

EP42: The mind-body connection for gut healing

Wed, 11/24 12:34AM 36:15

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

gut, people, functional medicine, trauma, seed, doctor, traditional medicine, started, supplements, residency, patients, book, health, podcast, wife, leah, parasympathetic, cycling, run, practitioner

SPEAKERS

Dr. Kozlowski, Leah Brueggemann



Leah Brueggemann 00:03

Welcome to another episode of the balancing hormones naturally podcast where we offer actions and steps you can take today to start balancing your hormones naturally. This is your podcast host Leah Brueggemann. I am a Functional Diagnostic nutritional practitioner. I am honored and excited to be your guide on your journey to better understanding your hormonal health and how it affects your everyday life



Leah Brueggemann 00:33

you guys, welcome back to another episode. You know, pockets you're listening to but the balancing hormones actually podcast. Today's an interesting and fun day because this is the first male guests that we've had on this podcast. So we're bringing on Dr. Peter cause Loski was a functional medicine doctor. He uses a broad array of tools to find the source of the body's dysfunction. He takes the time to listen to his patients and plots their history on a timeline considering what makes them unique and CO creating with them a truly individualized care plan. Do you understand why I let him on the podcast now? Because this sounds amazing, right. Currently, he works with patients online and in person via Chicago, Illinois and Bozeman Montana based offices. Montana is amazing, but also probably freezing cold. Dr. Kozlowski did his residency in family practice. But he started training in functional medicine as an intern. He trained with clinics, trained in clinics with leaders in his field, including Dr. Mark Hyman, Dr. Deepak Chopra, and Dr. Susan Blum. And if it sounds like I just read that off a piece of paper, I did, because there's no way I would remember all of those names off the top of my head. And we all know how well Leah does at pronouncing things. So anyways, I really enjoyed this interview, bringing together the Western and the eastern side of medicine, because he has experience in both sides of the field. And just hearing him share that experience and what made him switch over. And really just diving into why mental and emotional support is so important when it comes to healing. Like, you can't take all the supplements without also supporting the emotional side. So you guys are gonna love this, definitely let me know your thoughts. If you found this helpful, please, please share it with a friend. Also, fair warning, the audio in this is a little jumpy. I don't know what was going on. I don't know if it's zoom connection or whatever. But the information is still amazing. So I hope that you can just bless and release the text and the audio. And I'm gonna just apologize in advance. All right, ladies. So I have a special guest for you. This is Dr. Kozlowski and he is hailing in from Montana. So should be cold, but it's probably warmer than I am right now. But I would love for you to just share a little bit about yourself and what got you started in the health field?

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Dr. Kozlowski 03:18

Yeah. So I am, I was trained as a family practice, doctor. So I went through traditional medical school did my family practice residency. And then during that, I found functional medicine. And so now, that was 10 years ago, I've been in functional medicine for 10 years. So the what I do what's different now as a functional medicine doctor than a family practice, Doctor, is help people figure out why they're sick. I was taught to listen to symptoms and prescribe pills to feel better. I was then retaught in through functional medicine, to listen to people and try to figure out why they're sick. So that, that's kind of what I do. To keep things really simple. There's five main areas we look in functional medicine for the underlying cause of disease. They are food, gut health, hormone imbalances, toxins, and mental, emotional and spiritual health. And out of those five, the most important one to me is mental, emotional and spiritual. That I just wrote a book called unfuck your gut. And the big secret that I reveal in the book is that the key to your gut health is the mental emotional and spiritual health. So that's kind of become my passion.



Leah Brueggemann 04:48

I just gonna pause one second so we can nerd out about the fact that you were trained as like a typical doctor. That's just you know, you have this issue like, let me prescribe a pharmaceutical for you, because you now get the best of both worlds, you know, you get, you get to see both sides. And I think that when people truly can heal, is when they, they can combine those two, you know, because sometimes you do need you need eastern and western medicine. Um, but I think a lot of times people there, they go to their doctor and they're like, Hey, this is what's going on. And they get frustrated. That's, you know, the women I see. Because the doctors are like, well, here's birth control, like, I don't know what else to do. And they're like, why don't want to go on birth control. So I love now that you are you're seeing both sides and truly able to help people in that way. So, okay, so

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Dr. Kozlowski 05:47


what there's a lot of people in my field, in the alternative medicine world that just really talk poorly about traditional medicine. You know, and it's like, it's all bad. And it's definitely not and, and my own personal story with my wife is we had been having some infertility issues. And I did every functional medicine test I could on her. And we found a mold issue. But I think the mold issue started before the original issue. So we were detoxing her. And I was just like, you literally look perfect. And she had this seven years of chronic pelvic pain, and had been to 10, OBGYN and gastroenterologists and then me, and everybody said she was normal. And when we saw fertility doctor, she's like, almost half the women that come through my doors have endometriosis. And, you know, she had, my wife had had an ultrasound she, to me, I was like, I checked her hormone balance, everything was good. I was like, I really don't think you do. But the doctor did a tubal study and found really inflamed tubes. And my wife just had them removed a couple of weeks ago. And in that also found endometriosis all over her pelvis. So she's, you know, she's a very traditional doctor. But that That, to me, kind of exemplifies what where you need both. And they can do amazing things. I couldn't heal my wife's fallopian tubes. And they, you know, unfortunately, the damage was done. So both are really important. I just like to make that point because it you know, we a lot of times we talk really badly about regular medicine, and it's there's definitely some good in it. No,




Leah Brueggemann 07:42

I agree. And preaching to the choir here. I think. I think the frustration is people get burned too many


...and the problem is the other where... people get... times. You know, like a lot of people give up after they've gone to 10 doctors, they're just like, why am I doing this, but there are there are a lot of doctors out there that are starting to combine like they have both like you. And also you just have to find one that listens to you and is like open to trying things with you. Because you know sometimes they have to learn along with you you know, endometriosis PCOS are still like massively growing fields when it comes to studies. So as long as they're willing to work along with you there, there are things that natural medicine and holistic like you need, you need the other side. So when you can combine them. I think you have a really beautiful picture there. So is that what got you started into the functional world was your wife?

 Dr. Kozlowski 08:42

No, I'm a recovery from alcohol. Oh, okay, how I got into functional medicine.

 Leah Brueggemann 08:51

Let's go down that road.

 Dr. Kozlowski 08:54

I tried to stop drinking when I got into residency. Okay. And I couldn't, I wasn't like, right. It wasn't like a daily I needed a drink every day. It was just like on the weekends. That's what I did. And I had no idea what to do with my life without alcohol on the weekend. So I went to a treatment program and took six weeks off of residency. And the treatment program was all about underlying causes. It had nothing to do with alcohol. It was all about why. And my deal was I grew up really insecure. I am a first generation American, my parents are from Poland. And I just never felt good enough. And even though I was successful, everything I did and I just never felt good enough. And that alcohol got rid of all my insecurities. So when I went back to residency, I had a doctor. As a resident, you're trained by different doctors, whether it's every day, every week, every month, there's Somebody's different that's influencing you. And I worked with this doctor's name is Dr. Batra, who started every patient that was hospitalized on a multivitamin and vitamin D. And as the interns, we would have to write those orders. And we always made fun of him. We were like, Why is he wasting our time and having us write supplements for people when we could be prescribing meds? And so after my own treatment, I kind of just asked him, I was like, What are you doing? Like, why are you different? And he said, I'm studying functional medicine. And he took me to the IFM website. And he's like, it's all about the underlying cause, figuring out why people are sick. And for me that had just worked in my own life. And so it sounded interesting, and they kind of require you and pay for you to do medical education during residency. So I went to the first functional medicine conference. And within the first hour, I knew that I could never look at medicine the same. I thought it was all full of crap. And it was all taught from like an anatomy and physiology, biochemistry level, like all of it was like made sense. So and then everybody I met at the conferences there. I mean, I was the youngest one there, I was still an intern. And there was doctors with 3040 years of experience in all types of different fields, like surgeons and neurologists and all these things. And I was just like, What are you guys doing here? And it they're like, this is the future of medicine. And if you're just starting, like, this is what you should do. So that that's what I did. Along the way, like what you were saying, like when I went straight out of residency into my own practice, and most people don't do that from any route, usually, like, you go and work with someone and you learn and I just kind of started on my own. And I learned a lot from my patients. I mean, I knew a lot more, even though I was finished, finished my certification, I had a lot more experience with traditional

medicine, and my patients had 3040 50 years of experience in natural medicine. So I was constantly learning new ideas from them. And between that and just studying and paying attention, I kind of figured it out,



Leah Brueggemann 12:22

ever learning. So talk to me a little bit about the mind body connection when it comes to disease. And it comes to finally healing like where does that? Where does it start? How's it come in?



Dr. Kozlowski 12:37

So yeah, the to me, this is the most important part of health and I feel like it's it's kind of glossed over. And



Leah Brueggemann 12:46

it doesn't make anybody money, you know, so, yeah, that's a big, big reason.



Dr. Kozlowski 12:51

Right? Yeah. So people come to me to figure out why they're sick, right. And I mentioned the five areas food, gut hormones, toxins, and mental, emotional, spiritual health. That as a, as a perfectionist, I always think about the patients that don't get better, right. And I have all these success stories and all these amazing stories, but those people don't really ever cross my mind. It's like the person that will email me and say they're not doing well. So for me, I'm always trying to figure out why. And I mean, it was pretty evident from if I if you pay attention in functional medicine training, at the core of functional medicine, they we use this thing called the matrix which kind of looks at all your different areas of health. And in the middle of it is mental, emotional, spiritual. And, but we get so excited thinking about diet, thinking about SIBO, or candida or estrogen dominance or lead toxicity, that it's very easy to forget the most important piece. And for me, I was always aware of it. Because, you know, I was in treatment, telling all my therapists to like eff off and I was fine. And, you know, I wasn't and they helped me figure that out. And so I knew a lot about denial. And so the reason so people mostly come to me for gut health, testing, your microbiome, treating SIBO, treating Candida treating dysbiosis, low stomach acid, all these things as an underlying cause of disease. The reason that we start with the gut, is because the gut is the gateway into the body. The gut is a tube that starts with the mouth and ends with anus and the inside of your gut is actually considered outside of your body. If you swallow something and poop it out, it's never been in your body. So the gut to me I mean, people are familiar with digestion and absorption. But the most important job I think of the gut is protection. It decides what comes in and what's stays out. So that I think is an important thing for people that haven't thought about the gut that way is like why right? Why did Hippocrates say 3000 years ago, all disease begins in the gut. That I think that's why is because it's, it's the barrier, and it works like the skin. But the differences is like the skin is three layers, three different layers of tissues made of a ton of cells. Whereas the gut is a single layer of cells. And what's happened in the last 3040 years, is we've made our environment a lot more toxic, right, we've changed our food supply, we've changed what we put on our food, we change how many meds we take, we changed the amount of like mold and heavy metals and glyphosate and organophosphates and EMFs. And all these things. And so this, this, we're hitting this, there's this flood of things hitting us every day. And the best way for those toxins to get into our body is through the gut. And once they get through the gut and into

the blood, now they're in the body, and they can go anywhere. So that's why I could take 100 patients with a lead toxicity. And they all have different symptoms, because inflammation got into the body, and then it's free to circulate.



Leah Brueggemann 16:22

Yeah. Which is why it's so important to not chase the symptoms, because you're just gonna, you're gonna keep chasing your tail forever and ever.



Dr. Kozlowski 16:31

So the answer to your question, cuz I didn't get there. Yes, go ahead. The gut is lined with a nervous system called the enteric nervous system, there is more neurons in your gut nervous system than there are in your brain. It is connected to your brain by the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve is your 10th cranial nerve, and it runs from your brain to your gut and heart and lungs. And I would picture it as just basically like a highway that's carrying signals in both directions. And so the brain affects the gut and the gut affects the brain. The vagus nerve runs on your autonomic nervous system, which is your automatic nervous system. So this nervous system's firing without you thinking about it. It is divided into sympathetic and parasympathetic response. Sympathetic, is fight or flight. Parasympathetic is rest and digest. The analogy I really like to use is that now that I live in Montana, let's say you're out hiking in the mountains, and you see a grizzly bear, sympathetic nervous system is activated that blood and energy go to your brain and muscles. So you figure out how to survive. If you do survive, and you're sitting by the campfire, at the end of the night, and having a meal, you're now in parasympathetic, that energy is going to your gut to break down what you're eating. So both responses is same thing, like, not all sympathetic is good. Not all parasympathetic is good. We need both to work in balance. And the problem with people's guts nowadays is we are living as if we're running from a bear 24/7 We wake up and the first thing we do is check our phone, social media, breaking news, work emails and calls and right we're telling our gut right from the beginning of the day, like, hey, we don't need you today, like today's a survival day. And then all day long. We're reaffirming that signal like in the gut gets confused because like, well, there's food coming in here. I need to break this down and the mind's telling them no, like now's not the right time. And so when you're living in that fight or flight response, you don't digest your food, your gut gets super leaky, and then your microbiome changes and all the gut bacteria go wrong. So that's been my experience that that's the biggest roadblock and people healing is, you know, just wanting to find the right diet or find the right hormone balance or find the right supplement if it doesn't work that way.



Leah Brueggemann 19:11

No, especially if you're like trying to take all the supplements and eat all the food but you're still like running around like a chicken with its head cut off. I mean, you're not even absorbing your supplements, you're just having extremely expensive poop at that point. Just a quick break to remind you that if you are not already seed cycling with us, you should be seed cycling with us. The benefits of seed cycling are amazing. They contain so many nutrients that are necessary for hormonal balance, including zinc, manganese, vitamin in all of the good things amazing for a quality and whilst cycling is not the end picture like that's not all that you'll have to do to maybe achieve the things that you're looking for in your health. You guys it is the easiest thing that you can do. So one tablespoon of pumpkin, and one tablespoon of flax seeds from your period to ovulation. And then switch to sesame and sunflower. So that is one tablespoon of each of those seeds every single day, you want to be buying whole, organic, and then grind them before you eat them. The reason why you don't want to buy ground is that they go rancid within a couple of

weeks. So unless you know where your seeds are coming from how long they were sitting on the shelf, they're probably rancid by the time you get them. Okay, so start seed cycling with us. And as always, if you want to make this even simpler for yourself, that is where Funk at Wellness seeds can literally change your life. They are organic, they are certified B Corp, all of their seeds are like they get them from the best places. And you can get them shipped to your door. So it literally doesn't get any simpler than that. And it's a subscription. So literally happy hormone subscription box. I can sign up for that. Yes, yes, please. So you can get yours shipped to your door right now they're only in the US. So if you're outside of the US, I apologize. But if you are inside of the US take advantage of the flash sale they have going on. You can use code Leah Lea H 20 to save 20% off of your order. And you even save already on your subscription. So I love cycling. But I will say that sometimes it can get hard to stick to because it's hard to find quality seeds. And sometimes they forget to grind them and then I don't get my season for the day. So forget wellness makes it super simple. Literally, they're shipped right to my door. They grind them right before they ship them. So I know that they're not rancid. They have certified B Corp companies that they get their seeds from. So they're super high quality. They're organic. So yeah, I'm much more consistent with my seed cycling now, thanks to Funky Wellness. So how do you get them to slow down? Like what are your tips?

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Dr. Kozlowski 22:05

Yeah. It's this is the most difficult part is like this is not my expertise, I have my own journey and story of my experience with dealing with it. But the most important thing is that different things work for different people. So a baseline recommendation, I've recommended every patient I've ever met to work with the therapist while they're working with me. My patients that our follow through with that it was just maybe like 15% are doing amazing. I had a woman yesterday that I was working with who's we've been working with for only a year. And she's like, we did a follow up and she's like, I'm doing so great, everything's good. And then at the end, she's like, by the way, like I've really focused on my mental health. And I've just seen such a change. And we've also detoxed her from heavy metals, but still that piece and then today I had someone that I've known for work with for six years that was cussing me out and telling me to eff off because I told her that she should see a therapist. And she, you know, she's not doing well. And she's been with me for six years, but she never really followed through on what I told her. So, it therapy, I do a gratitude list every day with my wife, three things were grateful for. Exercise is a big one for me. If I don't exercise for a few days, my mental health starts to fall apart. I use prayer, meditation is a big one. And just having like a social network are people of people that are also like, open to admitting that they have mental, emotional, spiritual issues. So that that's what works for me. That's what works for me. But it's difficult because like, I might love my therapist, but they might be terrible for you. You know what I like guided meditation, somebody might like something different. Different types of exercise, some people have enough pain where they can exercise. So it's like, for me, I just tried to help people create awareness around it. And when I see them shift from denial to acceptance, which is something I had to do in my own journey. It I can see things change. And then once you can, like accept that, hey, this is connected to my health, then you can start figuring out what's the right way to deal with it for you.



Leah Brueggemann 24:39

Yeah, I think so. Whenever I run like care, mineral analysis, and you always whenever you pull up that calcium show, which always has to do with trauma or some sort of way of your body protecting. I see that more and more and more these days whenever I've run that on clients and you know we talk about, you know, like, what's, you know, what's happened in your life? You know, how can we, because as we get that calcium shell broken, and you're going to have emotions that are going to start coming up, because we want your body to come back to this state where it can deal with it. And so many of them are like, Well,

nobody's died and my family like nothing dramatics happen, like, I don't know why that would be. And we dismiss so much of what is maybe a trauma for us, but it's not trauma with a capital T. And we ignore it. But it's still there.

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Dr. Kozlowski 25:38

The best definition I learned of trauma over the years, because I had therapists tell me, I had trauma. And I was like, you know, no chance, like, No, my life was great. And the best so the definition I really like of trauma is anything less than nurturing. And most people think of like violence or war, things like that. But it like a classic story is a five year old coming home from school, wanting to show their parents their homework, but their parents are busy and not paying attention. That can create trauma, because it's like, I'm not good enough. And then how do I draw attention to myself, Oh, I'm, well, I'm in pain, I have stomach issues, or this is bothering me. And that just something so subdued, like that, they wouldn't really think I wouldn't think about can completely shut down the gut. And then you're going through and you're fine. And but then college and something happens there or after marriage or divorce or kids. And eventually that you know, what started as something very subtle can flow over into autoimmune disease or something else. So it? Yeah, I really liked that definition of it. And I totally relate to it is just being like, No way I don't have trauma. And it's, you know, I created my own trauma, but it doesn't matter. Like my body's still saw his trauma.



Leah Brueggemann 27:09

Yeah, just like, you know, our day to day life, where our body thinks we're getting chased by a bear, even though we're not, you know, we're just going to work, but work is stressful, or whatever it is. And I think, like you said, nobody talks about it. It's, it doesn't make anybody money. I mean, therapists I guess make money if you go to them, but like, nobody makes money, you even refer out to the therapist, it doesn't make you any money. And so I know people, they need to talk about it more, but I see why it's, it is not. But that's something free that everybody could start today is just spreading awareness or getting awareness in your own life about how are you managing your stress? Do you have an outlet? Dang, okay, so you obviously wrote a book about this. So talk to me a little bit about your book, what, you know, like, puts you over the edge of why you had to write this and put this out for the world.

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Dr. Kozlowski 28:11

Um, it was it was a life goal. When I started my career, I was like, I want to write a book one day, and I what pushed me over the edge is having enough experience with helping people heal that I finally felt like I had something to say that could be helpful to people. And most of my job is kind of dealing with the environment dealing with what we're exposed to. And dealing with, like the side effects of traditional medicine. And so within that, also, there's every practitioner, I feel like practices functional medicine differently. And I think there's different ways to heal. I don't think my way is the only way. I've had a lot of success with a lot of different people from a lot of different backgrounds. And so there's certain things like I wrote a whole chapter on SIBO. I think SIBO is, is the most common gut condition I treat. There's a lot of bad information out there. It's really there's just a lot of confusing information. And actually, chapter one of my book is basically why you should stay off the internet. And I kind of make fun of the internet and I kind of go through Google. Yes. And so I go through like what happened when I Googled abdominal pain, and like the 100 different diagnoses that I could convince myself of. And so that that's, I mean, it's pretty funny. I think I've seen people kind of laugh out loud when they're reading it, but I mean, You know, the, the amount of information that's out there is also very sympathetic response activated, because you'll

have one friend who's like a raw vegan, and you'll have another friend who's keto. And now you know, somebody that's carnivore, and they're all swearing like this is the only way this is like, this is the answer everybody's been looking for. And then you try and you're like, well, this isn't working for me, like what's wrong with me? And then you search more. And then somebody's like, well, you have this or that. And it just it, it destroys people. At the same time, functional medicine wouldn't exist without the Internet. So I'm very grateful for it. Because people can go online and be like, Okay, I was diagnosed with Hashimotos, what are my options here, and they'll come across functional medicine. It just goes kind of too extreme and a lot of people. And,



Leah Brueggemann 30:54

yeah, and I think I always talk about Dr. Google. Because, you know, that's where I started, like, way back in the day was like, going on Dr. Google, and I just had someone reach out to me the other day, cuz she has really heavy bleeding. And she's like, I went on Google. And like, all the sudden, like, I was gonna have to get a hysterectomy. And I'm like, What the heck. But that's what going down that rabbit hole does, because you have no guidelines and no boundaries, then you're just following like, blog to the next blog to the next and but I also agree, you know, that's how people stumble upon some sort of information that can guide them to the person to talk to so I don't know,



Dr. Kozlowski 31:38

I, my piece of advice that I give people is to find a practitioner you trust? Yes. After you do that every time you want to get on the Dr. Google, try meditating instead, and see what happens.



Leah Brueggemann 31:54

No, it's true big. And like you said, practitioners all practice different ways as well. So you have to truly find someone that aligns with you. But you know, maybe also pushes you a little bit because gotta get a little bit out of that comfort zone. But I love that you, I love that you talk about that. The mindset part because we'll a it's free, everybody can start doing it. Yeah, but you can take all of the supplements, and you can follow the diet and you can spend 1000s of dollars. But unless you deal with the crap going on in your life, and actually acknowledge the fact that you can heal, like get out of your victim that the world is coming to hurt you. So I think that's amazing. So tell me how people can find you how people can get your book, give me give me all the juicy details.



Dr. Kozlowski 32:54

So it's unfuck your gut and it's funk with a C. And my practice, we had a saying that we put the funk in functional medicine. So that's where unfuck your gut came from. It's it's on Amazon or Barnes and Noble. Your local bookstore won't have it in stock, but they can order it if you prefer to support local business. My website is dock dash cars.com do C dash k o z.com. And I'm on Instagram and Facebook, Doc underscore cars. And yes, so those are ways like if somebody wants to work with me or has questions are my assistants phone numbers on my website, her name is Jasmine, she's amazing. You can talk to her you can email us. And to me functional net. Like I think our greatest job as practitioners is education. And so initial visit with me was always education solely. And that's what I everything that's in my book is just like how to, like understand your health and feedback. I've gotten this from people that are like have not come to

see me but saw another functional medicine person, they're like, I just felt a lot more prepared for my my visit. Like I explained all the different testing and things like that. So um, yeah, so that those are the best ways to if someone wants to learn more about me.



Leah Brueggemann 34:24

Perfect. And I'll put all those in the show notes. When I was reading your bio, that was like the thing that popped out to me that you listen to people, because so many times and I'm sure you hear this people come with like this folder of tests that they've had run and they're like, I've had all these tests run. Like I have no idea what they mean. I don't even know like what I had tested, and it's like, we want to inspire the people that we work with to take their health into their own hands and go on to not need us anymore. You know,



Dr. Kozlowski 34:57

functional medicine is the worst business model it It's spend money up front, but then people don't come back to me versus traditional medicine is get you sick at a very young age keep you sick and keep you alive as long as possible.



Leah Brueggemann 35:12

Yeah, I love i Yeah. So perfect. I have to let you in on an inside joke because this is cracking me up that your book is on funkier gut. Because there is an affiliate for this podcast, a dietitian who created seed cycling organic for women, and their brand is funky wellness. And I'm just like, Why do I keep attracting these names? Over here. So yeah, we're very familiar with that. Well, I really appreciate you coming on and taking the time to share and I know that everybody is really going to thoroughly enjoy reading your book.



Dr. Kozlowski 35:52

Awesome. Thank you.



Leah Brueggemann 35:55

Thank you for listening to today's episode of balancing hormones naturally. If you found this helpful, I would love for you to share it with a friend and post it on your stories and tag balancing hormones Ashley podcast so we can get this message out. You can find me on Instagram at Leah_brueg and I would absolutely love to hear from you