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Meet The Disruptors: Dr Steven Katz Of Naturopathic Physicians Group On The Three Things You Need To Shake Up Your Industry

An Interview With Fotis Georgiadis



To shake things up next, I am going to continue to push for equality in medicine. As the former President and current Treasurer of the Arizona Naturopathic Medical Association, I want to help grow the profession of naturopathic medicine and help get naturopathic doctors recognized as a part of mainstream medicine. I also want to grow this field of medicine around the country and continue to fight for the patient's right to their choice in medicine. Naturopathic medicine is all about a patient's right to choose.

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As *a part of our series about business leaders who are shaking things up in their industry, I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Steven Katz.*

Dr. Steven Katz is the owner of Naturopathic Physicians Group and has worked there since 2013. During his clinical education, he spent a year and a half working at the Southwest Center for HIV/AIDS where he developed protocols to strengthen the immune system's ability to fight both acute and chronic illness. Dr. Katz also spent two years working in alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers utilizing many naturopathic modalities. He is trained in IV therapy protocols as well as how to properly detoxify patients and help restore health and balance.

Dr. Katz is an expert in pain management. He addresses problems using a patient-centered approach. He determines the root cause of the pain and then uses naturopathic treatments and restorative injection techniques such as PRP therapy (platelet-rich plasma therapy), Prolotherapy and others to heal conditions.

Dr. Katz also treats digestive disorders such as food allergies, acid reflux, IBS, Crohn's Disease, and Ulcerative Colitis. With each patient, Dr. Katz develops an individualized plan to help treat their condition. He believes in balancing the body's biochemistry to help restore proper function.

Dr. Katz has continued his own education and become trained in advanced restorative treatments such as ozone therapy. Dr. Katz' passion for naturopathic medicine does not stay isolated to the clinic. He was also the former Arizona Naturopathic Medical Association President. He devotes his time and energy to improve both the patients he works with as well as his profession. Due to his dedication, he was recognized in 2017 as the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine Alumni of the Year as well as the 2019 AZNMA Volunteer of the year.

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Thank you so much for doing this with us! Before we dig in, our readers would like to get to know you a bit more. Can you tell us a bit about your “backstory”? What led you to this particular career path?

When I was 18 years old, I wanted to be a pharmacist. As a pre-pharmacy major at ASU, I ended up working in a pharmacy for more than six years and became a certified pharmacy technician. Throughout that time, I realized the impact drugs were having on people and it seemed as if the more medications someone was on, the healthier they looked. I knew that there had to be an alternative option to drugs, but I did not know what that was yet. Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine was at a career fair I had happened to attend and there, I found out about naturopathic medicine. I fell in love with the profession right away and changed my career so that I could help people get better by treating the root cause of the condition without taking drugs.

Can you tell our readers what it is about the work you're doing that's disruptive?

A naturopathic doctor's philosophy is to treat the cause. My job is to find the cause of a problem so that I can treat it as naturally as possible and get the patient better. If it is not a cause, then it is an effect. Conventional medicine, in comparison, are all about the “treat the symptom” approach. They use drugs to “treat symptoms” which in turn is treating the effect and not the cause. This is

why I work to pull people off of drugs, instead of prescribe them.

My work allows me to provide cutting edge new and unique treatments to my patients, such as regenerative injection therapy such as Prolotherapy, and platelet rich plasma therapy, that all work to heal damage in the body. There are also plenty of diet and lifestyle treatments that I recommend to patients to work on inflammation in the body and build a stronger immune system. Naturopathic medicine is disruptive because we prefer to use alternative medicine approaches rather than conventional medicine (pain pills and steroids) that weaken the immune system.

Can you share a story about the funniest mistake you made when you were first starting? Can you tell us what lesson you learned from that?

This is meant to be a funny thing, but it was sort of my ah-ah moment. When I was having skeptical thoughts about becoming a pharmacist, I decided to skip a class at Arizona State University despite there being a quiz on that day. I went instead to a career fair for science majors. I only decided to skip the class because each student was allowed to drop one quiz grade. That was where I first heard of naturopathic medicine, as Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine was at the fair. Their approach inspired me and from there, I started pursuing naturopathic medicine. That lightning bolt hit, and I've never looked back. If you could not drop a quiz in that class, I would have never gone to the career fair and unsure of where my career path might have ended up. Everything happens for a reason.

We all need a little help along the journey. Who have been some of your mentors? Can you share a story about how they made an impact?

My most influential mentors are my parents. Nearly 40 years ago, my parents started a business from scratch that is still thriving today. They started with very little and have worked all the way to the top. My parents have taught me to fight for everything.

Another mentor to me is Alan Isaacson because he sparked my journey into medicine. Before I was a pre-pharmacy major, I was a business major at Arizona State University. While working at a shipping company in Scottsdale, while on a break, I stopped into the Fry's grocery store next door and ran into Alan. He was a pharmacist there and asked me what I wanted to do in my career. He encouraged me to work in pharmacy, which was not something I had ever considered, but he said he would help me if I was interested. Alan got me a job at that pharmacy which is how I started my journey into medicine.

And finally, my wife. Basically for putting up with me while I was in medical school. For anyone who understand how daunting a doctorate program is, they will understand. I was basically in school during the day and studying at night. Despite all of the time away, she understood why and never complained. She saw the big picture and was the biggest supporter I had.

In today's parlance, being disruptive is usually a positive adjective. But is disrupting always good? When do we say the converse, that a system or structure has 'withstood the test of time'? Can you articulate to our readers when disrupting an industry is positive, and when disrupting an industry is 'not so positive'? Can you share some examples of what you mean?

Stepping out of the norm is good when your motivation is helping people. Naturopathic Medicine works to help people both treat and prevent chronic conditions. We thrive when patients are frustrated with the normal approach to healthcare. In the medical field, it's so important to educate doctors to only be motivated by the goal of healing their patients. When the motivation for the doctor is anything but healing patients, then they are in the wrong field. We need doctors to understand that drugs and pain pills need to be used as a last resort option. Drugs used for autoimmune disease have side effects that are sometimes worse than the conditions they are treating. Naturopathic doctors try to figure out where their inflammation is coming from. We believe in treating the cause, not the effect. Drugs are treating the effect.

Can you share 3 of the best words of advice you've gotten along your journey? Please give a story or example for each.

The best words of advice I have gotten along my journey is, "stay the course and standout."

Students in medical school will think at least once during the program, "What am I doing?" Medical school can be a rigorous program, but it is important to focus on the bigger picture. Halfway through my medical school program, I had my first child and thought about how I was going to continue my journey. I stayed the course and kept my mind on the big picture, which is why I now operate my own practice. If you do not standout, no one will notice. A fitting example is with naturopathic doctors and doctors of medicine. Naturopathic doctors must stand out from the traditional methods of medicine, or no one will notice them. Never take the easy road. If they are not talking about you, then you are not worth talking about.

We are sure you aren't done. How are you going to shake things up next?

To shake things up next, I am going to continue to push for equality in medicine. As the former President and current Treasurer of the Arizona Naturopathic Medical Association, I want to help grow the profession of naturopathic medicine and help get naturopathic doctors recognized as a part of mainstream medicine. I also want to grow this field of medicine around the country and continue to fight for the patient's right to their choice in medicine. Naturopathic medicine is all about a patient's right to choose.

Do you have a book, podcast, or talk that's had a deep impact on your thinking? Can you share a story with us? Can you explain why it was so resonant with you?

Books focused on the Revolutionary War, such as *John Adams* by David McCullough and *Killing England* by Bill O'Reilly, have had a deep impact on my thinking. These books discuss how perseverance was needed to overcome obstacles and defy all odds by the risks taken. Nothing in life is handed to you,

but you must persevere and keep going forward. I read a lot of books, both fiction and non-fiction, but the Harry Potter series also stand out as a favorite. I love the story of J.K. Rowling and how she started out with nothing for her first book and now has created a modern-day Star Wars. It is that type of motivation you need to keep pushing forward.

Can you please give us your favorite “Life Lesson Quote”? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?

“A great thought begins by seeing something differently, with a shift of the mind’s eye,” — Albert Einstein.

This quote is one of my favorites, because it represents the role of a naturopathic doctor. Patients do not always understand what we do, but our goal is to teach them how to get better and stay better. Naturopathic doctors work to show patients that there is another way to treat their pain. While both conventional doctors and naturopathic doctors want to give patients relief and treat them, naturopathic doctors work to shift their patient’s mindset on how to stay healthy.

You are a person of great influence. If you could inspire a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)

I want to make drastic changes to our food industry. Our health industry pays no attention to food and the food industry pays no attention to health. This causes chemicals and other unhealthy ingredients to enter our foods, requiring people to pay heavy attention to the labels before consuming as well as increasing the toxicity in people. The best way to protect people is by making it illegal to have chemicals within our food that causes harm.

How can our readers follow you online?

Readers can visit us at our website at <https://www.naturopathicgroup.com/> or on our [Facebook page](#).

They can also contact us at 480-451-6161.

This was very inspiring. Thank you so much for joining us!