

[243: Resiliency Radio with Dr. Jill: The Root Cause of Chronic Illness: The Blood Microbiome](#)

Dr. Jill 00:00

Welcome to *Resiliency Radio*, your go-to podcast for the most cutting-edge insights in integrative and functional medicine. Join me, your host, Dr. Jill, as we interview amazing experts, medical doctors, and other people in the field who are opening our eyes to new ways of thinking, challenging our beliefs, or even reiterating old patterns of: How do we achieve wellness? How do we become our optimal selves? How do we overcome chronic disease?

Dr. Jill 00:24

I know Dr. Rawls and I, my guest today, have both dealt with many patients in our own journeys that we're going to talk about in this realm. My goal today and every day, every time you see this podcast, is to empower you with knowledge and information to transform your own health and your own personal journey.

Dr. Jill 00:41

Today, as I mentioned, Dr. Bill Rawls has dedicated his life to modern medicine. When a health crisis with chronic Lyme disease abruptly changed his quality of life, he came face to face with the limitations of modern medicine, and he began to explore the vast possible alternative treatments. Restoring his health through holistic and herbal therapies inspired him to share his revelations on the importance of cellular wellness in defending us against microbes and other root causes of illness. Today, he works to bring life and vitality to others as he helps them establish their own paths to wellness through modern herbology.

Dr. Jill 01:16

There's so much power here. I can't wait to dive in. He's got a best-selling book, so be sure to check this out. We will link up in the show notes wherever you can find this. It's *Unlocking Lyme and The Cellular Wellness Solution*. He talks about the herbal phytonutrients and all the ways that we can strengthen our defense. He's also the founder of Vital Plan, a holistic health company where he developed the signature Restore Kit, an advanced herbal protocol that has helped thousands of victims reclaim health.

Dr. Rawls, it is a true privilege to have you here.

Dr. Bill Rawls 01:44

Oh, a pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Dr. Jill 01:47

You're welcome.

I love to start with story, and you clearly have a very interesting story. And we're both medical doctors, just to say this is so interesting because I'm the same way. What happens is we encounter either significant illness in ourselves or someone we love dearly and we're like: "Wait, there are some limitations to what we've been taught." Let's go way back, though. What was your journey into medicine? And then how did you confront your own illness and start to transform your own health?

Dr. Bill Rawls 02:11

I think all of us that are doing something different—they're outside the mainstream—have a story. There was a reason that that happened.

My journey started 30-something years ago. Conventional medical school. I decided to go into obstetrics and gynecology because I was really attracted to having a mostly well-patient population and interventions that really made a difference. It was a lot of fun. But 30 years ago, practices were small. I was in a three-person practice in a small town, taking call obligation for labor and delivery and the emergency room—24-hour call—every second to third day and every second to third weekend from Friday morning until Monday morning. I was one of those people who, if somebody was in labor or if I had a problem in the hospital, just didn't sleep. In my 30s, I could push through it. You just do that. But by my 40s, I was having a hard time keeping up. And by my late 40s, I lost the ability to sleep normally when I wasn't on calls. So I wasn't catching up. And it just snowballed.

Dr. Bill Rawls 03:35

But even when I was forced to stop taking obstetric calls, which pretty severely limited my practice, I wasn't catching up. And my body started breaking apart. I had neurological symptoms and cardiac symptoms. My joints were falling apart. Everything was a wreck, and I couldn't figure out why.

Dr. Bill Rawls 04:03

I went to my conventional colleagues and they ran all the tests, and it was like: "Well, you have a lot of symptoms of MS, but it's not quite there." And "We did a cardiac catheterization. Your vessels are clear. Good news. But we don't know why your heart is skipping beats every second to third beat. Here's a drug for that." And more and more and more of that, just getting nowhere. The best I could do was identify with a diagnosis of fibromyalgia, which really doesn't get you very much.

Dr. Bill Rawls 04:37

I started thinking outside the box, became certified in holistic medicine, started asking questions, and kept looking for that root cause. And like so many people with fibromyalgia, I finally found that I was carrying some of the microbes associated with Lyme. Of course, it wasn't from an acute tick bite. I picked them up when I was a child, so they had been in my body for years. But I didn't really understand it then, and I gravitated toward Lyme disease, like: "I can get an antibiotic that can make me well." And it didn't. It just made me worse. And that put me back in that search mode again of "What the heck is going on?"

Dr. Bill Rawls 05:22

By default, just because of my situation, I didn't have the resources to pursue a lot of care outside of my small town. I had to do things that I could bring to me. Almost with low expectations, I thought: "I have heard that herbal therapy can help this. Some of my patients, I know, have used this. I'd had a little bit of contact with it. I'm going to try this thing. And I'm going to embrace it." So I literally started taking handfuls of capsules of all these different herbs. Now, I had done my research. I knew that these things had a high safety profile, and there was also evidence that they had strong antimicrobial properties. And I got my life back. Over a five-year period, I completely regained my health. And that changed my practice forever.

Dr. Bill Rawls 06:19

I didn't go back to obstetrics and gynecology. I started practicing more of what would be defined as functional medicine today. But that carried me on this journey of asking: Why? What's going on? What's happening inside the body? And it carried me to a different place, to the point that I don't really think about chronic Lyme disease the same way that other people do. In fact, I don't think about chronic

illness the way that other people do. And that's opened up a lot of possibilities that weren't there before. So it's been an interesting journey.

Dr. Jill 06:54

Wow, what a journey! Before we even got on here, I said, "I know you're a curious physician and mind" because some of my favorite people, the people I learned the most from... If we maintain that curiosity... Almost like a child-like curious, like, "What else? Why would that be?"

Dr. Jill 07:13

So often in our conventional system, we have these ICD-10 codes that are labels and they do describe a set of symptoms. It gives us a roadmap of what we're dealing with so we can talk coherently with other providers. Like fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, ME/CFS, or any of those things. But it doesn't really tell us: Why did that happen? So we're going to dive into that and some of the stuff you've learned.

Dr. Jill 07:34

But I love framing that for people because they might think, "Well, my doctor told me I have rheumatoid arthritis" or fibromyalgia or whatever. But the truth is, many medical doctors aren't looking to say: "Why did that happen? What trajectory were you on?" And then it shifted.

Dr. Bill Rawls 07:48

Yeah, it's so important.

Dr. Jill 07:49

Yeah.

The other thing I heard there that I think is so important: I try to tell people that we do have diagnostic evidence that they've had an exposure to a tick bite. And I'm the same as you: I think when I was four or five years old, I probably got bit by a tick. I have been tested positive for *Borrelia*, *Babesia*, *Bartonella*, and *Ehrlichia*—all of them. But the truth is, if I tested 10,000 people on the street with IgG and IgM testing, I would probably find 30%–50% have been exposed to Lyme. But they're walking around fine. Their brains are fine. They're not fatigued. So I love that you

brought that into your story because I completely concur with the fact that it takes an old infection...

Dr. Jill 08:24

Even Epstein-Barr, we know, can be reactivated. Chickenpox can become shingles. So this is totally known to medicine—that old infections can start to change. But it's in the context of a system that becomes exhausted, an immune system that's not keeping up. And I think that's where we're going with our talk today. What things can we do to reverse that? Maybe say a little bit more about that because I think we're on the same lines of how we think about it.

Dr. Bill Rawls 08:47

Oh yeah. I think you're right on track. And we need lots and lots more providers out there who are thinking just like you are and asking those same kinds of questions.

When you look at that concept of a diagnosis, it's really important for acute intervention. And that's the one thing that we do exceptionally well in conventional medicine. [If] somebody's broken their leg, you need to know which leg and where it's broken. But when we move toward chronic illness, there's a disconnect between cause and effect.

Dr. Bill Rawls 09:20

When you're talking about any chronic illness, the purpose of a diagnosis is to define the code so you can get paid and define the medical therapy. But medical therapies for chronic illness treat the processes, the manifestations of the illness, but they don't get to the root causes. So people don't typically get well. They end up in this chronic state of managed illness. We have a whole world of that. Sixty percent of our population is in that state. So moving beyond that concept of diagnosis and asking the question, "Why?" is so radically important if your endpoint is wellness.

Dr. Jill 10:06

It's so true. And that's where you were met with this evidence of maybe an old infection [and had the curiosity to know] "What else is going on?" But it also was preceded by driving yourself into the ground, which is what we're taught to do in medical school—deny yourself.

Dr. Jill 10:23

I want to talk about herbal [treatments] and what you learned because you're a neurologist, you learned a ton. And I would agree with you; there's such a synergy with herbs compared to drugs. And there's a place for drugs, but herbs are so powerful. And then I just want to give people a heads-up: We're going to talk about something that I did not know a lot about, but coming up is the dormant blood microbiome. I want to dive into that topic. But let's first talk about herbs and what you learned on that.

Dr. Bill Rawls 10:47

I'll tell you what: Let's do it in order. There are different places we can start, but it's always nice to start thinking about the body differently, thinking about the body and cells, where the microbes play a role, and how the herbs fix that. Because my perception of how herbs work is very different than traditional herbalists. What I'm wanting to know, what I was really digging for in my study, was how this complex chemistry of the herbs is affecting us. And that's very different.

Dr. Bill Rawls 11:27

Most traditional herbalism is all observational. Basically, over a long period of time, practitioners observed that certain herbs worked well for certain conditions or symptoms. But they didn't necessarily know why the herbs were working. Interestingly, in conversations that I've had with physicians over the years, they say: "I don't understand how this one herb was used to treat this thing and this thing and this thing and all these different things." So when you start understanding the body in a different way in terms of cells, then you understand how the herbs are working and why the herbs are working very differently than how drugs are working. So it all starts with that concept of cells.

Dr. Bill Rawls 12:21

Every living organism is made of cells. From bacteria to plants to animals, we're all cellular. When you look at the body, we are a complex assortment of trillions of cells. And everything in the body. We're basically cells stuck together with connective tissue. But everything that happens in the body is a function of cells. Whether that's your heart beating, thyroid hormone being produced, or brain impulses firing—it's all done by cells. So thinking about that, it breaks it down.

Dr. Bill Rawls 12:59

So often the body seems really complex. We talk about systems. We break it down to cardiovascular, neurological, and all of this. And we have specialists in each of these categories. But all the functions and all of those symptoms are done by cells. So when you get down to what a cell is, your cell is an independently functioning unit. It's almost like a little microscopic machine. And every cell in the body has a job. But they're independent. Even though they're all connected together, they're each independent. Each of them, like any kind of machine, has specific requirements. And this is true of every single cell in the body.

Dr. Bill Rawls 13:49

You can break those requirements down to five things. And this is the simple formula of wellness right here: Every cell in the body—every single cell—needs the right nutrients. Different cells need slightly different nutrients. Thyroid cells need iodine to make thyroid hormone. Heart cells burn predominantly fat to keep going all day long. Brain cells like fast energy from carbohydrates. But if you're eating a whole-food diet, you're giving your cells everything they need to function properly.

Dr. Bill Rawls 14:24

Number two: Cells need a clean environment. All of the toxic substances—both natural and so many unnatural substances that we're exposed to—adversely affect cellular functions. They get stuck in our cells, and they prevent our cells from functioning properly. To function at optimal performance, cells need a clean environment that's free of toxic substances.

Dr. Bill Rawls 14:53

Number three: Cells need downtime. Some cells, like our heart cells, have to rest between beats. That's why they're so vulnerable. But all of our cells need downtime to recover from the stress of doing their work. Every cell works hard all day long and they need eight hours of sleep to recover and repair. If you're only sleeping what is average in America of six and a half hours, you're starting your next day with a deficit that your cells haven't recovered from the day before. So our cells need downtime.

Dr. Bill Rawls 15:34

Number four: Cells need good blood flow. To wash away metabolic waste and toxic substances that cells are trying to get rid of, they need good flow passing through the space between the cells. That comes from our bloodstream. It washes things out through the bloodstream and lymphatic system. What makes that happen is moving. There are a lot of benefits of exercise, but one of the biggest ones is [that] it's flushing our cells and clearing those spaces.

Dr. Bill Rawls 16:10

Number five: Protection from microbes. The archenemy of our cells are microbes. Either acute infections that are basically destroying our cells or these long-term chronic things that we're going to get into in just a second.

But that's it. That's the formula for wellness right there. If you're doing all those things, there's a high probability that you're going to have good health in your life.

Dr. Jill 16:35

Wow. I love how simple that is and how beautiful it is. Anyone listening can understand—"Of course!" And I love how it incorporates all the things that we hopefully are doing in integrative/functional medicine.

You got sick after working yourself down with crazy hours and not sleeping, not doing number three—down recovery time, sleep. And then for me, I got breast cancer in medical school. No doubt, the same thing. I was working 36 hours every three days. The same exact thing for me. And not good food and many, many things in your list. So people listening might be able to think through those things and say, "What am I not doing for myself?" and think about how it maybe led to their current diagnosis.

Okay, go on. That was so fascinating.

Dr. Bill Rawls 17:25

That leads into that microbe factor. We're all aware of acute infections, some worse than others. And we're all afraid of things like the Ebola virus, more recently COVID, that are acute things that invade our body. What they're doing—how microbes do harm—is they're using our cells for food and resources and they break down our body. That's how they harm us.

Dr. Bill Rawls 17:57

But when you look at this thing, we're exposed to a lot of stuff in our lifetime, and microbe encounters are happening every minute of every day. And we pick up things that a lot of times we don't even know it's happened. Different microbes cross into the body in different ways: Respiratory infections, food and drink, sexual contact with other people, and then insects and ticks. That's a prime way that microbes can get in their bodies.

Dr. Bill Rawls 18:33

But here's the deal: [With] most of the things that we encounter in our lifetime, we have built-in immunity for these things. Ebola is really bad because humans have never been exposed to it, and we have no built-in immunity. If you get exposed to that thing, there's a high probability that it's going to make you deathly ill. And this includes tick-borne microbes. Ticks have been biting humans since the beginning of time. So most of these things that we're exposed to have a low potential to cause acute illness. But here's where these microbes win, where a lot of microbes that are more invasive and more threatening don't: They've developed sophisticated mechanisms of staying alive inside our body.

Dr. Bill Rawls 19:37

I picked up tick-borne microbes when I was a child. I don't ever remember being sick. Ninety-five percent of the people that I speak to with chronic Lyme disease do not remember becoming ill around the time of a tick. I've come to the realization that acute Lyme disease, as far as somebody getting really symptomatic after a tick bite, is unusual. That's not what happens most of the time.

Dr. Bill Rawls 20:06

These things get in our body, and they're trying to get through our bloodstream and get to our tissues as quickly as they can. And they can do that very rapidly. They basically bypass the immune system as quickly as they can. When they do, they arrive at our tissues—our brain, our joints, different tissues for different microbes—and they invade our cells.

Dr. Bill Rawls 20:34

We talk about our immune system. Our immune system has the job of patrolling the body and looking for invaders. But a lot of things slip by. So our primary defense is barriers like our skin and the lining of our gut. Secondary to that is our immune system for things that get through. Our third-level defense, you don't hear about this one very much, is [that] our cells, through a process called autophagy, can kill invasive microbes.

Dr. Bill Rawls 21:08

But this game between the microbes in our immune system and our cells has been going on [for] a long time and they have very stealthy ways of getting by that. One mechanism that I've become aware of over the past 5 or 10 years is that all of these microbes—tick-borne microbes, Epstein-Barr, mycoplasmas, chlamydias, all these things that we're exposed to in life—can enter our cells and either go dormant or slow their growth rate down so much that they can just exist. The cell keeps right on functioning. And we collect stuff in our tissues.

Dr. Bill Rawls 21:50

This is a new thing. They're starting to call it the "dormant blood and tissue microbiome." We have bacteria that are dormant inside our red blood cells, inside all of the tissues in our body. And the evidence is growing. It's been hard to accumulate because we don't chop up healthy people, right? But there's all this evidence accumulated that we all have this. And as long as you're healthy, it's okay. They won't ever bother you. And that's fine with them because all they need is a platform to exist so they can hold out until they can spread to another host. So there are a lot of microbes.

Dr. Bill Rawls 22:34

So you look at *Borrelia*, the Lyme bacteria associated with Lyme disease. It's been found everywhere. It's been found in multiple sclerosis, along with other microbes, and dementia. It's been found in breast cancer cells. It's been found throughout the body, along with a lot of other stuff. When we compromise our cellular health, these things emerge and start breaking down our tissues and creating an environment that favors microbe growth. So basically, your body becomes a place where microbes can prosper. That's basically what chronic illness is. We have different chronic illnesses because different microbes invade different tissues and

different stress factors allow them to emerge in different ways. But that's pretty much it.

Dr. Jill 23:34

Wow. I'm just blown away because this makes so much sense. And even though I didn't have that term—the dormant blood microbiome, and we talked about doing this podcast—like I told you, I did some research and found the articles. I'm like, "Wow, I cannot wait to talk to Dr. Rawls about this topic!" It makes so much sense.

Dr. Jill 23:50

And even the thought comes to mind. One of my colleagues, Dr. Richard Horowitz, does a lot of Lyme treatment—his big protocols are intracellular drugs. And they work for the right people. But back to the term intracellular, what he's doing is targeting, through triple therapy, this intracellular. Now, I think herbs may be a little more gentle way to go. But this is so fascinating because it makes a lot of sense that those with a weakened system are the ones that are at risk for these chronic illnesses.

Dr. Jill 24:19

If you have a person who comes in with symptoms, where do you take them as far as finding out? Do you need to know the organisms? Do you have a universal approach that kind of treats whatever is going to become active?

Dr. Bill Rawls 24:31

We live in such a test-driven world. Everybody thinks immediately: "I have to have a microbe test." And quite frankly, the biggest thing that microbe testing does is provide verification. But I've said for years [that] the only difference between somebody with fibromyalgia and somebody with chronic Lyme is [that] the chronic Lyme person figured out some way to get a positive test for *Borrelia*. That's it. But fibromyalgia is basically the same thing. Then we hear about the co-infections. The list of co-infections grows every year. And the harder I search, the wider I search, the more of these low-grade stealth pathogens I find that can be present in a person's tissue. Because the solution is not finding a specific microbe and treating that specific microbe, testing becomes less relevant.

Dr. Bill Rawls 25:34

I think it's important to do a certain level of testing because it provides verification. And the more we know, the more we understand what's going on. But testing can also hold people back. If I have somebody with all the symptoms of chronic Lyme and they've done all this testing, it's like, "The testing in chronic infection isn't very good, so it's not going to affect what I do for you," because what I do is very, very different than what Dr. Horowitz does with drugs. He is targeting specific microbes. I am targeting the problem. And fundamentally, the microbes are there and they are flourishing because the body became vulnerable. So part of it is suppressing the microbes, but you must do that while you're restoring cellular health.

Dr. Bill Rawls 26:31

And the problem with antibiotics is really threefold. There are a lot of these. But no matter what antibiotic you're choosing, the big thing is [that] antibiotics kill normal flora. All it takes is 10 days to disrupt your gut flora, and that causes a cascade of problems that you cannot fix with just probiotics.

Dr. Jill 26:53

Then you get endotoxemia, which is the toxic load from inside out.

Dr. Bill Rawls 26:58

Yeah. Any antibiotics cause antibiotic-resistant pathogens inside the body and beyond. Chronic Lyme disease is a big problem. Antibiotic-resistant pathogens kill a million people every single year, and that problem is growing every year. So every time somebody goes to somewhere and takes six months of antibiotics, they're contributing to their problem and putting themselves in, in my opinion, grave danger because we've got better alternatives. The third thing is antibiotics are toxic to our cells and mitochondria, and you can't get well with things that are toxic to your cells because that was the root of the problem.

Dr. Jill 27:45

That's why I was saying in your list of five, it treats one—the microbes—and makes at least the majority of the other ones worse. So that makes a lot of sense.

Dr. Bill Rawls 27:56

Yeah.

That's where we get into herbs. And that's why herbs work for so many things. With an antibiotic, all antibiotics come from a natural source, but it's one chemical pull from an organism—either a bacteria, a fungus, or a plant. We do that because we're not good enough to reproduce that organism's defense system. And we need to get a patent on that thing so we can make our money back from the money we invested. But we haven't invested in new antibiotics since the 80s because it's not cost-effective.

Dr. Bill Rawls 28:34

When you take an herb, you're borrowing that plant's entire defense system. It's not just one random chemical; it's everything that the plant uses to defend itself against bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and a full range of microbes. So it is very comprehensive. The nice thing about herbs is [that] because the toxicity of using the herb is so low, you can combine multiple herbs to get overlapping benefits to cover a wider range of microbes. So you don't have to worry about finding the specific microbe as much as making sure you're getting broad-spectrum coverage.

Dr. Bill Rawls 29:18

But the plants—it's a sophisticated system with a certain intelligence about it. The plants don't want to mess up their normal flora. It's really interesting. And I found this early on—I've actually found studies that document it—that when you take an herb, you're getting these robust antimicrobial properties that have been well documented by institutions like Johns Hopkins University, but you don't disrupt normal flora in the body. In fact, if anything, you enhance it, which is really great. Herbs don't generate antibiotic-resistant pathogens. So you can take them for those six months or even years if you need to. In fact, I've been taking herbs now for 15 years straight, and I've enjoyed some of the best health I've had in my whole life in the past decade.

Dr. Bill Rawls 30:16

Herbs protect our cells. They protect our cells from too much carbohydrates. So with things in our diet, cells have a normalizing effect that protects our cells and our mitochondria. Our herbs protect our detoxification systems and protect liver cells. They also neutralize a lot of toxic substances that can harm our cells. Herbs compensate for a lot of things that we're doing inadvertently to ourselves. So they're these wonderful cell-protectant systems. And that, in a nutshell, is how

herbs work. They're cell protectants.

Dr. Bill Rawls 31:04

There are some herbs that—also what you're getting when you take an herb—are chemical messengers that the plant is using to coordinate cellular functions. A lot of those things are similar to our hormones and signaling agents. When we take that, sometimes we get that effect. Like, our adaptogens help balance our stress hormones. But further in the spectrum, you have some plants that have strong substances that have drug-like effects. I tend to stay away from those herbs. But when you look at herbs that are sold in stores—like kratom and things like that—those contain substances that do have drug-like effects. That's not desirable. That's not the outcome I'm looking for. I don't want herbs that have drug-like effects because I want people to be able to take these things long-term to calm that microbe stress down, restore their cellular health, and get them to a point of wellness.

So that's basically, in a nutshell, what we're doing with herbs. They are protecting our cells, and that's why they have such a wide range of different benefits.

Dr. Jill 32:22

So well said. You're such a great teacher. It's a joy. I'm sure our listeners are enjoying your input as well.

And it brings to mind [that] as I'm in clinic with patients, I have found way more success in the long term with herbal protocols. Absolutely. And sometimes I have to convince them that it's just as good or better because patients have the idea that antibiotics are always better or always stronger.

Dr. Bill Rawls 32:46

They are. Yeah.

Dr. Jill 32:48

I love this education, though, because it really is more of a synergy. And finding that right balance can pretty much get them into a complete remission or feeling back to their old self, which is your experience.

If people want to learn more about the book, it's *Unlocking Lyme and the Cellular Wellness Solution*. We'll be linking up to that. And you have a protocol, the signature Restore Kit. What are some of your favorite herbs? Is it a complex protocol? Do you want to give us a little bird's-eye view of the core principles or the things you've found to be your favorites?

Dr. Bill Rawls 33:20

Yeah. Every herb out there is going to have some antimicrobial properties. I wasn't aware of these things in the beginning. First of all, I had low expectations for the herbs. I was almost surprised when they worked. And second, when they did work, I thought, "Well, I'm going to get two or three weeks, and it's going to wreck my gut like the antibiotic if they're actually working." It didn't. My gut got better. And it was like, "Whoa, this is crazy!" Getting to know the herbs over time and understanding these properties has been really interesting in the journey.

Dr. Bill Rawls 34:01

There are certain herbs that we've used from the beginning. How I was turned on to herbs is out of desperation. This was all going on about 2005 in my life. It was the year that a guy named Stephen Buhner wrote a book called *Healing Lyme*. I read the book. He made a pretty darn good case for the herbs. It was enough. Science, Western mind, I was like: "Yeah, okay. You've talked me into this. We'll try it." And then reading that and then going beyond it and having this explosive passion to know more about this thing that changed my life so remarkably, I've spent a lot of time studying different herbs. But that book set a standard of herbs that we use for chronic Lyme disease.

Dr. Bill Rawls 34:53

Since then, I mentioned [that] Johns Hopkins University did a study of these herbs and found that a number of them—some from that core protocol, Japanese knotweed, Chinese skullcap, one called *Cryptolepis*, and several others—were actually better than antibiotics in killing the modal and cyst forms. But there are other studies looking at *Bartonella*, *Babesia*, *Chlamydia*, and *Mycoplasmas*. Interestingly, a lot of these same herbs cover those things too. The herbs aren't specific for specific microbes or specific pathogens. They have a wide range.

Dr. Bill Rawls 35:39

And interestingly, it's like: "Okay, we've got these antimicrobial herbs." But then I started looking at some of the adaptogens, like ashwagandha, [which] is a real favorite for normalizing stress. Rhodiola is another good one. They all have antimicrobial properties too. And turmeric has antimicrobial properties. That's part of how these things are working. So that cell-protectant property—we always talk about turmeric as being this great anti-inflammatory. Well, it is doing some of the same things that ibuprofen is doing but in a different way, so it doesn't have the same side effects. But a big part, I think, of what it's doing is it's protecting cells.

Dr. Bill Rawls 36:30

Inflammation is excessive cellular die-off in our tissues that creates debris and congestion. So if you're protecting cells and slowing down that die-off, that's a pretty strong anti-inflammatory effect. All of the herbs have anti-inflammatory properties because they're protecting cells. All of the herbs have antimicrobial properties. All of the herbs—every herb that I've studied—because they're protecting cells, have anti-cancer properties. So who doesn't want that in an everyday thing?

Dr. Jill 37:07

Wow, I love it. And it's so simple. It's almost like we've made it so complex that it can just go back to that simple... And I can concur with you: In clinical practice, herbs are so powerful. And I see so much improvement with not a lot of drug therapy or very little. So I love that.

Dr. Jill 37:28

Maybe before we go, I want to be sure to tell people where they can find you and get your book and all of that. But also, if patients or people are out there listening and they have a certain set of symptoms—whatever you mentioned, fibromyalgia—what are some of the diagnoses that you see that are often linked to Lyme? Or maybe not Lyme but this blood microbiome dysfunction or the immune dysfunction. Maybe give us a short list because then it'll get people thinking about, "Oh, could this be me?" even if they've never been diagnosed with Lyme or co-infections or Epstein-Barr. How does it present?—is what I'm saying. Give us a laundry list of some of the things people might experience if they have an abnormal microbiome in the blood or the cells.

Dr. Bill Rawls 38:11

Yeah, the margins are so blurred. And I just don't look at chronic illness as a diagnosis anymore. When I'm looking at someone when I do a consultation, I usually start very early in life, whenever they started having symptoms—even if that was childhood—and start looking for those causative factors to build out why they are ill. Sometimes that includes specific testing, trying to figure out what microbes. But a lot of times that's more academic than a real-world need. I tell people to really be careful about identifying or getting hung up on a diagnosis because we're finding *Borrelia* in so many places. But not just that. All the ones that we know about—*Chlamydia*, *Mycoplasma*, *Bartonella*, *Babesia*, all of these things that we hear about associated with chronic Lyme—are being associated with just about every chronic illness out there.

Dr. Bill Rawls 39:23

And it's different. We all have different chemistry. We all have different ways that these stress factors come together. We all pick up different microbes. And I think the microbes work together. So your particular spectrum of microbes and your genetic risk for different stress factors may define that you have a risk for certain illnesses.

Dr. Bill Rawls 39:47

I found a really nice paper on multiple sclerosis that was looking for causes, and interestingly, they nailed all five categories as contributing causes. And they picked up *Chlamydia*, *Borrelia*, Epstein-Barr, and a list of other microbes as being commonly associated with MS. Not surprising. But they also found that there were certain genetic risk factors that were the tip of the balance of why someone might stop at chronic Lyme and another person might progress to MS with the same set of variables. So we know that there are genetic factors, but it's more in defining risk.

Dr. Bill Rawls 40:31

But the herbs—this same spectrum of herbs has worked for so many different kinds of conditions. And the price for doing it: They don't cost much, first, the actual price. But the potential for harm with these herbs is so low. It's kind of like, "Why

would you not do that?" You're almost crazy not to consider that as part of your repertoire for getting well.

Dr. Jill 41:03

I couldn't agree more. And I treat children. Family medicine background. So I want to just mention that too, because I have treated a two-year-old, a four-year-old, an eight-year-old, you name it—very safely—with a combination of herbs. In fact, that's the easiest population to treat because they're resilient. And as long as their moms get them to take these tinctures and things, I am always so surprised at how well children do. And I always reach for herbs first before any drugs with the kiddos.

Dr. Bill Rawls 41:31

Yeah, absolutely. We've had great results too. It's just amazing—the kind of responses that you see for so many different things.

Dr. Jill 41:39

Yeah.

Dr. Rawls, I knew this would be a great conversation, and it has been. I know people want to know more and get a copy of your book. Where can they find you?

Dr. Bill Rawls 41:49

My latest book is *The Cellular Wellness Solution*. It's kind of like four books. It's a thick book. Don't be intimidated by it. It's basically that cellular theory and the dormant microbe story. A primer on how to really understand herbs at a basic level, and then applying those principles and learning about other things that you need to do, like sleeping and everything else.

Dr. Bill Rawls 42:17

That can be found on Amazon. We sell it on our website, VitalPlan.com, along with supplements, protocols, and programs. Additionally, I have a site—it's actually under construction right now, we're doing some work—RawlsMD.com, which is primarily just an informational site to get this kind of information out there to start changing the conversation.

Dr. Jill 42:46

I love it. Yeah, I'm here on RawlsMD.com. And then you said VitalPlan.com. And like

you said, the book is on Amazon. And you're also the author of the previous [book], *Unlocking Lyme*. I have that on my bookshelf with all the classics. I think I have a brand new copy of your new book. I haven't gotten through it yet, but I am going to read it. It's my next read.

Dr. Jill 43:07

Dr. Rawls, thank you truly. I love your thought process. I hate that you had to go through this, but what a blessing that through that you really transformed your own life and now you're spreading that to the world. I admire people like you. And I know that our listeners have really enjoyed this. So thank you again.

Dr. Bill Rawls 43:23

Well, the same. You do what you do because of something that happened to you. I look back on it and go: "Yeah, where would I be if that had not happened?" It changed my life in such a positive way. Sometimes you almost have to look at it and go: "Yeah, I was supposed to go through this." so I don't have any regrets.

Dr. Jill 43:48

Gosh, I couldn't agree more because the same thing has framed my life, and it's like: "Oh, now I see. I had to do that in order to be the physician that I am today." So thank you for letting yourself be used for the greater good for everybody out there. And I hope you guys will all go check out that book, especially if you're suffering or someone you love is suffering, because this is so powerful. And again, thank you, Dr. Rawls.

Dr. Bill Rawls 44:10

Thank you. It's been a pleasure and thank you for having me.

Dr. Jill 44:13

Hey, everybody, thank you so much for joining me for another great episode of *Resiliency Radio*. You know you can find us on YouTube, Spotify, iTunes, wherever you watch or listen to podcasts. If you are on one of those platforms, if you'd stop and leave us a five-star review if you enjoy the podcast, that really helps us to reach others. If you're on YouTube, notice we've hit 500,000 subscribers, and that is thanks to you. I am so grateful every day for our listeners, those of you who comment right in. Overall, it's a joy and a privilege to be here with you, and I'm so

grateful that you allow us to reach more people by subscribing. And if you want to hear notifications, you can click that bell as well.

Dr. Jill [44:55](#)

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So thanks again for joining me. We will see you next week for a new episode of *Resiliency Radio*. Have a great day.