



The Athena Wellness Podcast  
Episode 094 – Why the Magic Pill Approach to Health Doesn't Work  
with Joe Rich and Victor Briere, A.D.  
December 1, 2021

00:05

Welcome to the Athena Wellness podcast, the show that invites you to take a seat around the community fire and listen to stories that inspire. I'm your host, Kathy Robinson, author, coach and founder of Athena Wellness, a company that's dedicated to supporting you on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

00:30 Kathy

Hello and welcome to Episode 94. Thanks so much for joining me for this shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

00:41 Kathy

Today I'm joined, once again, by Victor Briere and Joe Rich, co-founders of the International Institute of Ayurveda. In this conversation excerpt, Victor shares his thoughts on the difference between Western medicines' approach to treating the symptom versus health prevention and wellness promotion and what we lose when we opt for the magic pill approach.

Links to the Institute's website and email are included in the show notes. And now onto the show. I hope you enjoy the conversation.

01:19 Kathy

I want to talk about some of the choices that we have. And this is assuming that our basic needs are being met, and I know that's a whole other conversation on how we do that for people, that safety net.

But assuming that our basic needs are being met, many of those folks aren't making the best health choices for themselves. And we've talked about some of the reasons why. But



what is really driving some of the beliefs today? How do we help people make better health choices for themselves?

01:50 Victor

I think it starts by sitting down and getting honest with the fact that, of course, it'd be nice if there were a quick easy fix. And if that was the way it worked, then wouldn't everything be grand. But if you take even 10 minutes, look at your own life and look at the lives of those around you, it doesn't work. I mean, it's just right there in your face all the time. If we found something that works, there wouldn't be all this new stuff coming out every two seconds. Because why? We would have something that works.

So this idea that if we can dispel our fantasy that I could buy a product and be healthy. Or I could do this one exercise for 30 days and be healthy. If we could just get honest with ourselves about that one thing, I think that opens the doors wide open to "Okay, what do I really need to do?" And, of course, it's going to take an approach like Ayurveda or Chinese medicine or something like that, which is a constant cultivation and creation of our own well-being. And it's a responsibility, but it doesn't have to be a huge burdensome responsibility, but it is our responsibility to take care of our body every day, and our mind and everything associated with our wellness.

03:09 Kathy

I think that some people are so ingrained in our western medicine approach that they may not even realize the difference between a system that's based on symptom care versus health prevention and wellness promotion. Can you speak to those two philosophies a little bit? And then we can get into some specifics?

03:31 Victor

Yeah, sure. So the West is primarily built on a system of symptom management, putting band aids on things, because that's easy. You go to a doctor when you get a symptom and the doctor says, "Okay, what are your symptoms, tell me your symptoms." And then typically, after, I think the average appointment these days is six minutes, and it's frequently reported that the doctor doesn't even make eye contact with you and they don't assess you. They just type into a computer and then they get your list of symptoms and maybe they'll do some examination, if necessary. And then they're either going to



prescribe tests or medicine, a pill. And those pills are all targeted at a specific symptom, or a little grouping of symptoms.

So if you have rheumatoid arthritis, and this is something Gabor Mate does that's great, he says, "If you have rheumatoid arthritis, you get steroids. If you have asthma, you get steroids. If you have cardiac arrest, you get steroids. If you get this, you get steroids." He's like, "How is it that steroids can cure everything no matter what it is?"

And obviously he's proving a point. And the point is, it's just trying to address the symptom in that moment. As opposed to Ayurveda, or a similar modality which says, "Okay, well, why do you have that rash on your arm?"

"I don't know."

"Well, let's go over your entire life. Let's go over everything you eat. Let's go over your thoughts. Let's go over your feelings. Let's go over your relationships. Let's go over your sleep pattern."

05:00

Because we're gonna find out where the causes are, why your body is expressing that symptom. And it turns out that, of course, after 1000s of years, they've come up with a lot of reasons why we develop, there's a deep understanding of why we develop these diseases and what we can do to change our lifestyle.

The reason people opt for going the pill route is because, let's say I find out that the reason you have that rash is partly - because there are always multiple causes - but partly because you drink two cups of coffee in the morning and two glasses of wine in the evening, filling your system with acid, which then affects the heat and acidity of the blood. And when the blood becomes too heated or acidic, then it commonly expresses that as a rash on the skin. And that's a very common pathology.

05:54

So if I sit down and tell you, "Okay, we're going to need to give up the coffee and the alcohol if you want to cure this rash." That coffee and alcohol consumption is based on an adapted self that was created long, long ago and has now been part of that person's



personality for many years. And because it's based on an adapted self, it's based on a defensive strategy of life.

And so what happens when you ask someone to give up their addiction? You get a defense mechanism. "No, I can't do that because... Well, what makes you the one who knows that? I'm going to go get a second opinion. I don't know if I believe you. This study said wine was... This study said coffee was..." And all the defense mechanisms come out. But that doesn't change the reality. The reality is, your body's too acidic and it's expressing a rash on your skin as a part of that pathology.

And so then it's like, "Well, I'll just put on this steroid cream," and the rash goes away, look at that. But then, two months later, you got a different disease, gout. You kept dumping acid in your system and now gout develops, which is a more extreme version of that same pathology. And then you take a shot for gout. But now that shot damages your kidneys. So now you're starting the path of renal failure. And then you get diabetes, because your kidneys aren't operating well. And so you take Metformin and then that Metformin destroys your liver. So then you... I could go on forever. I've heard the story many times.

Joe

Yeah, until the patient dies.

Victor

Yeah, until you die. And you suffer a lot more than you have to, because the fact of the matter was, all you had to do is go through a few days of discomfort, dealing with the patterning around coffee and alcohol.

And yeah, of course, that's going to take you down the other rabbit hole of healing, which is, "Well, why am I addicted to something? Or why am I so attached or possessed with this substance as a coping mechanism?" Why, why, why, why, why? And that why is going to bring you right to the precipice where you left your authentic self.

Joe

To childhood trauma.

Victor



And that's great. So that's the other way of healing, not the magic pill way.

08:11 Kathy

And what's fascinating is that when we do have those rashes, or the gout, or whatever it is that's happening, your body is working as it should, but we don't see it that way. We see it as, "Oh, I've got this issue, I have to fix this issue," versus "My body is expressing itself, I need to figure out why that is."

Joe

Yes.

Kathy

And that is, it's more of an internal path of what's happening here, more relationship, having a relationship with health rather than having somebody fix my health.

08:41 Victor

Yeah, and so the word heal, to heal, it means to make whole, to not cover up. So the Western approach is more of a cover up approach or a get rid of the symptom approach. Whereas the Eastern approach is more of a to make whole, return to your authenticity. And you are whole again and so the disease departs, it no longer has the grounds to manifest.

09:08 Kathy

Beautiful. Thank you, gentlemen.

09:10 Joe

Thank you, Kathy.

09:13 Kathy

Thank you so much for joining me today. I know there are many ways you can spend your time. Thank you for choosing to spend it with me. Until our paths cross again, be kind to yourself and show your Warrior Spirit some love.



If you know anyone who could benefit from today's episode, please pass it on. And many thanks for supporting the show by subscribing and leaving a review. It means a lot and it helps others find their way to our circle.

If you'd like to access the show notes, have a question you'd like addressed on a future episode, or would like a transcript of this episode, visit [www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast](http://www.AthenaWellness.com/podcast).

Until next time, be well!