



Complete Transcript: HALO Talks with Celina Semente
Posted April 11, 2023

Pete Moore:

I want to thank all of our listeners for several years of dedicated and loyal listening throughout the Halo Talks 400 podcast completed to date. We're going to a thousand by 2024. If you're so inclined, we'd love to have you go to iTunes for us, fill out a review so we can keep this podcast rolling globally. We are now on Chartable's top lists and moving up the charts. Also, if you want to educate yourself in a new year, please go to the [halo academy.com](https://haloacademy.com). Take a look at what'll be done with 150 executives in the halo sector to get them smarter, get them prepared for capital raises, and also more winning. Thanks. Have a great season. Let's go. This is people on Halo talks. I have the pleasure of having Selena. She's coming in to help out a close friend of mine and the head of the gist, Mike Pesca in his health journey. And we are gonna learn about the values of having a health coach, how everyone should have one, and what the road to being a successful one is. So Selena, welcome to your first Halo Talks.

Celina Semente:

Thank you so much. Thanks for having me on. This is so great to be here.

Pete Moore:

Awesome. So you've got you've got five stars from a close friend of mine, so that means a lot. So let talk first about, you know, how you became a health coach and how that kind of prompted you to feel like you're on the right personal career journey.

Celina Semente:

Yeah, absolutely. So I actually have kind of a unique different way that I got into this and I really pull a lot of my coaching from my own experience. So, halfway through my college career, I was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease. Are you familiar?

Pete Moore:

I am. My cousin has it and lived through a very difficult teen years and has not had any episodes in a long time, but yes, I'm very familiar with it. So fire away.

Celina Semente:

Awesome. So for anybody who is not so familiar it is an autoimmune condition that affects anywhere on the digestive tract. I have to be affected on my small intestine. So remember that for a little bit later. But

I was diagnosed halfway through my college career, like I said. So I was in this really unique position where I was going to college for a totally different thing. I was actually in school for fashion studies, which was going to wind up going into interior design. That was my plan. But halfway through, once I got my diagnosis, I, I recognized, wow, I'm in a really unique position. Maybe I should pivot and actually go into the health side of things and really dive in and learn everything I possibly can to not only help myself, but help other people too. So I got diagnosed and I was put on a medication.

It worked for about six months, didn't work so great. After that, I started having flareups, as you know, Pete, from seeing your cousin flareups are just not a fun time with Crohn's or any other autoimmune condition as it is. So I had to switch medications. I was then put on a medication that was strictly intravenously administered. It was not a great time. I was on that for about a year and a half, and I actually wound up having really horrible reactions to it, to the point where I had to then switch off of that medication. And so that brought me to about December of 2018. And I remember I went into my gastroenterologist appointment that day and I said, listen, I have to do something. I can't be on these meds anymore. They're really not working out for me. They're making things worse actually.

And she looked at me and, and I said, what's next? And she looked at me and she said, we have to get you on a self-injectable. So I said, okay, what does that mean? And also, if that doesn't work, where do we go from there? And she looked at me and she said, you know, I don't know where we go from there, because there's really not many options out there for you at this point. Right. again, this was around 2018, so not that long ago, but she basically said, there's really not many options for you at that point if it doesn't work. So I said, well, okay, that's not a lovely feeling to have. Right. Very defeating all these things. And I was, at that point, I had switched my major to nutrition and food sciences, which is what I graduated with. That's what I have my bachelor's in.

Where did you go to school? Montclair State University. So in New Jersey, I have my bachelor's through that. And then I went to Georgian port for my holistic health graduate degree. So I, I said, listen, doctor, like I am going through this undergrad degree of nutrition. Is there any way I could possibly integrate this into my healing journey? Can I, can I lean more into that and maybe lean off of a self-injectable in the future? And this is the moment that changed my life and made me realize, okay, I need to for real get into the career of either health coaching or something in the halo sector because I need to be there for other people. She looked at me and she said, seriously, Selena, this what you eat does not affect this disease at all. And meanwhile, this is a digestive disease, so Right.

I'm not sitting here to say medications are awful, they're men. They're lifesaving for many people and they're necessary for many people. But for me, that was just unfortunately not my experience. I had a really poor experience with that. So hearing, you know, you're pretty much doomed if this doesn't work out for you. And also nutrition doesn't affect your digestive disease that's going through your digestive tract. So that is, I said, okay. I'm very stubborn person, so in that moment I wanted to prove her wrong. And that was 20, yeah, 2018 in December. And since then I've not touched the medication for my Crohn's disease. So I actually have been able to manage this strictly through lifestyle and diet modifications. So I know that it's possible and maybe not for everybody, and that's okay, but this is my story. And that's when I realized, oh my gosh, I am so alone in this. I really don't have anyone to lean on. I had a circle of people around me that were absolutely amazing and wonderful, and I had the support there, but I, I did not have somebody in my corner who understood what it felt like to basically be told there's nothing for you out there and what you're studying is not worth it.

Pete Moore:

So, a couple questions re related to that. Did you start to lean into whether it was all, all, you know, alternative medicine or, you know, maybe some case studies that were done on a nutrition side? Or

were you kind of like just creating like your own, your own Guinea pig and you're gonna figure out like what works and then kind of double down on that and double down until you kind of sound okay, here's like, you know, it's funny you say that because you know, a lot of people say, oh, I'm trying to lose weight. It's like, well, you know, the car doesn't work. It all, it's all depends on what kind of fuel you put in it. So, you know, 90% of your journey on, on your fitness side really has to start with the fuel that you put in. If you're putting the raw fuel in, you're not gonna get results.

Does at the same time, a lot of the medical community, you know, unfortunately they give all these people pills and what they're trying to do is just get people on a recurring revenue on a very high margin product and they forget that, hey, there's, there's other ways and means that you can accomplish the same goal, you know, naturally. But people just take the easy way out and don't really look for a better answer. So I've got an issue with basically the entire pharmaceutical industry, however, we won't go there right now. But as you kind of went through that journey, you know, what, did you find that some of the, you know, superfoods that, you know, kind of were self-correcting for you? Or, you know, were you taking like a very detailed and daily log of like, here's everything I'm putting into my body, here's kind of like how I feel or kind of create your own like odometer if you will on mm-hmm. <Affirmative> on energy and, and you know how you felt internally?

Celina Semente:

Yeah, yeah. And that's a great question. And that's something that I exactly. I was pretty much my own Guinea pig. I still am my own Guinea pig because this stuff changes. It's not the same year to year, your body changes, so you kind of have to do trial and error all the time. But I've gotten to this point where I'm like, I recognize something's off right now. I know how to do trial and error at this point, and I'm always trying to help my clients see that too. I'm never gonna tell them to do something like logging or mood logging or even just symptom logging, mood logging, whatever. I'm not gonna tell them to do that if I haven't done it first or if I'm not willing to do it. So, to answer one of your first questions was yes, in that moment when I realized like, oh my gosh, I have to be my own best health advocate.

And that is really what I am a broken record to all of my clients about, is you need to be your best own health advocate because nobody else can do that for you. Yes. and what I mean by that is ask questions. Do the research, dive in, do whatever you need to do to feel better. And so to get started in that, I really just dug into anything I could. I read all the books I, you know and even though this is not that long ago, it's crazy how much things have changed. Instagram wasn't there like it is now with all these professionals sharing their thoughts and all of this. So I really had to get creative and the resources that I was using, again, a lot of books were really great. I was asking my professors all these questions and I recognized I was really privileged to be in the time that I happened to be where I had access to all of my professors and everything.

So that was really helpful to just read a lot of different things. And I first started, I, I'm more than happy to share any more resources with you that might be helpful. But I first started with a book called Breaking the Vicious Cycle by Elaine Gothel. It's a little bit, I don't wanna say controversial, but some things have been discounted, some things not so much, but it's all, it all comes back to that trial and error. That Guinea pig moment of a lot of that stuff in the book did work for me and it gave me a really good baseline to start from. And I don't follow it to a tea anymore. This was years and years ago that I first read this. I don't follow it to a tea anymore, but it really did help me get on a path to success. So what it did help me with was avoiding all the inflammatory foods that you would find in a typical anti-inflammatory diet.

Right. so that's, for me at that moment, that meant avoiding all grains, which I know sounds scary for many people, but that's eliminating the gluten and that's also eliminating the grain that could be harder

to digest on the stomach. I have been somebody that hasn't eaten red meat in a really long time. I was willing to explore that if I saw that it would really help me. But I didn't see that. So I do still avoid rugby meat and I don't eat that. Soy is another big thing that I avoid too, because that tends to be very genetically modified here in the us And I, at least for myself, I noticed that's a very big trigger. But in terms of super foods, healthy fats have been really, really helpful for me. So things like, gee, avocado you know, things in that nature of the healthy fats extrovert, olive oil, things like this uhhuh <affirmative> where, you know, so I feel like it's ingrained in us that you share fat and it's like, oh my God, that's gonna make me fat. I can't eat fat. But no, we need that, especially when it comes to the gut. We need healthy fat. Yeah.

Pete Moore:

I mean, I used seed non-fat jelly beans and then realized that it was all sugar <laugh>. I thought I'd do myself in favor. Do your favorite <laugh>. Yeah. They should really re rename the word fat to something else that's not, you know, the synonymous with the word fat will be helpful for the, for the average consumer. Yeah. You know, when you take a look at what you're doing right now and health coaching, do you feel like you need to say like, Hey, I'm a specialist in fighting Crohn's disease. Do you kind of say, look, just tell, give me someone that has an issue and because I know how to diagnose this specific disease, I can basically diagnose whatever disease you have because I, I know that I, I understand the process to go through. How do you think about that as a professional?

Celina Semente:

Yeah, so I, I do wanna say off of bat, as a health coach, I can't technically diagnose, but if they come in and they tell me that they have X, Y, Z, let's say they have Crohn's disease and they know that, and they tell me that, then okay, let's work together to really focus on gut healing. I would say that most my experience as a health coach has been leaning towards helping people with their digestive health as, as most of my experience. If we have somebody that came in and, and basically said, and you know, when it comes to gut stuff, it's really hard to diagnose. And oftentimes there's misdiagnoses

Pete Moore:

Mm-Hmm.

Celina Semente:

<Affirmative>. So if somebody comes in and this happens a lot and they say, my, my gut's hurting me, or even I have acne, brain fog, because everything comes back to the gut, what I'm really gonna help them work on is getting to the root of what is going on. Again, I can't diagnose as a health coach because that's out of my scope, but what I am gonna do is help you get to the root of your symptoms. Yes. Maybe that's doing something like what you said before, Pete, keeping a log of, this is the food I ate, I didn't feel so great after this. Or maybe two days later because symptoms can happen, you know, up to three days later or so, which makes it difficult of course. But when you have that log to reflect back on, that is such a helpful piece to the puzzle that it's not fun to do. No one wants to do it, but once you have that information, it's really great. So I would say that yes, a lot of my relationships with my clients have been, let's get to the root of what is giving you these symptoms. Because nine times out of 10, something's going to be related back to the gut,

Pete Moore:

Right? So I'd love that. Everyone who's on the health coach side says, I'm not allowed to diagnose. However, you are more than certified to do that. But I love the disclaimer that has been, I gotta disclaimer all of you to say like, I gotta say I'm not allowed to do that. However, I will get to the root cause of the problem. I will change your life and I will show you that you can live a healthy lifestyle. However, that's not a diagnosis, that's just what I do. So anyway, that's us. Having said that, and I appreciate the professionalism there, you know, as you see more and more people that are, you know, dealing with complex foods and you know, what's coming out in all these packaged foods, like, I don't think the body and the gut has been necessarily conditioned. You know, I was thinking the other day, cause I think of crazy ideas, you know, if I was like the gut, what would I be thinking right now of like, what is, what is this? I have no idea what this is. I don't know how to break this down. Yes. I'm completely confused. I'm gonna call you some pain just so I can tell you this is not what I asked for.

Celina Semente:

I love to hear this. That is such a fantastic way of thinking of this because if you think about like that's what's happening. These symptoms, whatever you're experiencing, those, that's your gut or whatever it is communicating to you because it doesn't have a voice like that, it can't tell you stop feeding me. Right. And so have to listen to the non-verbal cues that it's giving you. I love that perspective of I'm the gut. What are you feeding me right now? Because that's so important. So to think of that going forward, especially with somebody who knows that they have gut issues, so important. And you know, it, it's so hard because like what you were saying before with healthy fats and the word fat in itself, marketing is so tricky. And so there's so many brands out there that I stand by and I love, and they're clean brands, you know, cookie brands, I can, first thing is coming to mind like, simple mills love simple Mills to death, but it's still a processed food at the end of the day. You don't wanna be having that a lot of the time. But let's say you're at a birthday party, you wanna con, you wanna participate in eating a cookie too? Bring your simple mills cookies with you because you're gonna be okay. <Laugh>, you know? Right,

Pete Moore:

Right. And

Celina Semente:

It's not relying on that.

Pete Moore:

Yeah. I mean if you think about the, the marketing power that you're going against and that health coaches are going against, it's really almost insurmountable from a standpoint of the foods that they put out there. You know, it's not like the FDA is, is doing research on everything that's being created and putting in a, a package and putting preservatives on there and then, you know, encapsulating things that, you know, have really long shelf lives. And if it has a really long shelf life, it probably has a longer shelf life in your stomach to break down as well. Right. I mean, it's just intuitively That's right. Set. you know, so what, what are some of the maybe like non policy related channels? Like obviously education is the key to everything. However, there's mis information that's being put out there for, for, you know, for capitalist purposes, right?

If I'm putting out a new product, I'm looking at my revenue growth and my revenue growth doesn't necessarily have like a moral hazard sign on it. And it doesn't necessarily say like, Hey, this is good for you if you've got like a gut that's like in the top 5%. So do you kind of are you in the position where I just have to kind of w there's to, to make it aside and David like this, but there's a guy named Dr. Dr. Lane

Norton who was on our show. And he basically goes and he basically travels through all different research and, and different podcasts and people putting out articles about things you should eat and things you don't eat. He basically says, look, lemme tell you this is true, this is false and I'm coming at you <laugh> if you say something that's false. And it's almost like we need more like nutrition police, if you will. Yeah, we do. And create like a task force to be like, Hey, look, we're going after everything that that's misinformation. Yeah. It's gotta be the hardest time in the, in the, the evolution of planet to try and combat that. Absolutely. So what, what's part of the solution besides getting a health coach and then contacting you?

Celina Semente:

Yeah. Well first of all, I do think that everybody should have a health coach because things like this also accountability, motivation, so many other reasons why everybody needs a health coach. But I think this comes back to, again, being your own best health advocate, making sure that you are asking questions for yourself. Because a thing about nutrition too is it's also personal. I'm not saying that those heavily processed foods is gonna be great for somebody and then not great for somebody else. No. That, that's not what I'm saying. We always wanna focus on fresh whole foods of course, but nutrition is so personal for everybody. So it really makes it tough to say, this is good for you, this is not so good for you as an overall like nutritional, like blanket almost. But again, being your own best health advocate of looking into the resources that are going to be more trust, more trustworthy, right?

Like, not necessarily just listening to, I, I'm trying to think of an example, but maybe somebody who like took a fi like a five week course on health coaching and that's it. You know, maybe hold somebody else's with more experience or more certifications or whatever, maybe hold their opinion a little bit more than somebody who just got their certification five weeks ago. Not saying that they can't add value at all, but just be really intentional about what resources you're going to for your information. And another thing that comes back to that about being your own best health advocate is asking questions. Just leading with curiosity is going to help open up so many doors. I don't even know if this is particularly answering your question and I apologize.

Pete Moore:

No, keep going. Keep going. We're not editing, I'm not editing any of this, so just keep rolling cuz this is helpful for people to really, well you gotta, people need to calibrate for themselves, you know, you know what they put into their bodies and you know, if you want to get the results, you, you have to start to look at the ingredients. Like, I'll sit in a, a grocery aisle and I'll like read the ingredients to certain things and I'll also look at things that companies put out that you would think are healthy. And then you actually look at the serving size, which I'm, I'm, I'm going after those people at some point pretty soon as well when I have time because you know, somebody buys like a bag of trail mix at, at the Hudson News at the airport and then you realize that it's, you know, eight servings per, per trail mix.

So you multiply that by the 12 grams of sugar, you think, oh well I put 12 grams of sugar and then everyone finishes that bag cuz it's not shareable. Yep. and you end up eating the whole thing and you think you're eating healthy and now you're put 96 grams of sugar, which is like 16 tubes of sugar in, in your body and now you're gonna sit on an airplane. Yep. Yeah. So little things like that. Yeah. Little things like that are like, hey, you know, people are misinformed, people are, are miscalculating wh what that actually is to themselves. Yeah. And then like you get a pint of ice cream and I've never seen bud somebody put a pint of ice cream back in the, in the freezer three times. Like it's found a four person serving size <laugh>. You know? So tell me what the whole, tell me what the whole, you know, pint is cuz like I'm really good at multiplying by four because of the cause of Ben and Jerry's.

Yeah. <laugh>. You know, so when you take a look at like, the industry at large, you know, it's, it's, it is highly fragmented. As you say, like there's a lot of different voices you've got, you know, in you've got precision nutrition, you've got people like yourself that have degrees from schools. But a lot of it's kind of, you know, word of mouth. A lot of it's relationships. And maybe that's a good thing. Maybe, you know, you know, nutritionists or health coaches kind of become like, I'm the, you know, I I'm the expert in, you know, north jersey or I'm the expert in, you know, this town and like, maybe that's the way this industry kinda becomes like a manual, I use this term like manual weapon of meth destruction, right? So like at one at a time. Like we've gotta help a hundred, two, 300 people. And maybe that's the only way it could be done because it's probably not like a blanket organization. It has the ability to, to educate people and get through the noise of consumer packaged goods. Like it's probably never gonna happen where like the truth comes out.

Celina Semente:

Right. Right. And I think it's really, I mean, especially like you're saying right now when all of this stuff is, is being plastered, you know, we're talking about this now and now that I mentioned Frink Mill's cookie, it's probably gonna come up on your phone on Instagram or whatever you scroll because we're talking about it. Right. And so we're in this space, like you're saying there's constantly these ads that are making, you wanna go get this. So it is very, very, very hard. And like you're saying, I, I don't know that we're gonna be able to tackle this once and for all, but do you know what I think is so impactful that doesn't get spoken about enough? And I had the opportunity to, to be a group health coach group coaching is so powerful. So if you could join a group health coach or a, you know, a health coaching group, if you're able to get a part of that, that is touching so many lives at once with just one health coach.

So group health coaching is absolutely phenomenal within itself. I'm actually, I'm in this I'm in a book club for myself with a, a few other women focusing on hormonal health with a book called woman Code by Alisa vt, I hope I'm saying her name correctly. But in that is a lot of very detailed protocols in how to help fix your hormones through nutrition and lifestyle factors. And the fact that that's a book and it's I think 10 of us, 10 of us are there educating ourselves to best help our hormones. That's group coaching in a way. And that's all of us standing together with community. And I, I'm digressing a little bit, but I think community is a really important part of helping to get ourselves into a healthier or a healthier groove altogether. So while one-to-one health coaching can be really impactful, and I'm not trying to say that that's not important at all. Group health coaching is something that's incredibly important too. And I think we can help a lot more people at, on a, on a community level when there's group health coaching involved. And like I said, it doesn't get spoken about enough.

Pete Moore:

Yeah. So two, two questions. One is you've got a lot of big insurance companies that are starting to provide preventative health mm-hmm. <Affirmative> you know, or paying for health club memberships or boutique classes or pay for your gym pass or your class pass. You know, how, what, what's the evolution right now as you know, of healthcare plans or, or any kind of employee assisted, you know, hey, we are actually going to have a nutritionist on staff and to your point mm-hmm. <Affirmative> and then you read our book. You know, one of the things that we have in the book on the time to win again, is to say, if you're running your company like a professional sports team, you have to have a strength coach, you have to have an executive, you know, coach, you need a nutritionist on board. Yeah. Like, these are things that are non-negotiable.

If you're a team and if you think about your employees as athletes, there's no reason why they shouldn't have the same access to that expertise cuz you're trying to keep those athletes and employees on the field Absolutely. At absolutely optimized levels at all time, bro, it's gonna cost you money or you're gonna lose. Like those are the two things that it's gonna do. Right? It's so you gonna cost you more on your healthcare, you gonna have more people that are saying, you know, I'm, I'm homesick. Or you're just gonna say like, Hey, my team is not as good as yours because I can't put the amount of players on the field at the same time. And if their brain's not, if their brain's foggy, then they're not making the right decisions. Right. I mean, as we talk about this, it sounds like a no-brainer to me that you shouldn't be able to go into a company and say, Hey, for five grand, for 10 grand a month, I will be the health coach for your entire team. And somebody that doesn't jump at that and say, actually we've been thinking about doing that, or we, we have a spot for that for 2023 on our executive team. So is it, is that even a conversation being had our insurance company is thinking about like, Hey, I need a nutritionist or a health coach, like that's part of your plan?

Celina Semente:

I do, I do think that it's becoming more normalized. I will say that I am, I am. See even if it's slow and even if it's small, I do feel I am seeing a little bit of an evolution into companies recognizing this. And at, at one of the companies I used to work at, I was actually a B2B health coach, so I was seeing all of these companies were, and this was I was working for a virtual health coaching company, so I should clarify that, but Okay. It was, I was working b2b, so I was working business to business and my company that I was working for was still started a startup at the time. So by the time I left that company, we had taken on so many more B2B companies than we had beforehand. We were, had all these partnerships that we didn't have before when we first kind of started out with b2b.

And of course that's just the evolution of our company as well. But throughout my time I would see our partnerships expand how many people they would offer that to or expand the length of time that they were offering that for. And even in these, again, slow and little ways that companies like this are carving out opportunities for employees to take advantage of this, it, I do really think that it's happening. And I think maybe the pandemic had a big thing to do with that too, because people are noticing we need our health of course. And so it, it's really, it's really cool to see that, I truly believe health coaching is starting to get the recognition that it deserves. And it's nice to see that in you know, a employer to employee setting, even if it's going a little bit slow.

Pete Moore:

Gotcha. Alright, my last question because everyone that works out avidly always has a cheat day. Okay. And some cheat days are worse than others, right? So you gotta, like the rock puts out, you know, his you know, his stack of pancakes and, you know, throwing syrup on it. It's like my one cheat day. How much does that take someone back on average if they just kind of kept the script for the whole week? Am I back 24 hours, 48 hours, or is a cheat day a good thing?

Celina Semente:

I think I, I think it's all in the recovery. How do you bounce back from that? Are you having a cheat day and then letting it slide for the next couple of days or so? Or are you somebody who says, no, I'm getting right back into the swing of things, I'll have my next cheat day the next time. I think that's where it's really telling, because if you're somebody who has the habit and you're consistent with your habits, you're gonna keep up with doing it, you're going to get back on track. And if that's the case, it's really not interrupting you at all. I truly believe in an 80 20 lifestyle when it comes to this. 80% of the time be

on plan 20% of the time, have your fun times, have your cheat days, but get back on, you know, on plan as opposed to somebody who's like, no, I'm gone for it still. And then that makes it really hard to get back into it again. So

Pete Moore:

Yeah. Yeah. Cheat. That is my take on that. Yeah. Cheat, cheat days could roll into to bad habits. So look, it was awesome to have you on look forward to having you exposed to the halo sector at large. I think there's a lot of bricks and mortar locations that are thinking about how to do this with their members and I think the results are gonna be very meaningful. So keep doing what you're doing, we'll be in touch and you know, keep us posted on how we can help you as an evangelist in the space.

Celina Semente:

Thank you so much, Pete. Thank you so much, Dave. It has truly been an absolute pleasure. So thank you so much.

Pete Moore:

Awesome. Good stuff.