRL, Nutritionist, Integrative Health Coach

When looking for a mentor you should seek out the following traits:

1. Who is doing what you want to be able to do?
  - a. Who are the people that are getting the results that you want to get and/or using the techniques that you want to learn?
2. Find someone who is willing *and* able to teach.
  - a. There are people who are great practitioners, but they're not great teachers.
  - b. You have to find someone who is willing to share what they know. They also have to have the ability to know how to get that information across.

Susan has had a number of individuals (many mentioned in the previous podcast – see “Overcoming Food Aversions with Special Guest Susan L. Roberts – Part I”) that have played an important mentorship role in her career. Catherine A. Trombly (ScD, OTR, FAOTA) was one of Susan’s professors in occupational therapy school and was an incredible influence on her career. Nancy Talbot (MEd, OTR, FAOTA) was also one of Susan’s big influencers.

Susan has learned from many co-workers as well as well as children and parents. In her own words, “Part of the excitement of working in this field is that there’s always something new to learn everyday if you’re open to it and are willing to do so.”

In ancient Chinese medicine there is a phrase “Who stands behind you?” This phrase represents the lineage of mentorship that represents your knowledge and ability. As practitioners we also have a lineage that is passed onto us through our profession and when you go into a treatment room that lineage goes with you.

The most important thing to understand about mentorship is the ability to embrace the fact that you don’t know it all. It can be a vulnerable place to say “I don’t know much about...”, but understanding this fact allows you to be teachable so you can learn and grow.

Personal growth and development first starts with information. When you first start anything new, whether you are a new therapist or learning a new technique, you first take in a lot of information. Information is then digested through experience. Once you reach a place where you have been effectively practicing for many years you have accumulated a wisdom. Wisdom only comes from making mistakes *and* doing things right. Once wisdom is developed it is your responsibility to mentor and pass wisdom on to the next generation so they can build on it as well.

When searching for a continuing education course to attend, Susan suggest you should:

1. Search for topics that stretch your understanding and/or abilities.
  - a. Sometimes being pushed a little out of your comfort zone is not a bad thing.
2. Pursue hands on courses if at all possible.
  - a. Distance / video learning is not bad at all, but many of us retain even more information when there is hands-on reinforcement to what we are learning.

One of Susan’s biggest motivators in the field of pediatrics is pursuing sustainability in therapy practice. She is pursuing sustainability not just in a financial sense of making sure things are affordable for families and parents, but ensuring that her practice techniques are sustainable and not just dependent on “high-tech” equipment. She is also pursuing sustainability in therapy by evaluating the resources that are available to parents / caregivers to make sure that what she practices with a child in a session is a sustainable treatment that can continue to take place outside of the clinic.

Sustainability is a richer, more purposeful word that carryover. Sustainability focuses on a life plan versus “homework”.

Susan always knew that she wanted to have some aspect of teaching about her career. One reason she pursued graduate school is the fact that she knew she wanted to teach. Susan spent some time teaching at the collegiate level, but she felt that the world of academia was not the best fit for her because of her love for practicing therapy. She eventually began teaching continuing education courses through Cross Country Education and fell in love with it. Susan loves the ability to work directly with people who are practicing in the field.

To learn about Susan’s upcoming courses you can visit <http://www.susanroberts.com/seminars.html> where her upcoming speaking dates are updated regularly.

Susan is teaching a number of self-regulation courses this year and is now linking the self-regulation and mealtime information together.

Susan recently presented “Occupational Therapy from a Traditional Chinese Medicine Paradigm” at the 2016 AOTA Conference. Throughout the presentation she looked at 5 healing occupations which are all self-regulating as well as stress

relieving. These are especially important because when stress is relieved then inflammation is reduced and when inflammation is reduced then the body heals. This approach is critical because it can change the paradigm of OT from adapting and rehabilitation to asking “How can we fundamentally change our way in the world so that the body heals itself?”

Susan sees an ever increasing dichotomy in the world of medicine between a “high-tech” trend and a “low-tech” trend from the physician level and on down. She herself is more drawn to the “low-tech” trend. According to Susan, ancient Chinese medicine has been being practiced for over 5000 years and started being recorded 2500 years ago. These people didn’t have the technology available to them that we have today, yet these medicines were and still are effective. According to Susan, there are some instances of results that ancient Chinese medicine can bring that cannot be duplicated by Western medicine. Susan sees the “low-tech” approach as more sustainable, but also feels that we need to be able to embrace technology as well.

A “low-tech” approach lets practitioners focus on the core of the child and what makes them “tick” so the right treatment approach can be ascertained and practiced.

One of Susan’s favorite phrases when teaching is “Family dinners and going to the playground will cure anything.”

Susan’s next book she is planning to write will be based on the biomechanics of spirituality. If you are interested in this material be sure to sign up for her newsletter where she will be sharing more about this topic.

To learn more about Susan, you can visit her website at [www.susanroberts.com](http://www.susanroberts.com) or [www.changesot.com](http://www.changesot.com). You can also sign up for her newsletter at her sight which will keep you informed about Susan’s latest projects as well as blog posts and articles. Susan can also be reached at [susan@susanroberts.com](mailto:susan@susanroberts.com) or [susan@changesot.com](mailto:susan@changesot.com).