



Dr. Jill

Your Functional Medicine Expert®
JILL CARNAHAN, MD ABIMM, ABoIM, IFMCP

[#93: Dr. Jill Interviews Author Sonia Hunt on Overcoming Food Allergies with Functional Medicine](#)

Dr. Jill 00:13

Hey, everybody! It's another Live with Dr. Jill and my special guest, Sonia Hunt, whom I will introduce in just a moment. I'm excited as always to be here today with a friend, colleague, author, and someone who I think you'll enjoy hearing from today. It's something very practical that many of you have dealt with, or if you haven't, you might have a child or a loved one who has food allergies. We're going to dive into that topic. Sonia is going to share not only the book that she's written, an absolutely amazing resource for you, but also the tips and tricks that she's learned along the way.

Dr. Jill 00:45

One thing I love is [hearing someone's] story. I know that in my own journey, a lot of my own education and medicine didn't come from medical school. It came from my own journey through Crohn's, cancer, food allergies—like you, Sonia—mold illness, and all these things. Some of my most precious teachings and things come from that experience, and I know Sonia has a lot to share from that perspective as well.

Dr. Jill 01:05

Before I introduce her, just a little background: You can find me at JillCarnahan.com. There are over ten years of free blogs and resources there—loads and loads of information—all free. If you want to find out more about mold, Lyme disease, food allergies, or mast cell activation, you can find it all on my website.

Dr. Jill 01:24

If you need any products or services, DrJillHealth.com is where I have my retail store. It has all kinds of things, like Hist Assist for mast cell activation or Histamine Blocker for DAO and food. Those can all be found at that site.

Dr. Jill 01:38

If you haven't heard any of the Lives before, we are going on 90-something

episodes, and they're all available to you for free on iTunes, YouTube, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Thanks for joining us today.

Dr. Jill 01:51

I want to introduce Sonia. She is a food allergy activist, TEDx speaker, bestselling author, and tech marketing executive. She's a mentor to global organizations focused on social impact and the creator of Three to Be, a holistic health and wellbeing program that guides people on how to be healthy, be safe, and be well to thrive in life. We totally have this in common, Sonia.

Dr. Jill 02:12

Her first book, *NUT JOB: How I Crushed Food Allergies to Thrive*, is a prescriptive memoir detailing her journey to become food allergy-free and an Amazon #1 bestseller and #1 hot new release. Her life work is at the intersection of humans, health, and technology, creating products and services that drive impact for people and the planet. Her platform helps people of color manage and overcome food allergies. She's driving conversations on mental health and food allergies. It's so relevant!

Dr. Jill 02:42

She was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is a fearless foodie and proud first-generation Indian American who currently resides in San Francisco, California. It's so awesome to have you here and to talk to you, Sonia!

Sonia Hunt 02:55

Hi! Thank you so much. It's so great to see you and I'm so honored to be here! Thank you.

Dr. Jill 03:00

You're so welcome. I thought your story was so relevant. And I asked you before if it was okay to share that. But we met through a mutual friend who's a business negotiator. He knows everybody and was like, "Jill, you've got to meet Sonia!" And, "Sonia, you've got to meet Dr. Jill!" You came to me for some care at the beginning, so we met that way. But I have great respect for what you're doing in the world as an activist, an author, and all of this stuff. What I want to do is start back with your

story. Where did it all start? You have quite the story, so tell us a little about how this all came to be.

Sonia Hunt 03:32

Yes, absolutely. I was diagnosed with severe food allergies, environmental allergies, and asthma around the age of three—the trifecta I always say that nobody wants. We learned the way that you don't want to learn: I ate something and had an immediate reaction. I was in anaphylaxis, although I was so young that I had no idea what was happening. My parents had never seen that type of a reaction before. They had never even heard the word food allergy before. They were born and raised in India and came to the States when they went to college. My siblings and I are first-generation Indian Americans eating Western food. We had no idea that inside my body something was going on.

Sonia Hunt 04:21

It was at another dinner party that my parents had when a snack came out. "Try peanut butter and jelly." I'm taking a few bites and boom!—hives and anaphylaxis. Luckily, many people at the party that my parents knew were physicians and had seen something like this before, so they were able to get me to the emergency room in time. The doctors saved my life that day.

Sonia Hunt 04:50

I've lived with inflammation for four decades. I know you understand that. My food allergies, as I got older, got more severe. I've been on the ER table almost dead four times in my lifetime. I've been in the ER hundreds of times for emergent but non-anaphylaxis incidents.

Sonia Hunt 05:20

In 2008, I had my latest anaphylaxis incident. It was the worst one that I have ever had! When I finally was released from the ER that day, for a full year of my life after that night, I had hives all over my body. Can you even imagine having huge welts all over your body for an entire year? I went through every possible emotion that you could go through. That's when I said to myself: "Whatever you're doing is apparently wrong because here we are again. I now need to get to the root of why this is happening and what's really happening. And I want to have a North Star to age healthily while getting rid of these."

Sonia Hunt 06:20

That was in 2008. Fast forward a decade after that, and I worked on all areas of my life, [including] physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional—holistic health. During that process as well, I was introduced to you. Together, we started to have conversations around gut health: Is there a relationship with food allergies? What does that mean? Not only have I learned so much from you but you're such an integral part of my health transformation, which culminated in learning in 2020 for the first time that my food allergies were gone.

Dr. Jill 07:05

We have to pause here. Let me clarify for people listening. We deal with a lot of IgG food sensitivities. That can be present. That can cause delayed reactions like achiness, headache, brain fog, or even rashes. But it's delayed. It's rarely, if ever, anaphylactic. It's not supposed to be anaphylactic. We're talking about true IgE. People can die from this. You were close to that several times. I just want our listeners to know there's a difference. I treat both. But what we're talking about is true and blue. Some people outgrow them—you didn't and got worse.

Dr. Jill 07:43

That's one reason why I wanted to have you on. Just like for me, they think Crohn's is incurable, and I am cured. Just like for you, they think: "Food allergies are forever. There's no cure. There's nothing that you can do about it." And that's why I'm so excited to have you on today because you have reversed this and made a change. And we can talk about the deep dive of some of the things you did to do that. But this is something that most people have been told or have heard is "lifelong," "irreversible," and "some people grow out of it but there's not any control that we have over it." And we're saying that's not true.

Sonia Hunt 08:18

That's not true. I was always told what's true today: "We don't know the exact cause of food allergies and there is no cure." When you've heard that since you're three, you're like: "Okay. There is no cure so I have to learn how to live with this." And incidents do happen. My whole life was only focused on my physical body and making sure that it could withstand another attack. I never looked at holistic health.

Dr. Jill 08:49

Let's go back to that first before we talk about the solutions. I would just like to know [about] one or two experiences. I can't imagine; as a child, you can't breathe, your lips are swollen, and your body's rashing out. How did that feel? And do you remember any specific incident or time when you were taken to the ER? You had to be terrified.

Sonia Hunt 09:11

Oh, yes. Probably one of the most mortifying times was in college. I was walking to lecture and one of my college roommates was like: "Take a banana with you! We've got to finish them." So I took a banana and ate it on the way. By the time I got to class, my throat was closing up and I hardly had any air. But I'm in a 300-person lecture at 8:00 a.m. And of course, there's the cute guy sitting in front of me as well. [laughs] I was mortified. I got up and went to the water fountain. I tried to have some water, and it just wasn't happening. I think I was already turning blue and somebody was like: "Oh my God, something's happening! We need to call 911." I was rushed off to the emergency room. It was embarrassing. I was never allergic to bananas before that. That was incredibly scary to learn that any random food that I might try or that I've eaten before could all of a sudden cause this reaction.

Dr. Jill 10:22

Yes, this is something new. And I'm thinking about myself as you're telling it. By being with that many people, there's a little claustrophobia. And then to have [an experience] like, "I can't breathe!"—there are so many layers there. I can't imagine. Wow! That was college. In the last decade and a few years, you really started to reverse it. What was the first point where you thought, "What if there was something different?" or that you were going to maybe go down a different path to look for answers?

Sonia Hunt 10:57

That emergent situation was in 2008. I was in the hospital for about three days. That's when I was having all these conversations with the universe, lying there. In my book, I write that I was making a deal. I was like, "If I can get out of this ER safely, then I'm going to change everything." Very dramatic, like: "I'm going to change everything! You'll see! Watch!" It was almost as if the universe was like: "Okay, you can get out of here. But just to make sure you're going to make good on

this, we're going to give you hives for one year and see what you do." [laughter] Now I look back on all of that and I'm like, "Oh, my gosh."

Sonia Hunt 11:40

But that was the time when I felt: "How could I be here again?" It broke me down across all areas of my world, and I was like: "I refuse to be in this position again." And there was some fire in my soul that I was like: "I will figure this out. I will find the right people who believe that I can figure this out and who will help me on this journey. We will get to the bottom of it." I saw it as my life's work because who knows if it would happen or when?

Sonia Hunt 12:21

In 2010, after I healed from all that anaphylaxis, I started to put my story out there and tell people. I hid it my whole life. I never used to talk to people about all of this. I was super embarrassed. [It felt] shameful. But in 2010, I said, "I'm going for it." It was a process of a decade to get to where I am now. It was a lot of testing and tweaking of many different things. But there's so much learning that happened.

Dr. Jill 12:54

What I hear in you is the thing I hear in any patient who's successful at overcoming illness, and I've been there as well. Number one is that there is a deep fire within—"I will figure this out somehow"—almost a desperation. I was there too, I remember, with cancer, Crohn's, and mold. Every time I got to the pit of despair and was like, "There's no hope," I remember feeling: "No! There's this fire inside. I'm going to figure this out." Any patient knows they might visit five, ten, or twenty doctors and either get no answers or get put off until they find it. So you do need a lot of persistence and a lot of belief that you can.

Dr. Jill 13:36

Talking to you out there, no matter what kind of illness you're dealing with, you can figure it out. I believe that just that desire alone, that prayer to God, the universe—wherever you're at [such as] in the hospital, I've been there too—ignites the people and the resources to start to open up for us. It's that first little instinct or inkling that we maybe have hope and can figure it out and that we start to shift towards: "I'm going to do whatever I can to figure it out." That opens the doors for people, resources, and things that we need to come across our path or for us to

seek them out—even like you and I meeting or all the other people who've helped you in your journey. I feel like that desire starts the process.

Dr. Jill 14:17

I want to encourage you if you're listening and feeling hopeless about any situation: You can overcome anything. But it starts with that desire and that will to survive. I've got a German-Swiss heritage and they're kind of stubborn and stoic. I don't always like that at all, but the truth is that there's a piece of that that creates this fire and drive. And you obviously have that too.

Sonia Hunt 14:42

And I'm so glad that it came out because it was dormant for all my life. But then that fire came out, and I almost immediately said to myself: "I can do this. I will do this. I truly will figure it out." Taking that pressure off of "this is a goal" and seeing it as my life's work took a lot of pressure off because I tend to also add all these things to my plate. Then I'm like, "Oh, God, I've got to do this now." And I was like: "I don't know if this can happen, but we're going to give it our best shot. And I won't stop until I figure it out."

Dr. Jill 15:24

Yes. And I didn't have hives for a year. But when I started doing mold treatment, I did detox binders and I had hives for at least two or three months, head to toe. So I also relate to that in a little fraction of what [you went through]. It was horrible!

Sonia Hunt 15:37

Horrible!

Dr. Jill 15:38

So I get it. So from [being] in the hospital bed to obviously being an author and being passionate about this and healing yourself, where did the journey start? Tell us a little bit about that journey and the levels.

Sonia Hunt 15:53

I have an amazing allergist that I've been with a long time out here on the West Coast, and I ran this by him. I said, "How do you feel?" I wanted him and his team to be on board with all of this. I love that team so much because they've always said to me: "Our goal is not for you to continue to eliminate foods from your diet. We want

you to eat everything you can." Like, "This is great. You're taking ownership of your health and we want to be on this journey with you." Also, in talking to my parents, I was on, for my entire life, so much Western medication. I remember a conversation with my mom. When I left the ER that day, I left with a duffel bag full of pills. Soon thereafter, I went back to work even with all my hives and I was still taking all this medication. So I felt very foggy and—

Dr. Jill 16:57

The things they probably gave you: Antihistamines, multiple fractalkines, and steroids, I'm assuming. Those kinds of medications calm and put a wet blanket on an immune system, but they don't say [in essence], "Why, immune system, are you being overactive?" They're just like, "Shut up!"

Sonia Hunt 17:10

Exactly. It's all about suppression. Here I was suppressing. And I said to my mom, "Is there some healthier way where I can maybe take a different medication that doesn't make me feel this way?" That's where, coming from India, we started talking about Ayurvedic medicine. We pulled into this support team, as I call it, of doctors. There was an Ayurvedic MD who also started to get involved with my situation and with the food I'm eating, how I'm exercising, and what I'm putting into my body. They ran a lot of testing [and looked at] what medication I was taking. In India, with Ayurvedic medicine, they do believe that in situations like this, there's a ton of fire and toxicity that's in your body that's trying to get out, which is why it manifests as hives on your body.

Sonia Hunt 18:06

Some of it is like: You've got to let all of that come out before you start to heal it, which is not what I wanted to do. But for the first time, I had to say, "We're going to trust some people coming into this process." We ran everything by both sides of the house—the Western and the Eastern—and we started down a plan. Eventually, that's how I got into functional medicine as well. There was always this question in my head about the state of my gut health: "Is something going on that's causing or exacerbating my allergies?" Those were some real starting points for me to expand my awareness to other forms of healing because there are so many other ways to heal my allergies.

Dr. Jill 18:58

I want to hear about some of the things you found. Just from a functional perspective, from my perspective, with someone like you coming in, I always think of toxic load as a bucket. We all have a bucket that we're born with or have a capacity for. Depending on genetics and environment—how we were raised, the foods we're eating, and the air we're breathing—sometimes our bucket has a lot of margin and we do pretty well. We all have some toxic load. Our bodies are created to detoxify. You can't get rid of toxins but you can minimize exposure. I always say simple things like clean air, clean water, and clean food. Go back to the basics. And 80% of our toxic load is from the air we breathe, so just getting air filtration, clean air sources, clean food, or clean water can very much be a part of the solution.

Dr. Jill 19:43

But as that toxic load starts to fill up and overflow, one of the things that can manifest is sensitivities [such as] allergies and hives. It's like the system that was created to defend us against invaders and bad things start to turn on us and react to things that are normal everyday [foods] like peanuts or whatever. To me, that's a sign of an overactive immune system. Then we say: Root cause. Is there an infection? Is there a dysbiosis of the gut?—meaning abnormal microbes that are putting out excessive toxins. Or is there another toxic exposure? Mold can be a trigger for some people. But something in you or anyone who's suffered from this has triggered their immune system to be a little bit overreactive.

Sonia Hunt 20:21

Yes, absolutely. When we worked together in the beginning, we started looking at all this, [such as], "Is there mold exposure in my home?" and things like getting an air filter. The focus with food allergies for me was always just on the food, so I had all these other things that I wasn't even considering.

Sonia Hunt 20:42

Even with the food, as part of this process that I went through, it was almost like I learned to eat again. In the testing that I've done over the years, we started to get a real understanding of my genetic predispositions from the family. In the extended family, you've got type 2 diabetes and thyroid issues. There are all kinds of food-related issues that I wasn't even considering. It wasn't just [about] eating foods that were safe; it was [about determining]: Is the food I'm eating that is safe

for my allergies good for my body? Or is it causing an issue somewhere else in my body? A lot of that was going on. My first step—even as I have in the book—was all around changing [one's] mindset around all of this. I just had to get my head in a different place.

Dr. Jill 21:34

Let's talk about that. If someone's listening and is like, "My son," "daughter," "friend," or [I] "myself have allergies," how do I change my mindset?

Sonia Hunt 21:46

What works for me, and I talk about this in the book, I started off by defining. I'm big on journaling, whiteboarding, or yellow stickies. Whatever works for you. I just drew: What does a healthy Sonia Hunt look like today? Is she skinny? Does she have clear skin? What does that look like? And then what does she look like 20 years from now? How is she aging? I literally started drawing this out and thinking about it. I went very, very deep into weight, skin, and function. I always grew up seeing older folks have that pillbox. I call it "the old lady pillbox." And I was like, "God forbid that I would have the old lady pillbox because it'd be full of allergy medications." These are things that I wrote down and I was like: "Here's what I want and here's what I don't want."

Sonia Hunt 22:52

We all have stuff as we get older and all of that, but I knew that I didn't want to be on medication all my life. I knew that I didn't want to deal with other things that would be difficult for me to get rid of, like all of a sudden, because I was eating badly and gaining a ton of weight.

Sonia Hunt 23:13

I strategized this all out and defined it for myself, and that was one big piece. The other big piece is that I did a ton of research on the stories of people who have completely transformed their health. There are so many amazing people out there who, similar to me, had something going on. They just put a stick in the ground and said, "I'm going to do this." I started to read these inspirational stories and [consider]: "How did they do it?"

Sonia Hunt 23:46

I started to visualize and put together yellow stickies on my mirror in my bathroom of what I wanted to achieve in all of this. They were little reminders. Every time I went down, I would go into that room and look at that sticky [note], and boom, it was like a click, as I called it. There was a whole series of these little steps that I call micro-steps that, on a daily basis, I started to change behavior. Every time I was like, "No, I'm tired; I don't want to do that," I would go back and look at that vision board and say, "But here's where I'm trying to get to." It was a series of all of this to also get the mind in a healthy space and a growth mindset because I think that for a long time, I was in more of a victim mindset.

Dr. Jill 24:39

Truly, our system creates victims. And there's nothing wrong. I'm not shaming anyone, because I've been there too. It's so easy to be like, "Oh my gosh!" I've realized there are a lot of people who've had cancer and they live as "I'm a cancer survivor." I rarely say that because, in my mind, it's gone and passed and I got through it. There are times, Sonia, where I'm like: "Oh, yes, I had cancer." It's almost like another life or another person. It's so not associated with me. I'm proud that I'm a cancer survivor and don't mind talking about it, but I don't identify with it. That's something I can see that we can get stuck in and then we lose the growth. I love talking [about] mindset. I love that you're sharing these practical tips because I can also relate.

Dr. Jill 25:24

I remember, right after my divorce, a really low point in my life. I started just walking and meditating. I wanted to come up with some mantra that would help me remember the things that I wanted to put at the forefront and the vision of who I saw myself to be in 10 or 20 years like you. This may sound silly to you [who are] listening, but I every day would say: "Every day, in every way, I'm stronger and healthier, wealthier and more resilient, younger and more beautiful. I will overcome all obstacles. I will outlast all adversity. Things are turning in my favor." For three years—probably every day, multiple times a day—I said that. And I had little quotes from scripture to go with each one, so there's a longer version that includes all that. And I can say it outright.

Dr. Jill 26:05

And it was some of this work on NLP, subconscious mindset, growth mindset, and all these things. What I remember learning, which is what we're both saying, is that our subconscious mind just takes orders. It's just an order-taker. It's very simple. And anything that our subconscious believes it will bring to pass. That's all it knows how to do. Usually, it's our subconscious that thinks we're sick or will never get well. That sabotages our wellness.

Dr. Jill 26:29

But if we can program our subconscious through repetition, reminders, dreams, meditation, and prayer, we can reprogram it to believe. And for me, there's no doubt in my mind. I believe: Stronger, healthier, wealthier, more resilient, younger, and more beautiful. And the funny thing is, at the end, that [phrase] "more beautiful," I was ashamed of even saying that. I was like, "That's so vain!" [laughter] It's not like I want to be a fake plastic. I just want to be more vibrant and healthy as I age.

Sonia Hunt 26:59

Yes. That's exactly what I thought.

Dr. Jill 27:03

I was like, "I'm going to throw that one in too." Even my ex-husband asked me the other day, "Jill, did you get plastic surgery?" And I've never done anything like that. But I was like, "Do I look younger than I used to?" He was like, "Yes, you do." [laughs]

Sonia Hunt 27:19

[laughs] The transformation on my skin from all of this has been unbelievable! My friends asked me: "You're doing something, right?" And I was like: "Yes. I, for the first time, have true joy in my soul." And even joy with allergies. I found joy in allergies. I never knew if my allergies would go away. I'm so grateful and lucky to go into remission. But I just had to find purpose in it, and I was without purpose. That's why that mindset piece, like the meditation, the visualization—I'm so with you. I did all of that.

Sonia Hunt 28:01

And I said to myself: "There's no amount of juju that I will not do. If it's good juju, what is it? Tell me what it is." I would go ask and interview people who I was

inspired by. I would say, "What are you doing?" Like, "I'm trying to transform my health. What are you doing?" And I'd write down: "This person is doing this. I'm going to try it." Doing these little, little steps every day didn't feel burdensome. But I could feel all this weight coming off of me, especially the worry off my head. And then I was able to start making conscious decisions.

Dr. Jill 28:38

I didn't think we were going to go deep into this, but this is making me so happy because I so relate and I also think people need to know. I take supplements. I exercise. I do the things that we need to do to be healthy. But this piece right here has the most power because it sets you up for everything else. And what you mentioned about joy, I remember right after my diagnosis of breast cancer, not knowing if I was going to live or die and having that same feeling. The purpose and mission that I had—I didn't know the outcome. And now I know, so it's easy to look back. Both of us can look back, like, "Both of us were healed." But I remember in the moment not knowing if I had six months, six years, or less and still knowing there was purpose and joy in that time.

Dr. Jill 29:21

I think that's so important too, because right now is a tough time. We were just talking before. Life is crazy. If you're listening out there and haven't had a crisis, it's coming because life is crazy. [laughter] I'm so sorry to say that but the truth is... We just had fires in our community. Many thousands of people lost their homes. Before that, my 17-year-old puppy died. Things that are tough. And I'm okay, but life is hard right now. And for everybody out there listening, there's a lot. And we expect COVID to be over and it's not. But it's relevant because it's still okay to find joy today, [even] in the midst of your hardship. Whatever you're suffering from right now, this is where you find joy. This is where you find it. You find it in the pit, because if you can find it there, you can find it anywhere. And it will take you where you want to go.

Sonia Hunt 30:11

Absolutely. And that incident in 2008 was my pit. I just said, "No more" and put together all these things holistically that I wanted to do. Some of it was mindset. Some of it was creating a support team of different types of people. We talk about expanding awareness to other forms of healing, functional medicine, and Ayurvedic

medicine. There's a chapter in my book called "Cooking Consciously". Finally, your conscious brain is turned on and I'm thinking about my overall health and the health of the planet.

Sonia Hunt 30:49

And one of the biggest things in this whole process was also that there is a voice inside me. I always suppressed it, just like my allergies. And I finally said: "It needs to come out. The real me, my true self, needs to come out and tell people that I'm struggling with this. I need help at times. Here's what's happening." I ended up learning how to advocate for myself and then, as I call it, humanizing allergies, which is helping others out there who are going through this. That really set me free in all of this. And all of these things that I document in my book led to remission. It wasn't like one thing did it. It was doing all of this stuff over a long period of time and consistently that led to it.

Dr. Jill 31:42

I love it. So, mindset, conscious cooking, asking for help, being authentic, and trusting your intuition. What about practical things? You and I talk about gut health or supplements. You don't have to go deep, but what were some of the most practical things from a physical, functional, or Ayurvedic perspective that felt like they were helpful? Were there specific herbs or protocols? Maybe [you can give] a little bit of an overview of that for you?

Sonia Hunt 32:07

Yes, absolutely. I will say that probably all my life, I've also been taking the wrong supplements.

Dr. Jill 32:14

Oh yes. So with some of them, we have two sides of our immune system, Th1 and Th2. And there's Th17 and Treg and all kinds of things in between. And now, with COVID, people know immune system cytokines. But what you just said, I'll just emphasize. I know I'm Th1 dominant, so if I take astragalus or certain herbs, they make me worse. I think that's what you're saying: Certain things activate that and maybe make your immune system more aggressive.

Sonia Hunt 32:39

Absolutely. When we discovered leaky gut, in my situation, a one-a-day vitamin

wasn't going to help. So I was coming with your lead to figure out: What are the right set of supplements to start to heal that? Also, because I'm thinking about genetic predispositions, type 2 diabetes, and as I get older, "What are other things I might have to deal with?" the supplement piece and completely overhauling that with your lead have been tremendous. I think a lot of what you see on my skin as well [and how it's] shining has led to that.

Sonia Hunt 33:20

In the past, it was just taking a One A Day. And it might work for other people, but I think everyone's body is so unique. With Ayurveda, they had different kinds of herbs. But also, a big part of Ayurveda was the food that I was eating, the times when I was eating, and the amounts of food that I was eating. And then there are all kinds of other practices to release toxins. Some of them include massage. And who doesn't love that as well, right? These were areas that I had never spent time on before because I was always just focused on "don't eat things with nuts in them," whereas I started to now open my mind.

Sonia Hunt 33:59

This concept of bio-individuality and personal medicine—that's essentially what we've done now. I'm not taking any medicines; it's all herbal supplements. It's all things that are great for me. I will, I think, always keep EpiPen and Benadryl on hand just in case something ever ends up happening. I really believe in those tools. They've saved my life many times in emergent situations. But I moved down the path of holistic products. Even if it's the food that I eat that is farm-to-table and that's grown from a local market, that's as much of a supplement as having joy and love in my life. All of it comes together to me. I look at all of them as supplements—not necessarily just an herbal supplement—I might put into my body.

Dr. Jill 34:56

That's great because it's so true. And I love that you've said that so many people are on this one-a-day multivitamin. I would say that for 90% or maybe 80% of my patients, that's not the right thing. Either you shouldn't have copper, iron, and molybdenum, or there's something in there you shouldn't have. I find that B vitamins are a perfect example. I take my B separately. I take a very high dose of B1 and B2 and then I don't take much of this one and more of this one. I very much personalize it for different people because we all need different [amounts]. Some

people need a much higher dose of one or two of those things, and you can't get it in a multivitamin.

Sonia Hunt 35:32

Right. And prebiotics and probiotics are huge for me as well.

Dr. Jill 35:38

We'll just talk briefly about that. People think their toxic load is external—we said clean air, clean water, and clean food—that's absolutely true. What people don't realize is that a lot of the toxicity can come from inside if your gut is leaky or if you have dysbiosis. Say you have an overgrowth of bacteria, fungi, or something in your gut. Those things will produce toxins from the inside out. They can also contribute to the toxic load. So what you said and what I've done too in my life is to deal with that leaky gut and that toxic load from within through either antimicrobial herbs, probiotics, prebiotics, or things to get that balance back.

Dr. Jill 36:16

Are there any other chapters in your book that we're missing as far as key [points]? We've hit on a lot of high points. Is there anything else that we didn't talk about that's been part of that that's significant?

Sonia Hunt 36:29

This Three to Be program—think of it as themes in your life. A mantra: "Be healthy, be safe, and be well in all aspects of your life," because now I was thinking holistically. So in "Be Healthy," there are three steps, which starts off with changing [one's] mindset and finding the right support teams. Then in "Be Safe," there are three steps. And "Be Well". Two of those steps, "Be Healthy" and "Be Safe," are focused on inward work—figuring out what's going on, trying to get to the root cause, having the right support system, and starting to think about things differently. And then, when you go through all of that, "Be Well," which is prosperity, is [about] taking it all into the world and letting your true self shine and helping others.

Sonia Hunt 37:21

Because I'm not a medical professional, I didn't want to say, "If you do one plus two, you're going to have three." I built it purposefully, as [follows]: Embed these themes into your life and you absolutely will get healthier because we have a ton of

research that shows what meditation does, what cooking consciously will do for you, etc. I really love that. I feel like in the allergy space, there's nothing like that. By embedding these themes into your life, your holistic health will start to get stronger and cleaner. The hope is always that you'll be able to own your allergy situation, have your North Star like I did, but be at it every day so that you can transform your health in many ways.

Dr. Jill 38:09

I love it. I love that because it's so applicable. So you could read this book if you had any number of illnesses and still get a lot of important information. That's what's so powerful and amazing. I love your story. I love what you've shared. I love that we went to the mind, body, and some of the foundation. And one of the things that I think is probably most important is the purpose thing—like when you were there in the ER and it turned out to internalize and become a purpose.

Dr. Jill 38:35

If you're listening out there and struggling with health, if you can find some sort of meaning or purpose in the suffering and transform—like you said, you've taken it out into the world—it changes everything. It really does, because it's more than just a chore. Every day when you get up to "I have to do this" or "Oh, my gosh, I must"—whenever you hear "should," "must," or "have to," you're probably on the wrong track. [laughter] Not that there aren't hard days, but it should come from more of a place of joy. Like, "I get to..." "I get to take care of myself. I get to do this to change my body and change the world." And I hear you saying that.

Sonia Hunt 39:12

Yes, absolutely. And one of those tools that I always had was a food allergy card. I got rid of my business card and I just used that. That was a starting point to meet all these new friends that I have, even in the restaurant industry and [among] chefs. I would just say: "I would love to eat here. Here's what I'm dealing with. Can you feed me?" And then it became this amazing conversation like, "Oh my God, my mom has this allergy" or "My son has this allergy" or "I'm dealing with this." These are all tools. You're in a place now where you own what's going on with you, but you're taking it out into the world to help other people as well. And that starts to lift the burden of what you're living with every day.

Dr. Jill 40:03

Yes, that last thing, basically what you're saying is that when we are authentic—and you alluded to it earlier—it's hard because I think we are set up to put on a mask. "Everything's great. I'm fine." "How are you?" "Fine." But it's like taking off that mask and saying: "I'm struggling with this. Can you help me?" "I'm suffering. Can you help me?" For me growing up, [being] needy was not good, so I [supposedly] didn't have any needs. So I had to relearn how to ask for help or say, "I'm suffering here; can you help me?" and share and be okay with it. And that's part of the journey, too. In fact, if anything has transformed us during this pandemic, we need community. We need people. Isolation is another disease.

Sonia Hunt 40:45

It truly is. These small tips—I think they're easy to start on every day. It's not like you have to put a gazillion dollars into any of this. You can start with a mindset change today after this Facebook Live.

Dr. Jill 41:04

I love it! So, where can people find you? Where can they get a copy of your book? Tell us more about how to get in contact with you.

Sonia Hunt 41:11

Yes, SoniaHunt.com. That's where you'll find all my links to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. My book is sold on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. It's in some local bookstores as well, so that's exciting. I read every single email that comes through. If you have any questions or just want to chat, send me an email. I'd love to talk to you. We have a newsletter as well that you can subscribe to that goes out monthly. There's a lot of great information on allergies, holistic healing, products I find, recipes that I give out, and things like that—because I'm a big foodie. [laughs]

Dr. Jill 41:55

I love it. I will include all of your links. Wherever you're listening to this, look below and you will see the links or in the chat. We will make sure to include those. Sonia, it's such a pleasure to see your journey and to even have been a little, tiny part of it. I'm honored to [inaudible] and to see where you're going and the wonderful book that you've written for people. And thank you today for your bits of wisdom. And I love this because I never know what to expect. I kind of let it flow. But I love where

we went with mindset and some of these deep issues because, truly, they have as much or more power than any supplement, pill, or medication.

Sonia Hunt 42:32

Yes. Thank you so much. I'm so grateful! Truly, you've been such a big part of this journey for me, and you have words of wisdom in my book. So for anyone who's going to buy my book, you can read Dr. Jill's words of wisdom that are in the book as well.

Dr. Jill 42:49

Thank you, Sonia. What a treat. I sure appreciate it. Have a wonderful day!

Sonia Hunt 42:53

You too. Thank you!