

056 OMDPodcast 8Things MindBody-8of8

Carlyle

Welcome to the Organic MD podcast with Dr. Damon Miller. This is Carlyle Coash. How are you doing today, Dr. Miller?

Dr. Miller

I am happy to tell you that I am doing well today, and I am grateful for that and for today. How about yourself, how are you doing?

Carlyle

I am still in one piece. I am walking and breathing, mostly. The air quality has been better since all of the fires, but I am still here breathing.

Dr. Miller

It is almost like the like icing on the cake, you cannot go out to mingle because of the pandemic. Now, you are not able to even go outside for a walk because the air is so toxic, but what are we going to do?

Carlyle

Small victories.

Dr. Miller

Yes, it is.

Today is the eighth of eight podcasts, where we have been talking about the different pieces of our Better Eye Health program, more specifically, on what your doctor does not tell you. Your doctor does not tell you these diseases can be improved, that there are things you can do to reverse vision loss, and there are things under your control that make a huge difference in not only your health, but the health of your eyes.

We have talked previously about the different pieces to our Better Eye Health Program, like microcurrent stimulation, color therapy, and supplements. We also recommend the elements of Oriental Medicine, like needleless acupuncture and exercises, which are important if you have already developed an eye disease, or if you have a predisposition to it. The piece we have not spent much time talking about is the fact that if you want to make your eyes healthy, you need to take care of your health.

This sounds too easy and too good to be true, but the things you do to take care of your health have a huge impact on it. That is a dirty little secret about modern medicine, most of what you can do to be healthy, and even to reverse significant disease, is under your control and based on choices you make every day. We are here to help you make good choices and give you some good information about what you can do to take care of yourself.

With western and allopathic medicine, they talk about the body and mind connection, but they do not really know what to do about it. This leaves us with just body, so we are going to be talking not just about your mind, but of your spirit and body. We will go over all the things you can do to take care of these three important pieces.

I am going to start by discussing the body because I am an MD, and that is what I was trained in. Then Carlyle will go over the mind and spirit because this is his expertise. He has been working for decades with people on their mind and spirits.

The basic thing about our body is pretty simple stuff, eat a decent diet. We should not be eating too many processed foods or sugar. If you drink alcohol, it is toxic to the brain and eyes, so you should stop drinking. The same goes for smoking cigarettes, they impair the circulation to your brain and eyes, so you should stop smoking. This is especially true if you are already impaired by a disease; these can all make it worse. You can find out more about what eating a decent diet is, by doing our *Healthy Eating Workshop*.

We should do whatever it takes, even if it means giving up alcohol and smoking. We can talk about alcohol in moderation because everyone has a different idea of what moderation is. It is usually more than what I recommend. We also need to get some exercise, even if it is only taking a stroll around the block. Exercise is important and it does not have to be in training type atmosphere, like an Iron Man, but you want to move your body parts around, keep your joints supple, and keep your muscles strong. You need to do what it takes, and it will help serve you.

Even more important is I want you to avoid the idea that there is a quick fix for your health. We need to step back from the global and integrated view of dealing with your health because it does take time. This includes your mind and spirit. If you have challenges with your health, you want to avoid the quick fixes because most of them are going to deal with symptoms, not cause. Chinese medicine has a great way of talking about it, using a tree as a metaphor. They talk about dealing with the root of the problem, not the branch. This means you want to work on the source of the problem, not only with the symptoms of it. This is a topic with a big discussion, so I am only going to introduce it here.

You also want to avoid taking too many of the prescriptions that are handed out for the diseases. This is especially true with eye diseases because they can compromise your eyes for things like allergies and immune function. You can even get heart disease, high blood pressure, and have urinary problems. These drugs really have a negative impact on your eyes, so you want to find a way to deal with these problems without taking the drugs.

There has been a lot of work done looking at how the health of your digestive system, heart, and cardiovascular system affects your brain and eyes. You cannot isolate to only taking care of your eyes, you need to take care of your whole body, it is one big package.

This brings us to taking care of your mind and spirit. One of the differences I was taught with how oriental medicine looks at the notion of spirit is that 95% of all the people who come to you are dispirited, and this is at the root of the physical problems one is having. If you do not care for your spirit, you are not going to make it better. Fortunately, oriental medicine is full of ideas, tools, and techniques for touching someone's spirit by lifting, helping, and supporting it.

This notion can be found in some early textbooks of western medicine. I am not sure if it still true today, but when I was going through my schooling, if you wanted to become board certified in internal medicine, you had to read *Harrison's Textbook of Internal Medicine*. I believe I had the 27th edition, and you had to basically memorize his textbook, which was very thorough. You can then go on to take the boards and become board certified in internal medicine. In the introduction to a few of the original additions, when he was alive, Harrison says, "Doctors, I need to let you know that 80% of the people who come to you are dispirited." He says 80% and oriental medicine says 95%, but the point is that a big majority of people we see has an issue with their spirit that needs to be dealt with.

This was understood with doctors in the past and passed on to me by one of my mentors, who was a country doctor. He would divide his day up, in the morning he would see people who needed quick fixes, like adjusting their medications or removing stitches. He could see five or six of them in an hour. The afternoon was saved for longer, almost hour-long sessions. He would see ladies who needed to come in to talk about their health problems, but had also recently lost their husbands; he knew it was their grief. They needed someone who cared and would listen them, so he scheduled longer appointments for people who would be working on their spirit. It worked very effectively. It may not be easy dealing with it, but you can do it and will thank yourself in the long run.

Carlyle

You certainly will, and I have seen so many people get better. I was thinking back when I took a session at Stanford, based around spiritual, existential, and cultural perspectives around illness. I ended up teaching the course for a number of years, after I was two or three years into it. It was only a small module set in a larger set of modules that the medical students would take during their many days and hours of lectures. They would go through all different medical topics, then throw this class in, almost as an afterthought. I initially started with an hour and a half session, but as the years progressed, it went down to an hour, then 45 minutes.

At one point, I asked a group of doctors and nurse practitioners in the session, how many other sessions they had that were like mine. They had different sessions on all sorts of topics and I was curious to know if they had any other sessions focusing on the body, mind, and spirit. After being stared at silently for a moment, I am told this is pretty much it. They do not have anyone coming in talking about social work stuff, it is all the logistics about discharging. I found it really interesting that they were spending hours upon hours learning all they can in the medical field, but the mind and spirit, which are very important pieces, are thrown in as an afterthought. I believe this led us to have the mindset of having a quick fix for everything, including our mind and spirit. We want to be handed a pill that will make us "better", but this is not the best approach. We need to look at the long-term goal when working on these things. Every day we are deepening the understanding we have of our emotions and how they play out in our lives.

One of the things I teach comes from a Buddhist tradition. Buddhism is an incredible heritage that is almost 3000 years old. In Buddhism, we are looking at our minds, emotional state, and how our emotions play a role in our actions. Take struggling with anger for example. When the anger arises in you, chances are it arises in a similar pattern. Your body may also feel a certain way, or even have a certain color, texture, or quality when it arises. The Buddhist tradition would say it is not enough to only speak of the anger, like telling yourself you get angry sometimes when you are hungry, or when you are not at 100%. I would hear this all the time growing up, my dad would get a little grumpy, so my mom would ask him if he ate anything today. We are taking something that we manifest and give ourselves the step-by-step guide on how to manifest it.

When we are ready to work on this, we cannot only do the surface level. This is not unique to only Buddhist traditions, but they want you to go down 15 levels and take the time to evaluate every aspect of that anger. By doing this, you will be able to map out how the anger is triggered when it does arise in your body. You will find, and start to notice your body's early warning signs of the anger, like tightness in your chest or you start to feel flushed. This map will bring you mindfulness to your situation and you will be able to do something different about it and change it.

Again, this does take time and effort to figure it out and build your resilience to have that resource for yourself. This can be a hard mindset to overcome, almost every day I see articles about mindfulness or meditation, and

how you can do it quickly. Most of them say you only need a few minutes of your day for it to work. If you only have two minutes a day to do any meditation, that is good. However, you need to understand it is also about building a long-term approach, by looking deeper in yourself and not only for the coming moment. You need to understand how your mind, how it works, and how your stressors work, so you can manage them. Next time you are in a moment of stress, you will know you have the support in you de-stress yourself and move through the situation.

We have also talked some on our inability to grieve and work with change in our lives. This is woefully under represented, certainly in our culture, and globally because we all face struggles and stressful situation. How often has a loss or stressful moment happened, and you push it down and make your way through it by grinning and bearing your teeth. Many of us do not do the work, respect the grief, or go through the grieving process. This will continue to apply itself to situations down the road and can profoundly impact our ability to do basic coping.

Since grief has such a huge impact on us, we started working closely with our friend from West Africa, Sobonfu Some, and have been working with her for a number of years now. Her community knows deeply about grief, and she taught us a great deal during her time on this planet about how to grieve and how to integrate it into our everyday life. Most people think if you grieve, it will somehow destroy you or you will see yourself weak as a result of it. When I see people truly working on their grief on a regular basis and incorporating it into their health plan, if you will, are almost always stronger because of it. We have not really mentioned grief before, but it is very important and is worth repeating.

We do not have to become a Buddhist to work on these things in ourselves, but this notion that there is a way for you to experience these things in your body and it is not only in your mind can be very useful. It is so easy for us to fall into our thoughts and mental state and just keep spinning, but you can stop the spinning by asking yourself some questions. Where is your mental state at? Where are you feeling this in your body? Where is this in my body? Most of people do not think this way, most of the time, so it gives you a way to objectify and work with it. Your body and mind will really appreciate the attention and will be happy to hold onto the good things for you. I am going to go one step further to say this is something I hold to be true; your mind and body will have an engagement with one another.

This is found in many cultures, but there are things that happen for a reason. Unfortunately, bad things happen in our lives and the world, but it is bad to try to brush things off or be judgmental. We need to change our mindset of needing to get past the situation quickly, we need to make ourselves more of an observer. Start opening your mind and notice what is going on in and around you because you are never going to change anything if you do not see it. Do not be deterred because there are things you can work with when you are dispirited. You can work with the ways your mind is frazzled or confused and you can work with the way your body might be not functioning at its peak.

The whole point is that all these things are connected. You are one person – one package, that contains many different aspects. When someone experiences a trauma or loss of someone important, it hits all of you. It will affect your body, mind, and spirit. If you want to pull yourself out and start to heal, you need to deal with all of the different aspects.

We will come back to talk more about dealing with the your spirit and mind because it is part of taking a global view of your health. This integrated view is missing in much of modern medicine. It is so easy for us to look up any issues we are having in a web search and it will tell you what drug to take, but it will not tell you how to deal

with the root of the problem. We need to deal with the causal factors, and it is up to ourselves to make the change.

Dr. Miller

Thank you, that was great. Again, this is the last of an eight-series podcast. We are looking to put this together into a book, and call it *Eight Things Your Doctor Does Not Tell You That You Need to Know to Heal Your Eyes*. I am glad you and I are doing well. We will be back, but you can also check out another podcast of ours, on how to deal with healthier lungs in the midst of all the smoke. If you live in California, Oregon, or Washington, you may want to check it out.

Please also like and subscribe to our podcast and help share the word.

This is Dr. Damon Miller, here in Northern California. Thank you, Carlyle.

Carlyle

Thank you.