

In My Head This Month September 2025

Stories, clarity, and hacks from a health-tech founder
By Mischulaikah Grüne



AUGUST REFLECTION

WHATS NEXT

SUPPORTING CANCER

BACK2SCHOOL

In memoriam **Peter Grüne**

I couldn't sleep last night.

The last time someone this close to me passed away was my grandmother. She was in St. Maarten while I was in the Netherlands. She had been bedridden for years after multiple strokes and a life filled with traumas and hardship. At the time of her passing, I wasn't married, I wasn't a mother yet, and sadly she wasn't an active part of my daily community, but I owe her so much.

This loss feels different though. The grief is not only emotional... it's practical, tangible. An active member of our village is no longer here. We've been giving ourselves the time to grieve and mourn... but last night, for the first time, I felt the weight of being a bit more alone.

Strangely, it feels like being forced to "grow up" again. As if we've been given more responsibility now, because we've lost a wise elder who was 100% on our side, who always had our backs, who helped us move forward and achieve our goals like many parents would.

It's a sobering, almost scary feeling.

I look at my kids and pray that I can be there for them, in good health, for as long as possible. And I intend to teach them to live healthy lives too. I decided to share these thoughts not only as a diary for myself, or to show the world what we're up to, how I think, and what I learn along the way, but also for my children. One day, when they are old enough to fully understand, they can read this right here: on my laptop, on my sites, and shared openly with the world.

Welcome to my mind, my world, and this amazing journey I'm blessed to call my life.



What Aggressive Cancer Does to the Body AND HOW TO REALLY SUPPORT SOMEONE whether they choose chemo, medication, or none of it.

When we found out about Peter's cancer, our entire community, family, friends, colleagues, trainers, even members from the gym, came together to support him. People cooked meals (yes, even our gym members cooked!), cleaned, and took over shifts so we could focus on caring for him in those tough, painful weeks. It was the most amazing thing to experience. He was blessed. We are blessed.

But in all that love and help, there was also a lot of confusion. And my **momma bear** instinct came out, and I mean... **FIRE!!** "No, he cannot just eat whatever he wants. Not yet." Doctors, team members and friends, everyone meant well. They wanted him to indulge, to enjoy "yummy" foods, to feel comfort. But until Peter decided what treatment path he wanted, whether chemo, other medication, or none at all, I knew

we couldn't afford to feed the cancer with foods that would break his body down even more, instead of building him up. So I sat down and created a document for our family and team.

Something that explained what was happening inside his body, and what he actually needed. Food that could build his body, not break it further. Guidance so that everyone, in their best intentions, could give support that truly helped.

Peter was diagnosed with aggressive kidney cancer. In just weeks, his strong body became weak, his appetite disappeared, and he couldn't keep up with eating, no matter how hard he tried. This is where most people get confused. Families want to help; they bring food, treats, or "healthy" smoothies. But cancer-related weight loss is not the same as dieting or "being too skinny." It's something called **cachexia**.



cancer-related weight loss is called cachexia and has nothing to do with being 'too skinny'.

Ca.... what???

Cachexia is when the body is burning itself down. Muscle, fat, and energy, even if food is right there. It's not about willpower, appetite, or calories. It's a whole-body process driven by cancer and inflammation. And it sucks. Big time. So here's what's happening inside:

- **The immune system is on constant “high alert”.**

Cancer cells trigger the body to release inflammatory messengers, like alarms that never switch off. These alarms (called cytokines) spread through the body, telling it: fight, fight, fight!!! But when that signal never ends, the body stays in a stressed, burning state.

- **Appetite is shut down.**

Those same inflammatory messengers switch off the hunger centers in the brain. Even when food is available, the body isn't interested and feels 'done' after a few bites.

- **Energy systems get blocked.** Normally, the body would use food for fuel. But in cachexia, the wiring is disrupted: insulin doesn't work properly, and the mitochondria (the little energy batteries in every cell) can't produce enough ATP (energy currency). So even if calories are eaten, they aren't properly turned into usable energy.
- **Muscles are sacrificed.** Because the body can't use fuel from food efficiently, it starts breaking down its own muscle tissue for quick sugars and amino acids. This means the very strength someone needs to fight or move is being consumed from within.
- **Digestion slows down.** The gut is affected too. Nerves are irritated, the stomach empties more slowly, and the liver is overwhelmed. That's why meals feel heavy, exhausting and uncomfortable.

Every Bite Counts, BUT NOT EVERY BITE HELPS

What doesn't help

~~“Just eat more.”~~ It feels logical, but in cachexia the problem isn't lack of food. It's the body's inability to use it properly. More food doesn't fix broken wiring.

~~Sugary treats, bread, cookies.~~

These give calories without building blocks. They feed the fire of inflammation, while the body desperately needs nutrients to rebuild.

~~Raw salads, smoothies, and juices.~~

Hard to digest, high in sugar or fiber, often cause bloating, nausea, or quick energy crashes. The body is already struggling with digestion and these make it work harder instead of easier.

~~Detox teas, fasting, miracle diets.~~

The body is in crisis mode, breaking down tissue for energy. Anything that adds stress or restricts nutrition accelerates that breakdown.

What does help

Soft, warm foods. **Soups, broths and stews.** they're easy on the stomach, comforting, and deliver nutrients without draining energy.

Building blocks. **Collagen, gentle proteins** (chicken, fish, eggs), and healthy fats like **MCT oil.** These provide the raw materials the body needs to protect muscle and repair tissue.

Cooked vegetables. **Pumpkin, carrots, zucchini.** Nutrient-rich but easy to digest. They support the gut without overwhelming it.

Hydration & electrolytes.

Cancer and treatments often leave the body dehydrated and imbalanced. Gentle hydration with minerals supports energy and kidney function.

Sunshine & light movement.

Even a few minutes outside can lift mood, support vitamin D, and give the body signals of safety and rhythm.

Back to School, *Back to controlled Chaos*



September doesn't just mean back to school for the kids , it means back to school for me too. I'm starting the final year of my functional medicine studies at OPFG.



Ganbatte IRU

I read the book 'Ganbatte' some years ago and it resonated with me so much that I kept it with me along with a couple other quotes that inspire me.. but this one is special...

**It means... "I am doing my best, trying earnestly,
wholeheartedly, with all the effort I can give
in this moment
and that is enough."**

It gives me so much strength and also calms me into not stressing out (too much) when things dont work out the first time.

Sometimes I laugh and wonder how I'm going to manage it all: four kids, an app, multiple teams, international missions, and now finishing my studies.

At home, the calendar has exploded again. Ballet, soccer twice a week, guitar, BJJ, drum lessons, swimming. Six schedules colliding under one roof. Honestly? If it weren't for Jeff, who holds down the afternoons with the kids, I wouldn't be able to do what I do. Real teamwork is the only way this works.

But I also know this is the year I wrap it up, and that feels exciting.

For my last year I am looking for someone that I can help with tackling their health in an integrative way.

Graduation Case

For my graduation case, I'm looking for someone to guide closely. Specifically:

- Someone with low-grade inflammation or gut-related issues. Or someone with long-term health challenges who wants to connect the dots between food, lifestyle, and biochemistry.

What you'll get from me:

Dedication, personal coaching, a full intake & analysis, lifestyle and nutrition guidance, and optional supplement support, under supervision of my teachers at OPFG

If this resonates, reach out. It's a unique chance to work with me 1:1, while I finalize this chapter of my education.

What's Next in September?

01

NEW YORK TRADE MISSION FOR WOMEN, ORGANIZED BY RVO

I'll be traveling with an **incredible group of female founders** for a trade mission to New York! These trips are never just about business cards and meetings, they're about building connections that can shape the future of OrthoFoodie. I'm looking forward to conversations that open doors to partnerships, pilot projects, and collaborations that bring our work into people's daily lives.

02

LIFE SCIENCES & HEALTH MISSION IN TEXAS

A big stage for prevention. Here, the conversation usually revolves around treatment and technology. We are excited to bring in a different angle: food and micronutrients as the first line of defense.

03

WEBSITE REDESIGN

Our current site is still from the very first release in 2023 (!!). It served us well in those early days, but it doesn't reflect who we are now. This fall, we'll launch a complete redesign. One that matches the clarity, simplicity, and vision we've been building toward. Our team has been working so hard on this. And we are SUPER excited about releasing it!



No matter what
We're all *awesome*.

Beyond all this, there are projects I can't talk about just yet, but trust me, they're worth the wait. After this summer's storm, strangely, it all feels a little easier.

Maybe because we've learned that even when life throws everything at once grief, kids, work, study, we can keep moving.

Not perfectly. But forward.

Let's go, September.

Love MischuFaika!