



**Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with Erika Flint  
Posted June 15, 2021**

Pete Moore:

This is people are on halo talks and YC on location, California, with my new friend, from Santa Monica entrepreneur, Sean art writer. Welcome to the show. Thanks for having me happy to be here. Awesome. So you are officially part of the Halo sector through helping people feel and look better. So let's talk about Elia and tell us about your personal frustrations that have evolved into a thriving business.

Shauna Reiter:

I love that. I love that introduction, you know, it's true. I think solving a problem is how most successful businesses are started as you and I were just discussing. And for me, the problem was one of depletion and a history of really severe auto-immune disease. I had been down some pretty scary roads in my youth that were not unfortunately resolved through the pharmaceuticals recommended by doctors. And there was a little bit of a crazy hunt for me over the course of about two years in terms of finding, resolve for both what is called a leukopenia it's it's neutropenia, there's different ways of categorizing it, but, you know, I was born with a body that just doesn't produce a normal number of white blood cells. In addition to that, I tested positive for Crohn's disease when I was 14 and simultaneously was battling parasite.

Shauna Reiter:

So there were a lot of variables with overlapping symptoms that my body was not unfortunately able to overcome naturally. And so I was seeking, you know, medical advice and the prescriptions just weren't working. And so eventually I got off Prednizone and NSAID and all of the Western pharmaceuticals and went down a more holistic naturalistic route. I turned to Chinese herbs a homeopathic medicine acupuncture and primarily nutrition slowing my body down, cultivating what I now understand is a meditation practice or mindfulness, but at the time, you know, whether or not it was categorized as such, I wasn't aware of it. I was only 15, but, you know, 14 kind of transitioning to 15, but basically listening to my body and understanding the cues and recognizing that when I eat certain things, I don't feel great the next day, or even with an hours, if I don't sleep enough, I'm cranky and everything feels inflamed.

Shauna Reiter:

You know, so I ended up on a really beautiful path ultimately in my late teens, but then after having my second child after 24 months in my thirties, I found myself once again, really to feel inspired and vibrant, alive, awake, all the things we want to wake up everyday feeling. And so I decided to once again returned to the sort of medicinal practices of my youth, which were really cultivating mindfulness

around eating and nutrition and understanding that my physical needs had changed drastically. You know, since I was a teenager, I was now the mother of two children. I'd been breastfeeding consecutively, you know, for years I went from breastfeeding, one child directly into childbirth and breastfeeding my second. And I began to do intensive research into what my body required at that stage, at that point in my life, and really was pretty dissatisfied with, with the finding I was, I felt like nothing I was eating was satiating me.

Shauna Reiter:

I still lacked energy. And so as any new breastfeeding mother understands, there's really not enough to consume. Like everything is being stripped. Pounds of minerals are being stripped from your body by the baby. And you're of course recovering from childbirth simultaneously. And so I started investigating powders protein, powders, different kinds of colleses, and didn't feel physiologically. Like my body was transforming the way I was hoping it would or responding in, you know, in the way of feeling the kind of energy I was seeking. So my initial concept was to start a line for new mothers and for breastfeeding women. And then I decided I wouldn't be in that stage for the rest of my life. So I wanted to create nutrition that would sustain me indefinitely. And I began my company, Elia naturals, really based on a very strong desire to not only have the energy that I required to do all the other things that I was, you know wanting to pursue in my life like music and singing and things I had done professionally in the past. But to not also slip back into a place of being unwell which had been, you know, my story in my youth when I had overlooked all of the signals and really sort of trauma trampled, you know, the signs that it was time to slow down and properly feed myself emotionally and physiologically.

Pete Moore:

Got it. Well, that's a, that's a great summary and, and, and journey and congrats on getting to this point of not only self-awareness, but you know, self natural medication must feel good to be able to, to achieve. As you were going down that path, did you seek out besides your personal research any nutritionist or naturopathic doctors or and then as part of, did you, was there a part of you that was always like, you know, what, maybe what's out there is in whatever's obvious is not the answer, you know, actually I have to kind of go deeper to, to actually find it because obviously there's products that have doctors that market, those products, how did you get to, I guess, a state of clarity to say, Hey, no, one's trying to sell me anything. You know, or like becoming an evangelist for something that, how did that, how did, how did you kind of get to that awakening?

Shauna Reiter:

I guess my starting point was one of distrust, which I suppose fueled part of my passion and really, you know, pursuing clean well-sourced ingredients that I felt, you know, I, I could trust. I think that when you have in the past experienced healing through nutrition, you understand the difference between pure quality ingredients and you know, those kind of marketing you know, companies, marketing products that are clever and strategic in the ways they are presenting, aren't having an effect. And that's something that took a lot of time and practice, and there are kind of two components of that for me. One is the research, which is, you know, who's whose, whose agenda is it that I'm sort of buying into? What is their mission? What's their purpose? What do they have to gain from this? You know, and do who are they associated with?

Shauna Reiter:

Right. So you know, when you're looking at farming practices and when you're looking at, you know, entrepreneurs and every sort of facet of, of what goes into creating nutrition, understanding the relationships among people are so important because if there's a big profit to be gained you know, then sometimes quality can be overlooked, you know, and there's also of course you know, marketing gimmicks, like saying that something is natural which I, at one point thought meant organic and sustainably sourced and environmentally conscious and all of those things and Fairtrade, and yada yada, and which I now understand means nothing, but the word natural. And and so sort of peeling back the curtains and the layers and, and understanding that you do have to do a deeper level of research to understand where something is sourced, how it's created, who's marketing it. And why in addition to that, then of course, just having your own personal experience of consuming, you know, the nutrition and saying like, do I actually feel different? You know, my, does my skin look you know, more alive? Am I brighter? It was my cognition sharper. Like, how am I, you know, what's the effect on this you know, physically and am I really tapping into it? And by the way, you know, I, that placebos are, can be very effective, but over time they wear off. Right, right. Right. Well,

Pete Moore:

I was in the, I was in the Vaughn's the other day and I was tasked with getting a bone broth and I came home and I thought, I'll buy my fiance, tasked me with that. So I came back and I was like, all excited. Cause I got the natural bone broth and I was quickly reprimanded and understand that it was not the organic bone broth, which I personally did not know the difference between even though I was supposed to be running the halos sector, I would have taught everything in life's about timing. Right. You would've, you would've saved me a save me a more positive trip to Vaughn's as you you've kind of explained some of the pitfalls in the industry right now, you know, I like to refer to nutrition industry somewhat as a, in a state of confusion. Because I feel like every time I read a new article, it takes me down a different rabbit hole with a different vegetable that I should, you know, use as my primary source of protein or happiness

Shauna Reiter:

20.

Pete Moore:

Exactly, exactly. As I mentioned before, I'm a big spirulina consumer. So that, that I feel like no, one's come out and said, Spiro lead is bad for you. So I'm hoping that continues. You know, but do you think the industry as a whole, you know, have the ability to honor its for its self or, or self-certify to, to make people understand what they're putting in their body? Because I think a lot of people right now are more focused on their health and what they do digest and understand that this is fuel for your, for your body. Your body is a machine. However, they could be taking protein powder. That's got way more in it that actually counters the effects of that, or actually creates other side effects that they don't even know about because it's just too much confusion. So do you have, do you have hope, are we just going to evangelize this until, you know, hopefully the message gets across? How do you view?

Shauna Reiter:

Well, there's so many different aspects to the question you're asking and I, and we could have four hour conversation on this question alone. I mean, let's start on a macro level with American politics and law. It's problematic in regards to food because of labeling labels can be extremely misleading. Companies are often not required to print things on label that they should be required to print, including, like you

said, you know, potentially toxic ingredients ingredients that are contradicted, you know contra-indicated with other ingredients, the possibility that a product, you know, it doesn't actually consume a concentrated enough amount of an ingredient to actually be beneficial. And that's misleading a lot of the time that people think that they're consuming something that's a big superfood, which it may be technically if you eat four pounds of it in one sitting.

Shauna Reiter:

But that isn't concentrated enough in a product because it would be too expensive to process that way. There's the law. I mean, even the term organic, as we know, doesn't mean 100% organic, you know, you can grow organic produce that then is allowed to be transported with a blanket that's laid in with pesticides. And of course transport takes, I think organic technically has to be. And, and please don't quote me on this. I may be incorrect in certainly I'm sure things have evolved since I checked the stat, but at a certain point organic meant 70% organic. So it wasn't even a hundred percent organic. Right. and then of course, you know, product you know, is in transport for days at a time and then unpacked in a grocery store where they're on supermarket shelves for days at a time before they're in their fridge for days at a time before they're consumed.

Shauna Reiter:

And they're also grown in soil by and large. That's not mineral rich the way it was when our grandparents, you know, were eating off the land, living off the land. And so you know, and of course there's the environmental toxins and pollutants that affect the way things are grown and farming practices are also not by and large. I mean, this is not true for everyone, of course, but a lot of farming practices, aren't doing the things they need to do to preserve the mineral, the integrity of the minerals in the soil that are affecting the, the nutrient quantities in our foods. So, so that's 0.1. I don't know that we can fully ever understand what we're putting in our body because unlike some other parts of the world, like Europe or New Zealand, we're not forced as a country to be as transparent.

Shauna Reiter:

Okay. That's number one, number two, there's the marketing game. People want to sell things. And so the impetus to make money, unfortunately often obscures and can sort of dictate the agenda of a company in terms of, in terms of wanting you to believe you, whatever it is that will increase sales, right? So I feel like it's always the responsibility of a consumer. It doesn't matter what you're consuming, whether it's food or other products and, you know, household cleaning products or clothing or ideas, or, you know, cultural trends, whatever it is you're consuming, it's ultimately your job as a consumer to do your due diligence and try to piece apart what's real and what's false. What is transparent and authentic and what you know, is a facade and to factor in a person's intentions and agenda and again, their relationships, right? So if a person is, is, is owned by a company that has, you know an agenda that may not be your wellness, then that's something important to note, you know, I'm trying to keep this incredibly vague. So I don't point fingers on necessarily

Pete Moore:

For you. Don't worry about it. We'll handle that part where we're not shy about it. Let me just one other comment on, on this point, I actually just came off of watching a, a documentary called [inaudible] over the weekend on Netflix. And the documentary was about companies that provide labels to seafood companies that say that there was no dolphins or no other animals harmed, you know, during the fishing process. And then two hours later you realize that they, there there's no proof that they've

actually diligenced that label. And they're just selling that label, you know, for marketing purposes, is, is there a good housekeeping stamp of approval yet on natural versus organic or in certain industries or one, you know, an FDA approval on something is not really what it used to be or what it should be as far as I'm concerned serving sizes.

Pete Moore:

I'm not sure who they put that down to four because I don't know the last time I put my Ben and Jerry's pint back three times and it was constituted for servings or when they sell a bag of you know, peanut, a trail mix, or what have you in the airport, you know, and someone's like, oh, you know, I eat healthy. It's like, well, actually, you know, you finished the entire bag and that's an eight serving size bag, you know, do the math on the grams of sugar. So is there any body is, you know any organization that, that people are starting to lean to, to say, Hey, they actually have checked all this for us. Yeah.

Shauna Reiter:

There's not one necessarily, there are a few that, do you have show notes at the end of the podcast? Cause I can, I can put them all on there. I'll email you the names of a couple more credible ones, but ultimately, unfortunately there's just a lot that we can't fully know. You know, there are, like I said, I mean, especially when it comes to cleaning products and stuff, they've actually gotten their act together a little bit more in terms of transparency. The food industry is it's tough. It's a tough one. I mean, I'm a perfectionist and a little bit compulsive. And so I was driven to start my own company to avoid not trusting what I was eating.

Shauna Reiter:

I was like, how controlling I am. I actually have to yeah. Create an entire company to make sure that I'm eating clean. No, but my history of food is incredibly dimensional, textured and goes far beyond the scope of what we've discussed. But you know, it's been my salvation in many ways and it's, and it's also of course as a woman growing up in Los Angeles, you know, a source of stress at times, I think, I think what we can do is only our best and we will drive ourselves absolutely nuts if we become overly consumed with fact checking and cross-checking and you know, people have jobs and families and lovers and lives. And we can't certainly spend all day, you know, micro analyzing the contents of the peanut bag as much as I'd like to be given my compulsive personality. I'm constantly in the push and pull of letting go.

Shauna Reiter:

And then, you know, back into analysis mode and then letting go and back into analysis mode, I've got two small kids, right? My kids just turned four and six and I'm going through this with them because, you know, th their little pallets are, are different than mine and their preferences. And, you know, I'm also in certain ways, you know, it's just, there are so many deep, fascinating, psychological studies that could be done on parenting and kind of where we go mentally as parents, when we're making certain kinds of decisions. Like I find myself wanting to give them foods that were comforting to me as a child that are completely inappropriate for their diets, given what I know now about nutrition, but I'm like, as a kid, I would watch the show and eat this amazing snag that had no nutritional value. And it felt really good for me. So maybe it will feel good for you.

Pete Moore:

There was a Seinfeld episode where he's like, you know, there was so much sugar in cereals and the one that really spoiled it was when they put cookies, it was just cookies, tiny chocolate, hard, try. Those are the best. And he's like that those are the guys that ruined it for everyone.

Shauna Reiter:

I go back. Yeah, yeah, totally. Yeah. It became very clear at that point that, that was in fact, a sugar cereal. I mean, listen, when my son was, was two, he had never eaten cereal and now I have six different kinds of cereal in my cabinet. So, you know, I've let go a lot. And, you know, I buy organic and gluten free and blah, blah, blah. We make our own granola. But at a certain point, you know, like we have to live our lives. I tried making homemade granola bars for my kids. I don't like them, you know, like I've tried four or five different recipes. All right. Well

Pete Moore:

Now we're not talking about your granola business here. So that's, yeah, this is

Shauna Reiter:

An acronym, but the point would be the point being that there is a point at which we have to just let go of our standard of perfection and do our best, you know, and then enjoy our lives. So

Pete Moore:

Let's pivot for a couple minutes and talk about building a company, being it, being an entrepreneur, or being a mother, you know, obviously I'm sure you see a number of companies that are in and around, you know, your product line that get venture capital money and private equity, and they're trying to kind of shoot for the moon. How do you kinda calibrate what kind of success you want to have? You know so you could probably take your company and turn it into a group that that's backed by 10 or \$20 million of venture capital or growth equity. You know, they'd probably put you on the fastest treadmill. You know, and, and, and have you worked to, you know, at the end of the day, raise your two kids at Santa Monica, like you're already doing, and maybe you say, Hey, look, I already got what I want. So I'm not interested in that part of the game. So how do you think about that? Or if you had the urge to do that and how do you think about it?

Shauna Reiter:

I have the urge to do it when there are snafos things are going well. I'd love for him to be part of someone else's problem, 5,000 labels. Don't have a barcode welcome to my morning today. So seriously, but I, you know, things go wrong all the time, but I'm not a fast girl, so I'm not interested in fast tracking anything. I, you know, you, it's always tempting to speed up, you know, and to, to move faster and to develop products faster and to get things to market faster and to get bigger, but, you know, to, to expand you know, your customer base faster and all of those things, and there's a lot of money to be made in nutrition. And it's also highly competitive. And part of how I distinguish myself is that my customers trust me. Like they know that when I put something out there, it has been scrutinized.

Shauna Reiter:

I am scrupulous about my research. I'm consulting with doctors who are helping me formulate everything. I'm actually physically in the lab, testing, sampling, discussing things. You know, and like I said, I'm not willing to, in any way lessen my standard of integrity. So that has been a plus for me, you

know, people who, who buy my products and consume my nutrition do so often. And definitely once they start, they don't stop because they do experience a difference. I feel like, you know, it really boils down to what your objective is and you know, what your agenda is. Mine is not to make as much money as I can, as quickly as I can. It is to serve people and to allow people to have the experience that they deserve in their lives of doing the things that are meaningful to them that they're meant to do on this planet.

Shauna Reiter:

Like first and foremost, I'm a singer. Like I was a singer and songwriter for many years. I'm back in the studio in two weeks, recording children's music. Now that I've got kids. And for me, this company and these products are what allow me to do all of these other things I love and I'm passionate about. And I'm giving that gift to people every day when things get hard. And when I have off days with the company, because you know, everything that I've lined up just as fallen somehow through the cracks and things aren't working out, I constantly remind myself why I'm doing this and that ultimately every little nitty gritty aspect of a business from writing copy to literally putting stickers on, you know container. I mean, there was a point early on in my company where my garage was my warehouse. I was shipping everything directly.

Shauna Reiter:

I mean, we were going to, you know, we had, we were best friends with the ups man. He was coming out proud. I mean, this thing started was very grassroots. It's still an extremely small company. Although I feel like we're doing prolific work. But there was a stage where literally I was doing every single thing with my husband. I mean, we designed the labels ourselves. We didn't outsource at all. I was customer service. I still sometimes am because my assistant now will forward emails to me that are more personal in nature. And, you know, I respond directly back to customers. So there's a way in which I feel that I will be satisfied if I ever decide to move on from this business, knowing that I've done the, the very best I can for the people I'm serving. And that every little moment that at times can feel like a distraction is in essence, still serving the same goal, just to provide people with, you know, the lives that they deserve to live. Do you

Pete Moore:

Think that some of these companies get too big, get up so far removed from the founder, that they have an inability to understand that, you know, a customer or a member is a human and to give you example, we, we work with a lot of health club chains and, you know, they sometimes look at the data and say, oh, we lost X amount of members or X amount of credit cards didn't get processed. It's like, well, the reason why people cancel is because you're not giving them an experience that they expected or something in their life change, and you don't know how to be a part of that change. So when you look at all the small businesses that are around, you know, most small businesses kind of wear their heart on their sleeve there is a personal connection. Do you see I mean, we're, we're in the finance side of this all the time, so we just see deals going on and we see money moving and, you know, backing concepts and blocking product lines. Do you see like that there's an inherent flaw in that, and at some point you might get too big unless you have an amazing culture. You know, if you lose the culture of a nutrition company, you basically lose the customer, I guess, is what I'm getting off my soap box

Shauna Reiter:

Right now. Yeah, no, I mean, I, I, I can't really speak for other companies and how they run their because I don't know, I really try to focus on how I am feeling driven to run mine. What I know is that if you're too small, things also fall through the cracks. Like there was a point at which when I was personally an exclusively responsible for customer service under an alias name I couldn't respond to everyone. I certainly didn't respond to people efficiently. And that was problematic. And I felt not only personally badly about feeling like people were being ignored but I was losing customers. So I think there's probably a balance where you want to be financed enough and you know, have enough of an ecosystem that's you know complex and efficient enough where you can have you know, people who are assigned very specific tasks that make everything run smoothly and efficiently.

Shauna Reiter:

But, you know, if you, if there's no soul or heart to the company, I see your point, which is that, you know, there is potentially some integrity loss. I think it depends on what the, the, the consumer is wanting from that experience. Like if I'm selling a great product as long as their needs are met, either through their product, or if they ask a question and they're responded to quickly by a customer service agent, you know, maybe that's enough for someone someone else may want to really deeply understand the story of the founder of the company and, you know, feel more personally invested in the development of the company and, and so on and so forth. So I'm not sure is the answer. I think it probably varies from customer to customer, to customer, and also is influenced by how a company is choosing to market themselves and present themselves. Like, if, if you're, if your demographic is pretty young and it's a it's spicy and sexy marketing, you know, I might not require anything personal. I might just want great, you know, ads on YouTube or Facebook or Instagram pictures that, you know, are compelling to me. There's really no personal element to that. If you've got like a young teenage intern, you know, posting for a year, it's a confused, you know, in other words, it's a complex answer to, to a question that could be handled differently by different companies. Yeah,

Pete Moore:

That's great. That's a great point. So in closing here, do you have any, I'm assuming you have a lot of quotes that you live by sounds like you have a lot of quotes that you come up with. So any for our for our audience here on how you approach life or business that we haven't officially covered.

Shauna Reiter:

Oh, quotes. I don't know that I have any quotes, but what I will say is that I always listen to my deeper knowing and my instincts and how I do is ask myself to let fear, take a break, take a nap and really tune into what the part of me that sort of just instinctively knows is trying to communicate every single business decision and life decision has gone wrong has been me overriding my instincts mistrusting, myself, questioning my initial thought about something and bulldozing over it with analytics and cerebral, you know, analyses. And so I would say to anyone, starting a company, or just wanting to live authentically and purely trust yourself, just trust your gut. And and in order to do that, just let fear take a back seat for a minute.

Pete Moore:

I like it. So, Shawna, thanks for being on here from trusting yourself to trusting lie naturals, we will put everything in the show notes, look forward to seeing you at the Fairmont or one of our in person events, bring your kids, bring your college in, and please bring me some spirulina.

Speaker 3:

All right. Awesome. Thanks for being on. I want to thank my friends at BRRN, for sponsoring this podcast, Dr. The innovative company behind the world, renowned burn board. Many of you don't know. I was one of the top roller hockey players in all of Nassau county. Back in 1988 to 1990. If I had a burn board watch out, I would probably be an NHL legend got a seven day free trial on their on demand library. It's hundreds of workouts, \$30 off the purchase. Check it out at <https://shop.thebrrrn.com/> We'll have it in the show notes, use the checkout code HALO and go burn it on the BRRRN board, ice hockey in your living room, at home fitness, low cost, low tech, low impact. Go HALO. Burn it up!