



A CONVERSATION WITH:

LISA SWIHART

HEALTH & LIFESTYLE COACH

NOETIC HEALTH LLC & INNOVATIVE COACHING

Which systems thinking skills do you use?

#1: Explore Multiple Perspectives

I educate my clients using simple terms about the complex interplay of beliefs, behaviors, and biomarkers. I offer multiple perspectives of how each element could contribute to their situation and how different lifestyle modifications could alter their future health. By applying systems thinking to my understanding of one's wellness in that snapshot in time, I am able to help my clients change.

#2: Consider the Wholes and Parts

I consider the whole and the parts by looking at how each element may contribute to biochemical storms that could set up a person for physical and emotional experiences.

#6: Recognize Systems

I recognize systems such as family systems, disease pathology, functional nutrition, blood analytes, environmental factors, stressors, and more to understand how they play into a person's health.

1. What is your role within the STEM community?

I founded and operate Noetic Health LLC and Innovative Coaching, two companies that engage individuals with their ever-fluctuating state of wellness by providing health and lifestyle coaching or consultation using the P4 medicine model (predictive, preventative, personalized, and participatory). Simply put, I help people feel better and experience joy.

2. What complex problem do you address in your work?

I help people discover beliefs, behaviors, and biomarkers that point to barriers in their lives. Environmental, medical, nutritional, genetic, social, emotional, and spiritual backgrounds contribute to who a person becomes. Patterns of thinking and habits either positively or negatively contribute to one's state of wellness. My integrated role as a certified nutritionist, counselor, and coach strengthens my mindset of curiosity about each person's past, present, and desired future. My clients discover truths about themselves that block them from forward motion. I provide options for how and when to interrupt the cycle of thoughts or behaviors, identify small steps to take, and create ways to hold themselves accountable. With repetition, small behavior and thinking changes can develop new neural pathways, allowing individuals the ability to change and create the life they desire.

3. What elements do you need to consider when addressing this problem?

I look at many facets of one's life, which varies with each individual depending on what personalized data is available. Elements may be a combination of data from any of the following or more: personal medical history, family medical history, genetics, bloodwork, hormones, level and types of physical activity, stress, sleep, anxiety, depression, gut microbiome, toxins, and nutrition. It is my job to look for connections between systems and the interplay between them.

4. How did you get where you are today?

I learned how to look at the world through different lenses during my undergraduate education at The Evergreen State College. Post graduation, I worked with foster children because jobs in my planned field of biology were hard to come by at that time. I saw how family systems and social dynamics contributed to the development of negative core beliefs. I saw the effect of cocktails of medications these children took and realized that nutrition and proper mental health care could reduce medication intake, improve self-esteem, and increase joy. I then went to Bastyr University and earned an M.S. degree that combined nutrition and clinical health psychology. I opened a private practice and gained experience analyzing behavior and specializing in creating behavior modification plans. In recent years, working for scientific wellness and P4 medicine companies solidified my expertise in health and lifestyle coaching. I continue to operate behavioral health and wellness companies.

5. What advice do you have for becoming a systems thinker?

Develop a mindset of curiosity. Become curious about everything. Ask yourself questions such as "What else could explain the outcome?" "How do these very different things relate to one another? What is the connection?" "What data am I missing here?" Become a detective in your life. Be curious about out-of-the-box solutions. Try to find alternative explanations to situations. From my perspective, cultivating a mindset of curiosity is the beginning to becoming a systems thinker.