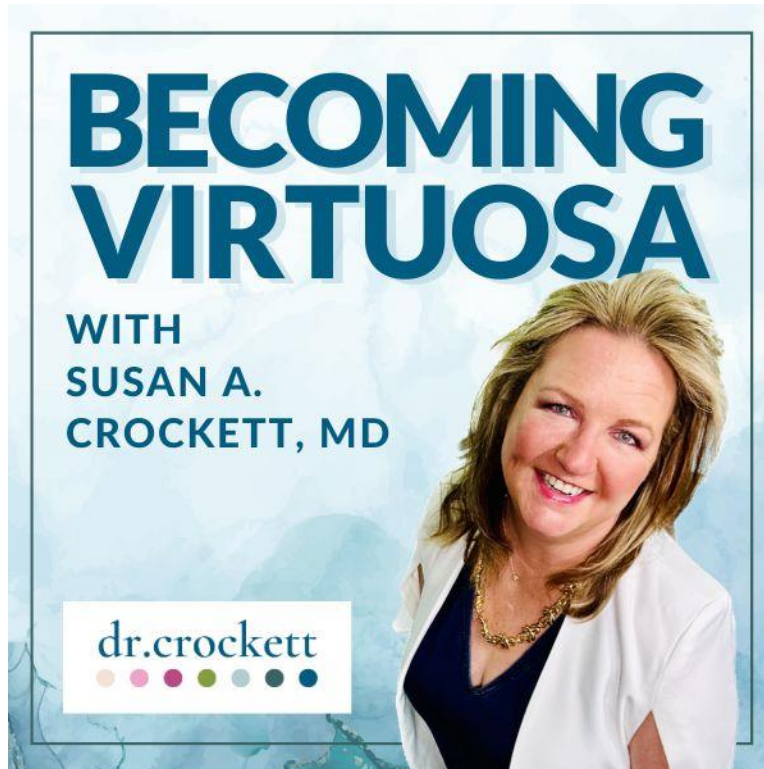


## Ep #41: Whole Person Integrative Eating with Deborah Kesten



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Susan A. Crockett, MD**

Dr. Crockett presents Becoming Virtuosa

## Ep #41: Whole Person Integrative Eating with Deborah Kesten

Deborah Kesten: Nourishing yourself emotionally, spiritually, and socially. That is why it is called Whole Person Integrative Eating. Yes. That is what 21st century nutrition is. It's not only about physical health.

Dr. Crockett: It's not calories in, calories out anymore.

Deborah: Not working.

Dr. Crockett: That's not working, as we've seen.

Deborah: Not working.

Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa*, the podcast with Dr. Susan Crockett. You are now listening to episode number 41, Whole Person Integrative Eating, a personal interview with internationally respected nutrition researcher and award winning author Deborah Kesten MPH.

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Dr. Crockett: Today I am so excited to be doing a little bit more in depth interview with my new brilliant, beautiful, bohemian friend, Deborah Kesten. This is her new book. We're gonna be talking about it. Y'all are gonna love her, and you're going to love her book. Take it away. Tell us a little bit about yourself, Deborah.

Deborah: Hello everybody. My name is Deborah Kesten, and I am a nutrition researcher. I specialize in preventing and reversing heart disease and obesity. My passion is food and health.

Dr. Crockett: This is amazing. When I first heard that you actually put numbers and research to reversing atherosclerosis and heart disease as well as obesity, I was really blown away. Because as a physician, that's just unheard of. That doesn't exist in the world that I grew up in and with the nutrition that I was taught. I was really curious for you to tell me a little bit more in depth about how you came to the book and your research and tell me a little bit about your background. What got you into this.

Deborah: Well, when I was in graduate school, Larry, my husband, behavioral scientist Larry Scherwitz was the professor for a medical student named Dean Ornish.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, the Dean Ornish.

Deborah: The Dean Ornish. Dean Ornish had put together a program exploring if you can actually halt and reverse heart disease, specifically plaque buildup in the arteries, which often leads to the most common type of heart disease. He talked with Larry because Larry did yoga and stress management and meditation. I was into what used to be called Whole Foods at the time. So we worked on Dean Ornish's first clinical trial for reversing heart disease.

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Dr. Crockett: Wow. Remind me where was that?

Deborah: Houston Texas Medical Center.

Dr. Crockett: I grew up just north of there.

Deborah: You did, in Houston?

Dr. Crockett: In Huntsville, just north of Houston.

Deborah: You're a neighbor. Hello friend. We didn't know what would happen, although Dean had done a preliminary pilot project and had clues that lots of the biomarkers such as blood pressure and cholesterol levels were lowered in heart patients. He did a mini project already. So we lived with the heart patients for about 24 days.

Dr. Crockett: Goodness.

Deborah: Put them on a program of what is now called lifestyle medicine, which included, for heart patients because many people with heart disease do not metabolize dietary fat and dietary cholesterol well. We put them on a, all based on Dean Ornish's program. Nothing I put together. It was all Dr. Ornish's work, on a no fat added plant based diet. Stress management twice a day, one to two hours of yoga and meditation.

Dr. Crockett: That's a lot. I've tried doing that.

Deborah: It's a lot.

Dr. Crockett: It's a lot.

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Deborah: In our busy, busy lifestyles. Part number three was exercise, moving your body, walking in some way. Also social support and interaction.

Dr. Crockett: This is the part that I'm so curious about. I really think this is a big, huge piece that's missing in our society these days with the internet and social isolation and all of that. So I'm interested to hear how that all plays into your research.

Deborah: Well, Larry, husband, behavioral scientist was Dean Ornish's director of research for almost 20 years. What they discovered is all these four elements, stress management, plant based diet, exercise, social support, all statistically significant.

Dr. Crockett: Which is big deal.

Deborah: Like big deal.

Dr. Crockett: That means it's not just like oh, it kind of did this or somebody thinks it might do that. This is like proven statistically significant factors.

Deborah: Yes. Because over the years we were always asked, which is more important. Larry would always say which leg of dog is more important? They're all there. What's in the American mind, for most of us oh, I'll cut down on fat a little. Gee, I'll do some exercise and walk a little bit. Not going to cut it.

Dr. Crockett: It's just not. So I'd like to know, take me from that research to this book now because you've written a couple other books. There's one right there. *Feeding the Body to Nourish the Soul*, of course. But this is your latest book called *Whole Person Integrative Eating*. We did a little

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group interview downstairs a little earlier, which was a little background to that. So I don't want to go over all of that.

For this talk, I'd really like to go a little bit deeper into the science of it. This book is groundbreaking for me as a physician because it's putting the science behind some things that we thought we knew and then introducing me to some things that we didn't know. So I wanted to go over with you first the seven, what do you call them? The seven eating?

Deborah: Overeating styles, yes.

Dr. Crockett: The seven over eating styles, yep.

Deborah: Yes, we did a study with more than 5,200 people.

Dr. Crockett: Gee whiz. That's a lot. That's a lot of folks.

Deborah: Before they did this six week, 18 lesson online intervention learning what whole person integrated eating is, we gave them a 74 item questionnaire. What's your over eating style?

Dr. Crockett: That's in the book.

Deborah: Yes, it's in the book.

Dr. Crockett: Because I saw it. So I want to show you all. In the book, starting on page 36 is a quiz for those of you who are like me, love taking quizzes, love getting scored. You can have access to it. Buy the book.

Deborah: Thank you. We gave people the what's your over eating style quiz to fill out before they took the 18 lesson six week e-course. They filled it out again afterward. We learned two things from that. One, Larry kind of

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spun the statistical kaleidoscope. What he identified is, he separated out how often do you overeat questions from the 74 other questions, 73 other questions. From that what we learned and discovered and identified are seven, I call it new normal overeating styles.

Dr. Crockett: Because they're really typical and common in our population.

Deborah: Yes. All statistically significant, all lead to increased risk of over eating. Five of the seven increase the odds of becoming overweight or obese.

Dr. Crockett: This is astonishing. So I took the quiz as I saw myself in them. We all commonly think about the first one, which is the emotional overeating. That's the classic thing that, especially as women, we talk about over eating when we're just wanting to soothe ourselves. That one wasn't so surprising to me, but can you tell me what the other six were and then a little bit about them, please?

Deborah: Of course. The first one I'm going to share is the what to eat over eating style. But the other six, including emotional eating, are all eating behaviors. In the world of science, they're all statistically significant. So while the words I've come up with are kind of cute and catchy, they're all the real thing.

Dr. Crockett: Then, and this is the most important critical thing about the book, is you have solutions, you have antidote to all of them.

Deborah: That is what whole person integrative eating is. It's a model and program science based. I also describe whole person integrative eating as 21st century nutrition.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, that's cool.

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Deborah: Because each of the elements I'm going to tell you about, there have been dozens and hundreds of studies on each one depending on topic. All of them, when you look more closely in terms of the solution, the whole person integrative eating program is about eating to nourish your body physically, which is where most of us live. But it's also about nourishing yourself emotionally, spiritually, and socially. That is why it is called whole person integrative eating. Yes. That is what 21st century nutrition is. It's not only about physical health.

Dr. Crockett: It's not calories in calories, out anymore.

Deborah: Not working.

Dr. Crockett: That's not working, as we've seen.

Deborah: Not working. Okay. You want me to share the overeating styles.

Dr. Crockett: Tell me.

Deborah: One is the what to eat. The overeating style in terms of increasing the odds of overeating and obesity is, everyone's familiar with this. All of the overeating styles I'm sharing should be familiar. Fast foodism.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, gosh.

Deborah: Yes, eating lots of processed food and refined food and lots of pizza and doughnuts. What's all normal for most of us. Most of us have learned to eat that way. That increases the risk not only because calories, but because I call it, this is my own personal description, dead food. It just doesn't have the vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, fiber, nutrients, your mind, body, not just your body need to survive and thrive and be healthy.



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Dr. Crockett: Agreed.

Deborah: That's the what to eat. The six behavioral eating behaviors linked with overeating, one what you just mentioned, emotional eating, stress eating. It releases, we know that when you eat high carb foods such as sugar and white flour and rice, it releases a natural hormone. Cheetos.

Dr. Crockett: That's my downfall is Cheetos.

Deborah: I'm an ice cream lady. It releases a naturally occurring hormone called serotonin, which calms and relaxes. But I want to really highlight takes about 20 minutes for the effect.

Dr. Crockett: So you can eat a lot while you're trying to get the effect to come on.

Deborah: That's what most of us do, yes. It works, but I'm also suggesting wait and enjoy it.

Dr. Crockett: Slow down.

Deborah: Slow down. Go oh, wow. There it is. Enjoy it.

Dr. Crockett: Think about your food. Enjoy it. Savor it.

Deborah: Most of us are eating that way. Kind of binge eating and overeating, emotional eating.

Dr. Crockett: Mindless eating.

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Deborah: Because we're feeling anxious and depressed. It's usually out of negative emotions. The second over eating behavior, again, this was so surprising to us is unappetizing atmosphere.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, this one was the shocker to me too.

Deborah: Two or three of them were shocking to Larry and me when we were discovering this. When I say unappetizing atmosphere, I mean aesthetically, and I mean emotionally. Meaning if someone's arguing at the table or at the table opposite you if you're in a restaurant, or if you're having a fight, an argument with somebody you're dining with. That impacts metabolism, the way in which food is metabolized, and not only influences overeating but also influences the way in which food is metabolized.

I'll talk about that in a moment. The second part is negative aesthetic environment, such as eating some 500 calorie muffin, for example, while you're filling up your tank at the gas station, and you're inhaling the fumes or you're in your car, and you're driving. You're in a traffic jam. Again, fumes from the cars, stress.

Dr. Crockett: That changes how our bodies metabolize that food that we're eating?

Deborah: Yes. A brilliant researcher, this is the other side of it, the whole person integrative eating program are the seven antidotes and solutions to the seven overeating styles. I want to highlight that of the 5,200 plus people who participated in our program, those who replaced the overeating styles with the elements of whole person integrative eating were the ones who just naturally without dieting lost weight and ate less. Naturally as a side effect of replacing the overeating styles I'm sharing with the elements of whole person integrative eating.

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Dr. Crockett: That's amazing. Okay, so we've gotten two.

Deborah: Emotional eating, fast foodism, and unappetizing atmosphere. A researcher named Candace Pert, brilliant researcher. She wrote a book called *Molecules of Emotion*. What she discovered is when you have an emotion, yeah, it's in your brain, but it releases what's called peptides. Signals, just natural signals, not only in your brain cells all of your brain cells, but throughout every cell throughout your body. These emotions impact the way in which you cells operate.

I have a quote from her that I give in a PowerPoint presentation. She is pretty much saying that these peptides, if you're feeling anxious and depressed, which is what's happening with most of us when we eat and when we're stressed and anxious, it affects the way in which the food is metabolized. It also can increase odds of over eating and, because you don't digest it well, gaining weight.

Dr. Crockett: That is just, it blows my mind.

Deborah: It blows my mind.

Dr. Crockett: It's such new information. So valuable.

Deborah: Yes. I describe what we're talking about is ancient food wisdom because I researched ancient food wisdom from world religions, cultural traditions, and Eastern healing systems, which are the guidelines we turned to for thousands of year.

Dr. Crockett: Now you're just validating that with science.

Deborah: Before nutritional science. Yes, validating it.

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Dr. Crockett: What number are we up to now? Five?

Deborah: Okay, number four. That is task snacking. Eating while you're doing other things.

Dr. Crockett: I do that. Guilty.

Deborah: At your computer, walking down the street, all normal. You're normal American. The task snacking over eating style, this antidote to that, which is part of the whole person integrative eating program is mindfulness eating. To be aware of what you're eating moment to moment non-judgmentally.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, well, that's a big word right there.

Deborah: Not judging yourself, not judging the food. Yes, being in the moment and enjoying it.

Dr. Crockett: No matter what you're eating.

Deborah: No matter what you're eating. Enjoy it. Bring moment to moment, non-judgmental awareness to every aspect of meal.

Dr. Crockett: I love that. I love that.

Deborah: I do too. Number five, new normal overeating style is food fretting.

Dr. Crockett: We're worrying about what we're eating.

Deborah: Always worrying about it. The word is overconcern about what you're eating. Is it good? Is it bad? Moral judgment projected onto yourself,

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onto the food. It's sinful. I was good today. I was bad today. Again, that's become normal for us. We have a phrase now. It's not a clinical diagnosis, but it's in the culture orthorexia. Eating, you know, orthodontia is familiar to most of us, your teeth. This is about correct. Overconcern about what you're eating.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, okay.

Deborah: Many of us are living there. We've learned to over-obsess.

Dr. Crockett: So it's not quite eating disorder, but it's on the spectrum, getting there.

Dr. Crockett: It's on the spectrum. Yes. The antidote to that is something that has been normal for thousands of years, but fewer and fewer of us do it is appreciating food from the heart. Authentic gratitude and appreciation from your heart. Not oh, thank you. This is great. Yum. I love pizza. But really appreciating food.

Deborah: There's lots of research, particularly out of an organization in northern California called the HeartMath Institute. They've done lots and lots of research about what the benefits of infusing your heart, especially, and your whole being with gratitude and the beneficial effects it has on heart disease, on cholesterol levels, on blood pressure, and eating with gratitude. We used to say prayers, many of us, for thousands of years. I'm suggesting really authentically appreciating food instead of worrying about it and judging it. The sixth overeating style really surprised us. It's called sensory disregard.

Dr. Crockett: That's mine. I did that quiz, and at the bottom of the quiz where it totals everything up, it has a like that says total sensory regard

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score. I'm like yes, I have total sensory disregard. I just want to eat when I'm eating and be on to the next thing.

Deborah: Of course, it's what most of us have learned. That means flavoring and savoring food is loving regard. I'll give you an example. Ancient food wisdom from Eastern healing systems, their concept of optimal nutrition for thousands of years before of what I call eating by number, counting calories and carbs and fat grams, was based on whether food contained all six tastes. Bitter, sweet, salty, sour, astringent, and pungent.

Dr. Crockett: That's cool.

Deborah: That meant bringing your attention into your mouth and tasting and being aware of it savoring the flavors and the food. Yes.

Dr. Crockett: I've never heard of that.

Deborah: That, again, when you don't relate to food through the aroma and the color and the flavors and the texture and what you're eating, affects, I repeat this. The way in which food is metabolize increases the odds of overeating, increases the odds of weight gain.

Dr. Crockett: Wow. I'm just blown away by how these behavioral things actually affect our metabolism.

Deborah: Yes, we were surprised also, but it's real.

Dr. Crockett: Real.

Deborah: Yes.

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Dr. Crockett: All right.

Deborah: The final one is solo dining, final overeating style of seven.

Dr. Crockett: So many of us are solo.

Deborah: We've learned to eat alone. One of life's greatest pleasures is eating with other people. We evolved around tribes and fireplaces and sitting with our tribe in front of the fireplace and families and friends. We've become very socially isolated. Many of us who're single. I think over 50 something percent of adults are single now.

Dr. Crockett: Yep.

Deborah: With COVID, we've learned to work at home. Alone, alone, alone. Lots of studies, particularly out of Japan and Korea, have linked to eating alone with eating one, junk food and fast food and two, over eating and obesity. So this is not something magical I'm making up. The solution in terms of whole person integrative eating is to eat with others as often as possible.

Dr. Crockett: Have the dinner party.

Deborah: Have the dinner party. If you're working at home, which more and more of us are doing, maybe take an online coffee break, a virtual coffee break with a friend. Maybe have an online cooking club and share a meal once a week or once a month with a group of people.

Dr. Crockett: I love those ideas.

Deborah: Connect with people as often as possible.

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Dr. Crockett: Yeah, that makes so much sense. All of these things that you're teaching for healing are things that intuitively we know we should do, but I've just never heard of them being attached to the medical problems or to the metabolism. I'm really grateful. I have a lot of gratitude for you bring this here today. I want to make sure that our listeners, our viewers can find your book and find you and your website. You want to tell us a little bit about where they can find you?

Deborah: Thank you. Please visit Amazon, and you can find out a lot more about *Whole Person Integrative Eating*. I have a really developed website called [integrativeeating.com](http://integrativeeating.com).

Dr. Crockett: We will link that in the notes for everybody. It will be in the show notes. Yes.

Deborah: Please take the quiz. It's in the book. Identify your overeating styles. My suggestion is if you have one or more, which is common for most of us, decide where you want to start. One client of mine, because I do coaching. One client of mine started with developing a beautiful place setting getting up from her Lazy Boy chair where she was working all day, and going over to a beautiful place setting and plates and starting there.

So decide on your overeating styles where you want to start. Two we have certified health professionals in Whole Person Integrative Eating. Please find a WPIE certified health specialist on our website, and you can get the support you need.

Dr. Crockett: That is so awesome. You are so awesome my new brilliant, beautiful bohemian. Thank you so much for being here and for sharing your wisdom and for being part of the Dr. Crockett Show.

Deborah: My complete pleasure. Wonderful to get to know you.



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Dr. Crockett: Likewise.

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