



DANNY LENNON:

So here we are. Dr. Clare Pettinger, thank you so much for joining on the podcast.

CLARE PETTINGER:

It's a pleasure to be here, Danny. Thank you.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, the pleasure is all mine, as I mentioned to you, I've been very much looking forward to talking through some of these ideas, given the amount of your work that I've been able to read. But before I get into any of my specific questions, just for people listening, can you give a quick overview of your background, of your research interests, and a bit about your background that may be applicable to what we'll discuss today?

CLARE PETTINGER:

Yeah, of course. So I am a registered dietitian and a registered public health nutritionist. I am a lecturer at the University of Plymouth, so I deliver the public health nutrition aspect to dietetic students and nutrition students and occasionally some other students as well. So that's my kind of academic role. I'm also actively engaged in my own research, and my research it kind of falls under two headings, but they're both fairly related. So I'm very interested in food insecurity and using creative approaches to engage communities and marginal groups especially. But most recently, my biggest research project that I've recently

got funding for relates to the food system and how the food system fails the people most in need. So it kind of, it aligns my interest in environmentally sustainable diets alongside the need for better food security. So I'm doing a big food system transformation project at the moment, which is a project, it's only three months old really, so it's very, very new; and that's a project that is around coproduction of healthy sustainable food systems for disadvantaged communities. So that's a very exciting new project that hopefully watch this space for things as they emerge from that project.

DANNY LENNON:

Amazing. Yeah, I think that's a perfect way to start where I really wanted to start this discussion is, can you maybe outline to you what you feel the current state of our food system is, in other words, what is it that is so unsustainable or problematic? And based on that maybe what are the primary detrimental consequences of our current food system that you see?

CLARE PETTINGER:

Gosh, that's a big question.

DANNY LENNON:

Right out of the gate, so feel free to start where you wish for that.

CLARE PETTINGER:

Yeah, I mean, I think it's a really interesting question actually, because I think I will probably start from the side that I touched on before about food insecurities. So I think one of the things that we've seen, especially making this really current is what COVID has illustrated; and in the past 18 months since the pandemic has been kind of part of our lives, what we have seen is a crisis on the crisis, as it's been termed that what we've seen is we know that food insecurity existed before, but COVID has shone a light on everything that's wrong with the food system really. And the people who were already food insecure remained food insecure, but new people who had previously not been food insecure were suddenly affected and more people were accessing food banks

and emergency food aid. And we saw that whole period where hospitality, meeting, everything just disappeared overnight, when we first went into lockdown. And, of course, the supermarkets had to pick up everything and we saw empty shelves, we saw panic buying, we saw all these quite interesting but quite alarming situations that we find ourselves in. And these are new individuals feeling that they were food insecure, people who had never actually thought that they had any access issues for food.

So I guess, it kind of showed the vulnerability of our food system and that kind of heavy dependence on the way that we do things, and the way that we have done things, and where the power is located, I think there's a big discussion here about power, and that makes quite a lot of people uncomfortable. But I think from the perspective of food and security, I think what we've seen is highly alarming, and we need a way to kind of quite urgently tackle some of those issues of access, their access, a right to food should be a basic need. But, in fact, it seems still, in this day and age in our so called civilized society that people eat a healthy sustainable diet, if they can afford it. So it's available to all those who can pay or who have access. So at the moment, it's very unfair. The location of power is kind of unfairly distributed. And I do say it in that sense that the food system feels the most – the people who are most in need, I think, is something and it becomes a social justice issue really. So that's a very long, garbled, and longwinded response to that question, but I think where I would like to go, I suppose, is it's very easy to flag up everything that's wrong with the food system, but I think what we need to do is switch that to a more positive so that we can be kind of visioning for a better food system. And there's a lot of excellent work happening at the moment around transforming the food system and this funding. The national food strategy in the UK has been a really positive shift in the right direction. But it's about visioning a food system

that favors both human and planetary health, and it's looking at all those pillars of sustainability, the social, the economic, and environmental, and it's all about value, and it's all about putting humans at the center of the food system, I believe, really.

So I think it's about visioning things in a slightly different way, and I'm really enjoying hearing some of the more positive terms that are being used around food citizenship and resilience and things to just let's put a positive spin on this, because I think it's very easy to get quite overloaded with matters that are slightly out of our control, but to see it in a positive light. Because I think we do have the power to change things, and I think we're going in the right direction in some ways.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, I think that's a really useful example, because over this period of time with COVID, it's shown this kind of intersection between not only health issues, but then squarely what's happening on a political level, and before on this podcast, we've talked about sometimes this conflict between evidence and ideology that can sometimes, unfortunately come up. And I think this is an area where we're probably seeing the same. But again, that is a topic we may revisit later on in the discussion, but I think for right now, given the fact that we've mentioned sustainable diets or sustainable ways of eating, because that may mean different things to different people, in this context in which we're discussing it, what do you think is the best way to define that, and that people should think of what do we mean by sustainable diets in this context?

CLARE PETTINGER:

Okay, I mean, you're right, and you've rightly identified, the term sustainability is used in lots of different contexts, and it very much depends on the context and the focus of the activity. But when we're thinking about defining an environmentally sustainable diet, there are a few definitions that come to mind. My favorite actually, which is probably the most simple is

Michael Pollan who says eat food, not too much, mostly plants. Now that's a very simple definition, and it says everything that we need to know, and I think it's hard hitting and it's clear. And, of course, that kind of is a very truncated version of the more elaborate, I guess, and comprehensive definition that the Food and Agricultural Organization put out in 2010, which is I'm reading off the screen here, because it's too long to remember actually, which says quite a lot about all the different things it needs to include. But diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations, sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, they're culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable, nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy, whilst optimizing natural and human resources.

So you can see that that is – it covers every aspect of environment and health really. And I think, what's always been tricky to navigate, and I think certainly for dietitians and nutritionists, we're becoming a bit more well versed in this agenda in the UK, but it's all about trying to think what that definition looks like on a plate for us as practitioners. How on earth do we make sense of it and make that fit? And this is where, I guess, the recommendations around what a healthy and sustainable diet might look like are not a million miles away from what is in the UK, certainly in England, the eat well guide, which is our food based dietary guideline. But you're looking at diversity, so eating a wide range of food, there's a balance between energy in and energy out, what, portion control is important in relation to food waste, for example, based around whole grains, legumes, more kind of plant based rather than heavy meat sources. Moderate eating meat, I mean, I think the recommendations are that you're not excluding meat altogether, although a vegan diet can be a really healthy diet for both human health and

planetary health. We know that the evidence is clear, but for many people, meat is a really important part of their cultural identity. So I think it's important that we consider people's own needs here, and so, the suggestion is that meat is eaten in moderate quantities, and all animal parts are consumed, and that can provide quite attention again for cultural aspects. In some countries, it would be quite acceptable to eat weird parts of animals, but in the UK perhaps, it might not be, so that's quite an interesting tension. Dairy products, again, are alternatives being eaten in moderation, nuts and seeds, small quantities of fish being sourced from sustainable sources, unlimited consumption of foods high in salt, sugar and fat, like we would be seeing in our recommendations and dietary recommendations. And then, oils and fats, which kind of fats, a beneficial omega-3 to 6 ratio, such as rapeseed oil and olive oil, and tap water in preference to other beverages.

So that's the list that was compiled by Tara Garnett back in 2016 in her Plates, Pyramids and Planet report, which was trying to kind of navigate some of the evidence to show actually is a healthy and a sustainable diet actually feasible. And actually, I think what we see is, well, yes, it is, but it does actually point in the direction of dietary change being needed at quite a massive scale release. So I guess, that's kind of what we're talking about, and I think it's urgent. There's a lot of conversation about climate and carbon. And this is a really urgent agenda that we do need to tackle, and I think nutritionists and dietitians are very well placed to be a strong voice as part of this emerging agenda for practitioners.

DANNY LENNON:

That's really useful, because, based on that definition you had led with, there's obviously quite a lot of complexity, and it's with good reason, it's very multifaceted issue here. But given that we've been able to translate that into food based terms, is going to be really the center of the bull's-eye for a lot of nutrition

practitioners going forward. And there's a couple of aspects to that we can maybe discuss, but I think it's quite useful that within what you've just laid out Clare, it illuminates the people, essentially, there's these different components when we're talking about sustainability. There's, of course, the environmental impact, but then you also discuss things like food security, we need a dietary pattern that's going to be health promoting. And then there's also issues like accessibility and affordability, and then specifically you mentioned they're culturally appropriate for various different people. So there's all these different issues wrapped up within this kind of bigger idea of how can we shift the population towards a more sustainable way of eating within these various different parameters, which probably makes it quite tricky.

CLARE PETTINGER:

Yeah, it does, it makes it tricky. But I think the reason it's a system issue, it's not just the responsibility of individual citizens, consumers, or whatever you want – it's not just our responsibility – there's got to be a shared responsibility, which is why we need to be seeing all of the food system players involved in sitting around the table having discussions about how to transform the food system, because it's about the food environment, it's about, you know, I mean, this food insecurity or food security issue that I identified, like, I'm based in Plymouth in the UK, and I'm very familiar with the inequalities that happen in our city on our doorstep, and what we see in areas of high deprivation is a food environment that's less than favorable, high density of fast food outlets, and hot food takeaways, and the like. And so, access to healthy food is there, you can go to the supermarket and find your healthy food, but it's a question of convenience stores, more convenience stores, stores that are more likely to be serving high fat, high salt, high sugar at a slightly elevated price. There's a disparity about the physical environment as well as access and availability of the foods

within that kind of supply chain as well. So it is highly complex, but I think it can't be the responsibility of the individual alone, this has got to be a shared responsibility. You rightly mentioned politics, and I always get a little bit uneasy talking about politics, but I don't think you can talk about food without talking about politics, because it is highly political, and I have learned through some of the work I've done around food insecurity that is massively political, and it can't be ignored. But it is everybody's responsibility, and everyone's got a role to play here.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, I think regular listeners of this podcast will absolutely resonate with what you've just said. We have an episode here called public health policy versus personal responsibility, evidence versus ideology, and it exactly highlights that this is sometimes where this ideology that is very much politically driven, is where this idea of personal responsibility tends to emerge. But that is in direct conflict with most of the evidence we have on many of these issues.

CLARE PETTINGER:

And it's really, really interesting that you should say that. I must listen to that one actually. I think I might actually make use of that in some of my public health lectures, it sounds great. I'll have to go through your back catalogue. We've been discussing just recently in Plymouth, we've had quite an interesting discussion with our public health teams and how we frame things in the context of evidence that we use to support research moving forward. And I think there's a realization now that our traditional kind of biomedical approach is perhaps not working as well as it should, and because complexity cannot often be considered when we're designing randomized controlled trials that are deemed the kind of higher up in the hierarchy of evidence.

And what becomes really difficult then is to acknowledge the reality of people's situation

and that lived experience is a really important angle, and I think there's a lot of really interesting, emerging work being done that adopts more kind of creative and more qualitative approaches to really find out from people what's it like where you are and where you live, and how does that, how complex lives and chaotic lives often with many conflicting things to deal with, money, children, care for, you know, so complexity is something that needs to be looked at, at a systems level, and I think there's a lot of really interesting ways that we can be doing that. And I'm encouraged by a shift away from that traditional kind of outcomes based model, because I'm encouraged by that, because I think there are many different ways of knowing and sharing knowledge, and I think that's where the transdisciplinary projects that are becoming more and more commonplace are really important. They're not without the challenges though, because what you see is when you've got so many different disciplines sitting around a table, there's invariably different agendas, different priorities, different epistemologies, different ways of thinking, so it can be very, very difficult, but with the best, you know, I do believe, I mean, I'm a – maybe I'm slightly naive, but I do believe that everybody has a best side, and everybody wants the best for the planet. But there are many different things that get in the way, economics and politics to name but a couple.

DANNY LENNON:

Sure. And I think that's actually really useful to think about in the context of nutrition professionals, and I was certainly in this camp in the past of very much being focused on the nutritional science of human nutrition and metabolism and the physiology, and all that interesting stuff to me in thinking purely in these nutrient based terms. But really, I think the point that I arrived at, and that we're hopefully trying to share with people on the podcast is that we really can't just decide not to engage with the public policy issues, or the public health nutrition issues or the political

issues, because they're incredibly important. And I think actually, there's a quote from one of your review papers, which I found fantastic that highlights this, and I might read that if you let me in, and get you to expand on it, but I think this highlights it quite usefully for people. So you said, "Ongoing research in uncovering synergies between how dietary patterns can meet both health and environmental goals, yet this area is a challenge for the nutrition professions, as relevant education often involves politically driven, systems-leadership style thinking, which is drawn from a less familiar evidence base than traditional nutritional sciences." Can you maybe speak to that and expand on that kind of idea for people?

CLARE PETTINGER: Yeah, I mean, gosh, it's interesting to hear it read out, that was something, did I write that?

DANNY LENNON: It's pretty profound, right?

CLARE PETTINGER: Yeah, it's very profound. It's interesting, because that's the kind of quote that I can take a lot of time to process and navigate, and it's very much at the forefront of my mind at all times, because I think what I've become quite drawn to more recently is the kind of critical dietetics and critical nutrition and critical food scholars who have got a very different take on things. And I'm thinking that the traditional ways that we've known for so long are our one way of doing things, and you mentioned that, focusing on nutrition and individual nutrients is one way and, yeah, it's interesting, but then looking at the other end, where you're looking, where you're considering the ecosystem, and you're considering politics and/or economics, etc., I think where we need to find is some common ground. I'm not answering this very well, and I've kind of almost forgotten what the question was, but I think you were just asking me to kind of expand on some of the complexities and the need to move beyond a more traditional, maybe biomedical or reductionist focus, which is traditionally, as

health professionals, what we're used to, to thinking and embracing evidence, because a lot of the evidence in the sustainable diet's agenda comes from a different place, maybe than we're familiar with. And climate science, political science, geography and it's where all these disciplines, because when you think about food, this is the bit that fascinates me, food is so much more than just nutrition.

And when I did my PhD, it's almost 20 years ago now, I was looking at the influences on food choice, so psychological, social, cultural and environmental influences on food choice. And what I realized, just food is all encompassing and that's why food policy becomes so difficult to place in a certain location because it covers so many different disciplines, and so many different interests. And nutrition is a very, very small part of that, and I would almost argue, I mean, this is me going against my own background, but, in fact, I would argue that the social determinants are more important. And some of the work that I've done with more marginal groups, and I've done quite a lot of interesting qualitative research working with homeless individuals and people with drug and alcohol issues whose lives are very, very complex – and there's an assumption that when you look at the evidence for their nutritional status, for example, yes, there's a suggestion that their mortality rates will be elevated, and there'll be certain disease states that are more likely to affect them. But they all know what they should be eating, they know about healthy eating, they know they should be eating five a day. But in fact, their circumstances completely prevent it.

So there's this sense that, there's a kind of victim blaming type approach that I think can be really negative. And I think what I'm, again, going back to the point that I said about being encouraged by this shift, and that's what I really like about this new kind of idea of a transformational agenda, whereby there's a lot of money at the moment going alongside the

national food strategy that's taking a more transformative approach to changing the food system. And that's where, we're turning things on their head, and realizing that what we've done up to this point, research doesn't work or it's only one side of the story. It feels to acknowledge some of the complexity, because this traditional view of the food chain as being linear, is so far from the reality because we know it's not linear, it's relational. And trying to join up some of the dots between those relational aspects, I think, is encouraging to know that these things are happening. But interestingly, in this current food system project, research project that I'm involved in, we've got a lot of different players in our consortium, we've got people from food industry, food business, social scientists, public health nutrition, scientists from different disciplines have a very different way of doing things and collecting data, and everybody thinks that their way is the right way. But of course, so we've had some really interesting discussions about, for example, how to collect data on the diets of disadvantaged communities to use one example. And there are so many different ways of doing that, and I think – so we've got a way to go, but I think the conversations are happening, and I am very encouraged by this shift in the paradigm. And I've got a lot of local public health consultants who are really embracing some of those more kind of human appreciative inquiry, complexity, science, related ways of thinking that are more kind of systems focused.

I'm encouraged by the shift, but I think we have a lot, from an education perspective, I think we have a way to go. Because I do believe that our students, undergraduate or postgraduate dietetic nutrition students, you know, there's a very clear curriculum that they have to follow in order to go into their practice area. And some of these more nuanced, highly complex systems debates are more difficult to know where to fit into that curriculum. So I guess, that's where taking that more kind of

critical view and getting students to think out of the box, and go slightly outside their area, which I guess in some ways, I'm bringing the sustainability agenda to our curriculum, at Plymouth, for example, I've been able to do that, which is great. And I think the students respond really well, but it's just getting them thinking outside of that clinical environment to a more, okay, there's more opportunities, there's more to this than perhaps a kind of clinically focused role, which I think is a really important agenda for the future, nutrition professional. And we need to be at the table, we've got a really important voice here, which is my point, and it's almost about, you know, I have a lot of students who are very well versed and they are very interested in environmental sustainability, they're interested in their diet. So they're immediately acting as leaders, because they're interesting and they're making changes, and then those changes can cascade to other people, because role modeling is really important in all of this.

So there is a sea change, but I think just giving people the confidence and the skills that evidence based practice is a skill really, learning how to look at the evidence, you can learn how to look at any evidence, and it doesn't matter whether it's – I have to watch what I say here, I don't want to be named and shamed for dismissing evidence based practice. I know it's a really, really important part of the work that we do, but there are so many different forms of knowledge, and we're doing a lot of work looking at grey literature, for example. We've got local food partnerships that are doing amazing work on the ground at grass roots, which isn't ever going to be published in a peer reviewed journal article, and I think that kind of knowledge is just as valid, that relates more to the voice of communities and lived experience and those sorts of things. So I think there's room for lots of different types of evidence in there, and I think that's a really important part of food system debate.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, for sure. I think one that we have voiced on the podcast before, has been around, when you look at the amount of qualitative research done in nutrition, it's often kind of lacking compared to what we could actually – there's a lot of fertile ground to plow there essentially, if more qualitative work, just as one example. But earlier you're mentioning that the different contexts of thinking about nutrition, and even if we take the question of what are healthy food choices to be, say, recommending to people, that might seem like a very easy question when we're thinking purely in terms of nutrients and metabolism physiology, but as you know, there's these socioeconomic determinants that you mentioned, your colleague, Martin Caraher who you've done work with, had a really beautiful example that he talked through before where he talks about that there are so many families within the UK that may not have a fridge where they can store food. So suddenly, now, the recommendation to buy fruits and vegetables in your weekly grocery shop is actually not a good recommendation, because that food then becomes wasted, you don't get nutrients from it, and then actually you don't have food to spend money on. So suddenly, this question of what is good or bad choice is much more complex, given that that context, right?

CLARE PETTINGER:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think my eyes, every step I take in my career path, which has been very interesting, I've been very, very lucky, the more I kind of learn, the more I realize I don't know, and I think this is where yeah, that focus is fascinating a lot of the work we've done locally in response to COVID, around emergency food aid and individuals that are emergency housed, who only have a kettle to cook with, for example, and they don't have any storage. And yeah, it's very, very challenging and highly complex to know how to promote healthy sustainable diets and how that needs to look differently depending on who you are, and where you're placed, and I think that's some of the exciting stuff I'm looking forward to finding

out from some of the communities we're going to be working with locally, to get them talking and thinking about the food system and try, you know, it's about building that reconnection. Because I think, it was interesting, my PhD going back to that actually, and that's really where I got to know Martin Caraher, because I did a cross cultural study comparing France and England, and what I realized, historically speaking, the UK, you know, our food system became very industrialized, and that was seen as the thing to do at the time. But what it meant is that we kind of removed ourselves from our food relief, whereas in France, they kept a less industrial process and their food culture has been kind of marked accordingly.

So France and England, very close countries, but with very different food cultures. And in the UK, we industrialized and things shifted, so we became completely removed from our food, and that was showcased via Jamie Oliver's Turkey Twizzlers, and the fact that children can identify where food was coming from. So we've come a way since then, but I think there's a big, you know, the alternative food system movement is very strong. We've got sustainable food cities and sustainable food places is a movement. But it's interesting that the discussion I had with Martin Caraher earlier was around that, you know, are we talking conventional food systems or alternative, because the majority of people will want to shop at Tesco, and will want the supermarket as near as they possibly can in order to – and that's absolutely fine, and we can see, well, surely you should be growing your own. It's not appropriate. So there's swings and roundabouts here, and I think we have to be very open and understand more of what people's experience is. I think it's all about the lived experience, and there are many different lived experiences yet to be explored, I think, I believe.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, for sure. One that kind of came to mind as you were talking through some of those examples, one you obviously mentioned, there are various barriers in place, certainly in disadvantaged areas or in those lower socioeconomic group. But on the other side, we also have many nutrition science students or dietetic students or early stage career professionals, or maybe even around a long time who are very interested in promoting sustainable diets in relation to say fighting climate change or being just more environmentally sustainable, which is great. But oftentimes, I think people can kind of jump to, well, what are some of the changes we know have an impact. So for example, that reduction in various animal foods, particularly say beef and so on or milk and replace for meat alternatives or dairy alternatives, which are now, of course, available quite a lot. But if we look at the kind of at least currently, most of the time, those types of products are probably 2 to 3x what they may be for conventional produce, for example, if someone gets an almond milk or oat milk, on average, it's probably two or three times the price of a liter of milk. So being aware of, yes, we want to advocate for positive changes, but in what context, and what individual the practitioner maybe working with, I'm assuming.

CLARE PETTINGER:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, the affordability bit is a really interesting one and complex, because I think, when you're considering the food insecurity issue, I mean, the proportion of money spent on food is very different in people who have higher salaries, as you're probably aware. So you're not going to persuade an individual who has minimal money to spend to feed a family of five, to buy an organic corn fed chicken, for example, if they can get two for the price of – two for a fiver or whatever, I mean, that's not really the best example to use. But I think this is where it becomes a system issue, there's a kind of demand supply thing, and there's always going to be that power. And this is where I'm kind of slightly out of my expertise

really, I'm not in kind of market and trade and all that sort of thing, but there's a demand and supply. And if enough people do change, then it can have a knock-on effect, but you've got to meet people where they are. There's no use saying to a middle aged male who's a high meat consumer to become a vegan, it's completely inappropriate and culturally unacceptable. So this is where, you know, but any reduction when you look – I mean, I don't have any of the figures at my fingertips, but if you do, I mean, there's various carbon calculators you can find online, and the One Blue Dot toolkit that's available for dietitians and nutritionists, and anybody really, it's publicly available, has got some really interesting kind of meal swap ideas, and it talks in health terms, and as well, it talks about carbon savings and those sorts of things. And Sarah Bridle in Manchester has done a lot around good choice and carbon, kind of, carbon literacy to look at, if you reduce from a sirloin steak to whatever it might be, then you'll save X amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

So there's different ways of looking at it, and there are metrics, and I think if you're trying to promote a change and a shift, then there's got to be something in it for somebody and an ideology and an ethical way of thinking is one thing, but the cost is really important. And I think that's where the shift needs to happen. And I guess, some of the potential output in the food systems project I'm involved in is relating to affordability, can we create innovative products that people are already buying, for example, that can be shifted and innovated so that they're more sustainable and more healthy, and still affordable. So I guess, there's quite a lot of work to be done around that. But it's true, people aren't going to be incentivized, unless there's an affordability that's tackled.

DANNY LENNON:

For sure, to maybe kind of start wrapping some of this up, Clare, for those in the audience who are nutrition professionals or dieticians or health professionals, or that are interested in

being able to get to grasp this area a bit more and delve into it, what are some recommendations you may give of some best first steps to take in order to try and navigate this area a bit more, be able to bring that into their practice?

CLARE PETTINGER:

Very good question, and I think there are some quite good entry level resources that are available, and I will flag the British Dietetic Association One Blue Dot toolkit is an excellent resource and it's publicly available. So all you need to do is Google One Blue Dot and you'll get up there; and it's targeted specifically at dietitians, but it's open for nutrition professionals as well. That was created on the back of the environmentally sustainable diets' policy that was a kind of – it was a dietitian led kind of consultation really, for something that would allow us as nutrition professionals to take that policy stuff and translate it into something meaningful so that we can use it in our practice in this excellent exam. I mean, there's so much evidence in that document, I was involved in the steering group who co-designed that and we had this – there's a wealth of evidence in there, and it's being updated quite regularly. But there's also a wealth of practical application information in there, so what can you do in your practice. Okay, well, there's meal swap ideas, there's various other things that are in portion control. And there's lots of information about any concerns you might have about micronutrient deficiencies, if you're switching to a plant based diet, those sorts of things. So that's an excellent resource.

I wrote an article myself, back in 2018, it's probably a little bit dated now, that was looking at sustainable eating for nutrition professionals. I think the key messages in there that are still of interest, and I'm still going on about, are around how there's opportunities for us as nutrition professionals, around education, how we can make sure that we're keeping ourselves up to speed, reading

appropriately, and acting as advocates, you know, what we can do individually, what we can do in our workplace, what we can do in our communities that can then cascade those messages out, and how we can collaborate across the nutrition professionals and collaborate across different sectors and get involved in your local food partnership. For example, there's a lot of excellent opportunities to find out more and see what's happening on the ground. And then, of course, there's at that high level, if you're lucky enough to see an opportunity who you might be able to influence policy, whether it's a local policy from local authority, up to kind of sustainable diets policy that are currently being kind of developed at government level, I think there's always going to be an opportunity to get involved.

Another book that I would recommend is the Sustainable Diets book, which was coauthored by Pamela Mason and Tim Lang. It's quite a hefty read, but it's an excellent textbook, and a bit of shameless plugging, of course. There's a chapter that I coauthored in a recent textbook, which is entitled Critical Dietetics and Critical Nutrition Studies, which was edited by John Coveney, and Sue Booth, and that was published in, I think, 2019. But I wrote a chapter there in conjunction with dietitians from Canada and Australia, looking at sustainable food systems from a critical dietetic perspective. So that was quite interesting to collaborate globally and see what other countries are doing in relation to sustainable diets and sustainable food systems. And what I noticed through this work that continues across internationally, is that in the UK, we've got a lot of excellent resources at our fingertips, and internationally, dietitians and nutritionists are looking to us as actually being quite advanced on this agenda. What I would really like to see happen next is for this to be more consistently embedded within dietetics and nutrition curricula, so that we can see all students coming through getting a solid grounding on this as part of their training. It's happening, but

it's still a little bit piecemeal, so I think hopefully once curricula, once we can embed that a little bit more consistently, then people will feel a bit – nutrition professionals will maybe feel a little bit more confident to be able to be involved in some of this wider agenda. There's probably more that I've not mentioned, but they are some of the good resources that I would signpost people to.

DANNY LENNON:

Awesome. And for people who are looking to keep up to date with you specifically, is there anywhere on social media or elsewhere on the internet that you'd like to divert their attention?

CLARE PETTINGER:

Yeah, so I'm on Twitter. I'm @DrCPettingerRD which is a bit of a mouthful. I'm on Twitter and I'm on Instagram, and I'm also on YouTube as The Singing Dietitian, that's a bit that you maybe haven't noticed, but I'm a singer in my spare time. And I have got a little YouTube channel that I attempt to put together some quirky little songs that relate to food and the food system and food fads, etc. So that's for a bit of light relief really, but there's some poignant lyrics in there as well, so it's supposed to be kind of expression and showcasing that little element. So yeah, I tend to be around on social media, and I welcome chats, follows, debates, whatever, I'm quite happy to chat to people.

DANNY LENNON:

Awesome, yeah. And art tends to be the place where most profound things are often shared, so that makes complete sense. With that, Clare, I'm going to give you the question I always end the podcast on, this is quite a big and generic one, so apologies for putting you on the spot with this. But if I were to ask you, if you could advise people one thing to do each day that would have a positive impact on any area of their life, what might that one thing be? Or at least what's the first thing that comes to mind?

CLARE PETTINGER:

Oh, that's the kind of lifelong question, isn't it? One thing, I'll say something, and then after

we're finished, I'll say, oh I should have said that, I should have said that. Oh, I think it's got to start with self-compassion in everything that I do, that's kind of where it starts. And for me, and I suppose that's one thing that leads on to many other things, who we are as human beings, I think is really important looking after ourselves, then allows us to look after other people and treating each other as humans. So I think self-compassion really would be my thing, but I've quite recently more, I think, during COVID, we've all been reminded of who we are and what we do, and what we're doing, and the meaning of life and all these sorts of things. And I think, for me, what's really helped me is gratitude, and I'm very privileged, and I honor my privilege in a lot of ways, but acknowledging and understanding who you are and where you come from, in terms of your privilege allows you to understand where other people are, in maybe not such privileged positions, and there's a lot been talked about which is maybe another podcast around privilege and disadvantage and power and how they're all situated you. So I think that would be my thing, that's the first thing that sprung to mind. I'm sure there are many others, but that would be where I would place that.

DANNY LENNON:

Yeah, wonderful answer, and a great way to wrap this up. So Clare, let me say, thank you so much for taking the time to do this today, and for the information you've given, but even more broadly for the work that you've done and continue to do, it's very much appreciated.

CLARE PETTINGER:

Thank you. It's been an absolute pleasure to be here and it's been fun. And I look forward to listening to more of your podcasts as well, Danny, thanks for making it possible.

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