Introduction and Background

Doctor Sharon Stills, what a pleasure to chat with you. We had a little bit of a pre chat, and it was just so much fun to just hear all the things that you did. It's amazing.

I mean you really are out there changing the world and I believe her son works with you as well. So we want to hear all about that doctor Ben Stills and you working with males and females and you have such a great, interesting background.

Would you mind telling the listeners and viewers who you are, what you do, all the different types of I know your natural medical doctor, but you've also done so much else and you have such a great approach.

If you could explain that, and then you have a very interesting back story, which we'd love to hear as well. Thank you, thank you. That's amazing. Yes I do, I do work with my son proud nonetheless.

So we certainly in going and yes, I'm a natural ethnic medical doctor. I went to medical school in the States and I'm going on my 23rd year now. So I kind of one of the elders.

Fell in love with the wise elders. Yes. And so many of you may know me. I host the Doctor Talks Menopause Summit, so I do a lot of work with women. I do a lot of work with men too. Right.

Because men also, you know, go through and pause. They have a pause in their hormones. And I don't just work with menopause. I work with people who are dealing with all situations from allergies to end stage cancer.

And of course, when you're talking about any medical condition, there's usually an emotional condition going along with it, whether it's burnout or depression or anxiety or some of the other, you know, stronger diagnoses.

And so when I went to Catholic Medical school, I actually went to be a pediatrician. But that's a whole nother story. But I really focused in mind body medicine because we talk a lot about mind body medicine.

And I think to me, it's really important that we go from talking about it to really bringing it into clinical practice, into really paying attention to it, because a lot of patients who come to see me, they seem to be in one camp or the other, they're like, I will eat all the organic broccoli.

You tell me to eat. I will go to sleep at 9 a.m., but don't talk to me about my little trauma, my big trauma. Don't talk to me about emotional stuff. I don't want to go there and then there are other people who come in and say they've been diagnosed with breast cancer, and they they totally get it.

They're like, I understand. I haven't been nurturing myself. I have a bad relationship with my father. But then they're like, you know, want to eat M&Ms and smoke cigarets or so?

And it's really important that we realize we are this emotional, spiritual, energetic being in a physical body. And so to me, it's really important that we address both areas.

And so because of that, I have studied literally around the globe. I study a lot in Switzerland, a lot in Germany, really focusing on terrain based medicine and European biological medicine to really understand how all of these pieces come into play, to help someone on their journey.

Because I feel like when you get a diagnosis is it is really a gift. And I know that if you're suffering and you're listening, you're like, yeah, I feel like a gift.

But when you work through it and extract the wisdom or the knowledge or the life change that needs to take place, then when we look back in hindsight, we can say, oh, I'm really glad that happened because it sent me into a different course.

It made me leave a relationship I shouldn't be in or enter a relationship I should be in, or leave this job, or travel the world, or start baking cookies or whatever it is we need to do.

And so I think disease and struggle always, it's always has these fruits that can balloon from. I love that like the flowers in the background we could glean from them.

Could you just explain what the biological medicine and that when you said you studied the biological medicine and it was something, what was the other one?

What did you say? Rain bathe the rain based. Yep. Tell us about that. Explain that. Yeah. Thank you. Sure. So a lot of us are probably familiar with functional medicine and has really gotten popular.

And that is a a piece of what I do. But functional medicine, it it still has roots to me in that allopathic medicine. You have a so we'll give you B and yes will do a gut microbiome test.

And we'll see you're deficient in Bifidobacterium. So we'll give you some or we'll give you some acromion or whatever it may be. And that can be helpful, but it's still kind of treating you just as an organism that's just missing something.

Mind-Body Medicine and Biological Approach

And you need to take it or has some toxins and they need to be released. And that is true. But biological medicine really takes into account the bio energetic body, the energy, the bio photons, the terrain between the cells, which is can call it our extracellular matrix.

We can call it our foster system. And that's really what is gathering information not only from outside of us, but also from inside the cells. Biological medicine also takes into account constitutions that we are all born with different constitutions, and you can look at it from different perspectives, whether it be Aya Veda and pitta cough vata, or from a traditional Chinese medicine perspective, or from a homeopathic miasma perspective.

But when we look at different constitutions, what's good for me may not be good for you, because we have a different constitution and we interact with the world and our emotions in a different way.

We also take largely into account the whole terrain of the mouth, and that there are energetic connections between every teeth and every organ. And so, for example, we're talking about emotional things.

The wisdom teeth are connected to the small intestine and the heart meridian. And so I will see a large correlate often because wisdom teeth are often extracted incorrectly and low brain infections cavitation can form there.

And so we see a big correlation with problems and the wisdom teeth and diagnoses of bipolar disease or anxiety or depression. So we're really looking at the body as like this whole map and just going system by system energetics to the physical body, to the hormones, to the bio photons talking to each other through sound and light and color to give you the best bed of not just feeling better, but but truly healing, truly discovering why you're here as a as a human, as a soul, however you want to refer to it.

What is your journey? What are you here to experience? What's your gift to give the world? What's your lesson to learn if you have but so that you are really fully expressing yourself as a human being and having this experience rather than just saying, okay, I got rid of my headache.

I'm listening to you. And I'm sitting very calmly, but inside I feel like I'm jumping all over again. I'm so excited. What you said, because I've been I'm a clinical neuroscientist much of the way, and I've been involved in researching the

mind and body connection for nearly 40 years now, and psycho neurobiology and just a whole when you talked about the, you know, the biosphere, when you talk about the terror and way you said, I didn't realize terrain medicine was so energetic and talking about the energy between the cells and the minds embodied and the impact and how you can't edit it, it's that is what it's all about.

And how do you speak? The mind becomes, the physical becomes, I thought, this is incredible. I mean, this is what this is what how medicine should be practiced.

You know, it's not just one thing. Medicine's fantastic, but on its own, it's like a only a piece of the puzzle. And so you are you are bringing all these other elements in.

And I love the fact that you emphasize the, the, the energy of the mind to the becoming the physical, because that is scientifically what actually happens.

We've known that for thousands of years. But the last 50 years that view has been has changed. So physical art made me well, it's energy in and physical response.

Then physically you know that feedback loop. So you're you're actually educating your patients to have a much more holistic approach. So what is the typical this summits about mental health and and helping people to manage the mental health.

And all of us with mental health is an ongoing thing. It's not just a you know, it's a quick it's train all the time for physical health. And and we've got to work on our social, we've got to social health people to work on our mental fitness and physical.

That's all one. And it's something we work on constantly. If I'm understanding you correctly, you educate your patients to understand that whole spectrum of the physical and the and the mental, the mind, the energy, everything in order to be able to recognize and you help them see the individuality within that.

Is that correct? And how does it work out on a practical level? And I know this is such a big question and you've got such a lot of experience, and I do not expect you to diagnose people with speed.

What is the route that someone could take to to understand themselves more holistically, not get too caught up in an allopathic world? But if you want to throw that out the door, we want all of it.

But how can they understand how to navigate the average person in the street who hasn't had your education or my education? How do you navigate the world of physical and mental health and the relationship?

Big question, but I think you could I know you're going to I know you go to. Answered, well, I. Put you on the spot share and I hope you don't mind. I'm confident in. You.

I and I agree, you know, I always say look like if, God forbid, you're in a car accident or you have a broken bone, you know, don't come to see me like modern medicine emerge.

And that's the way to go. Yeah. Signs, you know, go go to the E. R.. It's okay. I, I had a patient the other day who had a bad spider bite, and I would like, take the antibiotic, like, absolutely blowing up.

And he's like, I don't like antibiotics. I'm like, there's a time and place for exactly. This is the place. So how do I think about it when someone comes in with, say, depression or anxiety?

And I'll just tell you, you know, how I grew up as. A yes and your back story, which we didn't tell yet. So you you can handle these two sections however you want.

So I learned very young about, you know, what I always say to patients or to friends or family, like if you want to know what your belief system is, what you want, if you want to know what you're thinking, just look at your life

because you're the manifestation of what you believe in, then that's not to make you feel bad or anything, because we have that power to go in and change these beliefs sometimes.

That's a good statement. Brilliant statement. So when I was in when I was getting ready to go to med school, I was a single mom. My boys were three and five, and I had to go do my undergrad work, and my kids went off to Montessori school and I was going to the U of A at the time, and they came home with chickenpox.

And I had never had the chickenpox, and I was 25. And, you know, it's good to get them as a kid, not so good as an adult. So reports and moved on. I had the chickenpox for a month.

I was very, very sick. And that went into pneumonia. Oh gosh. And then after that I went into just chronic fatigue. And I wasn't a Catholic physician yet, but I was on my journey and I knew a lot.

So I found a natural path. I was taking the mainstream. I was drinking my organic juices. I was doing all the things, taking the vitamin C, but I couldn't get off at the time, it was a futon I was sleeping on in the middle of my living room, and I couldn't get off the futon.

I was like horizontal and it didn't matter what I did. And then I, I finally like after another month, I thought, you know what? I'm really depressed and sad because my kids, who are the most important thing to me, they're going to school all day.

I'm going to school, I'm tired, I'm burnt out, I'm not enjoying them.

Personal Healing Journey and Mindfulness

And I thought, this is just this is not working. And while I was lying there, I thought, you know what I'm going to, like, radically change everything.

I'm going to take them out of the Montessori school. I'm going to homeschool them all day. I'm going to do night classes and get a sitter at night. At the time, I was a massage therapist.

That's how I was putting myself through school. I said, I'm going to stop working at the clinic. That's a 45 minute drive. One way. I'm going to bring clients to my house and do do their massages in the living room for my kids and and it was like this whole plan all of a sudden, boom!

I went from horizontal to vertical and all, and it taught me something very powerful that it didn't matter what I was taking or what I was getting, or what herb I was taking.

It was that I was not happy. I was not okay with what was going. I was missing my kids. And so they carried that with me. Always. And I'm, you know, I'm nothing special.

This is applicable to everyone. And then when I got to medical school a couple of years later, we had to do research projects and someone was doing a research project and I decided to join, and it was called MSaa, which is mindfulness based stress reduction program, which is based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn.

And so I got involved with that, and I just got blown away again, I realized because I had already been meditating, I had been sitting then for a while, and I just realized, wow, again, it the healing doesn't have to come from out here.

I always say not all medicine comes in a pill bottle. Even, but the healing is from inside. And mindfulness just blew me away. And I truly believe it's the best medicine and that is my definition is paying attention on purpose, moment by moment by moment, and while being kind.

Because mindfulness is a muscle, being present is a muscle. So many patients say, well, Doctor Stiles, you know, I tried meditation and I hear what you're saying, but it's not for me.

I can't do it. And I say, no, mindfulness is you wouldn't go to the gym and pick up a heavy weight and go, yeah, I guess enough for me and leave the gym. You.

You have to keep going. You have to keep trying and keep working on it. And it's the same with paying attention and being mindful. And when we can be mindful, when we can do that not only on the meditation cushion, but we can fall awake in our lives, we can really start to work on the anxiety, the depression, the emotions that are pulling us in, not letting us be present and not letting us bear witness to.

To me, some of the most mundane things are the most profound, and they're filled with beauty. And we and we miss them. And so that's a little bit about my not that worry.

And when you say, you know, how do I work with the patient when they come in, you know, if someone comes in with the diagnosis of, we'll just say anxiety, I'm kind of working both the realms and I'm talking with them first.

And getting in touch with their belief systems. So I see where we're going to have an easier experience of them making changes. And then I'm also seeing where, okay, you know, it's going to be a little harder to pry open and peek our heads in and make a change.

And I'm looking at everything I'm looking at from a transgenerational perspective, their family history, what was handed down to them energetically that they might not even be aware is guiding their their experience.

I'm looking at their hormones, of course, especially as a woman goes through menopause and her hormones are going cliff jumping, very easy to become anxious or depressed.

And so I'm a big fan of replenishing in a proper way. What a woman or man, right? Because I said before and your pause is missing is same time. So I say menopause and I write it with the parentheses around with the pause.

Yeah. Because to me it's not just the stopping of your menstrual cycle. It's this there's so much power in pausing. And we've been taught to get the gold medal for doing.

And I give out gold medals for pausing. Right. I'm so happy you said that. It is such a. I saw you a little parentheses around the pause, and so I'm so glad you've explained it like that, because that is something in our day, current day.

I didn't mean to interrupt you, but that the that the concept of pause is absolutely crucial because as you said, we've been rewarding doing as opposed to pause it.

Carry on. Yeah. And it's. Really good. At attention. Right. It's like the space between thoughts, the space between can we, can we just be in silence?

Can we, can we sit with ourselves because I say silence will scream loudly, often with the what you need to hear if you just listen. But again, we're taught to fill our spaces, have the TV on the radio on the the following, the computer, whatever it is.

And we we learn not to cause. And so it's really important for our life because you can just go through life like a hamster on a happy trail and not even think about, like, what are my goals?

What are my dreams? What do I want to see? What do I want to accomplish? What's important to me? What significant milestones do I want to master? And if we don't pause and exhale and think about those things and then implement them like, that's our job, no one's going to do that for us.

Maybe we have a therapist or a bestie who's going to help us and listen to us talk, but it's really up to us to think about, like, what do we want to do with this life time?

Because it goes by in the blink of an eye, and often anxiety and depression is just we're not living in our truth.

We're not living in. And so we're we're mad at ourselves, or we we get anxious or we, we eat.

Right. So you can induce anxiety in different ways, right? You can induce it with too much caffeine. You can induce it with too much sugar with the wrong diet.

So we go off on these tangents and we make ourselves feel something else because we don't want to feel what we're really feeling, which is disillusionment with our life.

And we have to be willing to to put the spotlight back on ourselves and take ownership of what we're here for. So I never just let it one. Then I'll talk about, you know, come in and say, you know, here's your bias and your bioidentical progesterone, and let's check your thyroid and your oxytocin and your adrenals and all these things which are super important and help the physical without saying like so I when I went through menopause, I climbed Kilimanjaro because that's.

Oh my gosh, that's amazing. So and I stayed in I was stood on top of Kilimanjaro is literally one year after my last period, the actual definition of menopause.

And it was to say to myself, like, I'm not buying into what society says. Like to me, this is my sacred second. I'm standing on top of the roof of the world here, and I can do anything.

And this is just a new beginning, a new, exciting time for me. And so I always ask women like, what's your Kilimanjaro? And you don't have to be like, loony like me and climb mountains.

And actually do it. That was my thing. You know, you're Kimberley Kilimanjaro can be taking a local dance class. It could be for your meals, starting a garden.

It could be any watering. It could be learning to pose. Yes, yes, yes they are. There should be an Olympic sport for I think so. I think so we need that definitely.

Menopause, Hormones, and the Power of Pause

But I'm always, you know going on both tracks like how is it going. You know, how is your relationships, how are you feeling at work. Are you satisfied.

What's your connection with your community, with your family, with your self, with nature? You know, all these important relationships, this this is how this is how we heal and and I don't you know, I like you can't look at my kitchen, but I have a lot of supplements on my kitchen and but there's supplement.

And so this isn't a lifestyle. It supplements who we are, how we're feeling. And so the combination works really well. But we can't just think that's allopathic thinking again.

Oh because I have patients come in. You know doctor stills I'm anxious. Should I take Gaba or should I take glycine or should I take five HTP. And you know, all of those can help.

I'm not opposed to them. I do urinary neurotransmitter testing. We can look and see if your brain's on fire. You know, these are important, but I really work hard to get people out of the mindset that that's all there is.

And it's not easy. Yeah. So it's not easy because we do live in a world where it's get the external in to fix and it's set physical, neuro centric approach that has become so dominant with the birth of scientific method, which was wonderful. It worked fantastic.

But the the new reductionism that's happened over the last 40 or 50 years has led to this great model of make of medical health, but it's also led to a lot of the negatives where we just think, I can take something.

But you said something so relevant in terms of it's not saying don't take the stuff, but you just saying it, get it in the

right bed. And so that thing.

But to come back to a comment that you made earlier on and linked to the pause, but the terrain medicine, the biological medicine, the energy, the fact that the mental becomes the physical.

What I'm hearing you say is that if you have a patient that comes in and they're going through menopause, all the anxious or whatever, whatever the situation is, are they coming in?

Yes, it's physical symptoms too. But people are coming in with both. They're coming in with their life issues. They seek signals and they coming then that's that's mind energy.

Those are mindsets. Those are all the experiences of life and the thoughts arising. And those have become part of the physical and the physical is just doing what the mind tells it to do. So.

So that's where you, you and I'm just emphasizing what you're saying for people to that they get that that we and my question is that do you also see because I see it in my work, that if someone you can have all the supplements take to follow all the great food regimens and is such great advice that you give and so many other people as well, your advice is really easy to apply and so on.

And the supplementation the the bringing you at your natural all these things that you can do which is external in but you balancing that if your mind is not right, if your mindset is not right, those aren't going to work as well.

And this research showing that and this is this kind of is slipping a little into my own. I wanted to ask if you find this too, that if you all of that stuff is great and it's good, but it doesn't work as well, you can lose very high percentages of benefits of those things if your mind isn't right.

Are you seeing that with your patients as well? Do you find the same sorts of things at the mind striving it's mind first and. Absolutely 100%. You could take all the things, but if it's not the root, and the root is that you have fear or you have trauma you're carrying with you from your own childhood.

Or like I said, transgenerational, then is is still, you know, yes, you'll feel a little better if your hormones tanked and I give you back some hormones, but there's still going to be issues.

You're still not going to be sleep, and you're still not going to feel your best. You're still going to go back to that repetitious whatever it is, you know, and the victim, they're out to get me.

Life isn't fair or whatever. You know, the story that's running in your you're and and we all have these stories and we can you know, we can dig them out, we can garden them out.

And I feel like paying attention, breathing. It doesn't have to be super fancy all the time. I do a lot of work with light and color to help patients unravel what's going on emotionally.

I love family constellation work, which is really bringing in the whole family system and understanding it's a spider web and what happened? A great grandma can be pulling along the web and affecting you if it was never talked about, if it was never dealt with.

And so and a lot of us like, you know, my elder generations, they didn't, you know, they really didn't talk about things. No, not at all. Done everything down.

And so we really need to I look at it like a pizza, right. With all the slices and yes, taking the right supplement. Yes. You know, if you're obsessive glutamate and your brain is on fire and you take some glycine and it can calm you down, you know, but to me, that's just so that you can start looking at I think I just recently became a death doula.

Oh, wow. I think death is our biggest anxiety. And I think we really don't talk about it. We really don't understand that it's this big, giant purple gorilla in the room.

Absolutely. And we don't celebrate death. We don't we don't look at our lives on this continuum and we don't starve. So I one of my favorite exercises is for my patients when I'm having them pause is to write their eulogy.

So I'm like, let's think about these things now. Like, what do you want to be remembered for? And then are you even doing any of those things? How can we how can we step into like, if you want to be remembered for all your volunteer work or for being, you know, effective in the community, like, are you doing any of them?

Like, let's start living into what we want to be remembered for. So we're actually living into our highest ideals rather than, you know, watching another 12 hour Netflix binge.

And I love that, I love it, I love what you said to talk. I know that we're running out of time. And if I could just steal you for a couple more minutes, can you?

You've touched on something very spiritual that I think is so important, and I'm very I've been in this world field for a long time, and I've, I've always been a spiritual person.

And but it's I'm seeing so much and scientists same time and so are you and I'm seeing such a positive move across the board that this has been a shift back into people talking so much more about the need to, to be more spiritual and kind and all those things.

We know that. And you talk about being a distance learning.

Death Doula, Spirituality, and Closing Thoughts

It's all the near-death experiences. And I mean, there's just so many there's so much more. And part of the work I've done is on the unconscious mind in a way.

Not many people talk about an unconscious mind or really understand what it's about the unconscious, not the subconscious. It's actually the thing that drives a certain spiritual level.

And and there's a whole lot of science behind that. And so when you talk about being a death doula, obviously at the. Well, could you just talk a little bit about that and, and just how obviously something is drawn into that sort of spiritual side there because you seeing people in such an expansive way, not just as a bunch of physical parts that need to mechanically be replaced or, you know, oiled or something, you actually seen a very holistic approach with very spiritually driven human.

Could you talk a little bit about that as a, as a, as a medical practitioner as well as as a, as it is to like maybe people don't even know what it is it.

So I've spoken enough. If I can hand over to you for 2 or 3 minutes, if you wouldn't mind doing that is our last question. Sure. Yeah. I learned about what a death doula was because my favorite author, Jodi Picoult, wrote a book called The Book of Two Ways, and the the main character is a death doula because.

So even I had never heard of that. That was just a few years ago. But we hear about birth doulas, right? So yeah. Yeah. The new mother. And so a death doula is just, you know, that's we we take our first inhale, we arrive, and then we take our last exhale and we exit.

And in between, we have this thing called light. And so a death doula is there to help someone. Because usually the person who's dying is, you know, into a more spiritual place and has come to terms with it.

And we want them to leave on their own terms in the way they want. And usually it's family, right? That's all freaked out and can't handle it and doesn't want to talk about it.

And so they need a lot of handling and education and hand-holding. But we we don't mourn properly. We don't think about what death means and we don't.

I love Stephen Levine, wrote a book a long time ago about a Year to Live. And it's like, can we live as this is our last year? Can we live as if it will matter because we spend so much time in minutia worried about, you know, I always say like, worry is a waste of the imagination, right?

I didn't make that up, but I I've heard that and it's. A great. Quote. Yeah. And and so, you know, can we really bring it in because this light is like fleeting when we really think about it.

And you look at kids growing and I, you know, I have a son who's going to be 35, I'm like, how are you going to be 36? You know, I get the book with my grandbaby, like, she's already going to be five, my oldest one.

And it's like you were just born. And like we look at it and life goes so quick and how can we cement ourselves? So when we do the practice of dying, I think it really reflects a lot of how we live.

And so we can live how we want to die. That's the first place to get started and to come to terms with what is our fear of dying? Because I think the biggest fears are dying in public speaking.

Right. But I think it's a and you know, what is what is the higher the spiritual meaning when we can when there's a there's a saying in the Kabbalah guns a lot of that means this too is for the good.

And when we can look at whatever is happening and say, this too is for the good, even if we don't really quite understand it, that we can trust that the morphogenetic field, the quantum has us, and new things are happening as they should.

We can really pause and exhale and start to be more present. Beautifully said. That was just beautiful. What a great way to in the in this interview that was such.

It's such an inspiring and helpful and kind good information. So thank you Doctor Sills. It was wonderful meeting you for the first time that I'm sure this won't be the last.

I definitely would love to have you on my podcast as well sometime. And thank you so much for your advice and input into people's lives. Where can people get hold of you, follow you, find you, learn from you?

Thank you, thank you is an honor to meet you. And also and you can find me at Dr. stills.com or at stills Health center.com, because my son and I are opening up a new large 7000 square foot clinic here in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Amazing. Putting all this into practice so you can check us out there as well. That's incredible. That's incredible. It's all on your website. And thank you so much for joining us today.

Thank you.