



Declutter Your Energy Body

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C
Interviewing **Heather Aardema**



Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Welcome back to the Reverse Autoimmune Disease Summit series, everybody, we're in version 5.0, we're healing the energy body. And our guest today is Heather Aardema who's going to talk about decluttering your energy body. She's a National Board Certified and Functional Medicine Certified Health Coach. She's the Founder of School of Living Lighter, which is a weight loss methodology grounded in minimalism, functional medicine and cognitive behavior. By releasing the clutter of their minds, bodies and homes, her clients are actively living lighter as they tackle their clutter, uncomplicate their lives and lose weight for good. She's been featured on popular wellness and minimalism platforms and has do-it-yourself courses and the monthly membership and private coaching for your lightest self at SchoolofLivingLighter.com. Welcome to the summit, Heather.

Heather Aardema

Thank you so much for having me, it's a pleasure.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

We were just talking about how I was pointing to the fact that my background is not minimalist and yours is, I'm not a minimalist and you said you have a story around that. And I remember your story and I would love to have you share it.

Heather Aardema

Okay, well, I was born a maximalist. I always thought more was more. I remember having breakfast with my sisters and my dad would make a bunch of toast and I always tried to get all the toast, all the pieces of toast. And so I really carried this idea that more was more for decades of my life. And a number of years ago, we had a water heater leak and there was a lot of toxic



mold with it and it contaminated a lot of the things in our home. And so we have gone through numerous remediation attempts to create a safe home and that included a lot of decluttering, a lot of letting go, letting go of things that could feel really hard to let go of. I let go of year books, I let go of my wedding dress, I let go of my diaries. All of my diaries since childhood, mold loves paper. And even though you couldn't see the mold, we knew it was there. And so that's why I've got a very empty background behind me and it has made my life lighter though. I have realized throughout the process that I was putting a lot of meaning into all these things. And at the end of the day, the meaning can live in my heart, it does not have to live in those tangible things to create happiness.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

You know, when I turned 50, I started decluttering and shedding in the last year, shedding some carried around weight of my own just on my body. And it's interesting because that then made me clear out most of my closet 'cause nothing fit anymore. And there is a sense, like I got rid of two thirds of my library and it wasn't 'cause of mold, it was just because I felt like there was too much stuff around me and it felt heavy and that I needed to just start moving it and re-gifting things. And it's really fascinating how the lightness in your being is reflected in your environment.

Heather Aardema

Yeah, so when--

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

And that they impact each other.

Heather Aardema

Exactly, when you started to gift some of those things away and let go of some of those things, how did that feel inside?

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yeah, it just felt really, really lovely because it felt like this isn't necessary anymore. It had this really beautiful purpose and brought joy in that period of time, but to carry the past into the present and then keep adding to it, there's this definite heaviness that happens that I don't even



know that we're aware of. And I know that a lot of people like there's this stage of life when you start letting go of things so that you can start leaving the planet. And it felt like that for me, like 50 was kind of this watershed where I walked through this threshold of this door that just said, oh yeah, everything shifted as far as what was important. And so I think that we do some accumulation, like when we have children, we have to get the stroller and we have to get the crib and we have to get, like there's like stuff that we nest with. To create a nest for our children. And then if we're not conscious about it, we can keep adding to that. And I just think that the consciousness part that you're bringing to this, I think is a really important conversation to have.

Heather Aardema

When we're operating on autopilot in an unconscious manner, we try and buy our way to happiness and accumulate our way to happiness. And I do see for a lot of people, we spend the first half of our life accumulating things and items and showing that we've made it or whatever definition of success we are embodying. And then we spend the second half of our life letting go. And some of us resist that, we really resist the letting go bit even though it can create a lighter experience and a lighter heart.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

It's very much true, and I'm very anti-clutter, so everything's organized and I do not do well with clutter in my environment, but even your stuff, it's like, you have to organize your stuff all the time. And if you don't have it, you don't have to do that.

Heather Aardema

Right, and we're talking about not getting rid of everything, we're just talking about getting rid of the things that are heavy that have that low vibration. And if we can let go of those things, then we get to see the things that we actually love. So often our vision is so clouded by all the things, we don't even see the items that truly do bring a smile to our faces.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

It's much easier to get dressed these days.

Heather Aardema

I bet it is, yes.



Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yeah, it's so much easier. So I don't have three sizes of clothes that I carry anymore. I mean, that's one thing about going through menopause for me too, was all of the hormonal changes stopped and it's just like my body found its weight that it needs to be at. And it's a really nice one and it's like, okay, so now I just have one size of clothing. And I'm so used to, after having four children having this up and down relationship on a monthly basis. And so, just to stop that, that's amazing.

Heather Aardema

Well, you gave yourself the gift of allowing yourself to find your natural weight. And once you find that natural weight it is so easy to maintain, as long as you stay intentional and stay clear on the things that you want. So bravo to a lighter closet and bravo to creating that natural weight for yourself.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

So let's define clutter because we're talking about the cluttering of the energy body.

Heather Aardema

And so far we've been talking a lot about physical clutter, but it goes so far beyond that. So I like to look at clutter as anything that gets in the way of the life we wanna live, anything. So it doesn't have to just be a thing. And usually more of our clutter is mental, mind clutter. So resistance, resistance without action is clutter, cluttering up our mind. Overwhelm, overwhelm, I used to indulge and overwhelm and worry and frustration and these feelings didn't do anything good for me, especially because I would ruminate in them, I would soak and marinate in them. And so those are forms of clutter as well, trying to get your spouse to change and be a different person is another form of mind clutter. And those thoughts of wishing somebody were different, those are just getting in the way of you showing up in your best, best self. So we've got mind clutter. We also have body clutter and then some unusual forms of home clutter that I can go into.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Let's hear it.



Heather Aardema

Okay, so the body clutter briefly high level, anything that comes into the body that we are sensitive to. So the first thought might be food. What are the foods that are causing you to swell up? What are the foods that are causing autoimmune conditions? I have a number of autoimmune conditions myself, and there are certain foods that I stay away from because if I consume them, I'll have to pull out the crutches and I don't wanna do that. It goes beyond foods though. So the air that you're breathing, the air that I'm breathing. I mentioned my toxic mold experience. And so mold in the air, certain types of mold for certain people can really, really be clutter. What's amazing is that I have two boys, they're 10 and 12 and my husband and those three are not impacted by the mold in our home, I'm the only one that's been impacted.

And so at first they had a little resistance to letting go of their things when we were remediating, because those, but why mom, why do I have to get rid of these things? They're not making me sick. And so resistance again as clutter. And then home clutter, yes, it's the piles and piles of paper or it's all the books. Now, Marie Kondo actually mentioned books could be clutter, but she was misunderstood and she's a famous minimalist. Books are only clutter if you perceive them as clutter. And so if you're looking at lots of books and saying, I'm never gonna read these, they feel heavy to me, then that can be clutter. The closet that you mentioned, your closet is much lighter now, but a closet that is just bursting with clothes, definitely clutter. But unusual forms of home clutter are things such as sensationalism.

So what is coming out of your TV? How often is the TV on? What is coming out of the radio? What are you listening to? What are those messages? Are those messages heavy or are those messages light? How do you feel when you listen to them? Do you feel lifted or do you feel weighed down? And so the messages, those are clutter as well. And even the relationships that come into the home. And so if you've got neighbors stopping by, if you've got people who lift you up, definitely not clutter. But if there are those people that are always angry or grumpy or heavy, and you feel exhausted around them, that might be some clutter that is coming a little too close to the home because it impacts you.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

You know, the TV thing, I think some people like to have it on as white noise in the background and that tendency, or that need, I would just ask, invite to drop into that and see like what is the



resistance to just being alone with your own thoughts and the feelings and sensations in your body, what is the need for distraction? Because that white noise has its own energetic footprint inside your home.

Heather Aardema

And those distractions are clogging up our potential. And I used to be that person, I wanted something on. And the reason for me was because I wasn't happy with my status quo. I was working a job, I wasn't finding the fulfillment that I found originally in that job, I wasn't finding the meaning and so I welcomed all the distractions. Because then I didn't have to get up close and personal. And so that is really key that you just mentioned that because a lot of us are uncomfortable with quiet space, with open space, and we think it's harder actually than it is. And so I invite everybody to carve out some time, sit with yourself, ask yourself what are the distractions that are clogging up the potential? What are the distractions that you're going to because you wanna cover up something else? And then what is at the root of that? What's underneath all of it? I always think that when things stay vague, they are so much scarier than when we get clarity on them. When we get clarity, then we can create some action and we can move forward and move into and toward a lighter future.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yeah, it's so true. And I sat in a 10 day Vipassana, a silent meditation retreat many, many years ago and it was probably the first time I was raising four small children with my husband. And it was probably the first time that I had to really sit still with myself. You don't journal when you're on a 10 day Vipassana meditation retreat, you don't listen to music, you don't do yoga. You don't partake in any of the doings that might be on your, to do list, even if there are those kinds of self-care activities like yoga and journaling. You just sit still with yourself, it's you, yourself and you. And it is amazing as the quiet of that or the clutter of the mind comes crashing into full clarity, how people respond inside the Vipassana center. Sometimes there's crying, sometimes laughing, like the just different, different responses to finally becoming present, fully embodied, present with yourself and only yourself and not looking. You're supposed to make eye contact with other people, not looking for what their needs are, like you're just tracking you and that's it. And it is remarkable. Our culture does not teach us to do that or support it in any way. So, finding that kind of a space like a 10 day Vipassana retreat, I always tell my patients, it's like 20 years of psychotherapy you never knew you needed.



Heather Aardema

Sign me up, it sounds amazing. And you just talked about the different emotions and feelings and we repress those. And what is that doing to our physiology?

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Well, it causes autoimmune disease 'cause like 10,000 years ago, Ayurvedic Medicine said autoimmunity is undigested anger.

Heather Aardema

100%, and so with my kids today, the two boys, I tell them all the time, cry it out. It will feel so good, cry it out. And doesn't a good cry just feel amazing. I think if every doctor could prescribe have one good cry a month, we would be a lighter society.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yeah, we have different energy systems though. Some people are not criers, some may need to like go punch a pillow.

Heather Aardema

Punch a pillow, get it out, whatever the release looks like, but not having the release is cluttering up the body. And so that release is a beautiful tool. And you're right, do the right form for you, absolutely.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yeah, there's an energy system that's very earth and it hunkers in and everything gets stuck in their system. And just even moving, like going for a hike will start that going. And so each energy system has its own needs, but it needs to get unstuck. And some leave real fast, they have a lot of air and space and then that's anchoring and tethering into your body being able to feel your feels. And then if you need to cry, cry. It's just it's like your call to declutter your body's emotional build up. That's one of the biggest pathways to reversing autoimmunity.

Heather Aardema

Yes, and what I see is when we resist that or try and distract ourselves from that, that's when we get the inner turmoil and the inner build up. And so it can be a scary thought to allow emotion



just to allow it, to allow it, to move through the body. And one thing I like to remind myself and my clients is that you will not feel that emotion for the rest of your life I promise you. It'll probably be a good, rich, small number of minutes, it's not the months and months or the days and days if you allow it. But if you continue to resist it, if you continue to try and distract yourself from it, it's always gonna be there.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

It's so true. There's another energy system that I see with autoimmunity a lot and it's the rigid one where there's a lot of space and that one is the attachment to adhering to rules. So taking what we're saying and then making it into a rigid rule structure. I have to do this, I have to follow it. If that happens, then I'll get this outcome. And that's a perfectionistic piece around. So it's kind of rigid and robotic, and so that one is like giving yourself permission to get messy. To actually let clutter happen around you a little bit and say, "Ooh, how does that feel?"

Heather Aardema

Yes, well, and actually, sometimes people will say, "Well, is your house clean all the time?" And the answer is, no, we live in the home, we do art projects, we get the stuff out, but we also put it away. And so that's that, I think when we allow ourselves to get messy, we can find a new level of creativity, which can open the door to new thoughts and new ideas and new possibilities. And so I definitely don't live in a museum, oh my goodness no, my husband would laugh at that. There are random socks probably like in the living room right now that belong to the 10 and 12 year olds. But the clutter really, it's one of those things where those things that are out there, they're either useful or we love them. And so if they're useful, if you love them, they're not clutter. And so it's let go of the things that are weighing you down. And some might say, it's so hard to let go. Maybe they inherited something, it was given to them maybe by a parent and it was the grandparents, the great grandparents, but they never liked the thing and it never felt like it fits. That can be a little harder to let go, to give yourself permission, to let it go and to give it a second life somewhere else.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

I did that and it really upset my mother.



Heather Aardema

It's interesting.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yes, yeah, it really upset my mother. She had given me her China, which she never used, and it was a pattern that I found that I never used and so I gifted it away. And when she found out she was not pleased. So, you can also use your discernment in how you approach and talk about it and let there be a feather bed landing. I didn't even think she would care because she gave it to me, so I thought she didn't want it. So I was a little too offhanded without checking in with her and saying, okay, I'm gonna let this go, it's not something I'm using, do you have a suggestion? Is there a place you would want it to go? And do you wanna offer it to someone else? I didn't do that, so.

Heather Aardema

Well, that's what I usually recommend is if somebody's given you something and it's in the family, ask that person, do they want it back or do they have a suggestion? What's interesting though, is your mom gave it to you, maybe thinking, oh, finally it will get used since it wasn't getting used with her. And it's always interesting our reasons, our motivations for doing things. But like I always say, when you give something to somebody else, make sure it's not clutter for them. Make sure you're not moving your clutter to somebody else's space, ask them, "Do you really want it?" And also say, "This gift comes with no strings. So if you end up re-gifting it, that's okay, that's okay, I just want you to know that." Yes, when we give things with agendas, secret agendas that we don't share with others, that can be some mind clutter as well.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Exactly, it creates relationship clutter.

Heather Aardema

Exactly, exactly.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yeah, those are really good points. So how has this helped your autoimmune health to drop into this?



Heather Aardema

Well, in so many different ways, so many different ways. And so I have rheumatoid arthritis and it used to be something that was on my mind, every single day. I forget that I have it because I have very, very few flares now. And that was originally mostly because I changed my diet. But then I realized I had changed my diet and if my husband and I had an argument or where maybe got to a place where I didn't feel like the conversation was finished, or maybe I felt I didn't share what I wanted to share within 30 minutes, I would get a flare in my left shoulder. And so we started to joke a little bit about it. "Oh, Heather, I see you still have something left "you wanna say, you've got a flare in your left shoulder. "You've got the sling on again." And I'm grateful, it's been years since I've had to wear a sling.

It's been years since I've needed to use the crutches, but our thoughts, our perceptions are energy and they create a cascade in the body. And so those thoughts that I was thinking would create the rheumatoid arthritis flares. And so I am much more intentional now on reminding myself that I'm not a victim, that I can think about what's been said, and I can interpret it in a different way. There are millions of ways to interpret what's been told to you. And so often I would just go the victim route, like most human beings. And so I remind myself on a regular basis, you're not a victim. When I do that, I always get to a lighter space and the relationship benefits as well. Now, what is the relationship? The relationship simply are my thoughts about the other person, but because my thoughts are lighter, I then behave in a different way and that's received so much better than if I behave as a victim. So that's one way my new relationship with clutter and with minimalism.

Minimalism, I like to define as a beautiful pathway toward intentionality, but that's one way my life has changed. I'll share another experience I've had. I also have psoriasis and it manifested physically during a really stressful period of my life. My thoughts were what were so stressed, really, the life was great, but it was the thoughts that I was thinking at the time. And I went to a Reiki Master and had a session with her. And within 24 hours, 90% of the psoriasis was gone. And it was an incredible energy session. I have a hiatal hernia and she had her hands right over the hernia, and I felt like it was gonna pop out of my, like I just thought it was crazy what was happening during that time. But energy can get stuck for so many different reasons in the body. And my energy had been stuck. And once I had that session, I felt a flood of energy go through my body. It was tremendous. And 24 hours later, I'm like, oh my gosh, the psoriasis on my hips,



on my legs, some awkward spaces as well, miserable spaces, amazing that it was all gone. I had 10% left, still a little bit along the hairline, but everything south of the hernia was cleared up. And so I can't speak highly enough of those people who have the skills to help in this way. I don't have those particular skills, but they have helped me tremendously. I can't imagine if I had not gone.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yeah, yeah, you know, you can learn those skills, right?

Heather Aardema

Yes, yes, but here's the thing, there's a right time and if I bring that on right now, it'll clutter up my calendar.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Perfect.

Heather Aardema

I do, I do wanna learn those skills and I have that tendency where I mentioned I'm more of a maximalist naturally, but I have discovered the minimalism. So I have the tendency to overfill my schedule unless I am really, really conscious. So at some point within the next 10 years, that will happen. I give myself a lot of room.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

And that's important that again, we're all designed differently. I study human design and we all have a different way that we manifest our humanity in this incarnation. And it's important to learn that about yourself. Like what's my bandwidth? What's my mission, what's my purpose? And do things in alignment with that. 'Cause when you're out of alignment, then it creates all kinds of dissonance in all of your layers, not just your physical one. So that's very good that you have your discernment on board there.

Heather Aardema

Thank you, I'm creating coherence with my calendar.



Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Yep, yep, yep.

Heather Aardema

Creating coherence with my home, my mind, my body, and with that coherence comes health. But with the lack of coherence comes more disease and I'm not inviting more disease into my life, I'm just inviting more health.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Beautiful, you have a free gift that you're giving our audience.

Heather Aardema

Yes, so it's called "12 Questions That'll Change Your Life." And it's a workbook, it's fillable, so you don't have to print it up and create more paper clutter. And they are 12 intentional questions to help you think about where you are and what matters most to you right now and where you wanna be. And the questions will also help you lean into the actions necessary to start to create some momentum. There are 12 powerful questions.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Beautiful, and then for those of you that have purchased the All Access Pass and are availing yourself at these talks forever, are on that VIP inner circle, there is a purchase bonus that comes with that All Access Pass that Heather has generously donated. Also it's a mini course on decluttering the mind, the body and the home. Is there anything you wanna say about that, Heather, to introduce that?

Heather Aardema

Yes, thank you so much. Well, again, I was very intentional. I didn't wanna create more clutter in terms of the courses that we sign up for. So there are three modules, mind clutter, body clutter, home clutter, and of course it's very actionable. Embrace these three modules and life becomes so much lighter from all perspectives. And so it won't take your whole life to complete, it's just a short focus period of time, but I'm happy to gift that. And I can't wait to hear how these three modules lighten your life.



Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Ah, thank you so much for your generosity of time and your work, it's beautiful work. And I can't encourage everyone enough to make sure that you dive into this work and help declutter mind, body and home. Thanks Heather.

Heather Aardema

My sincere pleasure thank you.

Keesha Ewers, PhD, ARNP-FNP-C, AAP, IFM-C

Until next time, everyone, be well.