



Your Functional Medicine Expert®
Jill Carnahan, MD ABHM, ABOLM, IFMCP

[#5: Dr. Jill and Dr. Nicole talk about stress reduction during the time of COVID 19](#)

Dr. Jill 0:12

Yes, I'm so excited to talk to you. So for everybody out there, first of all, just thank you for joining us. Please share if you find it interesting, and of course, later the recording will be available. So if you don't hear us or you jump in midway, no big deal. But we are so excited to talk about the virus, the pandemic, and, more importantly, what you are doing and what we're doing to relieve stress and keep our immune systems healthy. We know that stress is probably one of the biggest factors in suppressing immunity, and we'll talk a little bit about that tonight, too. But we just want to give you some really practical tools. We have coffee, and sometimes we color together, and we have the best conversations, Dr. Nicole and I. So what we wanted to do tonight is just let you in on our little coffee chat session. So [there's] nothing formal here. But if you guys have any questions or comments, feel free to put them in, because I'll try to be watching, and we'll try to answer those at the end. So welcome, Dr. Nicole. I want to introduce you really quickly.

Dr. Nicole 1:15

Hey, yes.

Dr. Jill 1:16

I remember we had a colleague; I was at a seminar, and he came up to me and said, "You have to meet Dr. Nicole." I was looking to expand services in the office, and I really wanted someone who had a different skill set than me and that had things that I couldn't do. And I always thought it would be really cool to have a talented naturopath like you, especially because I wanted people to know what you do. So in a minute, I'll give you a chance to explain. But I remember this guy being like, "Oh, you'll just love Dr. Nicole," and "She's moving to Colorado." And I have to tell you, I think you know this. But I had interviewed PAs, nurse practitioners, and other naturopaths and never really felt like [there was] a really good connection. And when we met, I just remember being like: "I love this girl." We totally jived, and I just felt a really cool connection. You're just easygoing, and you get it. It's been such a joy to work with you. So welcome!

Dr. Nicole 2:10

Thank you! What an intro!

Dr. Jill 2:14

Yes. Remember that, when we first met?

Dr. Nicole 2:16

I do. I know. You were the first clinic I stopped in, but I went and interviewed at 11 other clinics. I was like, "I just hope Dr. Jill decides that she wants me to work at her place."

Dr. Jill 2:30

Oh, and I'm so lucky.

Dr. Nicole 2:31

It was so mutual.

Dr. Jill 2:33

I don't know what it is. To me, you're down to earth, you're practical, and you're intuitive like me; we have that approach to how we see our patients. [In] our office, there are a lot of women. There are a lot of sub-leases, and I think some environments like that can get really catty and cliquish. I wanted to just have a person who was going to fit in. And you've been that and so much more. And, you know, we've been colleagues, but what I love more than anything is that we've been friends. We've had coffee chats over men and over other things in our lives, and over situations and health issues. It's been so refreshing to have you not only as a colleague whom I respect but [also as] a friend.

Nicole 3:12

Aww! Well, I mean, I completely agree. I feel the exact same. That's so mutual.

Dr. Jill 3:19

And we're both doing virtual consultations. I want to be sure you all know. We'll link to Dr. Nicole's website and [explain] how to schedule [an appointment]. I want to have you [tell us] next what you do. But if you want someone who's an expert in these areas, she's available, and she's taking on new patients. She's very, very skilled. I don't say that about a lot of my colleagues, but I really feel strongly that she's

talented. If you guys need some help at this time, she's a great resource. I'd love to first hear how you got into naturopathic medicine and then tell everybody a little bit about what you do.

Dr. Nicole 3:55

Yes, absolutely. Thank you again. It's such a nice [introduction]. It's so complimentary. So I got into naturopathic medicine. I think we all get into our fields of medicine because of our own stuff that we go through. I had really bad asthma as a kid. I had really bad allergies. I was having some thyroid trouble, although we didn't know that's what it was. It just felt really puffy. I was gaining weight. I mean, I have two dogs now, and that would have been unheard of. I was the kid who had lizards growing up—anything that didn't have any sort of allergen. So I think that just through my own realization of how powerful food was, [made a huge impact]. I was able to get rid of gluten, and I saw so many transformations. Then I got into doing some of the emotional work. I accidentally, while I was a strength coach, started reading my clients' labs and figuring out the different ways of helping them with supplements and lifestyle was actually healing their bodies, which I thought, "Gosh, I'm not even using anything that's super invasive." So I just had to know more. Everything kept leading me back to naturopathic medicine. And a lot of my colleagues at the time, [since] we were all in fitness and doing a lot of nutrition, were like, "You're sure you want to go back to medical school?" And I was like: "It's like I have to. I don't know how else to describe it. I need to know more. I need to understand the foundation," because I felt like I kind of missed that part. So it's just been a love affair since. I mean, I love naturopathic medicine. I feel like I truly do walk what I talk because I see how profound it is in my own life and in my family's lives, and then to see it in my patients too is pretty cool. So that's sort of how I got into it. What I do now is use muscle testing. I also use a lot of naturopathic principles, [one of] which is that the body can heal itself given the right combination of lifestyle, nutrients, homeopathy, herbs, and sometimes medications, in order to kind of remove any obstruction to allow the body's innate healing capacity. What I treat a lot in my patients—I feel like most things come [down] to three main things: Some sort of emotional stuff that needs to be cleared, some sort of chronic infection, and a toxic burden. I feel like if we're able to clear out those [things], we'll just see miraculous results. So that's what I do with my patients.

Dr. Jill 6:26

Gosh, I love that. And again, getting to know you and what you do is such a neat complementary thing because I'll do this one thing, and then we might see the same patient, but you might do the emotional clearing, and then I'll do very specific medications and work with detox. And you do the same.

Dr. Nicole 6:42

It's so synergistic.

Dr. Jill 6:44

It totally does. I know some of my patients who've seen you; they love that, and they kind of have both. What I love—tell me just a little bit more about the emotional clearing because, for me as an allopathic doctor, it's so powerful, and yet I don't do it. So I'm always amazed at what you do and how you get results with patients. I'd love for people to know more about that.

Dr. Nicole 7:02

Absolutely. And I like to say the word 'stress,' because I feel like 'emotional' sometimes really turns people off. But we all can relate to stress, and we know that there's so much unresolved stress that hides in our bodies. And we know now from research that any time something stressful happens, it actually creates proteins [which are] stored in the body. What I like about the modality I use to treat unresolved stress—it's called NET—[is that] it's a neuro-emotional technique. Using muscle testing and other various techniques allows us to find out: Where are those proteins hiding? What unresolved stress is still wreaking havoc on our bodies? I had this one patient, and it was something that will stay with me forever; she couldn't turn her head [any] further than that for eight years. We did one emotional clearing on her, and her head turned all the way. She's like, "What'd you do?" and I was just as surprised because it was newer for me. It was [about] showing her how much emotional trauma was preventing her musculature from working and her nervous system from working accurately. So it is being studied more, and I'm just so grateful because it kind of looks a little bit like a magic show, but it works. I think we all have to have our own profound experiences to use certain tools that we use. I used emotional work, and it completely got rid of my seasonal allergies. And after that, I was like, "I will use this on every patient" if it tests, right? Not everybody is open to it, and that's okay. But there are a lot of people who are, and I feel like it just helps so much.

Dr. Jill 8:47

I love that. I would say that in my career of 20 years, I started [practicing] functional medicine, and I love diving into the biochemistry and the science and [things like] that. But what I would find in the last probably five to seven years is, first of all, that I see a lot of people who are super complex. They've been ill for a while. They have mold-related toxicity, or they have autoimmunity or lots of other

multiple chronic conditions—[many times] chronic fatigue. What I see is that I can do all this great functional work with them, but at some point, they've got to do the emotional work. Even for myself personally, after my divorce three years ago, I realized, "Oh my gosh, I have to do the work, and I have to go emotionally deep and see what other things are blocking me." I've worked with you; I've done NLP, I've done Thought Field Therapy, I've done EMDR, I've done brain spotting—so lots of somatic work. What's interesting is that all of these things are different ways of looking at an elephant and describing the tail, foot, and head, but they all work. I've done a ton of this work, and each different method really has a unique way of approaching it. So if one method isn't right for you, you might find [that something] like NET really, really works for you. And what I think, Dr. Nicole, is that it's really simple and straightforward. It's not super time intensive usually. It's amazing, and the change is pretty instantaneous. Sometimes it can take a little while for the body to assimilate. But especially for those of you out there who follow me for mold toxicity and mold-related issues, for some reason, the mold particularly likes the amygdala. The amygdala is our fight-or-flight and stress response. So what I see with our mold patients and Lyme patients and chronic illnesses and especially mold, there's something about that that really triggers old trauma and fight or flight. I would actually postulate to say that I don't think most patients can get well until they deal with that old trauma and how it comes up. And again, I can't tell you the exact mechanism except that we know mold is this physiological trigger that tends to trigger old trauma and the amygdala. The amygdala is related to fight or flight, so it's like this pattern kind of comes up. In order to get over that, you almost have to find a way to deal with it, or you're going to be stuck in that pattern. [With] mold, even if you're consciously like: "I'm good. I'm going to be fine. Mold is not dangerous; I'm getting well," you can say that to yourself, but your subconscious body feels that threat as a much bigger psychological threat. Even subconsciously, even if you're consciously aware you have no mental illness or anything around it, you almost have to clear those things, whether it's with someone like Dr. Nicole or otherwise, in order to get well. Have you seen that?

Dr. Nicole 11:20

Wow. I think that the way you put it was so succinct. And yes, I do see that. I don't know; I feel like life has a way of bringing up stuff that we haven't dealt with that we need to deal with. So for some people, I definitely see that with mold. I feel like you have to kind of go at it at the same time, right? Like, you're doing the chemical piece. And that's what I love about my medicine and your medicine too, because functional medicine and naturopathic medicine are so similar—you're basically just going after the root cause. That root cause can also be that emotional part as well as that chemical toxicity and binding up all those mycotoxins, right?

Dr. Jill 11:59

Yes. You and I both have had experiences with mold and even [with] trying to figure it out for ourselves. Five years ago, my office had mold, and I had no idea about mold back then. It was the universe's or God's way of kind of pushing me to say, "You need to learn this and teach others." So I didn't choose mold; it chose me. Even recently, we were talking before we got on live here, and we both had little, tiny things in our places that we've had to deal with. I had a washer and dryer that leaked in my laundry room in this safe, wonderful condo, and I think I have a little bit of an issue. It's minor compared to historically. But gosh, this stuff affects so many people. And I don't know if you want to share anything about your experience, but it's crazy how it affects us all.

Dr. Nicole 12:40

Yes, totally. Well, what was interesting is that I did treat some mold for sure in California, but I didn't know the extent of it until I really started working with you and realized all these ways of testing and remediating. [There's] this ongoing joke with my husband; I'm like: "I feel like we have mold in our house." "I feel like we have mold in our house." Then last year I started getting some of those heat rashy kinds of things on my skin. And I'm not a skin person; like, I don't really get stuff on my skin. So we noticed that was weird. My husband is a very productive person—up in the morning—and I noticed he was tired a lot, like sleeping in later. I was like: "Good for him. Maybe he needs the extra sleep. I don't know." But it was kind of strange. He wasn't sleeping great at night. None of these symptoms are debilitating, but we live a really healthy lifestyle. So I can't imagine for somebody who isn't doing like the crazy amount of health stuff that I have us do and is in a moldy environment, how much it affects them. And lo and behold, we finally did the ERMI test, in the beginning, a couple of months ago—it wasn't even that long ago—and got those really high levels of chaetomium coming from our basement and one spot upstairs. So we've been working at it ever since, which is why I'm [talking] to you from my kitchen today and not from my office because that's being remediated—just in case. I think it has opened my eyes so much more to how much it affects you emotionally too and your motivation level or feeling so exhausted. I think, like you said, mold chose me; I didn't choose it. But I think I understand it so much more now for my patients who have been through it and are going through it.

Dr. Jill 14:28

Yes, that's a sad thing. But the blessing is, like, oh my gosh, we have to learn when we face it.

Dr. Nicole 14:33

I know.

Dr. Jill 14:35

For those of you listening, all of us are, all of a sudden, home a lot more. So if there is an issue in your house, you might feel... I totally agree with you, Dr. Nicole. For me, when I get exposed, I get this fogginess where I feel like I'm slugging through mud. And normally, what takes me an hour to finish a blog, [some] writing, or whatever might take me two or three hours—it's a lot harder. [While] processing as I'm reading, it's harder; I might reread more than I normally would. And then I noticed, yes, emotionally, it's hilarious because normally I'm pretty even, but I will be much more volatile; I'll cry, or I'll be overwhelmed easily, or I'll be [feeling] almost like if it's prior to my period or something; that kind of emotionality [inaudible] that. I'm a very happy and optimistic person. Praise God, I've never suffered from depression or anxiety, but with mold exposures, I've had times where I feel really sad and like the world's going to end and everything's bad. And it's not me, and I kind of know that it's not me, but the effect of mold on the brain and the emotions are profound. So it's always one of those differentials when I look at any sort of mood disorder or sleep disorder. It can cause insomnia; it can definitely cause anxiety. And for me, there's also the chaetomium that you mentioned; I call that the narcoleptic mold because a lot of these molds have personalities. My exposure to chaetomium makes me want to lie down and go to sleep immediately. It's like, Sleeping Beauty, just boom, I'm out. But now as you talk about your husband, it's that feeling of like, "Oh my gosh, I'm really sleepy." So I'm grateful that we both have had the experience, even though it's been kind of difficult, because it really does help us understand patients.

Dr. Nicole 16:11

It does, for sure. And honestly, Jill, I am so grateful for all the work that you've done in the mold field too, because I have seen some patients who have come in and been like: "None of my doctors will even acknowledge that it's a possibility that mold is an issue. But I've been looking at Dr. Jill's blogs," or "I've been watching her videos on YouTube, and I finally know that I'm validated." So it's really awesome that you have so much information out there for people because I know they find it so validating in so many ways. So thank you to you for that.

Dr. Jill 16:46

You're welcome. You know how it is. [With] some of the symptoms, it's like, "Am I crazy?" I have experienced that. Before I understood, I'm like, "What is wrong? I'm

not myself." You just don't like yourself, and you don't feel as productive or as clear—so many things. And even like you said, the skin stuff, I had lots of that too. Well, let's kind of shift a little bit then to stress. That's a huge topic. But let's start with: What are you doing at this time to help deal with the stresses? And I think more than just our personal stress, there's this collective consciousness—there are other words for that; that's the way I like to think about it—this pervasive feeling of fear, anxiety, and overwhelm. And those of us who are very sensitive, like you and me and any of you listening, can feel that collective nature, and it does affect us even if you're feeling strong yourself. So what do you personally do to protect yourself against that, to keep positive, and then also just to reduce stress?

Dr. Nicole 17:45

Sure, definitely. I would say that collective consciousness [part] is so real. And some people can't describe it. They're like, "I can feel everybody else's stress." I think there is a lot of stress going on right now. The best thing I like to tell my patients that they can do is at least get themselves as aligned as possible, and that can be in whatever way works for you. I used to work out really intensely for stress, and I feel like the more I've learned about my hormones, that's probably the opposite of what I should be doing. So I found some great online yoga stuff, and I've actually been doing a lot of yoga classes at home. I feel like that type of workout lowers my stress more than anything. Meditation has always been a really strong point for me. There's an app actually called Beatfulness, and it's by Binaural Beats. There are a bunch of them that are free. So even just listening to those affects your brainwaves and can actually help calm me down. Another one is that I'm very selective about what I'm feeding myself, and food is one thing, sure, but I mean knowledge [and] information. I think when this first started happening, I watched the news a lot. And that's not something I do normally, so I didn't really understand why I was doing that. For me, the news is not my source of information. I have places that I love to get information from. You're a great information source. There are other great information sources. So for me, when I want to really see what's going on with the world, I'll choose that instead of the news just because I feel it really affects my body. I can tell that it instantly affects my mood. So just being really careful about that [is important for me]. And then I always bring in a lifestyle piece—food and nutrition in general. Even though sometimes the thought of a glass of wine would be really calming for me, I know that it actually doesn't really make my sleep very good. I don't wake up feeling great the next day. So I'm a lot more selective about things that are going to inhibit my physical body in any way or my mood. I mean, that's really what I've been doing.

Dr. Jill 19:54

Gosh, I love it. I could say "yes, yes, yes" to all. So I totally agree. And it's funny because you and I—it sounds like both of us—I was like an avid high-intensity interval [exerciser] and really [tried] pushing myself. I've been joking lately because I've gotten in the best shape of my life in my 40s by stopping to work out. Now, that's not quite true because I actually walk every day, I hike once or twice a week, and I do some free weights; I have a pull-up bar back there.

Dr. Nicole 20:21

Yes, I do too.

Dr. Jill 20:22

Yes, I love it. What I've been doing, Dr. Nicole, is when I walk through the door, I'll do a couple of pull-ups. Or when I brush my teeth, I'll do calf raises. Between interviews, I'll go do push-ups. I love tagging this with day-to-day activities. It's part of my routine, and I really never "work out," right? It's so fun for me because I used to always have that—you could say "compulsion," but I loved it. It was never obsessive. It was just like, "I love to work out," and I'd get up super early—5:00 or 5:30—and be out there doing an intense workout. And what it was doing—we talked about stress response—for my body, it was raising cortisol all these years. So when I really stopped that and instead of going to work out at 5:30, I sat in my chair and read, prayed, and meditated and was still, it changed everything because my cortisol went down. I lost a percentage of body fat. Amazing things happened when I stopped working out. Whatever works for you. You've got to find out what [that threshold is]. You might be the one who does need the high intensity; that actually helps motivate you if you're tired. Everybody is different, but for me personally—[and] it sounds like you too, Dr. Nicole—I realized I was raising my cortisol and keeping that up, and that was actually a stressor. I was basically overtraining and I didn't even know it, so that was huge when I learned that. It's so relieving to not have to go and do an intense workout and to still feel the benefits of strength, energy, and all that. I wanted to mention some practical resources for you guys out there. So you mentioned some of the binaural beats, right, where they go back and forth?

Dr. Nicole 21:55

Yes.

Dr. Jill 21:55

In brainspotting and EMDR, a lot of the therapists will use that because it kind of gives you a different state, and I think those are super helpful. You can use them

anytime in meditation. Some of the red-light head stimulators—I have a Vielight back there—can really turn on your brain. There's an alpha and a gamma. They're kind of pricey, but I find that to be incredibly helpful because it basically takes your brain right into an Alpha wave state. Then apps—Headspace is a great, simple app if you've never done meditation and wanted something to try. That was one of my first introductions because I always had trouble sitting still and meditating. And then Insight Timer is a repertoire of thousands of... You could do a Buddhist, Christian—whatever is your thing—or a 10-minute or a five-minute; you can choose the length. I love Insight Timer. I love Headspace for that. I love the Binaural Beats [app] because, a lot of times, the music really can put us in a good state too. I had mentioned this in another interview, but the other day I was out with my headphones, walking and listening to music, and I just wanted to skip or dance. I remembered it was a heavy time, and I was like, "Is this okay that I'm happy?" Like, I looked around thinking... And then I realized, you can actually have joy and suffering at the same time. Just because people around you are suffering and you have joy at times doesn't take away their suffering. And it was a really cool realization for me because I felt initially guilty about having that joy. And then I was like, "No, it's okay; I can be joyful even though there is great suffering." And I have great compassion for those who are suffering right now. It was neat to just hold those. And I just want to encourage you out there. [With] this heaviness and stuff, you can actually have compassion for the suffering of the world and what's happening, have the seriousness of what's going on, but also at the same time keep your joy and do things to make sure that you are refreshed and excited about life. I would encourage you: Now is the time to take stock. Think about what is no longer serving you. What I realized is that I had travel plans every other weekend. I had a trip to Australia planned to teach, and all of a sudden, boom, COVID hit, and travel is gone—done. I had this, "Wow!" like, relief because, on my own, I would have never canceled all those things; I felt committed. And all of a sudden, the universe gave me this gift to just say, "Guess what? We're going to give you a pause." Going forward, I don't know how it's going to look because I love to teach, but I know things are going to be different. And I bet those of you listening out there are feeling some of that too because this is an opportunity to pause. I've done a lot more journaling, and a lot of it [centers] around: What am I not going to take with me going forward? What am I going to eliminate? What is no longer serving me? I'm coloring more, taking more walks with my puppies, or having more time on Zoom with friends, and [with] some of those things, I'm like, "I want those things in my life." You guys who have your families might be having dinners together for the first time. You might be with your children a lot more than you're used to. Some of those things are blessings, and they're beautiful. I just encourage you to really find what's working and what's not, and let this be a time of reset for you.

Dr. Nicole 24:58

I love that. I was listening to almost 30 podcasts the other day, they're great, and they were calling it "a life edit." [It's about] going through different parts of your life and quite literally editing them. Like, how do I want to show up when I'm online? How am I showing up online? How am I showing up to my family, my friends, and my work? And I just thought, "What a perfect time to do that." And then, just to piggyback off what you said about being able to hold joy, it kind of goes back to what you said about the collective consciousness and fear. If none of us are allowed to feel joy, then we're not raising any of that collective consciousness too. So of course there are times when you're not going to feel that, but if you are feeling that, it's okay. And I love that you gave... It's almost like you gave people permission to feel that way, and I think people need that.

Dr. Jill 25:48

Yes, we do—joy, sorrow, anger, sadness, any of these emotions. Part of my work... I'll just share with you that I didn't know how to feel anger or sadness for many, many years. I just suppressed that part. That's not okay. "I'm just happy," which is so unhealthy, right? I had autoimmune diseases, and I realized in myself and in my patients that a lot of that develops from suppressing anger. Because anger was never allowed, I thought: "Okay, that's not an okay emotion, so stuff it down. Put it away." It hurts your own body. And [with] sadness, it's the same way; I would just go to a happy bubble Jill and ignore the sadness. As I learned to process it, it was scary because all of a sudden I had many, many years and decades of sadness that came up, and it was tough. But what I realized is that whether it's joy or sadness or anger or any of these emotions, they come through like a wave. It feels like you're going to be overwhelmed and you're going to drown, but if you hang in there and you get in touch with yourself and you have compassion for the fact that you're feeling like a normal human being... And you ride that wave. I learned to ride it just like a surfer. So I'm surfing emotions now. It's so beautiful because as that sadness comes or as that anger comes, you recognize it, you have compassion for your humanness, and it passes, and you actually feel way, way, way better than if you tried to stuff it and put it away. So even with the stress response, I think this is a really great tool that we can teach [to] people [who are] listening. You're going to have anger, you're going to have sadness, and you're going to have joy. All of those are okay, and there's nothing wrong with you. And if the sadness is more intense right now because you have some loss you're dealing with, [whether] financial or otherwise, it's okay. The biggest thing I could tell you about this: This is going to pass. We are going to get through this. Even if it feels insurmountable or like it's extending on, it's going to pass, and we're going to come out stronger on the other side. I love being an encourager in that way because I'm no different from you and I have my days. But I'd love to hear any comments you have, Dr. Nicole.

Dr. Nicole 27:52

Yes. No, I think everything you said is beautiful. What's interesting [is that] when I do NET on patients, the things that come up are the things that people didn't sit with. It's the stuff that you couldn't process or go through a lot of times as a child because we don't know how to really process emotion. But it's interesting that even as we get older, in our 20s or 30s and into adulthood, we still don't always want to process things because it's easier [not to]. Just like you used to suppress anger, I used to just decide to feel nothing. Like, "Oh, I could just become numb real quick and not go through any of it." So I think being able to truly process what's going on for you right now helps your health so much.

Dr. Jill 28:39

It's so true. You mentioned earlier, a glass of wine, you might... So one of the things we do is suppress emotions. Another thing we do is self-soothe, and that's a really sweet way of saying "addictions." I love talking about this because I really haven't had any issues with alcohol or drugs. They have never been part of my life, so I had this self-righteous kind of thing like: "Oh, I'm not an addict, and I don't deal with those things." That's so wrong because we all have our ways of dealing with those emotions that are painful. And I started to realize, like, work, that can be an addiction. Here I am—I love my work. I can pour myself into it when I'm feeling pain, sadness, or overwhelm, and I feel good because I'm producing and helping people. But that's an addiction like any other if we're not able to deal with the emotions. So work can be that. Online shopping, eating, or having these kinds of addictions is because that raises our serotonin and temporarily makes us feel [different] for the time being, and of course, drugs and alcohol [as well]. But it's so much bigger than that. Did you know that even relationships and sex can be addictions for some people? I've been doing a lot of studying on relationships. When someone doesn't want to be alone and they're continually going from relationship to relationship to relationship, these things are all, basically, ways of dealing with that. We're all human, so I believe we all have some form of dealing with it. And they're not all bad because a lot of times, like [with] work, we're productive; we're helping the world. But when that becomes our way of coping instead of actually being with ourselves, that's when it becomes an issue. I'm just learning all about this and sharing it with you because [of] some of my own struggles. But it's so important, especially at this time because you're isolated in your home with your family, yourself, or your dogs, and there's a lot of emotion, a lot of loss, and a lot of fear. So if now more than ever you're feeling the tendency to want to cope with an addiction, any tips for that, Dr. Nicole? What do you recommend for people to do if they're dealing with those emotions and they want

to go to alcohol or drugs or shopping or relationships or all the types of things we use?

Dr. Nicole 30:44

It's tough because some addictions are really quite literally diseases, and we do see that. Sometimes there are things we do to balance the neurotransmitters, which obviously you do in your work too, to actually help them deal with this because it's really hard to do solo. And then there are other ones that we're really aware of, like keeping ourselves busy or just making plans all the time. Or maybe I've decided, "I have more time, but I'm just going to create a million Zoom meetings so I'm still busy all the time," right? I mean, I think—

Dr. Jill 31:17

Are you talking about me? [both laughing]

Dr. Nicole 31:19

No! [both laughing] No, definitely not. Are you doing that?

Dr. Jill 31:24

Well, I do like to keep myself busy, and I totally see that as part of this.

Dr. Nicole 31:28

Well, it's interesting; Marianne Williamson called this a collective pause. So if this is a pause, why do we need to fill that space? What happens if we sit with that? And, you know, I'm a talker. So I like to talk it out with Matt, a best friend of mine, or my sister. You know, like, "This is what I'm feeling" or "This is what's hard for me." I'm also a journaler. I feel like writing is really helpful for me to be like, "What is it that I'm trying to escape right now?" Or, "Why do I want to be busy? Why is it hard for me to just work on a puzzle or hang out or read for a little bit?" So I think if anything, just becoming aware of it is so helpful. Like, that's the first step, right? Like: "I'm more aware that this is something I'm trying to do to create busyness, to keep me away from maybe just sitting or being with myself. I'm not sure what it is." So I think [it's helpful for] awareness and then self-discovery. If it's something that you want to go deeper into, then [it's good] to find somebody who can kind of guide you through that. I like doing it with NET; other people like doing it with NLP, right? But it's a good time to go into that right now. I think it's a great time for self-discovery.

Dr. Jill 32:37

Oh, I do too. We can take [advantage of] this opportunity. And you guys know that both Dr. Nicole and I are available online. But there are all kinds of therapists for any of these modalities. If something else works better for you... I mentioned a few. I will just clarify: There's cognitive-behavioral therapy, which is typical talk therapy, and that's great, but I'll tell you my experience. I'm in my head all the time. I'm very analytical, so talk therapy actually makes it worse because I get more in my head and more out of my body. For some people, they need that. For me, I needed to go below the neck and actually get into my body and start to feel again. So when we talk about that, that's trauma-based therapy or somatic therapy. When we say trauma-based therapy, it doesn't mean you have to have had a horrible, abusive childhood. I didn't, but I still had trauma. I believe we all have these things that are traumatic, and because we're five, six, or eight [years old], we don't know how to process them and don't have the emotional capacity. But if they get stuck in our tissues and we never deal with them, they come out as disease, as an inability to adapt to stress, as addiction, and as behavioral issues or difficulty with relationships, which is a common one. So we actually have to go back and deal with them. So if you're looking for someone, you could look for somatic types of therapies or trauma-based therapies. Some of those include—and this [list] is not exclusive—brainspotting, EMDR, and NET, which I would assume is kind of in that basket too.

Dr. Nicole 33:55

It is. Absolutely.

Dr. Jill 33:57

And then it seems like NLP—neuro-linguistic programming—[is also], and there's more. Those are just a few, but they are super helpful. And most of the practitioners are available online, so if you're struggling, now is a great time to reach out. I've done a lot of work through Zoom calls. One of my first NLP therapists was in San Francisco, so I went out to visit her, and then I did Zoom calls. But it can be so powerful, and I feel like it's just as effective to do it virtually. So if you're feeling stressed, reach out and get some help. Even if it's coffee with a friend, you can start there. Professional help is available. And if you need more references, we can both share the people that we know—or see Dr. Nicole!

Dr. Nicole 34:35

Well, I was just going to say that I've been doing a lot of emotional work on Zoom, and I think people are finding it the same as if they were sitting on my table, so

thank goodness. I have my fellow NET practitioners or other practitioners that do emotional work. If I'm like... I'll call them up and get a little [inaudible] because I feel like it's the time to do it. And I was just going to piggyback off one other thing you said. I think it was Woody Allen who said, "I don't get angry; I just throw a tumor." But it's that same idea; whatever you're repressing has to express itself in some form because it's energy. Whether you look at it as quantum physics, which is way too hard for me to explain, everything can create matter, and emotions and stress can too. [It] is crazy to think about, but it's so [well] documented now.

Dr. Jill 35:26

It is. I remember looking at the data. I grew up on a farm, and I had exposures [to things] like atrazine that were endocrine disruptors, probably in utero. I had breast cancer at 25. So I know that those real chemical toxicities and stress and [other] things affected me. But when I learned that there was a psychological connection to this nurturing... It's breast cancer, so it's the organ that we use to nurture the children that we birth. When I realized that there was actually a connection to breast cancer and over-nurturing and not taking care of your own needs, I had to do some work around that. But I think a lot of women with breast cancer have a tendency to be that type, and they're kind of ignoring some of their own needs at the expense of their own bodies. It's so fascinating.

Dr. Nicole 36:07

Absolutely. It's so fascinating too, like you were just saying, the nurturing aspect where different cancers decide to show up—or not cancer but even just dis-ease and imbalances. There's this great book called *Your Body Speaks Your Mind*. I love it because it explains so much about different emotional correlations, stress, or trauma that show up in different parts of our bodies. It's mind-blowing.

Dr. Jill 36:32

I've seen those too, and I'm like, "Wow, this is associated with this," and it often makes sense. It's on a metaphysical level, but it's interesting.

Dr. Nicole 36:39

It is interesting.

Dr. Jill 36:40

I want to talk a little bit about sleep. Are you wearing your Oura ring? Yes. We're not associated with the company in any way, but I will tell you, [it's] one of my favorite things ever—and all my favorite people have them.

Dr. Nicole 36:53

I know.

Dr. Jill 36:55

I mean, there are tons of other devices out there, but we love our Oura rings. One of the things I find to be so key with stress is sleep. It's one of those things where if someone comes in and they're not sleeping, I really can't do much for their health until we get that sleep [inaudible] down. So why don't we just talk a little about that and [give some] tips for sleep? So the Oura ring is a tracking device to track your deep sleep, your REM sleep, your activity, your temperature, and your heart rate. It's a really cool device. There are a lot of them out there; you don't need the ring. But I know we both love to wake up in the morning and check our sleep stats.

Dr. Nicole 37:29

We do.

Dr. Jill 37:30

I'm always competitive with myself, like, "Is it above 90% or not?" But I found it to be super helpful. For me, I get all of my deep sleep in the first half of my night, like the first four hours, and then my REM in the morning. So if I go to bed really late, I'm usually lacking in deep sleep, or if I wake up super early to catch a flight, I usually miss the REM. It's so fascinating to [be aware of all of that]. And then my body compensates. So if I go three nights without enough deep [sleep], the fourth night my body's like, "Woo!" and it gets three hours of deep sleep. It's really cool to track. And you can track it with alcohol intake, foods that you eat, the stresses that you do, or a fever, so it's fascinating. Have you found that to be helpful?

Dr. Nicole 38:08

Oh, I love it. I mean, Matt is like, "How about you decide how you feel about your sleep before you look at your ring?—because you can't keep looking at that to decide. I'd be like, "Oh, I slept great!" and then I'd be like, "I slept terribly!" But yes, definitely, I've noticed that [with] different supplements that I've been using for sleep, like magnesium glycinate, inositol, or phosphatidylserine, I can tell which ones really help me get into that deep sleep. If I drink wine—I drink dry farm [wine

since] you try to go as clean as possible, [and] I can't tell you the last time I had more than two glasses at a time—I will see my heart rate variability go down for sure the next morning. It's annoying that I'm that sensitive to it, but I mean, it's also powerful to have that information so that if you have a big day or you have an early morning, you can tell, like, "Well, I know if I do this that it's going to be lower." And what I thought was really interesting was that I was interviewing—oh, Dr. Anna Cabeca, your colleague—and she was saying how she used to check babies' heart rate variability all the time. That's just what they'd do for babies, and somehow we stopped doing that. It's such a powerful tool to see how well you're managing stress and just how well your health is in general. I like that aspect too because when you meditate, it will track your heart rate variability too. So you can see when you rest how deeply you're able to actually get into a de-stressful state.

Dr. Jill 39:42

I love that. I just want to explain if you're listening and you don't know what heart rate variability is. These devices track that. There's also an app called HeartMath that's been one of the most famous ones. You can get it on a phone or a computer. There are others out there. But heart rate variability is your beat-to-beat variability. So if we have a nice sinusoidal curve and it's real even and it goes like 74, 68, and kind of [has] this nice, sinusoidal wave, that shows that we have a parasympathetic tone, which means we have a lack of the high-stress environment in our body—a lack of cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline. If we have a stress response, it'll go to more of a sympathetic overtone, and that creates this jagged pattern, so it goes 80 and then 60 [for example]—so a real jagged beat-to-beat variability. It's kind of hard to explain, but the bottom line is that when your heart rate variability is smooth, it indicates you have a higher parasympathetic [tone]. So it indicates you have a higher de-stress tone. If your heart rate variability is very jagged and low, it's going to indicate a more sympathetic tone. What Dr. Nicole was describing is that if you've ever been pregnant and you have a heart rate monitor on your baby, that is heart rate variability. So again, we've done this for years. What happens is when that baby's heart rate variability goes very jagged and there's a sympathetic overtone, that's a sign: "Oh, we might need a C-section. We might need to save this baby because he's under stress." It's literally how we monitor the baby's stress in utero. We can do it as adults; we just don't do it. But it's a great way of tracking. If you want to know how your system is stressed right now and how to reduce stress, and you want to know: "How do I figure that out?"—that would be the number one thing I would say for you to find as a heart rate variability tracking device. You can actually do meditation, Vielight, therapy, or all of these things we've talked about. Go for a walk, and you can see the changes in your heart rate variability.

Dr. Nicole 41:32

I love it. It's such a good explanation of it because it's one of those things where if we find it so powerful for babies, which, of course, it's such a precious time... We are able to track it now as adults, just to get another piece of data for yourself. It makes a lot of sense.

Dr. Jill 41:49

So as we end, if you have any last parting words of wisdom or comments for people to reduce stress, what would you say to our listeners?

Dr. Nicole 41:59

Oh gosh. Parting wisdom... I mean, just keep in mind that everybody is doing the very best they can. I think sometimes it's easy to judge how somebody else is experiencing this time. I think [it's important] to know that everybody's going to experience this according to their own patterns and their own belief systems. And I think that as you're giving yourself grace, give grace to other people too. And just to be kind. I feel like it's such a powerful time for kindness.

Dr. Jill 42:29

I love that, Nicole. You and I are on the same wavelength. As you were talking, my word was just "grace," and you said it. But I love leaving our listeners with that because grace means undeserved merit and undeserved kindness. And right now, there are people who might get on your nerves, or you might see a post that you totally disagree with. What I find, though, is that the environment is so hostile. And I just want to leave you [with this thought]: Have grace, because people are doing the best they can. And they might say something to really irritate you, but before you respond, take a deep breath, check in with yourself, and find out if it's necessary. It might be. But I would love to leave you with the thought that kindness and grace will go a long way toward spreading that and helping other people decrease their stressors.

Dr. Nicole 43:11

I love it. It's beautiful.

Dr. Jill 43:13

Awesome. Thank you, guys, for listening. Feel free to share this around if you found it helpful, and we will talk to you soon. Bye bye.